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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 17, 2003****Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (HON. TONY WHITFORD): Thank you. Bonjour, mes amis. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 10-14(6): Strategy To Reduce Impaired Driving**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon, I intend to introduce an Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. These amendments are aimed at strengthening the act as a forceful deterrent to drinking and driving.

Last October, I made a statement in this Assembly to report substantial progress over the past decade in reducing the number of alcohol-related traffic accidents and the number of deaths and injuries that result from them. I was pleased to report that real progress has been made. At the same time, it was discouraging to acknowledge that people are still being killed and injured in alcohol-related accidents. These kinds of accidents need not happen at all.

Driving a motor vehicle is a serious undertaking. We need to give it our full attention. The consumption of alcohol impairs our mental judgment and diminishes our physical reflexes. Thankfully, it seems, more and more drivers have come to understand that drinking and driving just don't mix. Still, there are those who have not received the message that society no longer tolerates this type of preventable accident.

In brief, Mr. Speaker, the amendments I propose will provide for new administrative suspensions of driver's licenses for impaired driving. These are administrative rather than judicial procedures that enforcement officers can invoke immediately and separately from the criminal justice process.

A person driving a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol content of greater than .05 percent would be subject to a 24-hour license suspension and a 30-day suspension for a second offence within a two-year period. A person found driving with a blood alcohol content of greater than .08 percent would be subject to a 90-day suspension.

A problem here in the Northwest Territories, as well as in southern Canada, has been with people who continue driving even after their driver's license has been suspended. In these cases, the amendments provide for an immediate 30-day vehicle impoundment.

The amendments also attach new conditions for the reinstatement of a suspended driver's licence. Suspended drivers may be required to undergo drug and alcohol assessment and, if necessary, a complete rehabilitation program as part of the licence reinstatement process.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the amendments authorize the introduction of a graduated licensing system for new drivers.

Over the past decade, the NWT has fallen behind most other jurisdictions in Canada in enacting these or similar measures to deter impaired driving. These amendments will bring our laws in line with those in effect elsewhere in Canada.

In being amongst the last in Canada to bring in these types of impaired driving deterrents, we have had the advantage of studying how they worked in other jurisdictions before introducing them here. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the bill I will introduce later today is a carefully considered and well-written piece of legislation.

I wish these amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act could finally eliminate impaired driving altogether, however we can never expect a law to succeed so well in its purpose. I have no doubt though, Mr. Speaker, these amendments will deliver our message. Drinking and driving is dangerous. Drinking and driving is irresponsible. In the Northwest Territories, it is unacceptable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 11-14(6): Territorial Premiers' Meeting With Prime Minister

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has asked me to inform the House that the Prime Minister has agreed to meet with him, Nunavut Premier Okalik and Yukon Premier Fentie on Thursday morning in Ottawa to discuss federal funding for territorial health care.

---Applause

The Premier has also asked that I express, on behalf of Cabinet, our appreciation for the support received to date on this important issue from MLAs, our MP and Senator, the NWT health community and NWT residents.

I will keep the House informed on further developments until the Premier returns. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 12-14(6): Heritage Day 2003

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, Monday, February 17th, is Heritage Day in the Northwest Territories and throughout Canada.

Each year the Heritage Canada Foundation encourages Canadians to celebrate a nation-wide theme. The theme this year is "The Heritage of our Town." The Heritage Canada Foundation asks the question, "Why does a town exist?" The foundation suggests that heritage is found in a name, in the community's aspirations or in historical figures.

The 33 communities in the Northwest Territories vary greatly in geography, in history and in size. We should celebrate the heritage that makes our communities unique.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to a special heritage project the Department of Education, Culture and Employment launched at the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Rae-Edzo on January 24th. The Web site, "Lessons from the Land: The Idaa Trail," is an excellent example of honouring the heritage of the territory. I would invite Members to view the display of Dogrib culture and heritage in the Great Hall today.

While visiting the Web site, anyone from anywhere in our territory and around the world can participate in a virtual journey along the historic trade route, the Idaa Trail.

We will be continuing the recognition of our northern heritage with the production of our second "Lessons from the Land" series highlighting "Journeys of Nuligak" from the Beaufort-Delta area and the Inuvialuit people.

In the Northwest Territories, many of the elders who built our communities and created the history that we now celebrate are still alive, or their stories live through their children.

I encourage everyone to speak to an elder. If you have a story about your community, share that story. Visit a classroom and share your knowledge.

Special events have been planned to celebrate the heritage of our communities throughout the North. I invite everyone to participate in those.

It is important that we recognize the value of our heritage not just on designated days such as today, but through each day of the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Minister's Statement 13-14(6): Do I Need To See The Nurse Or Doctor?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the saying "knowledge is power" is particularly true when it comes to health and well-being. Information about how to assess and care for minor illnesses or conditions

empowers people -- it gives us confidence to make informed decisions and to seek advice when needed. It also has the added benefit of reducing unnecessary trips to the health care or hospital, because people can recognize whether symptoms are serious enough to warrant medical advice.

For this reason, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to distribute to Members advance copies of home resources on health and social services. These resources include a self-care handbook called "Do I Need to See the Nurse/Doctor?" and a brochure on core health and social services. The mail-out of these resources to all NWT households by the end of February fulfills two commitments in the health and social services system action plan. This action also supports a primary goal of this Assembly, to have healthy, educated individuals making responsible personal choices for themselves and their families.

It is important to state that the self-care handbook should be viewed as an aid to self-care. With this resource in our homes, we have ready access to basic advice on how to manage the everyday ailments that accompany life, like coughs, colds, sore throats, scrapes, upset stomachs and fevers. The handbook also suggests what we can do to help our families through troubled or stressful times.

Mr. Speaker, whether we are parents, caregivers or concerned friends, we have all had times when we needed ready to access basic health information. Sometimes, the most valuable thing gained from a self-care handbook is reassurance that the self-care we are currently providing is the right thing to do. Of course, there are also times when the condition warrants medical attention. The handbook is set up to flag obvious signs and symptoms of a more serious condition and it indicates how soon we should get medical help.

The brochure on core health and social services offers basic information of another kind -- it describes the kinds of service the public can expect from the NWT health and social services system. The brochure also provides information about where and how these services are delivered and why some services must be referred to specialists located outside a person's home community.

It is obvious to all Canadians and certainly to Northerners that there are high demands on our health and social services and programs. We need to take steps to ensure services are there, where and when we need them. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, people have an important role to play, to use our health and social services wisely. The brochure and self-care handbook gives people tools for their active participation in their own health and well-being, increases confidence in self-care and promotes good health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Minister's Statement 14-14(6): Family Violence Legislation

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity to report on the progress of our work on family violence legislation.

The Department of Justice has completed researching the feasibility of introducing family violence legislation in the NWT. From this research and discussions with local stakeholders groups, we believe this legislation could be a useful legal tool for victims of family violence. I have discussed this issue with my Cabinet colleagues and have received their approval in principle.

Mr. Speaker, family violence legislation complements the Criminal Code process. This legislation provides a civil remedy that can be used whether or not the grounds exist to lay criminal charges. People who are at risk of violence can apply under this legislation, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for an emergency order. This emergency order could include:

- restraining the family member from contacting or communication with the victim;
- exclusive occupation of the residence;
- removal of the family member from the home;
- restrictions on contact or communication;
- police assistance to remove personal belongings to the victim;
- seizure of firearms; and,
- possession of personal property such as vehicles, bank accounts and credit cards.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation gives people who are at risk of violence another legal tool that they can use to protect themselves and their families. It gives everyone involved the opportunity to step back and consider their actions and options.

Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure this legislation is effective in the NWT, I believe we need to have a public consultation on whether or not our residents want this legislation and what the legislation should include. For example, we need to ask the public:

- Who should be able to apply for an order?
- What constitutes family violence?
- What remedies do we want to include in our legislation?

We also need to determine the most suitable and effective delivery model for all NWT communities. Family violence legislation is not just an issue in larger centres. Consultation needs to take place in large and small communities. We were proposing to begin a two or three-month consultation period in April. This consultation would form the basis of legislation introduced early in the mandate of the next Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions have told us that it is crucial that consultation be done prior to developing and introducing this legislation. A thoughtful and thorough consultation builds awareness of the issue and support for this remedy. It will help us develop legislation that works in the North.

I understand some Members feel we are not moving quickly enough to deal with the issue of family violence. I understand some feel we should introduce legislation immediately. The earliest legislation could be ready for introduction is June, however, it would mean that important decisions would be made without the input of residents. Even if introduced in June, the earliest the legislation could be in force would be late 2003 or early 2004. This legislation will require considerable work and planning to implement.

Before implementing this legislation, extensive training must take place. RCMP officers, justices of the peace, shelter and crisis line workers all need to be trained on the legislation and their role. Other service providers, including community justice committees, victims' services groups, court workers, social workers and medical staff all need to be trained on how the orders work. A coordinator, a justice of the peace, a shelter/crisis line and additional RCMP officers may all need to be hired.

Public education on the protections available under this legislation must also take place before it is implemented. Family violence legislation will not protect residents if they are not aware of what protection is available to them.

Another option that could be considered is to table draft legislation during the June session. This legislation would be based on models adopted in other provinces and would be used as part of the consultation process on this issue. This would signal the government's commitment to enact this legislation but allow for a thorough consultation process.

Mr. Speaker, these are three options for how we can move forward with this legislation. All three show that the department is committed to proceeding with family violence legislation. I will consult further with my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to determine the most effective way to proceed at this time. I recognize this is an important issue for all Members. I appreciate their continued support and interest.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 15-14(6): Premier Absent From The House

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi will be absent from the House this week to address the issue of territorial health care funding in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Any further Ministers' statements? Colleagues, I would like to direct your attention to the visitors' gallery and the Grade 2 students from Sissons School here in Yellowknife, along with their teacher Ms. Tara Brown.

---Applause

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Condolence On Passing Of Peter Elanik**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep regret and much sadness that I wish to express my condolences to the Elanik family of Aklavik on the passing of Peter Elanik, who passed away February 12, 2003. My deepest sympathies with Peter's wife Mary Ann, and their children, Peter and Gordie Kasook. I would also like to extend my sympathy to Peter's other relatives, family and friends. Peter always took good care of his family. He was always great in assisting others in his community. Peter taught many children bush skills and survival skills. With his wife Mary Ann, they took many young men and people down to the whaling camp to give them more experience on the land and the whaling activities, especially at Shingle Point on the Beaufort Sea. He worked as a counsellor on a casual basis at Charlie Soupay Friendship Centre. He had a positive impact on all those who knew him, especially the community of Aklavik. Peter will be greatly missed by the people of Aklavik and the surrounding communities. He was the kind of man who went out of his way to help others. With the support of Peter's family, friends and relatives, I know his memory will always prevail and we will be able to overcome his loss and passing and carry on the work that Peter did. May God bless you all and be with you in this time of sorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Indeed, condolences of the Legislature go to the family members. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement On Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I and the other regular Members will be making statements about the Government of the Northwest Territories corporate capital planning process. As the committees apprised the House last week in our reports on the main estimates, Members have significant concerns about the process now used to rank projects in the capital plan. Mr. Speaker, Members discovered the Government of the Northwest Territories had adopted a revised corporate capital planning process starting with the 2002-2003 capital acquisition plan. According to the explanation offered in appendix B of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates document, this process allows for the allocation of available capital funding according to priority and need on a government-wide basis, as opposed to the prior process of allocating a capital budget target to individual departments. Mr. Speaker, in theory, this sounds fair. But, Mr. Speaker, Members are not convinced that the application of the process has been so fair. Now, perhaps we have just a problem in communication. Perhaps the government just hasn't properly explained how projects qualify for inclusion in the plan, but as things stand right now, we have not had reasonable explanations for a number of projects we have seen in the plan.

Another concern, Mr. Speaker, highlighted in last year's report and it continues this year, revolves around consultation. We have been told that community consultation is carried out on a departmental basis and that this consultation is taken into

consideration in the development of the initial capital needs assessment, the ranking of the projects, and all the way through the review process. Unfortunately, regular Members have not been given any evidence that these consultations are coordinated in any way, or if the communities see them as being adequate. Mr. Speaker, public sector spending is often the exclusive economic driver in our smallest communities, yet we do not see the importance of that included in the criteria for ranking capital projects. Ranking projects by priorities that are led by the protection of people and the protection of assets does not allow for a more responsive approach that recognizes the social benefits of capital spending in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues will point out today, there is a broad range of concern over how this new capital planning process is rolled out. Members were very critical of this process when we considered the estimates last year, and are disappointed that we have not seen any significant improvement a full year later. We need to hear from the government that they will examine the process and work with the regular Members to make sure that we have a fair, open and transparent process for setting the capital budget. We want a process that recognizes the needs and diversity of all of our regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Capital Planning Consultation

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, as well, have a concern with the corporate capital planning process that this government is now using, more in the area of planning and how projects would fit into that capital planning process. Previous to that, we used to, as Members, be informed on the five-year government capital plan and we would take that to our constituencies and meet with the leaders in our communities to discuss the importance of those initiatives in our communities. Mr. Speaker, those days seem to be gone. Now we have a letter that gets sent out to communities saying this is what the plan is, but little discussion after that. In fact, when you take the document that we were going over this session, the main estimates, in that document there is a capital acquisition plan that lays out a five-year plan. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, what we find from time to time is that we have projects that seem to just pop up in the plan without any prior discussion or knowledge from Members, without substantiation on the purposes of the new expenditures and how they've managed to leapfrog the other initiatives that have been laid out, and discussed and put into place with information that can be debated and we can carry back to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, this government plans on a five-year basis, as we know. But it's a 20-year cycle that the government uses to substantiate replacement of buildings and so on. We know when a new building is built that there is a 40-year life expectancy and somewhere in there, 20 years or so, will be a fairly significant retrofit. But we don't seem to see that anymore. We see a lot of changes happening in meetings and behind closed doors and we get to find out about it after a news release or after the department has gone through the process of planning with committee. So we want to know if, in fact, this

new plan that they've established is even going to be followed. Even as unclear as it is, we don't see that happening and we want to know why that is and if they are going to follow something that all residents of the territories can know that this government can be accountable on. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement On Inadequate Support For Small Communities In The Capital Planning Process

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the government develops the capital plans, we have been told that the departments consult with the communities to hear about their needs and priorities.

---Interjection

MR. NITAH: Mr. Speaker, when the Special Joint Committee on Non-Taxed-Based Community Affairs travelled to communities, we heard that many of the small community governments are not sure what capital functions they are expected to perform. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, many communities do not feel they have the support to be able to deal with their capital plan properly. Mr. Speaker, small communities cannot afford to have engineers on staff to help them, nor can GNWT engineers assist each community government with capital planning budgeting processes. Many community governments do not have up-to-date information about the existing municipal facilities. Many do not have a maintenance management system in place. With turnover in the administration of municipal governments, communities need better ways to keep track of their information about the condition and repairs done to facilities. This information would help in identifying needs and priorities when the time comes for any input into the capital planning process, Mr. Speaker. The skills that are needed to plan and manage infrastructure projects are specialized. Small communities do not have the money to employ engineers and planners on a full-time basis. How, then, Mr. Speaker, is a small community expected to participate in a consultation in a meaningful way, Mr. Speaker? This government needs to provide better support to small community governments to do their capital planning and project management. Small communities need this government to assist with provision of engineering support and maintenance management systems. I will be following up with questions to the appropriate Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Capital Planning Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the government introduced a new corporate capital planning process last year, we were told that the preliminary five-year plan is first reviewed by a deputy ministers' steering committee, then it is reviewed by the Financial Management Board prior to its review by standing committees. The final approval is given when presented in the main estimates to the Legislative

Assembly. Mr. Speaker, this new process was introduced and implemented without any input from Members on this side of the House. I am particularly concerned about an apparent expansion in the role the deputy ministers' steering committee plays in setting priorities for capital spending. Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that ultimately Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly are accountable to the public on how public money is voted on and spent, the capital review committee is composed entirely of deputy ministers. Mr. Speaker, with this approach, Ministers may never know about all the projects proposed or which ones were dropped from consideration. Certainly, Members are not able to get that level of detail when reviewing business plans. If the details of the process remain more transparent, Mr. Speaker, the public and Members of this Legislature would know about the consultations that have taken place. You would hear about the projects that were initially proposed and which ones were non-starters. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we would know how the deputy ministers review committee arrived at their last capital spending priority recommendations for the Financial Management Board. Mr. Speaker, because it is unfair to both myself and other Members of this House just how the final decisions are made, I have to form my own judgments and conclusions about how projects are justified. I know that the capital budget is limited, Mr. Speaker, and that there is not much money to go around. Let's satisfy the public and ourselves that what we do have to spend is adequately and reasonably justified. Mr. Speaker, I have always advocated for an open and transparent government. I strongly believe that the capital planning process is transparent as well and the reasons for decisions to remove or include projects should be communicated to all concerned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Fairness And Equity In The Capital Planning Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These days there is a constant tug-of-war in our Assembly for the money available for building and maintaining our schools, roads, airports and other infrastructure. It's further complicated, Mr. Speaker, in our consensus system of governing with the very legitimate expectations of departments and agencies, MLAs and Ministers, communities and regions, that everyone will get a share of the pie.

Let's face it. As MLAs, we all want to see something built, something improved, something new in each of our ridings and towns at least once in our four-year terms. But with a shrinking capital budget pegged this year at only \$74 million, it's not a realistic or a sustainable expectation. How do we address it? How do we manage to do this to satisfy the ideal of fiscal fairness and yet deliver spending where and when it's most needed and get the best value for the taxpayers' dollar?

In previous Assemblies, Mr. Speaker, departments have had more or less a constant amount of dollars. After departments and MLAs and committees have worked out priorities, a letter was sent to mayors and chiefs. It was sent by the Premier to describe the spending initiatives planned for the coming year in each community. It invited comment, but no real input into

planning. This changed somewhat with this Assembly. Now there is one pool of money the departments must share. For the past two years, a committee of deputy ministers has used a priority system rating safety or people and property first, to work out who gets how much money. Mr. Speaker, MLAs have been frustrated with this approach. It diminishes our voices and the voices of community and regional leaders in how capital dollars are spent. Informing the municipalities and regions after the decisions have been made is not the way to go. A suggestion I would like to make is that we look at a process where community leaders, MLAs and officials from the departments can all get together and create a spending plan that has everyone's interests in mind. Mr. Speaker, at one time I believe community governments were encouraged to prepare a multi-year community capital plan within their fiscal framework. This makes sense. To take the idea one step further, I would suggest that we only need to do this once every four years at the beginning of our terms, so we can reduce the annual spending scrimmage that takes up so much of our time and creates so much uncertainty and conflict at the community level and here in this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Public Expectations For Capital Spending

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the finance Minister in his Budget Address tells us that we must slow down capital investment, and that total capital investment expenditures are expected to decrease 48 percent from \$143 million in 2002-2003 to \$74 million in 2003-2004. Mr. Speaker, we know that this is not enough to meet all the needs of the Northwest Territories. We know that much of our infrastructure is aging. Although the economy is booming in some places, we do not get the full benefit of corporate taxes or royalties that are being generated. Without this additional money, we cannot replace or build new needed facilities. The business community recognizes the problem and has been very supportive in lobbying the federal government to invest more money in the Northwest Territories. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have to be realistic about our expectations for capital spending. Most of the capital budget is eaten up in the maintenance and upkeep in existing facilities, roads, water and sewer, et cetera. This leaves very little money left over for new projects. Mr. Speaker, in an effort to better manage what little money is available for discretionary spending, the government has introduced a new system that attempts to assign priority to community needs and I applaud the government for trying to make the best use of what is available. However, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the government could do a better job of explaining this new scheme.

When the special committee met with people in the communities across the North, they heard that the ranking criteria used in the capital planning process have not been adequately explained, that projected O and M costs are not adequately documented and that there is no systematic consideration of location options for regional and territorial facilities. Mr. Speaker, the residents of the Northwest Territories have expectations that this government will build and maintain roads, health centres, and recreational facilities in

each community. Because the process used to identify and rate projects is not well understood, we may be raising public expectations unrealistically. Mr. Speaker, the capital budget is not nearly enough to replace the aging infrastructure or to meet the demands of population growth and program demands. In fact, it is barely enough to maintain what is already in place. This makes it even more important that the government be very open and transparent about the choices that are made for new spending. Community expectations have been raised when they have been consulted and when they have identified their priorities. This government should be prepared to explain how they made the choice of which project to support and which ones to drop. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to focus on the need to link capital spending to service delivery standards in the communities. Mr. Speaker, Northerners have a right to fair and equitable access to services. Although it is not realistic to expect all services to be provided at the local level, it is fair to expect to have access to education, health care, policing services and addiction services. Alcohol and drug abuse has long been an epidemic in the North. We know about it and we know something needs to be done. The dollars have to follow the words. We need to focus on capital spending on facilities to support people who want to become sober and drug free. People are asking for these services, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we really want to help solve a lot of the social problems in the territories, we have to help people get off drugs and alcohol. We need to spend some capital money on addictions facilities to support the work of the addiction workers. Mr. Speaker, our current practice of hiring an alcohol and drug counsellor in communities is, at best, a token gesture. Without providing any other support or facility programs, we are setting up both the counsellor and the addict for failure. The Premier and Ministers have said we have to quit smoking and drinking. It seems to me that the words and actions of the government do not match. Mr. Speaker, the government recently spent about \$50 million creating a territorial jail. If even one-fifth of this was channeled to the prevention of addictions, we would have healthier Northerners. I do not think that the current process used to identify and choose capital projects puts enough of a priority on the health of the NWT residents. I would like to see changes in how projects are picked. The health and welfare of Northerners comes ahead of protecting and maintaining government facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am concerned about the current process used to identify projects. As I understand the ranking criteria, Mr. Speaker, the priorities are not seen to consider the needs of the small communities of the North. These criteria, especially the protection of people, may lead to projects from larger centres being placed before the needs of smaller communities. We need a more balanced approach to capital investment, Mr. Speaker. The government needs to establish a mechanism for meeting community involvement in the planning process, not just for local planning but for regional and territorial planning needs as well. The government also needs to ensure there is sufficient capital money to allocate the projects in smaller communities, even if it means not spending on mega projects such as territorial facilities that are not located in the smaller communities. There needs to be a mechanism set aside for the capital budget to meet the needs of the smaller communities based on planning criteria that is meaningful to their needs. I believe the government needs to make some changes to the ranking criteria for capital projects. The criteria should be simple and easily understood. It's not enough to just have a process either, Mr. Speaker. When decisions are made, it must be seen by all. Mr. Speaker, decisions on which capital projects get funded cannot be made behind closed doors with no explanation to the communities nor to the standing committees to justify those decisions. The government should be prepared to provide information about capital needs and the way priorities are assigned to projects. They should be prepared to report back to the municipal governments about the results of their input. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Capital Spending Levels In Tax-Based Communities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to add an opinion about this very important topic. Mr. Speaker, I think that the reality of our financial situation is quite dire. I think while there is a consensus that we have to do our necessary spending, the approaching debt wall in front of us is getting closer and closer. Mr. Speaker, one thing that needs to be remembered is the fact that this government has seen a major, major reduction in capital spending. Just in this year, capital expenditures are expected to decrease by 48 percent from \$143 million last year to \$74 million in this coming year. This is a very small amount out of \$611 million in the total budget. I do believe that, as long as we have so little money in the capital budget, we will continue to hear concerns about what's going on behind closed doors and the ever present feeling that whoever squeaks the loudest or whoever bugs the Minister hardest or whoever pounds the desk the loudest will get the capital budget in their riding. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that this government has to make very tough choices in order to meet the spending needs in areas such as health and social services, but I think it's incumbent on all of us to come up with ways to do it better and reduce costs where we can. I think there are many realities that I must point out as a Member from Yellowknife, which is seen as one of the richest areas. But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that the tax-based communities are not

getting a lot of help from the GNWT to replace their aging infrastructure. Residents in tax-based communities have to pay more in the way of municipal taxes, but we have to line up behind every other community to get capital projects.

---Interjection

There is a public perception, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of the capital budget is spent in Yellowknife and this is not true. While it may be true that the budget is being spent at territorial facilities in Yellowknife, these facilities are not for the sole use of Yellowknife but for all Northerners. We have needs for schools and recreational complexes like everyone else, and I believe we need...Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her Member's statement. Are there any nays?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, Ms. Lee, you won't be able to conclude your Member's statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement On Transparency Of Capital Planning Ranking Criteria

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as the gentlemen on the other side of the floor are concerned, we are all the same.

---Laughter

The capital planning process, Mr. Speaker, I, like my colleagues, would like to highlight some of the concerns we have with the supposedly new and improved capital acquisition process. If you go on the web site, Mr. Speaker, under capital acquisitions, you will find that the discussion begins something like this: "Commencing with the development of the capital acquisition plan for 02-03, the government has adopted a revised corporate capital planning process. The process allows for the allocation of available capital funding according to priority and need on a government-wide basis, as opposed to the prior process of allocating a capital budget target to individual departments." Mr. Speaker, it's hard to argue with that, but I think in the past, the public might suggest that the prior practice was simply of Cabinet sitting around and divvying up projects as horse trading exercises, Mr. Speaker. We all know this is a new time. We are new and improved. We are rehabilitated, as it were. We know we have limited resources and certainly not unlimited needs, insatiable wants. So, in theory, Mr. Speaker, this new process looks fine. But there is almost no way to clearly link this process to GNWT priorities. For that matter, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to define what our priorities are. We certainly can't look to the document we produced at the beginning of the Assembly, Towards a Better Tomorrow, to give us a documentation of our detailed priorities. It just doesn't do that. It's too vague and at too high a level. Mr. Speaker, without identifying these priorities, it's almost impossible to make a clear link between the capital process and our strategic priorities. If we are going to do anything, Mr. Speaker, step one has to be identifying our priorities in a clear manner and articulating them. Step two, Mr. Speaker, would be to apply ranking criteria to determine what projects should have

highest priority. This would give us, and the public certainly, a transparent mechanism for scoring the projects. We would see how they stack up against other projects and this simply isn't the case right now, Mr. Speaker. As we know, and other Members have mentioned, currently this exercise is done by deputy ministers behind closed doors and it's not good, Mr. Speaker. Ministers on that side of the House have to be prepared to stand up and discuss the ranking and scoring of these projects with Members and with the public so that we can see where they compare. The lack of transparency just creates suspicion. It casts a shadow over the whole process, Mr. Speaker. When regular Members ask for justification, at best we get a thick, technical assessment of a facility that purports to outline the shortfalls of that individual facility. But, Mr. Speaker, oftentimes it's about the size of a Toronto phonebook. This is not the same as a score sheet comparing a project against others on the basis of some agreed upon criteria. So, Mr. Speaker, if this truly is our objective, if it is not about patronage and not about pork-barrelling, we shouldn't be afraid to show it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Appreciation Evening In Jean Marie River

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this part of our agenda gives us the opportunity as MLAs to say a few things about your constituency. I will take the opportunity today to thank the community of Jean Marie for inviting me when they had their appreciation evening on February 8th, last Saturday. The community put together a feast and dance and made presentations to members of the community who have contributed to their community over the years. The reason for doing that is, in our society in the North, in our small communities, we have different leaders and different people who contribute to our society and our communities and we don't seem to appreciate the time and energy people put into trying to make a better place for people living in the communities. On February 8th, Chief Fred Norwegian and his councillors saw fit to recognize previous chiefs and councillors of Jean Marie and their elders who have contributed to making their community what it is today. There are many people coming out of Jean Marie River to pursue their careers throughout the North and the south. I think it's from the early beginnings when their community leaders of the day like Louis Norwegian, Jimmy Sanguetz, Johnny Sanguetz, Gabe Sanguetz, Henry Ekali, all these different elders who people don't know in the mainstream in the NWT that they did work very hard and urged their children to get an education and pursue careers. It was a very good evening that allowed me to reflect on our work here and throughout the North. I think there are many people in other communities and in government and other places, the Member of Parliament and Senators. We seem to focus on looking at the negative side instead of looking at the positive side. I think there are many positives in the North. We have reason to be proud of the work that we do and the work that our people in the communities do. Once again, I just wanted to share with you my tour in my constituency. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to bring your attention to the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of Robert Marleau. He's former Clerk of the House of Commons from 1987 to 2000. He is probably the leading authority on procedural matters in Houses of Parliament. Mr. Marleau is here along with his wife Anne to give the Board of Management some assistance on procedural matters. Please welcome Mr. Marleau to the Assembly.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of people in the gallery today who are here to witness some of the work we are doing on our strategy and legislation to reduce impaired driving. I would like to recognize three of them. First of all, Ms. Louise Knox, who is the national president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

---Applause

Then, as well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce Mr. Percy Kinney, the chief coroner of the Northwest Territories and also Major Karen Hoefft, director of community development of the Salvation Army. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, as well, would like to recognize Dr. Ross Wheeler, medical advisor to the registrar.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the students from St. Patrick High School, the SADD members, along with their teachers Ms. Thoms and Ms. O'Brien.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. Gary Walsh who is director of road licensing and safety, Department of Transportation, who is also here because of special interest in Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, which we should read later today.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to recognize students here today with us from the Sir John Franklin High School Students Against Drunk Driving chapter and their teacher/advisor Ms. Dianne Simons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to also recognize the Students Against Drunk Drivers. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish my son Mason a happy 5th birthday today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone who is here today to see their Legislative Assembly in session. Welcome. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Process In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs with regard to the whole capital planning process for smaller communities. Our municipalities play an important role in community development and community planning and they also ensure that our community infrastructure is taken care of. Mr. Speaker, capital spending is very important to our small communities. It creates such things as jobs and also improves our infrastructure. Yet, Mr. Speaker, what we find under the new capital planning process is that consultation does not really fit in the process. Mr. Speaker, the communities have to be involved. What is the government doing to do a better job of coordinating the consultation process between the departments, the regions and the communities so that we'll have community input into the capital planning process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in order to improve the capital planning consultation process, MACA is presently working with the superintendents in the region to put together planning, so that we can arrange for the capital planning process and the discussions to take place in each individual community with the superintendent for that particular region. We used to do that in the past and it was replaced with a capital planning process where MACA took on the responsibility to address capital planning needs for all the departments and bring that information to the community in that manner. However, MACA is back to simply concentrating on community affairs capital planning needs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the present time, the communities don't seem to fit into these loops. What is the reporting process that's used to ensure that community feedback into any capital planning process is in place, so that they know when they request or have concerns in capital or infrastructure needed in their community, they really get to yourself as Minister? What's the reporting practice used to ensure that their answers are being addressed and there is a reporting process in place?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said, MACA is planning to go into each individual community and work out with the community early in the new year what their capital planning needs are for the next five years. We are planning for that time of the year because it's right after the municipal elections and some of the political needs of the community are addressed right after municipal elections. So it's changed at that time. Their priorities change sometimes as the political people change at the community level. So we go in there and try and get updated information from the community as to what they see as their priority needs. We then take that back to the FMBS and turn that information over to them to deal with in the capital planning process from thereon. We are planning that after FMBS has worked out what we can afford to do, and what can be done, and in what part of the year, we are going to come back to the communities with that information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a lot of times community capital planning priorities aren't being considered by this government because they fall outside of the criteria for infrastructure that meets the requirements of the existing capital plan, especially in communities that may be lacking recreation facilities such as a ball diamond or a youth centre or a curling rink. Yet, because it's not one of the priorities in the criteria, communities may wait years for this to happen. How formal a process are we talking about? Right now, the communities do not feel that they are part of this process. Could the Minister tell me, exactly how does a community get those types of projects into this capital planning process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as for how formal a process it is, MACA generally requires from the community either a motion from the council, the hamlet council, or from the band that would support their requests for capital. We then take that back to FMBS. It's through that process that the needs of the communities are addressed if the government can afford those needs. However, the process of getting back to the community to advise them what we can afford to do that year, we do through a consultation with them after we approve the business plans and they see some of these results in the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's great what we hear from the Minister, but we have to put it into practice. Do you have criteria that are used so that our municipalities... Say you have a newly elected council, you could put something up on the board and say this is the process that you have to follow to get a capital project through this government. Do you have such a preliminary outline of a process that's in place where you can actually see it and it's in black and white? Is there such a document?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further To Question 23-14(6): Capital Planning Consultation Process In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, MACA, along with the other departments, will be advising the communities of the process that has been approved for capital planning approval. We will take that into the communities, so they are well aware of the process that is being used at this present time, and ask them for input on whether or not they see the need for changes or whether or not there will be any changes in the long run. Bear in mind, the fact that we have a corporate capital planning process right now. I think the important part, Mr. Speaker, is that communities will be advised that they have input at a certain time of the year. We meet with either the community councils or the planning committee, whatever the communities see as the one that's handling the capital planning for that particular community. Those are the people we meet with and that's the process we are using. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. I understand FMBS is responsible for the corporate capital planning process. Mr. Speaker, Members clearly do not feel that the government is being as open as they should be about how projects get

approved in the capital plan. We've noticed that when pressed, departmental Ministers seem to be vague on the details. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell us, have all Cabinet Ministers been briefed or trained on how the system is supposed to work?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, all of the Ministers have been briefed on the corporate capital planning process. But Mr. Speaker, also let me say that, having heard from the Members in the last capital planning cycle and in this one, we are now in the process of reviewing our corporate capital planning process and are looking at bringing something forward very soon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate hearing that there are going to be some changes. The Premier had made a commitment to revisit the corporate capital planning process including the application of the ranking criteria. So Members have been awaiting word on when that would take place. When does the Minister expect -- he said shortly -- regular Members hearing what changes they recommend?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we currently have a committee that is looking at the ways we go about meeting our infrastructure needs. They are undertaking that task right now. I expect to have something to FMB in terms of a proposal of how we could handle it, including the 2004-05 planning year and to have that within the next week to two weeks. As soon as I have approval from FMB, then I will bring it to AOC as a proposal. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on the criteria that are now in place, is the Minister confident that he can provide justification to support the capital projects that are included in the 2003-04 budget?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly we would not have put the capital projects in the plan if we didn't feel that we could support them and substantiate them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the government is confident that they can justify the projects as they stand in the corporate capital plan now, why has that detailed information never been supplied to the committees?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 24-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure exactly which detailed information the Member is referring to. We have provided information back to the committee when the letter was received. As we go through the main estimates for each department, we will provide further detail on any capital projects that are included in the 2003-2004 Main Estimates. I don't think there is a difficulty there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 25-14(6): Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger. Mr. Speaker, last week when the Minister gave his Budget Address, he was wearing old moccasins. What he was meaning is that we are in a time of limited financial means and that we must make do with what we have. Mr. Speaker, I see a lot of money going to upgrades in schools and hospitals. Maintaining current facilities eats up a lot of capital dollars. This is fine when infrastructure exists in an area, but it is frustrating when no infrastructure exists. What it has created is a situation of haves and have-nots. Is the priority of health and social services the protection of people or the protection of assets? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 25-14(6): Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly the focus of all we do is to provide service to the people in the communities. To do that, of course, we need facilities that are maintained and operational and able to provide a place from which to provide these services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 25-14(6): Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for the answer. I would like to ask him, why do we see money going to building renovations in larger centres for the protection of assets when there is not enough for a health centre in Wekweti which could save lives? What is the priority of the Minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 25-14(6): Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, my priority as Minister in this government is to provide the best possible level of health and social services to all the people in the Northwest Territories. We recognize there are different levels of services in some of the communities, especially the smaller ones, and we are of the opinion that it would be very poor management to let current facilities fall to wrack and ruin and focus only on building new facilities. So we are trying to maintain a balance to address both issues. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To 25-14(6): Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, if we do get the extra funding from Ottawa, would he try to at least standardize some of the health care in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 25-14(6): Capital Spending In Support Of Community Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the goals of the action plan is to come up with an integrated service delivery model that will give us that base to work towards. Some communities will have services above the baseline depending on their size. Some may be below. Our challenge will be to bring to those communities that do not have those basic services up to that basic level. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of MACA. The Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Communities highlighted the need for a better capital planning process for the communities. This included better support to communities for planning

infrastructure needs. What is the government doing to help municipal governments get access to the skills and resources that they need for infrastructure planning? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the government, not just MACA, but FMBS has been reviewing the interim report from the non-tax-based special committee. We are looking at the request that they've made and the suggestions they've made for changes to the corporate capital planning process. I believe the government wants to respond to the committee when we've seen the final report from the committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the government is looking at the interim report. The special committee also recommended the government consider a formal municipal infrastructure plan to modify the maintenance management system that the communities already use. Will MACA work with municipal governments to explore this further? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, MACA will work with them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the upkeep and maintenance of existing facilities take up a lot of the existing capital budget. What is MACA doing to work with the municipalities to ensure that the facilities' upkeep and maintenance is done on par with the need of the facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe MACA works with Public Works in working out an O and M cycle for maintenance in the buildings and renovations as the buildings get older. We do have some form of a schedule worked out with Public Works to identify with the

community what a replacement of those buildings would be in relation to the age of the buildings. We are working with the five-year capital planning processes up to 20-year capital planning processes. However, concentrations are normally in the first five years because that's when the priority funding is identified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the finance Minister borrowed your moccasins to do his Budget Address, I was hoping his colleagues would wear all of our shoes, so that they could walk a mile in our shoes and understand where we are coming from. I was appalled to find out, Mr. Speaker, that the government did not have a multi-use facility policy. Therefore, they don't build facilities that are multi-use. Arenas, for example. The biggest O and M cost is the arena. What is the position of MACA or Public Works, Mr. Speaker, on multi-purpose buildings? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 26-14(6): Capital Planning And Maintenance Schedules In Small Communities

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is quite right. I don't believe we have ever had a design for a multi-purpose building. MACA is now starting to look at what this would include and how it could possibly build this type of building that would address more than one specific need. I believe the intent of the communities is to address housing, and office needs for the other departments, as well as some of the social needs of the communities such as day care centres. We are now looking at a design for that type of building. We don't have one at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the negotiator Mr. Handley. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my Member's statement, we are all aware of the new process for capital planning projects. There are a number of concerns from this side of the House, and it's been expressed on an ongoing basis, and I am glad to hear the Minister state that they are looking at that and they are going to give us some information as to what is to come. What process is in place for how the Ministers deal with the deputy ministers on what projects are given the go ahead and what projects have been dropped off? What process is taking place between Ministers and deputy ministers?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, under the corporate capital planning process, the process has been to rank projects according to their importance right across the Territories starting with protection of people, to protection of assets, to protection of environment, and our financial investment, and finally meeting program needs. We have used that process. As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, we are now looking at changing that process in response to the suggestions, recommendations and comments that have been made by Members. So we are going through that now. For the next planning process, our intention is to come forward with a capital planning process that is somewhat different than the current corporate planning process we have. We may, for example, categorize projects and that's part of the recommendation that came from the committee on small communities. We are changing as we speak, trying to come up with a better way of handling capital projects and our infrastructure needs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell me how individual Ministers monitor projects that are identified in their different departments on an ongoing basis? What process do they use to make sure that all projects are kept on the table, and what priorities are they given? How does the Minister do that?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, under the current corporate capital planning process, our deputy ministers and their departments would identify the projects that they felt had to be done. There was a letter that went out from the Premier to all the community leaders notifying them which projects they were looking at and asking for input from them. Based on that, the departments would recommend to each Minister the business plan for that department. Each Minister would then bring that draft capital plan to Financial Management Board, and we would go through all the capital requests and figure out how much we could afford to fund and from there on, Mr. Speaker, it would go into the business planning process and eventually into the main estimates with input from the various committees. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister what happens in a situation where a particular Minister doesn't agree with the deputy ministers on priorities or projects that are involved in the communities. If a Minister doesn't agree with the planning that

comes from the deputy ministers, what influence do they have in the process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, each Minister is responsible for the department. They each have to be able to justify and defend and rationalize any projects that come forward. If a Minister has a disagreement on a particular project with their deputy, then they would have to sort that out between them. I assume that the Minister is the person in charge, the person who has to account for that department, and will make the final decision.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister say on a number of occasions, that the process used has a set of criteria, about five different criteria used for each project to prioritize it. Can the Minister tell me if these five criteria are used on a standard basis right across, or are there 32 different ways or however many communities that are getting addressed? Are these criteria applied differently to each community or are they standardized right across the board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 27-14(6): Role Of Deputy Ministers In The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is intended that all these criteria would be used in a standard way so that we are being fair to all communities, to all regions in the territories and to all departments. That should be done at the department level and it should be also done at the Financial Management Board level. We never arrive at 100 percent consensus on some of the major projects. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, we are now in the process of developing an alternative capital planning process. We are putting that together over the next couple of weeks and I intend to bring an alternative process forward to the regular Members, to AOC, as soon as I can get the green light from FMB. So hopefully we have an alternative that will work better than it seems the current capital planning process has worked. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 28-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was interested in the information from Mr. Handley, the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, on the new process that we are going to be engaged in. I would like to find out today, if possible, not so much what that plan is going to

look like but what will be the outcome. What are the key objectives, Mr. Speaker, that the government has in mind in designing this new process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 28-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have given the deputies who are working on this task three objectives for them to work toward. One is we have asked them to clarify a core capital need and develop an infrastructure policy. What is our policy with regard to, for example, territorial facilities versus community facilities? Should we be ranking a territorial hospital with the same criteria that we are as a community water system? Is there a way of doing this differently? We've asked them to give us some direction and propose some policy framework for us. A second task is we have asked them to look at potential ways of doing our capital projects differently. Are there ways of doing some things by the public partnerships, for example, leveraging other infrastructure investment. The proposed Deh Cho bridge is a good example of how we can do capital projects differently without just using our money. A third one, Mr. Speaker, that we've asked the committee to look at is strategies for coping with infrastructure impacts as a result of resource development. A lot of our infrastructure is being stretched to its limit because of the resource development going on. Is there a way of dealing with that kind of pressure more cooperatively and jointly with the big resource development companies? Those would be the three main tasks that we are looking forward to. We have also given a fairly tight time frame for this to be completed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 28-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in support of those objectives. I think those are good ones in designing this kind of system, though sometimes I think we do not seek input or advice far enough or wide enough in order to build a good process the people will have confidence and acceptance in. So I wanted to ask, Mr. Speaker, in putting these plans together and in seeking answers to these three objectives, will you be going out, not only to mayors potentially and band councils, but to industry leaders, to the federal government and business community to get their input into it as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 28-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the way I am proposing we will do this is first I will take the proposal of what we intend to do to FMB, have their agreement that we should proceed this way. I would like to discuss with AOC what we are doing and then give the team the mandate to get on with it. In doing their job, then, yes, we will have to consult with the MLAs and we will have as much consultation as possible. We are

proposing to have a workshop some time in March where we would invite representatives from our government, from DIAND, from the communities, from aboriginal organizations, from private industry to sit down with us and say how do we deal with the challenges around infrastructure? So we plan to do pretty wide consultation in developing a better capital planning process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 28-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's great. That's the kind of approach that I can support. In my statement, Mr. Speaker, I suggested that rather than taking a yearly approach, that we could potentially look at it, for instance, in the four-year term that we come into office for. If we look, for instance, at our \$75 million capital budget this year, that becomes a \$300 million capital budget and something that potentially has more opportunities and flexibility. Is this the kind of criteria that could be incorporated as an option in this new policy? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 28-14(6): Review Of The Corporate Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would think that we want to stay with a five-year capital planning process and with our 20-year needs assessment process, so we have a bigger picture of what's happening. We may also, in some specific projects, want to work with industry for as long as 30 or 50 years on a particular approach on dealing with some kinds of infrastructure, whether it's transportation infrastructure or whatever it may be. But, yes, we have to look at it in the long term, not year by year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 29-14(6): Rationale For Changes To The Capital Plan

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my concern is, as I stated in my Member's statement, about capital projects and when they find themselves on the capital plan. I will give you a couple of examples before I get to my question, which will be directed to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, and it's in the area of the college, Mr. Speaker. The community of Inuvik has worked and has put plans forth and there is a campus going up, but will be less a residence in Inuvik, and that's been in the works since the 13th Assembly. So that has a lot of time to be put in and thrown into a plan. Recently, as highlighted in the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's report, there are some concerns of projects jumping the queue, so to speak, and showing up in the capital plan. I would like to know from the Minister if they do intend to develop these policies, which are agreed for the next government but they might be broke anyway and not have to worry about this, but right now for the existing dollars, do your Ministers follow the policies you have in place for the projects highlighted? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 29-14(6): Rationale For Changes To The Capital Plan

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, the Ministers, the departments follow the policies that are set for all of our planning and our activities that we develop. There are some projects that may change. When we put together a five-year capital plan or a 20-year needs assessment, it doesn't mean that something that's booked for five years from now is necessarily still going to be the same priority in five years time. Things may change. For example, as Mr. Roland mentioned, we are building a campus in Inuvik. It only makes sense that we need to have student housing. Do we have to build a residence for students at the same time? I don't know. I am told there is currently enough space. There may be other priorities that will supersede those, and that happens all the time any time we make projections and we have to bring it down to what we can afford to do in a particular year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 29-14(6): Rationale For Changes To The Capital Plan

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister just added to my concern. For example, in Inuvik, they say that project probably can't house enough people in the community. While right now, scheduled in this fiscal budget that we are going to be working through, is replacement or repair of housing in another community, and they have vacancies. So how did that manage to jump in ahead? That's why I ask the question, are the policies used and followed by this government? It is great to talk about them, but if they are not followed, then it is not worth the paper they are written on. So, can the Minister inform us as to the criteria that are involved when a Minister comes forward with a capital plan that changes the existing five-year plan? What are the criteria that are involved? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 29-14(6): Rationale For Changes To The Capital Plan

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of criteria and they differ depending on a particular project, but certainly program need is a main criterion. If there is a need for space, whether students' residence space, or administration space or classroom space in a college program then we have to justify that through program needs. That is one criterion. As well, there is protection of our assets. But we can not let assets just collapse on the ground because somewhere in our capital plan says we are going to build a new facility somewhere else instead. If it happens that we need to repair that building, then we have to protect our assets. We have to protect our investment. Then there are other criteria depending on the program, Mr. Speaker, on protection of people, protection of environment and so on. But there are those five criteria that we have been using up to now and until we come up with a new process we will use those five criteria. Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that something we planned three years ago or five years ago, doesn't necessarily mean it is

going to stay right in the planning process and be there unchanged this year. Other things may supersede it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us as to what reports or studies would be done to justify changes in the capital plan? For example, we know that Public Works does building condition reports on how much longer a building would be able to hold out. So, can the Minister inform us if those are used and if that is the case, in a 20-year needs assessment, what changes when it comes into the five-year capital plan window? There is no use spending renovation money on something for a couple hundred thousand dollars if it is being replaced in two years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, Mr. Roland, the Chair didn't hear a question there. I'll give you another opportunity. Ask a short question to the Minister.

Supplementary To Question 29-14(6): Rationale For Changes To The Capital Plan

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question then to the Minister is what reports or work is done to justify changes in the five-year capital plan? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 29-14(6): Rationale For Changes To The Capital Plan

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly Mr. Roland has mentioned some of them. Condition reports of existing facilities is clearly one. We are continually assessing the condition of our assets. Second, we have to look at program needs. If a program changes, then we have to make changes in our assets. A third one would be the resources that are available to us. We may not have the money that we had anticipated three years ago; we may not have it this year; we may be working with less money, so we need to look at how we do things differently. So, those would be the three main considerations, although, I am assuming that there are other things that may come into play as well, but, those would be the three main criteria.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 30-14(6): Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, also regarding capital investments in the communities. In my Member's statement, I stated that the process has to be fair and transparent and balanced. As one of the tools to ensure that, I have been trying to look at utilizing historical spending. It has been very difficult to follow how and where the dollars have been spent in terms of when you break it down by constituency. Today, we had a Member state that Yellowknife was falling behind in terms of line up for capital spending. I could see why that belief is there because when you look at accounting, certain projects do not fall into the community they are constructed in. We have, for

example, the grader; a grader has been purchased for Enterprise but has only been used for the territorial highway instead of counted as part of Enterprise's budget. But, a \$50-million jail in Yellowknife is not counted as part of that community's spending. Let the Minister explain to me how the accounting is decided. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 30-14(6): Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, annually we put out the geographical tracking expenditures that summarizes how and where our capital money is being spent. Within that you will find that there are categories that show the spending, expenditures that are made by community. There are others that are made on a regional basis and a territorial basis. So, a grader, for example, for a highway, is not included in a community expenditure. If a grader is used by the municipality, that would probably be included in that community's report but you will find that all of the highway projects, for example, are listed as territorial. They are not identified as expenditures for the nearest community or anything like that, unless they are used in that community. But the main source we have is the geographic expenditures report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 30-14(6): Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request the Minister review that because I don't believe that is really consistent. There are projects, and we could probably find a number of examples, but my point is that things have to be consistent and things have to be balanced. I would like to know, the Minister mentioned today that they would be looking at a new design, a new approach to capital allocations. I would like to know what would be included in there for balanced spending so that everybody would be ensured some dollars in the riding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 30-14(6): Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, I would have to bring this to FMB and to AOC first. But, in my thinking what we could do, for example, is take all of your community projects, whether they are municipal works, water and sewage projects, those are clearly community. Recreation facilities, those are clearly community projects. Categorize those; all those projects are community-based. Then take the other things that are territorial and put them into a different category. Then allocate the budget. For example, you could allocate the budget accordingly because there is this much money for community projects; there is this much money for territorial projects. Then, within the community projects category, decide how you are going to allocate that money, and with the territorial one do the same thing there. So you don't have all these projects competing. Because I agree with the

report of this committee on small communities. There is a problem when a huge territorial facility is competing for money with a little community project. Maybe we need a different way to categorize it. So that is what I am looking at. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 30-14(6): Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the current capital process does not support a lot of projects as priorities. It doesn't reflect the need in the communities for office space, for crisis shelters and even medical facilities. I heard Mr. Lafferty indicate Wekweti needs a new nursing station and we can't get it on the readout screen. Also, communities like Hay River Reserve can't qualify for a lot of facilities because they are so close to Hay River. Yet the need is there. I would like to know if the Minister is looking at modifying the criteria to ensure that these types of community facilities are included in the capital funding process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 30-14(6): Balanced Approach To Capital Spending

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, certainly we will consider them. The committees, the regular Members, everyone has articulated very well in telling us the difficulties with the current corporate capital planning process. So if there are better ways of doing it, then I want to hear from all the people, and particularly from the MLA's. I will take a proposal to FMBS and bring it to the committee as soon as I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question also goes to the Minister of Finance in regards to capital investment. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the Minister made a statement with a great deal of conviction and pride about the fact that this government funds not on a per capita basis, but on a needs basis. He also stated that Yellowknife per capita gets \$3,000 whereas another community might get \$23,000 per capita over the last 10 years. The Minister also stated this is because communities are funded not on a per capita basis, but on need. I don't understand this. Am I to understand that Yellowknife needs \$20,000 less per capita than any other community? What does he mean by funding by needs and Yellowknife getting \$20,000 less than other communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, in centres where we have a large population, there are more people to divide up the cost

of a particular contribution by. So if we contribute to the water and sewage system in Yellowknife, it's divided by 20,000 or so people. If we were to put in a water and sewage system in Colville Lake where there is only 100 and some people, then it will just show that it's costing us much more per capita in Colville Lake than it would in Yellowknife. So that's what I mean when we say we fund according to need. People have a right to clean water. We will put a water facility in even if it costs \$15,000 per person in a small community compared to \$3,000 in a large community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister is speaking to the principle of economies of scale and, at some point, where there are more numbers, you could share the cost. But I believe the Minister is well aware of the crowded schools in Yellowknife. As well as the hard time the community has had in getting an extra arena, the roads that need to be fixed. So I would like to know, at what point does the need of a community like Yellowknife come into play after the economies of scale have been factored in?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have to be fair to all communities in the NWT, whether it's a little one with 100 people or a community the size of Yellowknife. So we have to look at need. If there is a need for more classroom space in Yellowknife, we have to compare that to the need for more classroom space in the other community we may be considering. Whichever one is the greatest need is the one that will get the highest priority. We don't try to allocate it all by per capita. It's by need in those cases.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I am talking about the importance of the need as well. I understand that we can't be funded totally on the basis of per capita, but what we have to understand is it has to come to a stop where Yellowknife gets the short stick all the time because it appears to have too much. Mr. Speaker, at what point does the government recognize that Yellowknife serves all the Territories and that is has to be funded on a more fair basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have to try to be fair to all communities in terms of meeting their needs and meeting

the needs and the amount we spend per capita are two different things. So I hope that we are being fair to Yellowknife and hope we are being just as fair to Hay River and to Colville Lake and everywhere else in meeting the needs, whether it's for classroom space or any of the other programs we offer. We are trying to be fair to everybody, including Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Minister that the problem isn't to do with the fairness or economies of scale, but that we have just allocated too little money for capital. What is the Minister doing to review the portion of the budget that goes into capital investment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 31-14(6): Needs-Based Capital Investment

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am continually struggling with the question of how we meet our capital needs. If we wanted to meet our needs completely and the way we should be, we should probably be spending somewhere between \$100 million and \$200 million a year on capital. We simply don't have the money to do that right now. As we speak, we have been discussing this and negotiating with Ottawa on our infrastructure needs and doing everything we can to get them to get that message. The Premier is in Ottawa right now dealing with health needs, including capital needs on the health side. So we recognize that the \$74 million that we are spending this year, and what we spent in the past, and what we plan on spending in the future is probably not going to meet all of our needs to the extent that we wish they would. So we have to do that. We have to be creative. As I said earlier, we want to look at other ways of doing some major projects with P3, private/public partnerships, other ways of getting big resource companies to help us, so we have to be creative on increasing our capital budget. But to take it out of the operations side, I think would probably not be a wise move right now given the amount of money we have to move to make a difference. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister responsible for the FMBS. I appreciate he has already indicated his willingness to work with Members in looking at the capital allocation process. I don't want to be guilty of piling on, but I think it's important to adequately address some of the current concerns with the program as it now sits. I know regular Members are having a difficult time, Mr. Speaker, linking the capital allocation process to government's priorities and strategic objectives. We don't know if highways come before parks or if provision of basic health

care services comes before building jails. So can the Minister reconcile this for us and explain to us how priorities are linked to the capital allocation process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have been using the five criteria I went through before that are guidelines for us in allocating our capital. So we look at protection of people, protection of assets, of the environment, of our investment, of program needs and try to balance that. So that's the main criteria we use. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we often get money from Ottawa, for example, that is targeted to specific programs. We have to use that limitation and often it means we have to match money, taking some from our capital and having to match that money. So it's very difficult to try to balance the amount of money we spent on Highway No. 3 against Aurora College Campus in Inuvik against a water project in Colville Lake. Those are difficult decisions. We have to use the five criteria as well as spending limitations that are placed on us in coming to a final decision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think regular Members appreciate and know that it's very difficult, but the Minister has previously explained that behind closed doors Ministers are expected to do exactly that. We look at this on a government-wide basis. I wonder if the Minister is prepared to share information publicly then about how projects in this year's capital plan were ranked against each other? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think as we go through the main estimates of each department, then that should become clear how we arrived at a particular project or against all other ones. I can't rank each project against each other project. It would have to be in a more general sense. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

MR. BELL: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, as you know in our consensus system we've had a couple of cracks at this current budget, and I can assure the Minister that this hasn't become clear for me, and I am fairly certain it won't in this next couple of weeks. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated and acknowledged, and I believe he said, we never arrived and -- I think he's speaking of Cabinet -- at 100 percent consensus on major capital projects. I am curious about that, Mr. Speaker,

would he acknowledge then that that really indicates a failing in this process because truly if that's the case, we haven't taken the politics out of the process at all, have we? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's a matter of politics that prevents us from arriving at 100 percent consensus. It's the fact that a Minister has a mandate to deliver education programs, for example, and feels very strongly about the need for both operational and capital money to do that. Another Minister has the responsibility to deliver health programs and feels strongly about that. So we always have to have those debates, and we don't always agree 100 percent on which project should make it into the budget and which ones won't make it into the budget. But it's just simply that we have a lot of conflicting, competing mandates to deliver through our government programs and services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

MR. BELL: Thank you. I agree that Ministers would have conflicting mandates, competing mandates, but the Minister has indicated we have an objective set of criteria that ranks projects in order to deal with that. I think that if the process were more transparent and we could see how the projects had been ranked -- we're told the deputies are doing it anyway -- that that would assure regular Members. I'd ask the Minister again, if he would share publicly information about how projects in this year's capital plan were ranked. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister of Finance.

Further Return To Question 32-14(6): Linking Priorities To Capital Allocations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could certainly give you the criteria we use, and I'm sure every Minister can tell you whether this is a project that protects people or assets or investments. That's probably the best we can do in the short time available as we look at each main estimates. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too will continue on with questions to Mr. Handley with regard to community capital infrastructure in a lot of our small communities. Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges we face in a lot of our small communities is the lack of infrastructure in our communities to do the job that's at hand. As an example, Mr. Speaker, we had a situation where we had a water crisis in Fort McPherson, when we had to provide two water trucks for the community. The process went through for the vehicles, but

there was no planning in place to look at infrastructure that would house these vehicles once you've got them in the community. All the other infrastructure was occupied. That's an example of how poor planning takes place. I'd like to ask the Minister what we do in regards to ensuring that this type of infrastructure is in place when the requirement is there.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Minister Handley.

Return To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, each time a department comes forward with a program need, then there is a need at the same time to ask the questions about the capital needs that will come along with that program. If there are times when we have an operational need, whether it's to park a vehicle and we haven't built a shelter for it, then we have a breakdown in the process, or it could even be that a deliberate decision was made to buy the equipment anyway and try to make do without that shelter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's a good example of the criteria that we use as a government. We have the protection of people, the protection of assets, and also ensuring that we have the adequate resources to carry them out. The whole area of protection of the asset itself is that you can't have a vehicle or a piece of equipment that we're spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on, sitting outside. We have to find a way of ensuring that we extend the life of that equipment by housing it. So I'd like to ask the Minister again, through the capital planning process, what do we do by way of ensuring that all bases are covered so that you don't have a situation where you get an asset dropped off in a community with no place to house it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we don't want to see that kind of thing happening either, otherwise we aren't protecting our assets or our investments. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope those things don't happen. If they do happen then they should be brought to our attention, and it's something we have to deal with in FMB. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the whole point I'm trying to get at is that there is very poor planning because input from the community and input from the department, and then input from headquarters to FMBS lacks linkage. I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that as a

government we do a better job of ensuring that consultation takes place so you can catch these things that are unforeseen. I'd like to ask the Minister exactly what we're doing to ensure that the input that we get from communities and municipalities is meaningful input, that they are listened to and that the directions that are being given are acted upon.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as Minister Steen has mentioned, we are undertaking a community consultation process. We aren't just going to follow through, I don't believe, with just a letter from the Premier. We will have people from MACA and from FMBS go out to the communities and talk to them about what it is they want. We will include all of the stakeholders in the community. We will have the people who are going out talking to communities prepared so the questions are consistent. We will give them feedback on what we heard and go ahead with it.

Mr. Speaker, often it isn't just the government. It's the communities, as well, who sometimes will say we want that piece of equipment, as an example. If we can't get the shelter to protect it, we still want that piece of equipment, we'll find a way to look after it because we need it. So we don't get all the pieces fitting nicely together. Mr. Speaker, what I'm taking to FMB soon will be a much more thorough consultation process than we've ever had before. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary question, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to hear the Minister talking about doing a whole consultation process. There's a committee that was established through this legislature in regards to the non-tax-based communities. We actually did that. Yet we're waiting for answers back from this government as to how we're going to see the improvement of the whole delivery mechanism to small communities by this government. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance how soon he can report back on that recommendation by the non-tax-based communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 33-14(6): Lack Of Infrastructure In Small Communities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the committee gave us an interim report. We will be providing some interim responses to it. We'll do that within the 120 days that they had asked us to do it. We will look forward then to having the completed report from that committee. In the meantime, we have taken the interim report from that committee and have taken the information they provided in there and tried to use that to build a better capital planning process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Time for question period is ended. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to

written questions. Item 9, replies to the Opening Address. Item 10, replies to the Budget Address. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS

Mr. Krutko's Reply

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regards to the Budget Address that was given by Mr. Handley, I feel that we as a government have to ensure that we are accountable for public expenditures. Again, Mr. Speaker, my concern is that we are awfully close to hitting our \$300 million debt wall, by way of some \$80 million. Being a former Member of the 13th Assembly and having to go through a majority cost expenditure by way of unforeseen cuts to our budget from the federal government, and then we find ourselves with having to make some major unpopular decisions by way of doing away with certain departments and amalgamating other departments into one single department, and then also looking at the overall problem of dealing with division.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, one thing that we've learned from that process -- or I should say we haven't learned from it -- is that when we spend ourselves out of a deficit or figure we can continue to spend with no idea of what will happen, the million dollar question is what happens when we do hit the debt wall of some \$300 million? Will the federal government come to bail us out or increase our borrowing limit to exceed the \$300 million?

My concern right now is that with the borrowing limit we have of some \$86 million, in one bad fire season we could be looking at another \$20 million to \$30 million. We've had major problems with replacing assets. During the 13th Assembly we had some major fires in which we had to replace two schools, and on top of that the cost of operating the government is continuing to rise. We see the high increase in the cost of diesel fuel and gas and other products that are out there, which is out of our control because it's based on the world market. Yet it's a cost that we will have to deal with when it confronts us. Especially in the Northwest Territories, we are not immune to the price of diesel fuel. We depend on diesel fuel for the operational costs of a lot of our communities, the generation of power, and also the overall running of the government as we know it. There again that's another unforeseen cost adding to the \$86 million.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we seriously look at this deficit situation in light of exactly how as a government we cannot continue to generate revenues by taxing the residents of the Northwest Territories, by increasing the tobacco tax or the diesel fuel tax or the costs associated with personal income tax or corporate taxes. There is only a limited amount of room that you can tax in any area. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, especially in the area of the \$300 million limit that's put on us. Right now we're at some \$220-odd million, with \$86 million to spare.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, I have to state that we have seen some movement in other areas, especially in small communities through the efforts of the non-tax based communities. There was an interim report filed in this House that recommended some changes to this government, and I'm glad to see that the government has taken up the non-tax-based communities' recommendations to implement certain dollar amounts in the capital budget, in regards to the \$1 million, in regards to the

overall chip seal program for main streets in non-tax-based communities, and also looking at another \$1.7 million to look at the whole area of housing projects, and also looking at the \$1 million to assist communities with community sport projects and ensuring that the communities are able to develop their youth initiatives with skating rinks or ball diamonds or youth centres. But I think it's not enough. We have some 27 communities we have to deal with, and it is going to take a while before all communities will be able to access this program. Yet, Mr. Speaker, like I said earlier, it is a start and I believe we have to build on that.

Another area where I have a lot of concerns, Mr. Speaker, is the overall area of our economy. We have a lot of things happening in oil and gas development. We talk about a pipeline, and diamond developments are going on in the Northwest Territories and the secondary industries. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I feel that we have to ensure that we have the legislative teeth in place to protect the people of the Northwest Territories, and also protect our environment and protect our resources so that they are not exploited and our environment is not exploited by these developments that are taking place. I feel that we have to do more to tell the federal government that these are our resources and these are our diamonds. We have the oil and gas and the other materials that are out there, regardless of non-renewable resources that we have. We have a lot of potential in the Northwest Territories. But we cannot let ourselves be put in a position where we have those non-renewable resources exploited, and then, as the government waiting to take on those resources, finding that we don't have the economic or social resources to really deal with the impacts that come from those developments.

We have seen a lot of developments come and go. During the 1920s we saw the Norman Wells expansion in regards to the find in Norman Wells, the Canol Trail, and development of a pipeline through the Yukon. Then, also, back in the '60s and '70s we had a major oil and gas boom up in the Mackenzie Delta, Beaufort Sea and the Mackenzie Valley. Again we're talking about a Mackenzie pipeline. Then we got into the diamond era where we have major diamond exploration and developments in which major finds have been made. The North has gone through a history of developing the economy in the Northwest Territories, then realizing there have also been a lot of negative impacts that come from that. I think we as the people of the North and as a government are not immune to those impacts of major developments where you have a major influx of people, and then where you have a major downturn in development when the development has happened and it declines.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, a lot of our communities have seen the impacts, have had the effects of those impacts, regardless of whether it's good or bad. We have to find a mechanism to ensure that we have the resources, but also that we have the people in place to assist our communities, to know that we have the capacity in our communities to take on these developments and also have the resource people to assist not only on the economic side, but on the training side and dealing with the social impacts that come from these developments.

We have a lot of potential in a lot of our communities, yet a lot of communities feel threatened by development because they have been bypassed either by industry or even by government. A lot of decisions are made at the top and are made knowing that those decisions will have an adverse effect on

communities, and the people in small communities who still live a traditional lifestyle of hunting, trapping and fishing.

Mr. Speaker, most people in our communities do not have a university degree, or in most cases not even a high school degree. Yet, Mr. Speaker, people are able to sustain themselves by having a traditional skill that very few of us have the advantage of, and that's to survive in the North and also sustain yourself by hunting, trapping and fishing, which is an activity that this North has been built on. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I feel very little activity or responsibility of this government has been focused in that area. We're too focused on the bigger issues, looking at major diamond finds or major pipelines or major hydro developments. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have to realize that we are here representing the people. The people are the people in the small communities, people in the larger regional centres and the people here in Yellowknife. But you have to have a balance that will ensure that the well-being of the North as a whole benefits, regardless of how that development is going to take place.

One thing that I haven't seen much of in regards to this report is one of the priorities we put forth for the 14th Assembly, which was ensuring the completion of land claims implementation and negotiations. There has been very little done to ensure that the implementation of these land claims agreements is carried through. I am referring to the wildlife agreements.

Most of the provisions in land claims agreements are wildlife arrangements, management arrangements, looking at the management of the land and resources, and also ensuring that aboriginal people and communities will be consulted fully about any developments. My concern is that we are looking at some major developments that are going to take place, and these land claims agreements have not been implemented by this government. It's crucial that those claims be implemented prior to any major developments taking place. I feel that this government has the sole authority to legislate those agreements into place. It is this government's responsibility to legislate them. Not the parties that are out there, it's this government. I feel that this government is lacking in that area, and we have to ensure that before any government, regardless of whether it's this government, takes ownership or control of our resources through a political or northern accord, that those land claims obligations be lived up to. We cannot wait another 10 or 20 years before we see these land claims agreements implemented, yet this government goes around stating how they have a working relationship with aboriginal government, yet we cannot even implement agreements we signed with First Nations governments. I feel that that has to be a priority of this government, and we have to move on it knowing the implications that pipelines and other major developments will have on aboriginal lands, the aboriginal people, and especially the wildlife and the environment in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that really catches my eye in this report is that under the social agenda it talks about improving our social conditions in regards to realizing the dream for a better quality of life for all Northerners. I have a real problem with that. I hate to state that I see a lot of our elders suffering in our communities. We see a lot of our elders who have put a lot of years in with this government and who are now retired or semi-retired, barely making a go on their pensions. Also in regards to the whole delivery of programs and services; we've established programs and services, but what we're seeing is that the regulations and criteria that we use are either so rigid

that you can't get into it, or it's so controlling that once you get into it they dictate to you how you're going to run your lives. Is that the purpose of regulations or policies or procedures put in place for this government? I don't think so. I think it was there to assist and improve the lives of people in our communities, and especially our seniors.

We have programs out there that put seniors in a position where they're afraid to assist in community activities or community public institutions, because of the effects that has on their income and also accessibility to government programs and services, because of taking in other income by way of per diems or honorariums they may get from sitting on an elders' committee or maybe a local band council, or even just a community council structure. Yet, that is an asset that we cannot lose sight of. They have a lot of knowledge and a lot of experience, and they've lived a life that they've seen the ups and downs and they've had to make tough decisions during their lifetime. I feel very disappointed and annoyed that this happens in this day and age. We're spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the bureaucracy, but when it comes to the people on the ground we are not doing anything to improve that quality of life that we talk about.

People are suffering in our communities. A lot of people are going hungry in our communities. Yet as a government we continue to...All we hear is mega projects and mega bucks, and let's go to Ottawa with hat in hand. I think maybe it's time that Ottawa really nailed us with the hammer and said look, guys, you get \$1 billion for some 40,000 people, where's the money being spent? Seventy-five percent is spent on the bureaucracy for delivering programs and services, why is that?

I think we have to somehow really take a good look at the size of government and the size of delivering these programs and services to 40,000 people. As long as I've been here, two terms, every time I've come here looking through a budget process there are always increases in the bureaucracy. There are always dollars to increase the delivery from the bureaucracy. Yet when it comes to elders' programs and services, they've been capped for six years. There has been no increase in programs and service delivery for actual on-the-ground programs, no increase to those amounts and those set dollars that we put in place, to ensure that they are really serving the people of the Northwest Territories, and serving the seniors and the people in our communities who really are suffering because of bad policy or bad programs that have never really seen an increase or seen a program really looked at to ensure if it's really doing what it's set out to do. If it's not, what are we doing it change it?

I raise the concern in regard to the way we analyze the income program for the seniors' fuel subsidy. The way it's developed now, it's based on previous tax year's reporting. In a previous year, an elder could have been healthy and maybe they did do some extra sewing, or they made some extra money by sitting on some boards and agencies, or they translated at a public meeting. Yet if a senior became ill during that period, the next year we cannot catch it under the existing program. What we are finding is a lot of our seniors who cannot function as well as they did a year before because of old age or whatever, we're not taking that into account. I feel that we as a government have to really re-think how we deliver these programs and services.

One thing that also caught my eye is the whole area of social assistance payments continuing to fall since 1989. Have they really fallen, or has it really been the Government of the Northwest Territories forcing the individual to get off welfare so it makes it so tough you can't get back on to it, or that they have basically forced individuals to a point where they've just given up on government social assistance and have gone elsewhere? One thing that you find is that certain criteria dictate if you're on social assistance and you get a part-time job, you're off it for three months. So with the criteria that are being used, that's why the numbers have dropped. It's not because the need isn't there, it's because of the rigid criteria that we have used in delivering this program and how it's being implemented and how it's being interpreted for people to use it. I think it's important that we really look at the program itself, and see exactly if it has really met the need, or has it hindered development in a lot of our communities because of tough rules that you have to follow to even fit into this program.

I think the intent might be great, but you have to realize that in all regions of the Northwest Territories we don't have development. We don't have large-scale developments where you can hire 600 people. I'll use the example of the community of Aklavik; 900-odd people. Yet they have a real social dependency on this program. Yet the problem you run into is because there are no social or economic opportunities in that community, you have to leave the community and find employment elsewhere. I think what we should be doing here instead of looking at the program criteria, is what we can do to develop opportunities in those communities so when people get off social assistance and want to get off social assistance the opportunities are there. You don't have to leave your communities to find those opportunities, they're either being developed or they're looked at in the notion of where those communities can go with those programs and services.

I think one thing we look at is we keep talking about the employment rate in the Northwest Territories at 71 percent. Yes it might be at 71 percent, but when you look at the population in the Northwest Territories distributed between 40,000 people where the majority of that population is in the regional centres where a lot of opportunities exist, you will get 70 percent.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Krutko, your time for reply has ended. Item 10, replies to Budget Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 9-14(6): Letter From Minister Miltenberger To Federal Health Minister Anne McLellan Regarding The Health Minister's Visit To The North

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the following letter from myself as Minister of Health and Social Services, to the Honourable Anne McLellan regarding the federal Health Minister's visit to the North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Tabled Document 10-14(6): Letter From Nova Scotia Premier, The Honourable John Hamm, Regarding Territorial Health Care Funding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table two documents. I would like to table the following letter from the Honourable John F. Hamm -- he's the Premier of Nova Scotia - - to the Prime Minister regarding funding for territorial health care.

Tabled Document 11-14(6): The Future Of Health Care In Canada - A Public Lecture With Mr. Roy Romanow, February 13, 2003

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled The Future of Health Care in Canada, A Public Lecture with Mr. Roy Romanow, Q.C., February 13, 2003. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledah, Mr. Handley.

Tabled Document 12-14(6): NWT Liquor Commission 2001-2002 Annual Report

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table two documents. First, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Liquor Commission 2001-2002 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 13-14(6): NWT Power Corporation 2002 Annual Report

As well, I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Power Corporation 2002 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Tabled Document 14-14(6): NWT Housing Corporation 2001-2002 Annual Report

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Housing Corporation 2001-2002 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledah, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Motor Vehicles Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to request a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: A recorded vote has been requested. We have a motion. The motion is in order. Is the House ready for the question?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Allen, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Delorey, Ms. Lee, Mr. Roland, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Braden, Mr. Steen, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Antoine and Mr. Ootes.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those opposed to the motion, please stand. Thank you. All those abstaining, please stand. Thank you. The results: yeas 14; no, zero; abstentions, zero. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Bill 5 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 4 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6), with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of items to consider: Bill 3, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14-(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6), specifically to continue with the Department of Health and Social Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Chair will call a short break and we'll come back to consider Bill 3.

---SHORT RECESS

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We are reviewing the Department of Health and Social Services, page 6-9. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, yes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witness in, please?

Mr. Miltenberger, for the record, could you introduce your witness, please?

Department Of Health And Social Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me, I have Mr. Dave Murray, the deputy minister of Health and Social Services, and Warren St. Germaine, the director of finance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will open the floor to general comments. Mr. McLeod.

General Comments

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of things under general comments I would like to raise. I can appreciate the amount of work the Minister has been doing over the last while and the extra dollars he's been able to commit to his department. While it's gone to a territorial facility that services all communities in the North, I want to take at this time an opportunity to remind the Minister that there are other communities out there that need facilities, that need services. In communities I represent, I only have one nursing station and I represent four communities. Although all the communities that don't have the facilities in my riding are on the road system, it's still very difficult. Like if you wanted to go to a clinic, you couldn't just get up in the morning and just walk down the street. If you don't have a vehicle, you will have to find a ride or arrange for transportation. Even then, you have to find the appropriate people to contact to file for a travel claim or for any type of assistance you qualify for.

On the reserve, the population has been growing for the last number of years, yet we are not seeing an increase in our staff positions or to our facilities. Right now, it's quite difficult for a lot of the Members. It's been brought to our attention on a number of occasions that we need a type of facility, at least a place where we can have the nurse or the social worker, for that matter, coming to the community or the income support worker. We have no facility at all in that community. The band office is really the only place people can access, for the most part, and that is overflowing. We need to have something in place. It's difficult to have people travel back and forth. There are some travel arrangements made, but that hasn't improved in the 20-

year forecast or the 20-year capital planning system. There are some dollars and I hope the Minister will start taking the time to address that issue to start doing the groundwork and necessary research to justify that facility comes into that community. We also, in Fort Providence and for many, many years now, have requested an increased level of care for our seniors. Right now, our seniors either have to travel to Fort Simpson or Hay River and that is difficult for the family members and a lot of the seniors have a hard time because they are away from their families. Not to discredit those facilities. I think the care is excellent in both the communities of Fort Simpson and Hay River, but it's very difficult for family members and for the elders themselves. I am not totally satisfied with the process and the hoops to try to request extended care. The Minister, on several occasions I have talked to him and I have also written him a letter. Health states that they don't build facilities for extended care or for seniors and the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation also states they don't provide funding for extended care, so it's kind of a hot potato. We get pushed and tossed from one department to another, but no real clear process. We should have that. If that program falls under the jurisdiction of two departments, there has to be a better process put in place so that we can have easier access.

Also, I am also quite concerned that there have been statements alluding to the replacement of alcohol and drug workers. These workers, for the most part, are all long-term workers. Many people have committed a good part of their lives to working with alcohol and drugs and other addictions in communities. We've asked many times on many occasions to see some funding increases, so we can get better wages, better compensation for them. They dedicate a lot of time and effort to the communities. We also stated that they should be certified. We are not seeing that now. I have been told they are going to be replaced by mental health workers. I don't know what that means. Where are these people going to come from? What is classified as a mental health worker? What effects does that have on the different facilities in the North?

So there are many concerns in the area of health, Mr. Chairman. We have to ensure that whether you are living in a small community like Kakisa or Yellowknife, that we have equal access and equal treatment and that we deserve the same quality of service. In some of the communities, especially Kakisa, we have been trying to address how we medevac somebody out of that community. How do we get quick access and ability to get everybody out of that community?

So those kinds of things are of great concern to me, Mr. Chairman. I think the Minister has to take some time, now that he's been able to deal with the crisis at Stanton and start looking at the long-term planning for the smaller communities. I certainly welcome him into any of the communities that I represent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I didn't hear any specific questions there. Mr. Miltenberger, would you like to respond to the Member? Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for reminding us that we keep a 360-degree focus in this portfolio and all communities on the radar screen.

With regard to the reserve, I have committed to the Member to work with him to go into the reserve and to sit down and discuss the issues that he has touched on. As well, planning to bring in members from the Deh Cho Health and Social Services Authority plus sit down with the people from Hay River that currently provide some service. There is money, as the Member indicated, in the capital plan to provide some infrastructure on the reserve, as the Member indicated.

We have also been trying to increase the support to seniors across the board. Basically there are three streams, Mr. Chairman. There is the facility living stream; the supported home living; and, we have been trying, as well, to improve our home care. This, as well, is an issue of priority for the federal government, so we are hoping that we may get some relief or additional resources to help us provide the services we are currently trying to provide but don't have sufficient funds.

With regard to the alcohol and drug workers, I would like to reassure my colleague that the intention is not to replace alcohol and drug workers with mental health workers. The intention is to convert alcohol and drug workers to a different focus. They would be called prevention workers. One of their functions would continue to be alcohol and drugs, but they would also be expanded to deal with some of the other presenting problems that are brought into the office when a person comes in with alcohol and drug problems.

In this budget, there is funding to give the alcohol and drug workers, soon to be called prevention workers, an increase in pay. Also, with some, for the first time, some benefits. So we want to develop a curriculum of training and certification for workers and we want to make sure that we recognize that among the alcohol and drug workers that are currently there, many have dedicated a significant portion of their working lives to an area because of their commitment to improve the lot in their communities at a very low pay with almost no benefits. So our intention is to work with all the incumbents to ensure that they are given every opportunity to make a transition with support and with training into the new job. It will be there that we'll put some of their skills to work and hopefully be able to supplement them with further training. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the area of health and social services, we know it's a critical service in the Northwest Territories, especially in communities that don't have access to hospitals and doctors on a daily basis. Coming from a larger community, I have had to deal with individuals who have had to travel south and have some medical attention while they were south and I have heard some positive comments on the service that they can get here in the NWT compared to in the south when it comes to waiting for procedures and things of that nature. So it's been positive on that side of it, but we must recognize the efforts of the long-term nurses and doctors that we have in the system that have remained and stayed committed to the NWT. It's difficult and there are many options for them. As an example, Mr. Chairman, I went home for the weekend and heard that one of the nurses had taken a job in another country and is travelling to warmer climates and moving on. That's unfortunate because that means we are going to have to try to find somebody else to fill that position. On that specific area, Mr. Chairman, I would like to know from the Minister, as we go through this budget

process and his department, in the area of recruitment and retention, that's an area that we've put a fair bit of money into over the years and I would like to know from the Minister how successful has that section been in bringing people to the North? Can he show and provide information on the number of new recruits that this section has helped bring to the NWT to the many health centres and hospitals that he has to provide services in? How have they worked with the boards in the regions to help with their needs?

It's very difficult, Mr. Chairman, when you talk to some of the nurses who are long-time committed in the communities and raised their families there. When they have to work beside a nurse who comes up on contract and spends either a month or two in the community and then travels back to their home in Alberta or wherever they come from to find out they are making, if it's not more, it's equal to the amount that the nurses are making here in the territories. Also, their housing seems to be taken care of, they get a couple of other allowances while they are up in our communities and that is the part that some of our long-time nurses have difficulty in dealing with. They are of the same profession, the same training level, but when these contract nurses come in, it seems to be a different standard that they have when it comes to being paid and what kind of benefits are available. How is the Minister's recruitment and retention section working? What is the total amount being spent in that section now and can he provide numbers as to the amount of recruits they have helped bring into the Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the issue raised by my colleague about recognizing the contributions of his existing staff is a very important one and one where we have invested a considerable amount of time and money as of late, regarding both doctors and nurses, but we've tried to expand it to all allied health professionals, as well as social workers. We've put more money into long-term care. We are putting money into alcohol and drugs. We've committed to doing the review, which is underway right now, of the classifications of nurses to make sure they are adequately classified and that their skills, especially of some of the higher trained nurses, are recognized in OR and ICU and those types of things.

The recruitment and retention unit that has been in place has been somewhat controversial. There have been a lot of questions about how it's structured and how effective it has been. Recruitment and retention, when I became Minister, was identified as the number one issue by all the health authorities. What we have underway right now, as part of our comprehensive human resource strategy development, is a review both of the human resource services currently provided at the authority level and as well the structure of the current recruitment and retention unit. There is a clear sense among the members of the Joint Leadership Council that the current structure that we have had in place for the last number of years is not as effective as it should be. That there is possibly an over-concentration of resources at the headquarters level that might be better used if they were redeployed to authorities.

One of the problems we have come across as we have looked at this carefully is that there are about seven different levels of services that are currently provided in the human resource

sections and divisions of the authorities. There is no clear rationale as to why or how the particular human resource services were developed as they were. So as we look at possibly realigning resources, we are also trying to come to grips with what would be a standard level of service that should be provided in the human resource sections of the authorities, so there is some consistency. So we are looking at that particular area. With all the most recent changes in adding money for training, as well as some of the other initiatives that we have undertaken in job reclassification, looking at making job offers to all the student nurses coming out of Aurora College, we have taken what we think are significant steps to start addressing this issue more effectively. We can, as the Member requested, get him numbers, but I can tell him that we have made job offers to all, I think it's 23 nursing graduates, that have come out of the college this year and we intend to keep making those job offers. We have set up increased mentoring. We have set up new nursing positions. We have tried to expand the number of nursing entry level positions, both at Stanton, as well as at the authorities in Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith and Simpson. We have found a home for the nurse practitioners. We are trying to adjust that program right now as well so that by this coming fall, we are ready to advertise for a second intake of nurse practitioners, which are a key component of the collaborative practices and integrative service delivery model that we are trying to work towards as a system.

So I take my colleague's concern about the recruitment and retention unit and how it was structured and we have been moving to make that whole process much more effective and much more collaborative with the authorities and the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's good to hear they are going to be looking at doing some restructuring. Hopefully it will be more successful in encouraging nurses and doctors to come work here in the NWT. I would like to know from the Minister when this work might be concluded. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this work is underway as we speak and we expect to be able to come back to the Joint Leadership Council and onto the committee or onto Cabinet by June. The work is going to be started and hopefully completed by then and pieces will be done in the interim, but we hope to have a final human resource strategy ready to put on the table here by June. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I recognize Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the spring 2000 session, a report called It Takes A Community was tabled in the Assembly. That was prepared by the Child Welfare League. There were some 58 recommendations contained in that report, along with the message to this government to increase the numbers of social workers. That report found that the caseloads for supervisors were some 80 percent over what was considered an acceptable standard.

They found also that the caseloads for social workers were more than 40 percent higher than what they should be. So they recommended that this government hire close to 30 new social workers, at a minimum, to deal with the situation across the Territories. The department's response to that report was called A Children's Services Action Plan. They proposed in that report to increase the numbers of social workers by about 30 over three years. A year ago this month, I asked Minister Miltenberger about the plan and he responded at that time, we were in year two out of a three-year plan and that another 11 PYs are scheduled for 2003-04. Yet, Mr. Chairman, when I look through the budget, I don't see the funding for that critical increase in staff. So that means that four years after this important review, we still have social workers with caseloads too high and too few supervisors. I understand that the supervisors are still, for the most part, carrying extensive caseloads, so they don't have adequate time for proper supervision and training that you might want to see with staff.

So I know we've managed to increase the numbers of social workers in the Territories over the past two years, but in many cases, we are probably hiring young people who are recent graduates and who may not have a lot of experience. If the supervisors are carrying great big caseloads as well, they can't provide the mentoring and leadership that you obviously would like to have with new people in the job.

I also had understood that in year three of this plan, that we are going to see an increase, particularly in supervisors. The first two years were concentrated on getting frontline staff and then we were going to concentrate on getting supervisory staff in place. If we really are serious about trying to keep families together, why has the Minister chosen this year not to proceed with the final 11 PYs that he had committed to as part of the three-year plan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a two-phased approach to this, if I might. One would be somewhat broader and then I will narrow it down. This particular initiative has been deferred for a year. It was considered a new initiative for the third year and given the constraints, fiscal constraints we were under, new initiatives weren't considered. Forced growth had priority, so we intend to resubmit under the upcoming business plan process. I would also like to point out though, Mr. Chairman, that social workers and child protection workers don't work in isolation and as a system, we have put in about \$26 million. We are adding money to long-term care. We are adding six new mental health workers. We are putting in six clinical supervisors to work with the mental health workers, the alcohol and drug workers. As we move towards an integrated service delivery model, the plan and assumption is that, although services at the community level will be working more closely and effectively together, we've attempted to supplement and bolster the services we have in a broad spectrum of areas. So I appreciate the Member's concern. It is still on our list. Unfortunately, the fiscal realities being what they are, preclude us from being able to go ahead with it at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am disappointed to hear that these 11 positions, as the Minister says, have been put on hold for a year. Of course, since last year he told us they were going to be in place for 2003-04, there is no guarantee obviously that we are going to see them come back in 2004-2005. So that causes me a lot of concern. I recognize that we have been expanding the services in mental health workers and alcohol and drug workers, as the Minister has spoken about. I think it's important that we take a look at what's happening with social workers. The caseload tends to be so high that I am not sure that social workers have the opportunity to do the job, in many cases, that they should or would like to do.

I take a look at statistics for child apprehensions in the Northwest Territories and compare that to the statistics in other jurisdictions. I have to say that it looks pretty alarming to see how many kids we are apprehending right now. If we had an adequate number of social workers, I would suspect that we would be able to get more help to families and probably wind up needing to apprehend fewer children. I suspect that if you take the cost of keeping a child in care, it wouldn't take too many successes at keeping families together to pay for the salaries of social workers. So I am afraid that the approach we are taking here is one much like justice and incarceration. We are dealing with after effects instead of being proactively involved at trying to solve the problem within the family. Has the Minister had some work done to examine whether or not we could defray the cost of adding social workers through reductions in the cost of child apprehensions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the concern of the Member. It's a debate and a question of choices. For example, I would submit that by finally recognizing and putting some funding into the alcohol and drug mental health section of the system and giving them a broader, more comprehensive job description and a decent level of pay and some benefits, that if we can, in fact, work more effectively with families and individuals at the community level and help them avoid starting drinking or dealing with the drinking before it gets out of control resulting in many cases in children being neglected and having to be apprehended, then we are in fact working towards the same end.

Yes, we do plan to put more social workers into the business plan, but once again it was a question of choices. I share the concern about increased apprehension rates. Ideally, we should be able to work with families and we are doing that more and more, working with families and children, and making sure that it doesn't become any kind of ongoing court, custodial kind of arrangement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I am aware that in a number of other jurisdictions, the approach has been one of making sure that they have social workers available to spend time in the home with the family assisting the family to work better together. While alcohol and drug workers are essential parts of the mix, that's only really one small segment of what sometimes needs to be addressed in a dysfunctional family. I think social workers are

still keen to do a lot of the healing and recovery that we need to see take place in the Northwest Territories. What's considered to be best practice now is one that sees much more direct intervention and has the social worker spending more time right within the home with the family. Unless we are able to invest in more social workers though, we are not going to see that kind of approach taken as broadly as it should be. So I would like to, again, encourage the Minister to examine what we could do with savings if we were to cut down on the numbers of apprehensions, if we were to cut down on the numbers of families in crisis, by getting first involved with the family and to do that, we would have to have more social workers. I think if the Minister takes a look at that, there may be a way to approach the FMB and say you have found a way to offset the cost of those social workers. I hope the Minister will take a look at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the advice of the Member and will give it serious consideration. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair recognizes Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of questions and many of the questions are points that we have already made in our report on the review of the draft mains. I guess the first area of questioning is around the alcohol and drug workers and the increased training that the Minister speaks of. I think that's certainly welcome. Increased pay and benefits and increased scope to change the job description and call on prevention workers. I think one of the things we have to be careful of here is that this transition is seen to be welcome by alcohol and drug workers and that they understand what's going on. Although it sounds like it's the right idea and in the right direction, I would like to ask the Minister about the level of consultation that's been undertaken with the frontline practitioners to assure that they are onside and that there is buy-in to this which seems to be a substantial and fundamental shift.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is ongoing involvement with the frontline workers in this particular area. We also have, as well, the fairly clear unambiguous Chalmer's report that did its own review and survey. Many of us who have been around now for some time know from our own firsthand experience that we have committed to a course of action with alcohol and drug that, as I indicated, previously suffered from benign neglect and a fragmented approach to service delivery. So, Mr. Chairman, we are very confident that we, like the Member said, are making a shift, but a shift the right way. We have to commit to some of the funding issues. We have to nail down the training and ongoing certification and of even more importance, we have to bring the alcohol and drug workers into the fold as part of the service delivery model at the community level, so that they can play a complementary role to a lot of the other services and service providers that are at the community level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly think that the consultation and the buy-in will be important, will be critical, in seeing that this is successful. I think certainly people who are in this field are passionate about what they do and we don't want to give some people the sense that we are trying to raise the qualifications, raise the criteria, raise the standards solely to run people out of jobs. I think the focus here has to be on improving the level of service to residents and working with alcohol and drug workers to improve the service and not seen to be something that is imposed on them.

I will look to another point, Mr. Chairman, and that is the committee's disappointment that we haven't been successful in rolling out a 1-800 number that would allow people to access nursing care over the phone from all jurisdictions in the Northwest Territories and help them make a decision as to whether or not they need to go into see their health care practitioners. Certainly, the document the Minister just unveiled today, the document entitled Do I Need to See the Nurse or Doctor that goes through a number of common ailments and indicates what folks may or may not do and gives them some sense of whether they need to see the doctor is very good and very important, but I think it's certainly something that should be done in conjunction with the 1-800 number. I think the two pieces together would make a very comprehensive package, especially given the run on emergency services that we've seen, at least in Yellowknife. I would like to ask the Minister for the trends and the numbers of people presenting at the unit, but it seems to me it is getting busier and busier and people are, instead of waiting for a good length of time to see someone at a clinic, if it's important, if it involves a child, if it's something that maybe they could make a phone call to a nurse, they simply have no other choice but to present at emergency and queue up for six to eight hours if it's a non-life-threatening situation. I think the 1-800 number, with the document the Minister has unveiled today, would have been a great complement and I think would have taken some of the strain off emergency services. So I would like to get an indication from the Minister what we are looking at doing with regard to the 1-800 number.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as Mr. Bell indicates, we, as well, are of the strong and continued opinion that the 1-800 number is an effective tool and would work and was planned to work very closely in conjunction with the book we handed out today. We intend to do two things. We have some signals from the federal government through their primary health care transition fund. They are interested in seeing if we can pursue this initiative in conjunction with Nunavut and Yukon, which was in one of our initial thoughts, but the logistics struck us early on as somewhat too daunting. The need was to try to get a system up and running. So we are going to go back and explore that particular option. As well, we intend to try again to build this particular action item into our business plan. It came in significantly over budget, about five or six times over budget, so there are two problems there. Maybe our estimations were overly optimistic and the cost to do this to the level we deemed necessary, we budgeted about a quarter million and the lowest proposal I believe was \$1.4 million. So we didn't have the funds to proceed. We had to put that particular action item aside and move forward, but it's something we would still like to proceed with. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: That's certainly welcome news that the federal government is willing to step in and provide some funds and support our efforts. Certainly looking at a situation where we can combine the service with the other territories would provide efficiencies for us and economies of scale and I recognize that the estimates came in much higher than the department was looking at. I think we do have to recognize that the level of service would increase, but also I believe the number of physicians on staff at emergency could be reduced and we may not have to have the kinds of resources at emergency. I certainly think that oftentimes residents are forced to head up to emergency to see a doctor when clearly they may even recognize themselves that they don't even need to see a doctor, they just need to get some advice from a nurse. So I think there could be some money saved in that situation. I would like to ask the Minister also about the Finance Minister's opening Budget Address. He makes mention of training for prevention workers, but also enhanced funding for family violence shelters. I am wondering if the Minister can talk about the enhanced funding for family violence shelters.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a very modest part of the \$1.4 million that we got for this particular area of service delivery. It's basically going to assist those shelters that are having some cash problems to make it through the year. So it's not an excessive amount of money. It's \$96,000 that's going to be split up, I believe, among three shelters, Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just some clarity. Is that money going directly to the people in shelters or is this for shelter workers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's targeted for shelter operations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. One last question. Mr. Chairman, I know the Minister, when he was on this side of the House, was very concerned about our seeming inability to get blue-chip information from the Department of Health and it was a constant concern. As he knows, we've raised concerns about the number of children being apprehended and particularly it seems, the number of aboriginal children being apprehended is on the rise. We did ask the Minister for some information on that and a colleague of mine posed an oral question and received a response from the department about the ethnicity of children who have been apprehended and there is one column in the response from the department that suggests the ethnicity is unknown and it's a large proportion of the children who have unknown ethnicity. The department indicates that when a

child's ethnicity has either not been entered into the child and family services information database or is not known, the ethnicity is considered to be unknown. I think this certainly raises a concern. It gives the impression that in some instances, the effort or the bother just hasn't been taken to even enter the child's ethnicity into the system. So of course we are unable to track this accurately now and unable to get the kinds of information that the committee was looking for. I think this was just a further example of our frustration in getting the types of information that we have been looking for. I am wondering if the Minister could speak to our seeming inability to track this kind of information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when I first became aware of that particular issue as outlined by my colleague, it raised concerns with me as well. This child information system that we had spent a lot of time developing was obviously not without its gaps. Steps are underway to make what I understand was an optional column area when you are filling out the forms to be filled out. We want to make it a requirement. We want to be able to track all the children in our system, so that we can do the proper planning, see what the trends are and to do that I agree with my colleague, we do need blue-chip information. We are down that road, but clearly we have things to do. From what I understand, this is a relatively straightforward kind of adjustment to make. The system is there and can be modified to make that kind of information not optional but required so that you can't proceed to fill in the form until you fill in all the required areas. You can't advance to the next part of the form. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just a few general comments from myself as well. This is the first chance I have had to publicly acknowledge and thank the Minister for fighting hard for extra money for Stanton. I appreciate that very much and I know it wasn't easy. I realize that there was an extended period of denial on the part of the Minister as to the need for extra funding at Stanton, but he did come around and I thank him very much for that. I know that the staff and the clients that use the hospital appreciate that as well. I want to put that on top of my list of things to say.

It's well known that institutions we all have come to rely on went through a little bit of trauma prior to Christmas. I know that the management and everyone there is working hard to put everything into some state of normalcy. Talking to the people at my "Coffee's On Me" at Tim Horton's -- because you always get a good source of information at Tim Horton's -- there seems to be less anxiety on the part of the staff there. I think everyone still feels that there is a lot of work to do. At some point, you need that extra money to get the job done, but once you get the money you still have to manage it and meet the needs on a priority basis. I believe that my colleagues have already touched on the need for recruitment and retention plans and so forth. I know the Minister has been working on this. I just want to state that the focus has to be as much on the retention of it as well as the recruitment of these personnel with the new money that is available there. We have to really appreciate the burden that has been on the staff there to keep

the place running. They have to be recognized for that. Any compensation packages that are being designed to recruit must take into consideration the needs of the people who are already there.

I think addressing the housing of allied health professionals will go a long way and I know that this is not a topic that the Minister or the government wants to get into lightly, but I believe that's something that has to be considered. It's an issue that keeps coming up by everyone who has any dealings with the hospital or the health care field.

If the people who come up here to work and provide health care services have to spend most of their money on housing and cost of living, it's just not attractive for people to come and stay. To offer a whole new package to new people that is not available to the ones that are already here, would not be a good thing for morale either. I know the Minister is working on classification of current positions to address some of the gaps in this area. I urge the Minister to keep putting his energy there and following it through.

Mr. Chairman, I don't think I need to say anymore about the fact that not addressing this recruitment and retention situation would end up costing us more and more of very scarce health care dollars.

I also wanted to say a couple more things on the health area. I have had occasion to be at the hospital more than I would like to be. Some happy news with friends having babies; people who get service from Stanton are very happy with that service. It's amazing even when the place was going through a lot of stress, the staff there are dedicated and they give a lot more than is called for, but there are some things that I am hearing lately that concern me. There is a constituent in my riding, for example, who couldn't – and I am not talking specifically about the hospital but health care services in general in the Territories – get diagnosed here. After months and months of trying, he ended up going south and spending his own money, a lot of money, thousands of dollars, to get a diagnosis. I am sure there are a lot of people out there who know of cases like that. I think that as legislators, we have to be very concerned when the services we are able to provide here or we are not providing here is causing people to go elsewhere and spend their money. Not only is that contrary to the kind of universal care that we believe in and the accessibility of health care for people, but it may end up in a situation where people with the money could go and get diagnoses, thereby creating different systems for different people. I don't fault at all those people who might feel the need to go south and spend their own money to get the diagnoses and treatment they need, but whenever that happens, it calls for reflection on our part to see what we are doing wrong.

Another point I want to make on health care issues is the \$250 co-payment. I know this is an issue that has been brought up over and over. I have had the occasion to talk to the Minister about this in person. It appears there is a major gap in terms of who is having to pay for this medical co-payment. Those people who are fortunate enough to have government insurance or company insurance that pays for this, they don't have to deal with this. Many of our aboriginal population have their own programs that would pay for this. I think it's the working poor who have no insurance or other assistance in this area who are being penalized. They are the ones who are self-employed or working in a job that is not insured and often when

they have to take time off with out pay to go for this sort of treatment down south or go for appointments or diagnoses, they are having extra things thrown on top of them. While \$250 may not be a big amount of money for some, it can be a huge amount for others. I know that the Minister had indicated that he was in the process of reviewing this. I think there has to be a sense of fairness here and it shouldn't be done in a way that is penalizing those who are falling through the gaps.

Those are the three issues. If the Minister wants to comment, that would be great. I am going to save social services questions or comments for another time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, recognizing Ms. Lee's passionate interest in health and health issues, I would like to thank her for her qualified praise in her opening comments. In this particular case, I would like to consider denial the big river that flows through Egypt, but I am very clearly aware of the concerns that she's raised and we have taken steps to try to address those, like some of the ones she touched on such as reclassification, new PYs, professional development. I am also of the opinion that there are housing options that can be explored that will not necessarily involve the government getting back into housing. This is a business opportunity that communities can look at with foundations and we already do in some cases. So I think that's something we have to continue to explore.

I have a document here about waiting times, which I would be happy to share with the Members, that is fairly recent. It's waiting times as of December 31, 2002. It was initiated by a request through another MLA, but we would be happy to share that with the Members so they can look at that.

I agree as well, we try to do hopefully with this new influx of services and positions and doctors and nurses, we can make a dent in some of the waiting times. In terms of the \$250 co-payment and the gap that is currently in the system, that is an issue that has been recognized. There is a discussion paper with the Social Programs committee that lays out the issues with some potential options of how we could seek to address this. It is an outstanding issue and, as Ms. Lee indicated, there is a specific segment of our population that does not have the benefit of being covered by third-party insurance. We have to, as an Assembly and as a territory, come to grips with what is going to be considered an acceptable minimum level of service for all our residents. We intend to keep moving with that particular discussion paper as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of aspects of the Department of Health and Social Services that I think could be brought up now, and perhaps in a bit more detail when we get on with the report. But the area of governance, Mr. Chairman, is something that interests and concerns all of us and it relates to many different government departments, not just health and social services. Unfortunately, we went through a fairly spectacular situation in our last sitting, Mr. Chairman, something I don't think any of us really cares to recall in great detail, but the decision was made

to dispense with the Stanton hospital board and replace it with a public administrator, which I believe is still the situation there.

So the situation at Stanton still seems to be in some flux. We still have the authorities in existence in other parts of the territory and the Minister has taken the initiative to set up various joint councils to carry through with that. I guess in relation to the main estimates and the budget and the business year ahead, I wanted to ask the Minister his opinion or his status report on how the situation is working these days with the boards. Are there mandates that have been problematic from perhaps our viewpoint here in the Legislature, Mr. Chairman, where we have tried to sort out whose job is what and where accountabilities start and stop between the department, between the Minister and between his authorities. So, perhaps I will just stop there, Mr. Chairman, and see if the Minister can give us a snapshot of how governance in our health system is working. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in my opinion as the Minister, the governance situation has evolved in the direction that I think it is working that we would not have, in my opinion, been able to achieve the amount of progress we have made in the last 14 months or so without having dealt earlier on with the relationship between the department, the Minister and the authorities. We have taken some steps to rationalize the system. We have put through Joint Leadership Council and through the Joint Senior Management Committee, and we have given copies to the Social Programs committee, an accountability framework that has been agreed to. We are working on finalizing the training for trustees, as well as we have worked through accepted roles and responsibilities of the trustees and we have put that in writing. We are working on a standardized selection process.

In regards to Stanton Territorial Health Authority itself, we have adjusted the relationship so that, for the time being, the CEO will report to the Joint Leadership Council. This is basically a committee that will be chaired for that particular issue overseen by the deputy minister and they will provide the oversight as the board chair and the department on the broad direction of Stanton Territorial Health Authority. That is the process that has been taken in that regard and we are going to continue to finalize the training component of the training for trustees. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Thank you. Some of these aspects here of how we are managing governance, I am pleased to hear. For instance, that you are undertaking a training program for trustees. I think that is something that is long overdue and we should probably be looking at doing this in other areas. We, through the authorities and responsibilities that we want to put at the community and the regional level comes the need for training and for familiarity. It is not a quick process of handing these over, so I am pleased to see that happening.

I guess in relation to the Stanton Territorial Health Authority situation, and if I understand the Minister correctly, we have the CEO of Stanton Territorial Health Authority reporting to the Joint Leadership Committee, which is overseen by the deputy

minister. I guess what I wanted to ask there is what aspects of operational authority or accountability are invested in the Joint Leadership Committee and what are invested in the deputy minister? I would like some sense of whose job is whose here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I apologize if I was not clear enough. The deputy minister is continuing to have a role as a public administrator, but the agreement to provide that broad governance oversight was deemed to be most appropriately served and provided by the Joint Leadership Council which already exists and which meets regularly enough to provide that kind of general direction and feedback to the deputy minister. When that happens, I will step aside and the deputy and the Chair will provide that function and give their feedback and input that is required. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. I would like to go on to a different area. It covers the injection of new money specifically into the recruiting of health care professionals. I think we saw some money early in the last session, in the September session, and another \$8.3 million that was put in just before the end of the year. My question or comment, Mr. Chairman, relates to something that I heard repeatedly from Mr. Romanow, the commissioner for the federal inquiry into the national commission into the health care system. He said that while more money is needed for a system, what he really hopes will not happen, should not happen, is that as more money is put into it, it simply becomes higher and higher and higher salaries for health care professionals or administrators or everyone else. This was not something that he envisioned as a solution was that money just keeps going into almost a never ending spiral of one jurisdiction in Canada chasing another with higher pay packages as a way of attracting people.

In the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chairman, are we going to be able to solve or begin to solve our shortage of health care workers in other ways than simply, as I say, this revolving spiral of salary increase? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I share the concern of Mr. Braden and in many cases it is a basic economic issue of supply and demand. We are in a situation of having to compete with all other jurisdictions in Canada, North America and probably the world for that matter because there is, specifically with doctors, a significant shortage. There has been a tremendous ramping up of training for doctors and nurses and they are trying to, I believe, do that with all allied health professions. So, we recognize that we have to remain competitive and that is a hard fiscal reality, but we also recognize that we have to look at retention issues, we have to look at some of the program areas that we have identified that we want to improve services. We have made an effort on the primary health care integrated service delivery to try to link services. We want to deal with birthing services. We want to deal with trying to evolve and

develop nurse practitioners. We want to better recognize and be able to work and integrate the alcohol and drug workers who are going to become prevention workers. We are going to put some mental health workers in, some clinical supervisors to work as well with the social workers that we have added at the community level.

We have recognized that we have to do a better job and we need to do some training with community health representatives and get some more training for those folks. We want to make investments in the development of licensed practical nurses, helping them move from to become a more relevant and integral part of that whole integrated service delivery model.

So, we are trying to balance all these competing priorities, but there are significant economic pressures on us to make sure we are very competitive as it comes to health professionals. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few comments and ask the Minister some questions on the apprehension rates of children in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Chairman, to answer my question of last year, October 24th of last year, the Minister's office had sent me some statistical information on the number of children in care of the Northwest Territories, Department of Health and Social Services. At that time, as of September 30th, 2002, there are 457 children in care.

Mr. Chairman, for a population of 20,000 people, 40,000 people in the Northwest Territories, that seems like a very high number. I would like to ask the Minister if maybe in a few words you can explain to me why there is such a high number of children in the care of the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Member is aware, this is a complex issue. There are clearly more children that would be identified by social workers and child protection workers as being in need of care or in need of protection where there is not an appropriate care giver available, if there is alcohol involved, if children have been left unattended. But one of the things, as well, with the legislation we do have, we have more opportunity to work with parents where you can have initial contact with children, but you have capacity to be able to do work with families, where you have joint agreements on getting services into families and children. But the sad reality is that there is still far too high a need of children that are deemed to require the protection of the state. I will put that out there as an opening response to the Member's question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am glad the Minister used the words, need of protection by the state. In our current reality, Mr. Chairman, we see in the news, at conferences, in everyday life, almost, Mr. Chairman, where we see the Anglican, the Catholic churches, Canada and the

United States and abroad and also the institution of the Government of Canada being sued by people, especially First Nations in this country, for billions of dollars. Those lawsuits resulted from abuse by the state. You could argue cultural genocide, Mr. Chairman. Physical abuse, mental abuse, spiritual abuse, linguistic abuse, cultural abuse; that is some of the sad history of the state when it takes on responsibility for children.

Languages have been lost. Cultural identity and practices have been lost. The skill to parent has been lost. That was Canada's answer to cultural assimilation by First Nations people, true First Nations people. That has been admitted by the Government of Canada of the day, yet we see the statistics, Mr. Chairman: 457 in the Northwest Territories. This is a rough calculation, Mr. Chairman. Out of the identified children in these statistics, 344 of the 457 are of aboriginal ancestry, with 102 of unknown ethnicity. The statistics would indicate that 90 percent of those unknown would be aboriginal as well.

Why is it that this practice of child apprehension continues at such a high rate in the Northwest Territories? We may not have statistical information on how children turn out after going through the protection of the state, whether it is foster care or other institutions taking care of the children. In fact, I will ask that question, Mr. Chairman. Do we have statistical information, have we been tracking those children in care after they leave the state? How many of them end up being contributors to society -- doctors, lawyers, judges, Members of the Legislative Assembly -- versus how many of them end up on our social envelope responsibility? Those that require housing for crimes against society. Do we have those numbers? If not, Mr. Chairman, do we have a process to identify those, a process to retain that statistical information? When we take children away from their parents in the communities and put them with the state, what happens to those children? Do they grow up to be happy people and contribute to society? Do they retain their languages and cultures? Do they know how to parent, how to care for brothers or sisters? Do we have the process to track that kind of impact on their lives? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, clearly, as the Member has articulated, the history of child welfare in the North and in many jurisdictions has not been one that could be looked upon as a shining success. I would like to think that we have learned from some of the significant mistakes made in terms of changing our legislation. In terms of recognizing the need to involve the communities with plan of care committees and hopefully family and children services committees at the community level. Of a commitment to hiring more social workers northern trained, hopefully as many as possible aboriginal social workers.

But the Member is right. The statistics are clear. They are stark. The majority of children in care tends to be aboriginal in the Northwest Territories. We have no clear link in our systems, for example, between child welfare information systems and the justice system where you could cross-reference to see if there is a link or with income support or with SFA to see which children have gone on to higher education. Would it be possible to do that kind of cross-referencing? It probably would with some effort, but the anecdotal information and for those of

us that have been around the system long enough, we would not argue with the anecdotal assumption that a far too high percentage of children, that specifically there are permanent wards, end up graduating into the adult system where they are in need of supported living arrangements or they get into the justice system. That is a significant shortcoming that is yet to be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, the fundamental issue though is, children are deemed to be in need of protection and we have to come up with a way to work with communities and families to make sure that children do not require protection. Those parents and their families recognize that the risk they take if, in fact, they do not provide the care and protection of their children. That is the fundamental issue that we have to try to deal with as opposed to trying to keep fixing things after they are broken, which is very difficult. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think that is my question exactly. We argue for the protection of children that we have to take away from their families, their homes, their home communities and place them with strangers, in institutions or in homes. But it has been proven time and time again that you may, as a state, take the children away from their parents and their homes to protect them from their bad environment. Who protects them from the state? When we have people designated for child protection agencies, who is to decide which children will need protection by the state? Who supervises them? Who tells them, no, you cannot take that child because I think they'll do better at home, or you should take that child because that are in danger there? Who oversees these people's responsibilities? Which cultural values are used when a child is identified in need of protection? Is aboriginal cultural and understanding part of that criteria used to determine the child is in jeopardy or in need of protection? I'm not sure.

When we send those children to the foster homes or wherever the state decides to send them, do they ensure that those children have an understanding of who they are and where they come from? Do we try to teach them their language, their culture, who their parents are, who their brothers and sisters are?

Mr. Chairman, I do believe we do need to have a tracking system. This is not a phenomenon that has occurred just once. This has a long and sordid history. We know the state taking children does not work very well, yet we continue to do so at such an alarmingly high rate in the Northwest Territories that we, as a government, must develop a process, a tracking mechanism so that we know when a child is taken from their family where they're going, who they're with, if they're doing well in school, if they've gone on to higher education or if they've gone on to be more dependent on the state as they get older? What is our success versus failure ratio for these children? Do we even have questions such as that, Mr. Chairman? If not, I think it's time that we start developing a systems to track the children that this state takes on a consistently high level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as a person who has had almost 20 years with Health and Social Services, mainly with social services, I can tell you that there have been improvements. We have a long ways to go, but I can just give you some numbers as an example. In 1998 as of March 31st, of all the children in care, only about 3.5 percent were living at home. On March 31, 2002, that is up to 28 percent. We significantly rewrote in the last Assembly the child welfare legislation to build in the specific checks and balances that my colleague referenced. They need to involve family in the community to recognize where children are from, to avoid any further situations where children were taken into the system and disappeared, only to reappear 18 years later. Some were totally unsure of who they are and where they are from.

I know that that has happened. I know people who it has happened to. We've tried to learn from those mistakes. As the letter I wrote to Mr. Nitah points out, our systems still aren't as tight as they should be in terms of the numbers of children that are classified as unknown. But we've made a significant effort in trying to train and hire northern social workers. We're making efforts across the board with alcohol and drug workers and mental health workers. They start dealing with communities and families more effectively so we can, most fundamentally of all, try to avoid having to take children into care. When we do -- I agree with the Member -- we have to be very capable of making sure we have good plan and care that involves the communities and the families, that our systems allow us to know where the children are and if, in fact, we're being successful. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make a few comments on the department, and then ask some questions when we go through the department. As we've heard many times, Mr. Chairman, with the programs and services that we're trying to deliver in the Northwest Territories, it always comes down to the amount of dollars that we have to deliver the programs on an equitable basis. When I hear the Minister talk about changing programs and completely overhauling a system, whether it be in alcohol and drugs or family abuse or mental health, it kind of concerns me that making wholesale changes it maybe just a way of getting around putting the proper dollars to address the programs that we're trying to put out there.

I know that the Minister has stated that in making some of the changes in alcohol and drugs, for example, and trying to address that through an integrated service, and I've heard him mention that they've worked with frontline workers and that they're all up to speed on what's happening in that area. That's certainly different from what I've been hearing as far as how much input and consultation the frontline workers have had in this. I have to question, over the past few years I've heard many times that when different professions try to integrate a service and when somebody is identified as having a problem in one area and then trying to address a related problem, that there are many issues that come into play as far as privacy issues, trying to get information, giving information on another person. It seems to be a problem that has held us up many times. I know school teachers talk about it all the time. I would like to know if the Minister could comment on what types of issues he sees having to deal with in an integrated service

when it comes to the ability to pass on information from one. If you're going to be dealing with different areas, what the issues are going to be as far as dealing with those privacy issues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, of course the most fundamental issue in the question posed by Mr. Delorey is going to be that of confidentiality. Confidentiality has been an issue that has been on the table since the very first moment they announced the amalgamation of Health and Social Services. It's an issue that can be resolved and dealt with if you have people all working for the same employer with the same oath of office in terms of respecting the confidentiality and all the ethics and conduct that's required. It's something that we have to keep working at. I know it's an issue still in some areas when it comes to case management between practitioners of different kinds. In my opinion, a lot of it is a reason not to do things. It's a reason to prepare the status quo. But the reality is, in my mind, when you have a health centre that has nurses, social workers, CHRs and doctors, that they have to be able to sit down as professionals and colleagues to come up with a course of action clearly respecting the whole issue of confidentiality and privacy, but being able to do their jobs. Or if they're unable to do that, then the integrated service delivery model is nothing but a label and we should just publicly stand up and say we will do everything in iron clad stovepipes and we will continue to have a fragmented service delivery model. But I don't think that's a direction that we can afford to go and that people want to go. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would hope that the department has a good idea as to whether or not they will be able to go forward as an integrated service.

I also have some concerns as to how we're going to attract people to work in this integrated service. For example, I have addressed alcohol and drugs for a number of occasions in this Assembly with the Minister, in the line of putting some criteria in place for qualifications for alcohol and drug workers. I have never been able to get the Minister to say that he would recognize alcohol and drug workers as a profession. Now we're not going to make them alcohol and drug workers anymore, we're going to reclassify them and make them prevention workers, from what I understand. I would like to know from the Minister what types of qualifications are a person going to have to have to be a prevention worker. If we're going to be dealing with an integrated service under the umbrella of mental health, I would suspect that somebody would have to have far more qualifications to deal with an integrated service than they would have to have strictly as an alcohol and drug counselor. I think that the services are very distinct and there may be some similarities, but I'm sure that there are many areas where they're not connected whatsoever, although we would like to think that everything comes under mental health. So I would like to know from the Minister what types of qualifications is a prevention worker going to need, for example. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're in the process of developing the job description. It will

lay out the requirements, skills and responsibilities of the position. I would just like to restate the commitment that I made earlier in the House to the concern raised. The intent is to work with existing staff to help them develop their skills, to do an assessment on an individual basis of where they are in terms of their professional need for development. By April we hope to have a job description outlining all the duties I've just touched on, which we would then bring forward to committee for review. But the concept is as I've outlined. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do we have any figures now? Does the department have any figures at all as to how many people are working out there in the field right now who will fully qualify as prevention workers right from the get go when this new integrated service is implemented? How many will require training? How many have indicated that they would be willing to take further training? And what do we do with them if they don't want to take further training? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the numbers we have is that at present about 45 who would be prevention workers currently in the system. We are going to develop the job description, and then we're going to do a review on a position-by-position basis of the capacities, capabilities and career aspirations of the various incumbents. We will work from that in terms of determining if they want to make this a career, as well, or not. Based on that decision we will proceed. But the intent is to go to the incumbents and to offer them every opportunity to make transition into the role of a prevention worker. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In another area, I think it's great news that I hear that we're starting to use nurse practitioners. I think we have one in Hay River now, and I think that's a great way. I agree with that approach. But on another area, I know in Hay River for a number of years now, we have been without the proper professionals for our residents to be able to give birth in Hay River, and it does create for a number of women having to travel to Yellowknife or south to give birth. I know that we're talking about passing legislation to be able to use midwives, and I think there's even a midwife scheduled to come to Hay River. But I'm pretty sure in the south anyway, that wherever they use midwives there are some pretty stringent rules as to where they can use midwives and what type of professional service has to be available at those locations. I don't know what the procedures will be in the North here when we start using midwives. But I know in Hay River we would need right now a GP anesthetist and a GP surgeon if we're going to be able to have women give birth in Hay River. It's one of the basic services that we would really like to have in Hay River. Is the Minister aware of what services in Hay River would be needed along with a midwife, before we could have a full service as far as women giving birth in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, dealing with what would be termed a normal birth; in Fort Smith, for example, there are currently a number

of births being done in the community just with midwives, with some assistance and back-up where required from the health system. What we are moving towards is legislation for midwives, protocols with the doctors and all the other caregivers, the nurses, so it is very clear that midwives are part of the team that provides the service. So we're working our way through that. We have a project in the works through the primary health care transition fund, to try to get that up and running. We hope to have legislation ready for introduction in this House for midwives. They've been doing extensive work over the last year or so, working on the protocols to integrate midwives into the operation with nurses and doctors. This would be, for the most part, for normal births.

If, in fact, the intention was to move to a Yellowknife model where they deal with all the other births, then it is a much more expensive proposition, as the Member indicated, requiring an anesthesiologist and obstetricians and surgeons and such. At this point, that is not the plan when it comes to birthing services outside of Yellowknife. We want to try to provide a fully staffed complement here in Yellowknife, and then work with the communities to develop birthing services, a level for the more normal births. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to follow up on something that I didn't have time for the first time around. It has to do with the fact that the 11 positions that were promised of child protection workers as a result of the League of Child Welfare report. Mr. Chairman, I do believe that we remember it very clearly when this government made a commitment, and I recall that there were child protection workers in the gallery and it was, I thought, a pretty strong commitment on the part of this government to follow up on that. My colleague, Mr. Dent, had already mentioned this. I just want to articulate and make it clear for the record that I do not agree with the government withdrawing the commitment and deferring this to next year. I do believe that these child welfare workers and social workers in the city, as well as in the communities, made a very clear case about their workload and the need for having adequate workers there to take care of the case loads. So I do appreciate that the Minister has mentioned that this is deferred for one year and he will bring it back next year, but we're going to be looking at a new Assembly, a new government, and it is very disappointing. I wanted to put that on the record, that I feel very badly that this area has fallen victim to some of the cost cutting measures.

Another thing relating to that that I wanted to speak about is something that is not easy to explain and I don't want to be misunderstood, but there seems to be some sense in the city that there is too much apprehension of children going on. I'll be the first one to support apprehension of children if any child is in danger. It is when the child is in danger and needs protection that that needs to be done. It concerns me a great deal when people speak about whether or not we're doing the right thing by it. At the same time, I have...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee, the Chair is going to recognize the clock and rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger, and your witnesses for appearing.

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the House back to order. At this time I will ask for the report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): Do we have a seconder for that? Mr. Nitah. All in favour? All opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 23, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs at adjournment this evening, and at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight tomorrow morning.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 18, 2003:

1. Prayer.
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills.
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act

- Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

- Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act

19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act

- Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

- Committee Report 3-14(6), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 4-14(6), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 5-14(6), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 18, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

