



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

6th Session

Day 13

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Pages 365 – 404

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Tony Whitford

(Kam Lake)

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi

(Sahtu)

Premier

Executive Council

Minister Responsible for

Intergovernmental Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Status of

Women

Hon. Jim Antoine

(Nahendeh)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Minister Responsible for the

Intergovernmental Forum

Minister of Resources, Wildlife and

Economic Development

Hon. Roger T. Allen

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Justice

Minister Responsible for NWT

Housing Corporation

Minister Responsible for Public

Utilities Board

Minister Responsible for Youth

Hon. Joseph L. Handley

(Weledeh)

Minister Responsible for Energy and

Hydro Secretariats

Minister of Finance

Minister Responsible for the Financial

Management Board

Minister Responsible for the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation

Minister of Transportation

Minister Responsible for the Workers'

Compensation Board

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister Responsible for Persons with

Disabilities

Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Jake Ootes

(Yellowknife Centre)

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Hon. Vince R. Steen

(Nunakput)

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister of Municipal and Community

Affairs

Mr. Brendan Bell

(Yellowknife South)

Mr. Bill Braden

(Great Slave)

Mr. Paul Delorey

(Hay River North)

Mr. Charles Dent

(Frame Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Leon Lafferty

(North Slave)

Ms. Sandy Lee

(Range Lake)

Mr. Michael McLeod

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Steven Nitah

(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Floyd Roland

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David M. Hamilton

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees

Mr. Dave Inch

Law Clerks

Ms. Katherine R. Peterson, Q.C.

Mr. Charles Thompson

Sergeant-at-Arms

Ms. Nicole Latour-Theede

Editor of Hansard

Michele Vanthull

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	365
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	365
24-14(6) - MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE	365
25-14(6) - PAN-TERRITORIAL SPORT STRATEGY.....	365
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	366
MR. DELOREY ON INDEPENDENT HOUSING PROGRAM REQUIRED IN HAY RIVER	366
MR. ROLAND ON EXEMPTING ELDERS FROM THE HARMONIZATION STRATEGY.....	366
MR. MCLEOD ON OPPOSITION TO THE HARMONIZATION OF INCOME SUPPORT AND SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY	366
MR. BRADEN ON SKIING MEDALS AT CANADA WINTER GAMES.....	367
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON IMPROVED COMMUNICATION BY GOVERNMENT REQUIRED	367
MR. LAFFERTY ON GNWT OPERATIONAL REVIEW AND TRANSITION PLANNING.....	368
MS. LEE ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.....	368
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	369
ORAL QUESTIONS	369
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	382, 402
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	382
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	402
ORDERS OF THE DAY	402

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 27, 2003****Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, 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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 24-14(6): Ministers Absent From The House**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have an emergency statement. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi is ill and will be absent from the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jim Antoine will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the Western Aboriginal Affairs Ministers' Meeting in Victoria.

In the absence of the Premier and Deputy Premier, I will be acting for the Premier and will take any questions Members may have today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 25-14(6): Pan-Territorial Sport Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to announce that the three northern territories have reached agreement with the federal Secretary of State for Amateur Sport on a new Pan-Territorial Sport Strategy.

On February 22nd, the three territories concluded discussions with the Honourable Paul DeVilliers on a funding arrangement that will allow us to increase participation in amateur sport at every level and in every community in our territories.

The agreement includes funding for the current fiscal year, which will help us to lay the groundwork for full development of the strategy over the next year. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that Sport Canada will contribute \$178,000 to the three territories this year for the development of the strategy. The Government of the Northwest Territories will receive \$106,000 of this new funding.

The new strategy will support the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in our goal of encouraging northern residents to be more physically active and to lead healthier lives. It will also enable us to increase our efforts targeted at

ensuring that residents in all our communities have the opportunities to participate in sporting events.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the following elements of the strategy for which planning is already underway:

- the Esteem Team, a role model program that uses high profile athletes to make inspiring and educational presentations to youth, will visit six communities. Over the next three years, the team will make presentations to every school in the Northwest Territories;
- in cooperation with the Aboriginal Sport Circle of the western Arctic, we are contributing to a traditional Dene games camp to be held in Fort McPherson this weekend. In the future, we hope to work with the circle and Sport North to increase the quality and number of multi-sport camps, and make them available in a larger number of communities;
- in cooperation with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we have promoted active living activities in schools across the Northwest Territories for Education Week;
- to encourage our high performance athletes, we will make a contribution towards the hosting of the Western Canadian Ski Championships which will be held in Yellowknife next month. Over the next three years, we will provide more opportunities for high performance coach and athlete training through clinics and camps;
- the Kid Sport Fund is a national charity that raises funds to provide equipment and participation fees for children who would otherwise not be able to participate in sports. In partnership with Sport North, who manages this program in the NWT, we will work to increase awareness of this excellent program.
- finally, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that the Northwest Territories is taking the lead for all three territories in the development of coaching resources to promote traditional sports including Inuit and Dene games, Inuit wrestling and dog sledding. The new strategy will allow this work to continue at an accelerated pace.

Mr. Speaker, the Pan-Territorial Sport Strategy provides an excellent opportunity for us to work with our many partners to increase opportunities for participation in all our communities. I would like to acknowledge the support of Secretary of State DeVilliers, who met with us in Iqaluit last spring and since then has worked hard to make this new program a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Independent Housing Program Required In Hay River**

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is incumbent upon us as elected Members of this Assembly to point it out when we see a demonstrated need in our communities and come up with a plan or programs to eliminate the situation. Mr. Speaker, one such program that would fill a void in Hay River is the Independent Housing Program currently offered by the NWT Housing Corporation in various communities. This program assists low income families with housing needs to obtain a modest home. There are three market communities in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, that being Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River. However, the Independent Housing Program that enables families to purchase homes is only offered in Inuvik and not Hay River. The argument that if the Independent Housing Program operated in Hay River, it would cause market disruption does not wash with me, Mr. Speaker. We need to find a way to meet the needs of social housing market clients. The Housing Corporation's 2000 NWT housing needs strategy clearly identified that Hay River has a significant number of households in core need, 182 to be exact. I am sure that number has risen since the survey was conducted.

Mr. Speaker, one solution to the question of market disruption is to build into a client's mortgage a caveat whereby they would have an investment in the home and thereby pose no risk to the corporation of selling the home for less than market value. This would protect the financial investment and equity of private market homeowners. Mr. Speaker, it has always been my belief that this government should support homeownership and we should be promoting the idea of helping people to help themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard there are a number of people in Hay River who are out doing the right thing and earning a living for their families. They are falling through the cracks. Mr. Speaker, some of these people are single mothers who are able to qualify through a commercial bank for a mortgage, but are turned down by the Housing Corporation simply because their income is slightly below the core need income threshold of \$48,500, disqualifying them from the Housing Corporation's Expanded Down Payment Assistance Program.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is something inherently wrong with our system when we can do nothing for people with a lower income other than to encourage them to apply for public housing. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I hear any nays? No, I don't. You have consent, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. In Hay River, Mr. Speaker, we need a program that will fill in the void created between public housing and households that have a slightly lower income than \$48,500, but would still be able to support a home. The Independent Housing Program is a program that we should have in here, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Exempting Elders From The Harmonization Strategy

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to make a Member's statement regarding the elders in the Territories and how news gets around fairly quickly, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, in this House, the issue of harmonization was raised and before the day was done, I had a message that someone wanted me to call them back soon and making that call, I was told quite straightforward about their concerns of what they were hearing this government was planning to do.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I was told to remember what elders have done for our communities and continue to do today. Mr. Speaker, they continue to help out families by taking care of grandchildren, by still helping out family members, their own children today. They continue to have a productive part in our society through many of the elders' groups that are established in the communities and by spreading on their traditional knowledge in schools or through workshops in the evenings, put on by the cultural groups. So they have a very significant role to play.

Mr. Speaker, when the message of the harmonization was mentioned in this House, I had a concern raised to me: what is this and what are you doing again to the elders? Mr. Speaker, it was put to me quite bluntly. Why should elders pay for the mismanagement of funds by our government? They feel that they've produced, they've put into our communities across the North and they feel that they have done their share and why at this late stage are we going back to knock on their door and put bills in front of them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm torn between the realities we are faced with as a government and what is happening to our constituents, but I feel I must raise this concern on behalf of the elders in my constituency and hope that the government will look at these issues because the comment made was, if you are going to take what we earn as elders, if there is sewing and so on as extra income, and start counting that towards their rent, then be ready to pay on the social end when elders start having to pay all this other money and can't afford to help take care of their own children and grandchildren. Thank you.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Opposition To The Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing Strategy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I once again want to voice my concern, my opposition to the harmonization initiative and the direction that the NWT Housing Corporation has taken towards the treatment of seniors and the students of the Northwest Territories.

In review of the standing committee briefing, it was stated that a quick random sample of 14 communities was taken to obtain feedback, which the Housing Corporation confirmed, and I quote, "the reaction we are getting is very positive." Low income single parents, who have been told their new rents are

going to be affected April 1st are very anxious about why a rent increase is going to take effect. Mr. Speaker, I know when I have to pay more for services, I get quite anxious, I certainly don't get excited.

The consultation process appears to have been very ineffective in small communities and I suspect in the larger centres as well. The majority of the tenants are not aware of the long term and the full impact that the harmonization will have on their rents. Under harmonization, the tenants will be required to declare winnings from various gaming schemes, such as bingos and lotteries, incomes which are currently exempted by the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, my concern and the concern of the aboriginal constituents is the obligation that the federal government has with respect to housing for Aboriginal people. It appears that somewhere in the transfer of funds to the GNWT, the federal government has tried to absolve themselves from the responsibility of providing housing to aboriginal people. The NWT Housing Corporation, in turn, appears to be slowly turning public housing into a business and is losing site of its intent, which is to provide affordable housing based in part on federal government responsibility to aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, it appears from the last sitting of the House, the NWT Housing Corporation does not take the concerns raised about the harmonization initiative seriously. It appears the implementation has been certain and to provide justification for this certainty, some consultation has taken place and we're expected to believe that tenants are happy and they are happy to see that their rents will be increased. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Deh Cho is seeking unanimous consent. Do we hear any nays? No, I don't. You have unanimous consent, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, at this time, I suggest that the implementation of the harmonization initiative not be considered until such time as the full and long-term impact has been made clear to all seniors and students or, as an alternative, the factoring in of incomes of both seniors and students be deferred.

Further, Mr. Speaker, it is important that the NWT Housing Corporation revisit its mandate and its responsibility to aboriginal people based on the federal funding for housing before attempting to push an initiative such as harmonization on aboriginal constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Skiing Medals At Canada Winter Games

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring a bulletin from the finish line of the Canada Winter Games in New Brunswick. NWT skaters again show their skill and strength, Mr. Speaker. Two more medals were earned this morning. Sarah Daitch of Fort Smith...

---Applause

Yeah, let's give them some applause! Sarah Daitch of Fort Smith brought in the bronze in the women's 10 kilometre pursuit race, and Mark Argue from Yellowknife also added a bronze in the men's 15 kilometre pursuit. Mr. Speaker, Mike adds this to the silver medal he fought for from among 60 competitors on Monday in the men's 10 kilometre classic ski race. This makes three medals for the NWT contingent, so far. It's the first win that we've had at the Canada Winter Games in 20 years and I am especially proud to carry this news, Mr. Speaker, as Mike who is with his parents John and Marsha down in New Brunswick. The thrill and excitement of the moment at the finish line shrieking through loud and clear at the finish line when John phoned me with the news this morning... And did I mention that the Argue family are constituents in the riding of Great Slave? Both Sarah and Mike won't be coming home right away, Mr. Speaker. They are going on to other national and I believe international events for the NWT and for Canada.

Over the next two weeks, this week and next week, Mr. Speaker, the NWT contingent of 72 athletes, coaches and support staff will be competing in eight games and their numbers include a three-person arts delegation. We are proud of all of them for doing their best and for representing the NWT so well, Mr. Speaker.

I have a little bit of time left here, and it is perhaps no coincidence that these wins for the NWT coincide with the news we hear from Mr. Steen, the honourable Minister for sport in the NWT that we have a new deal, a substantial deal to help us with our sports strategy across the North and I am really looking forward to what this \$106,000 is going to do here over the next three years, including the ski team, which I'm sure that Sarah and Mike are going to be part of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Improved Communication By Government Required

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about some of the broader issues affecting the way our government operates and some of what may seem to be new trends. These subtle changes in the way we do business may make perfect sense to the people who are involved firsthand, from a front row seat. But, if not communicated well, people are left to speculate as to their significance. Better communication on the part of this government is necessary. I am referring to the questions which were recently raised concerning the signing of the memorandum of understanding with the Gwich'in and the creation of a new regional director's position in the Beaufort-Delta. What surfaces in the MOU seemingly sets off a few alarms and triggers some debate is the involvement of an aboriginal government in the GNWT capital planning process and first dibs on 50 percent of the government contracts let in that region. The press release regarding the creation of the regional director's position at almost the same time clearly indicates that this office will be responsible for coordinating communication and activities amongst the various levels of governments in the Beaufort-Delta. This position was filled, not

through conventional GNWT hiring practices, but in consultation with governments in the region.

For years in the North, we talked about political evolution, aboriginal self-government and First Nations governments assuming more responsibilities and authorities in their respective regions. Therefore, when we start to see movement on this front, it should not come as too big of a surprise. However people in the public who follow politics and even some of us who have sat around debating the options of constitutional reform and governance models for many years sometimes picture these things in a fairly abstract versus specific way. So let's just analyze these recent announcements in light of previous precedents, good process practices and maybe in terms of how better communication might have put them in the context of a continuum of change that's been actually going on for years.

First, on the issue of having an aboriginal government involved in this government's capital planning process, it's been the practice of this government to notify municipalities and local leaders of their intent for capital projects for some time now. It has been done in an attempt to determine if there is agreement on what priorities for equipment, renovations and capital infrastructure are for people who are served by these programs and facilities. Consulting with an Aboriginal government is the very same thing, only perhaps with a more regional perspective which is good for many reasons. No community is an island or stand-alone. That what is available in the region, would or could be devolved to smaller communities is a very important lens. Capital planning is a process. We may have views about who should be doing it, deputy ministers, Ministers, MLAs, but bottom line, Mr. Speaker, it's a job that needs to get done. Thank you. I will conclude this statement tomorrow. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On GNWT Operational Review And Transition Planning

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the government and how it operates. Often while we are working within the system, whether it be shelving studies in the library, flying to Ottawa for meetings, repairing roads or providing health care, we forget that this system was designed by past Legislatures and we can make changes when changes are needed. Right now, there is a review being done of the government system to see how it can best meet future challenges. I noted that an e-mail survey was posted for all government workers to respond to. As well, MLAs had the opportunity to meet with the research team to provide input. I think it would also be helpful if input was gathered from organizations and Northerners who do not work in the government. They are the ones we are providing the services for.

Mr. Speaker, for too long this government has done things from within. A good example of this is how infrastructure planning is done. Despite opposition from the Regular Members for the past two years, Cabinet has identified Cabinet projects that were going to rich communities. The input of community members is not heard and the needs of the communities are not considered. Instead, internal decisions determine which projects go where. I have also noticed that when public

consultations do occur, it seems as though the operations provided are already ones the government supports. We are not creating a people's agenda, Mr. Speaker, but we are creating it for the government to respond to. We are creating a government agenda for people to fit into.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that, although input is being gathered now on the changing role of the government, no changes will be made until the next Assembly. This is part of the problem. The new Assembly will inherit a legacy of work from the last Assembly which eats up all the funding. We've seen that in this Assembly where small communities cannot get things that they want because of cost overruns and large territorial projects such as the jail. This initiative started with the past Assembly and we have no choice but to implement it. In a sense, it is set up for each Assembly to complete the work of previous Assemblies. It would be more effective if we could make the changes to do now. For example, I understand that the social services and income support used to be under the same roof, but were separated because caseworkers spent the most of their time on income issues. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for North Slave is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I hear any nays? No, I don't. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Now we have the harmonization initiative which places income support and public housing clients together. A better way might be to keep social services and income support together, but provide enough staff so that jobs can be addressed. Sometimes we don't have to overhaul the system, we just need to make adjustments to the policies so that the government operations meet the needs of all Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to reiterate something I have been pursuing the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on over the last few days in the House and many months prior to that. It has to do with the student financial assistance for post-secondary students with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, currently those students with disabilities who manage to get into the conventional post-secondary educational institutions are covered under the student financial assistance. There is also a separate grant to meet extra needs. The concern I have is with those students with disabilities who work just as hard to obtain education that would make them fully employable and maximize their human potential, but not in conventional post-secondary institutions as recognized under the SFA.

The department has taken the position and continues to maintain that some of these institutions do not qualify as a post-secondary education. This is in spite of the fact that in July of last year, the SFA appeals board ruled to the contrary in reversing the department's decision. The board determined that: "based on the evidence, the transitional vocation program

is a post-secondary school education for the purpose of the regulations." Mr. Speaker, I believe that this was the right decision and before looking into the interpretation of the SFA regulation section 12, that is in line with the general principle and the intent of the act itself.

Rather than respecting the decision and adjusting the policy guidelines accordingly, the Minister and the department decided to do the opposite. They have decided to dismiss the board's decision and treat it as though it's something erroneous and as a misinterpretation of the act. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, the Minister continues to exclude them from the SFA and by way of grants to NGOs, but this is not sufficient. This is, in effect, telling them that they are not equal. They are not as valued as those students without a disability. This also is effectively placing their future at the whim of the government policy and government financial stability of the day.

Mr. Speaker, this is wrong and I call on the Minister to revisit his position and make it right. I ask him to send a strong message that the students with disabilities are entitled to and deserve an equal place and treatment under the law; that we stand behind them while they go through inclusive schooling and beyond; that they have a place in our law and our regulations equal to that of every other student who struggles through the post-secondary education and into their working life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the following Hay River North residents who have made the long trip over here from Hay River today as members of the Diamond Jenness Handbell Choir. I am sure Members will agree with me that they did a fantastic job. I would like to recognize Amanda Butler, Katy Garrison, Kari Williams, Kayla Gostick, the choir director Ms. Jennifer Tweedie and their two chaperones, Dixie Butler and Louise Gostick. You did a fine job and welcome to the Legislature.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of this fine group up here, some of them are my constituents. I would like to recognize Jennifer Taptuna, Bryson Asels, who should get an award for being the only guy in the choir...

---Applause

...and Cori Bourne.

---Applause

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize Bob and Jennifer Decker who are here from my riding and they are here to observe their nephew who is paging in the Assembly today.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to recognize all the people who haven't been recognized. Thank you for coming today and I wish the people all the best in their travels. Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 103-14(6): Implementation Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some questions trying to seek more information regarding the harmonization issue for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I would like to know -- since this was initially pulled back last year and there has been some work done to bring it forward again and some of the numbers have changed -- if they have gone out to further consult with the groups across the Territories, specifically with elders.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 103-14(6): Implementation Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our functional role in the overall issue of harmonization is to communicate to communities and the tenants that there will be some rent restructuring effective April 1st when the implementation date is scheduled to occur. We have been communicating that through the LHOs to what they agree and that has been disseminated into the community. I will ask our officials to give us a proper response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 103-14(6): Implementation Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform us if every group or LHO is delivering the same message? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 103-14(6): Implementation Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there was a communiqué developed to ensure that each LHO is consistent in their message. There was a number of procedural information items provided to each LHO that they were supposed to be communicating that to not only the seniors, but also the students and also the regular tenants. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 103-14(6): Implementation Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us if the Housing Corporation itself has done any further consultation with those groups across the North? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 103-14(6): Implementation Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of yesterday afternoon, when one of the questions was raised to the Premier, I went up and called our department to inquire and I have been informed that there are ongoing consultations with community groups as to how much follow-up there is or has been, but I will ensure that as long as we proceed with this policy change, I will continue to work with all officials and LHOs and I will ensure that information is provided to each tenant.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the harmonization initiative. Last session I asked this question of the Minister responsible for harmonization and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment answered. I will let the Minister responsible for that program answer this question. As part of the federal transfer of funds to this government, I have been contacted by several of the chiefs in the NWT that wanted me to state that there is an obligation in there to provide to the aboriginal people in the North, and housing is part of that obligation. For some time now, the federal government has been trying to absolve themselves from that obligation by building it into the formula funding for this government. We, in turn, seem to be moving away from that mandate. Can the Minister tell me if this harmonization initiative is within the mandate that we've inherited by taking in the federal dollars? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The harmonization program is not a federally funded or federally driven policy change. That's the government policy. Our responsibility is to implement the policy changes and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have continually worked with the stakeholders in trying to address the key questions and we will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that we have decided which Minister is going to take the lead on it. I am also happy to hear that this is this government's policy. That's clear now. So I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me, could he define for us what is the principle behind this bill? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the policy was to set out an equalization of those who can afford to pay and also those who receive support from this government to ensure that we have a harmonized approach when we equate incomes and that income is equated through how they would assess rents based on that income. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for years, this government and the federal government have encouraged aboriginal people to move away from their houses into social housing and encouraged people to move into the communities. It's always stated that we would provide them with affordable houses and, in many cases, Aboriginal people are very cautious and didn't want to do so, but they were reassured that they would have houses. Now we are telling them that you are going to have to start paying, and your aboriginal rights no longer matter. Our students are going to have to pay rent based on their income. We don't have an alternate plan for seniors to move out of their social housing into independent housing. There is no program in the smaller communities. I understand there's been a program in Inuvik this year in the Minister's riding. I don't believe that's available in my riding. We are trying to get students back into school. We are trying to get more students involved in post-secondary school. How does this program fit in with that? How does this program help us bring more students to college?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to take some time to respond to this because I think it's important that people are aware that we do have an Affordable Housing Strategy, and a Seniors' Housing Strategy was developed in the year 2000 that would put 96 senior units on the ground in the life of this term. We also wanted to introduce a Singles' Housing Strategy that would also address the singles' needs and we have done that. Also, we amended or else we've introduced or modified existing housing policies that addressed 16 different programs delivered through the NWT Housing Corporation. We have deliberately gone into all the communities to discuss housing issues, raise the profile of the Housing Corporation, raised the profile of the LHOs, raised the profile of the housing needs and my evaluation to date is the fact that there has been a serious lack of follow-up. I must say that we have gone and worked diligently with all the Members of this House to address all the key local housing problems. Hopefully with the approval of the affordable housing strategy, we will put some 761 housing units on the ground within the next four years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to agree with the Minister that there has been some breakdown in the line of communication. I don't believe it's been clear what the whole harmonization initiative is all about and that hasn't been relayed to the communities. I am glad there are units available, 96 units available and I am hoping we will see some in my riding. There has been no consideration taken in for social conditions or the actual conditions of the units. Many seniors are very upset about that. My final question for the Minister is in light of the fact that many seniors want to move out of social housing and into independent units. How many of these 96 units that he's building will be in my riding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 104-14(6): Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The base of the allocation was made in the year 2000, based on the housing needs survey. Yes, as we go along and we find there is a great demand for seniors or singles, then we address that at that point. Each year, through our allocations, we have been able to deliver a number of units throughout the Northwest Territories and it's based on demand and on need. I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that according to the information we have, we have delivered a number of different housing projects in each Member's riding. We have not been doing this indiscriminately. We want to make sure that the Member is aware that we have given every community equal opportunity to participate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Minister had a good day in the House yesterday. It seems like we are picking on him today. As I indicated in my Member's statement, there has been a demonstrated need in Hay River for the Housing Corporation's independent housing program, or the IHP for short. The delivery of the IHP program in Hay River would go a long way in eliminating the demand for public housing and to create options for lower income households that currently fall between the cracks. I am totally in support of this program being implemented in Hay River and it would not create any market disruption, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister please indicate to this House why the IHP program, that would allow lower income families to purchase or build modest homes, is offered in quasi-market communities such as Fort Smith and market communities such as Inuvik but not in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: I must first of all thank the Member for Yellowknife South for being so gracious to me yesterday. Now I see I am paying the price today. Mr. Speaker, as I expressed earlier, I have continually worked with all communities to ensure that one of our 16 programs would fit the needs of that community and I am prepared to evaluate the outcomes. If the Member needs more independent housing programs in Hay River, yes, we may be able to modify the expanded assistance down payment program to meet the IHP demand. We are prepared to balance the level of delivery we do in that community. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, based on the Housing Corporation's 2000 NWT housing needs survey, there were 182 households in core need in Hay River. The criteria for acceptance to purchase or build a home under the Independent Housing Program is a household income between \$24,000 and \$48,000. There are a lot of households in Hay River that would qualify for the IHP, but it's not offered in Hay River. Would the Minister please indicate to this House if he is aware of how many households could be helped in Hay River if the IHP was offered and, of that figure, how many are the Housing Corporation having to turn down because the IHP is not offered in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the specific numbers with me, but I want to make the Member aware that besides the IHP, we also have a mortgage assistance program that we offer to clients who may fall through the cracks. We have been working with several of those clients and we will continue to do so. The important point is that this mortgage assistance program assists loans for new construction or purchase of existing property, extensions, renovations and repairs related to health and safety and energy efficient devices. That is another program that I am not sure has been communicated widely, but that's another option to our IHP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, that program the Minister is talking about was able to help three clients in Hay River last year. They were the only ones who fit into that program. So the needed program in Hay River is the IHP. Mr. Speaker, if there is a caveat built into the independent housing program to protect the financial investment and equity of the private market, it stands to reason the program could be introduced in Hay River to help those in core need. Will the Minister agree to institute the independent

housing program in Hay River thereby assisting a large number of low income households in Hay River to obtain modest housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, more than likely I am prepared to recommend and suggest that we reprofile some independent housing funds to facilitate other means of delivery and construction, and I agree that we may be able to institute some of those next fall. But we do continue to support the high school home builders program and have delivery models that are affordable to manage IHP clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad for the Minister's answer on that and I assume that the Minister is not taking into consideration and then introducing this program in Hay River and causing market disruption and he is prepared to move forward on the IH program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 105-14(6): Need For Independent Housing Program In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to do that on a case-by-case basis. I think we need to really evaluate the clients' needs and certainly, in respect of what the Member is saying, I certainly want to sit down with him as well as our district office to ensure we are not causing any market disruptions through the introduction of the IH program in the community. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Mr. McLeod.

Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation to tell me what the Housing Corporation's responsibility or mandate or obligation is to the Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories through the treaty process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under our social housing agreement, the Housing Corporation provides...We mentioned the level of funding received through the federal contribution program, with our matching dollars to support all housing developments, including the public housing in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason the Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories, people with treaty status, can't acquire federal funding money that is allocated to Aboriginal people on the reserves and off reserves in the South is because they tell us it's rolled into the dollars committed to this government. The Minister in his answer never mentioned any obligation. His department doesn't seem to have a mandate, obligation or responsibility to people in the Northwest Territories. I would like to repeat my question, if he would answer and tell me what the NWT Housing Corporation's responsibility is to the Aboriginal people in the NWT.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to provide an essential service to all residents of the Northwest Territories, including those who qualify under treaties. Also for the Aboriginal people, we do provide essentially a number of dollars each year. We are also looking at continuing to improve and keeping up the quality of housing to all residents. I think it's important to note that we do have appropriations each year that provides for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by the answer the Minister has given me, I am convinced that the Minister feels that there is no difference, no obligation, between an Aboriginal person and a non-Aboriginal person when it comes to housing. I beg to differ. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider deferring the harmonization until he's had time to sit down and meet with an organization of chiefs or the Dene Nation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may refer to Hansard 95-14(6), the question was raised to the Premier and I alluded to that earlier. The Premier will be addressing that with all Cabinet Ministers once he comes back healthy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just a clarification. Are you deferring the question to the Premier? Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Speaker, no, I am not. I am referring to the question posed to the Premier dated yesterday and I believe it will be discussed between Cabinet colleagues to provide an answer to the Member's question. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just a clarification to the Minister. You can answer the question or take the question as notice or not answer the question. You cannot defer a question to someone who is not in the House. Either answer the question, take it as notice or don't answer the question. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the clarification, I will discuss it with my Cabinet colleagues and respond back. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Clarification, are you taking the question as notice? Mr. Allen, are you taking the question as notice?

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Speaker, I will discuss it further with my colleagues.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 106-14(6): Treaty Obligations Regarding Housing

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the Members of the House will agree it's been difficult getting answers from the Minister regarding the harmonization initiative. In the statement and in some of the briefings, we've had all kinds of claims that were made about this program. Since the Minister is not answering my other questions, could he explain to me where these people are who he claims are so excited and happy to see that they are going to get a rent increase and they can't wait for it to come into effect? What part of the NWT are they from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am going to have to rule your question out of order. It's not within the framework of your original question. Your original question was based on aboriginal obligations to housing. Could you restate the question, Mr. McLeod? Item 7, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and it's with regard to the statement I made earlier. Mr. Speaker, during our debate of the budget for Education and in particular discussions about the government's position on student financial assistance for students with disabilities, the Minister mentioned that this government gets \$1 million from the Government of Canada and because of that, we have to follow the definition of post-secondary education in accordance with that policy. So I would like to confirm with the Minister that it is, in fact, \$1 million that we get from the Government of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is \$1 million, I understand.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the budget that we discussed, there is \$11.813 million that's been allocated by this government toward that program. Could the Minister confirm why it is that when we spend \$11 million and the Government of Canada gives only \$1 million that we have to adhere to their policy and not do our own thing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program is a federally funded program that goes to all provinces and territories and they apply certain guidelines, rules and regulations to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that. I have been told that. But why is it that we are putting in \$11 million of our own money? Why can we not make our own laws and regulations about that \$11 million we are putting in? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's to keep the integrity of the program and it's consistent with every other jurisdiction across the country, including the other two territories. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What about the integrity about this government's position that we treat everyone equally and that we believe in equality, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, the Minister still has not answered why, when we are putting 10 times more than what the Government of Canada is putting into our Student Financial Assistance Program, why can we not make our own law and why does the Minister not understand that he has the power to do that?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 107-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have concern for all students, no matter what level they are at. The Student Financial Assistance Program was designed to be consistent across the country. We adhere to that. We also

provide student assistance of \$8,000 for those persons who have disabilities. We increased that from \$5,000 to \$8,000. That's for the SFA Program. Additionally, we've set up a \$100,000 program to support the Council for Persons with Disabilities and, through that program, students looking for alternative types of programs can access that and we have the assistance of the council for that. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this government didn't partake in the federal program, employment assistance for persons with disabilities, which is perhaps one of the unfortunate things, but they didn't partake in that because the funding that would have been received from it would have been clawed back. We are looking at revitalizing that, Mr. Speaker, and that can add a lot of availability of funding for the type of program that Ms. Lee is referring to. I think it's important for us to pursue that and to ensure that we do get that type of funding to fill those kinds of voids, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Lafferty.

Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Roger Allen, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. My question to the Minister is, upon going towards harmonization, they've collected data to inform the Members on how it's going to affect our constituents. I would like to ask the Minister how his department collects all this data.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that all data is collected through a series of consultations with the communities, stakeholders and those interested agencies who are responsible for delivering housing programs in smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information the Minister has given me is not the same as the information I received from my communities. My community is saying that the information there is old and the data has not been collected yet. They are still putting data into their computers and some of the computers around the Territories are not able to calculate some of the increases or decreases. Can the Minister tell me if that's the case? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware at all that specific data has been entered, but I will keep the Member informed of the progress we are making to make

sure that we have all the specific data available to us. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have great concern for my riding of North Slave. The information is not there, the correct data is not collected. Would the Minister tell the House that his department will go into my riding or some other small communities and make sure that information we get is correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, our responsibility is to ensure that the LHOs and tenants are aware of this policy change. We are responsible for providing the training, so I will ensure that our people will be collecting the appropriate data, compiling it and reporting back, so that we can provide a positive answer. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if the two departments are still going to continue with the harmonization project, whether they have all the information or not on April 1st? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 108-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Data Collection

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will discuss that with my Cabinet colleagues. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Bell.

Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it's about the ongoing situation at Stanton Regional Hospital. The Minister was very successful in finding new money for health care professionals and increasing the number of funded positions, but it seems from a recent media interview with the CEO at Stanton, that we are still having a difficult time attracting people. One of the biggest challenges appears to be, as it has been for some time, the lack of housing in the city. I am wondering if the Minister could give us any indication as to what he is doing to address the situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven't seen that interview. We concluded an agreement with the general practitioners. We are engaged in discussions of alternatives in terms of housing in high cost areas like Yellowknife, looking at options made possible through foundations or other arm's length organizations. So there are a number of things we are trying to do in that regard. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can appreciate that he has not seen the interview. It's just a recent interview in the Yellowknifer. We have had a presentation from the Minister months ago now where his department acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges specifically in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River was housing, or housing for health care professionals in the larger communities. If that's the case, he's had some lead time on this. I am wondering what strides have been made to address the situations in the larger communities. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is an issue of housing in two communities, Inuvik and Yellowknife, when it comes to health professionals. There are also issues in some of the smaller communities when it comes to teachers and other professionals there. We, as a Cabinet, have been discussing what is possible in terms of promoting and trying to mitigate some of the housing pressures. There is a whole host of new units and houses coming on stream in Yellowknife, but I don't have a silver bullet or magic fix that is going to put in cheap, high quality housing that would be the type that professionals would want to possibly rent. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know our capital dollars are stretched very thin, Mr. Speaker, and there is a lot of competition for those dollars and I understand that. But given that there are new units, new housing units, coming on stream in the foreseeable future in Yellowknife, I am wondering if the Minister is prepared to start discussing entering into leases, so that we might provide, say, six-month transitional housing for recruits who might come up and want to see if they enjoy the North or might need a place to stay while they try to buy a house because the market is very tight. Is the Minister looking at some sort of transitional housing and would he be prepared to get into a lease for that kind of housing?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is some housing available, I understand, through Stanton and the Stanton foundation. At present, the government has no intention itself of getting back into housing or staff housing. We also have to be very cognizant of the fact that if we want to look at mitigating housing costs in Yellowknife, we can't just do it for one profession even though there is a shortage of that profession. We have a whole host of employees. The answer is we are not engaged in any kind of discussion where we have a transitional lease arrangement and the government is not going to make any steps to get back into the housing market directly. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

MR. BELL: I know the government isn't prepared to get back into housing, but the CEO in the paper, who is out there working on the transition at Stanton and putting the new plans in place, is directly quoted as saying we can have as many funded positions as we want, but it doesn't mean we will fill them. He's talking about the housing needs. I would like to know if this Minister doesn't recognize that as the biggest concern we have and the biggest hurdle we have to recruitment and if he is not prepared to address that, what is he prepared to do?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 109-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Professionals At Stanton

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the housing market in Yellowknife is very vibrant and alive. Some would say overheated. So I am aware of that issue. I am aware of the issue of Inuvik. I am aware of the issue in smaller communities where it's nurses and sometimes social workers and other health professionals that have to live in those communities and pay their rents. I have been encouraging authorities to look at creative options. There are business opportunities that exist here and in other communities and there are opportunities through foundations or on-line operations to put housing on the market that would be affordable and that would assist in this particular area, the key point being that the territorial government is not itself getting back into the housing market. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my question is further to the answers that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment provided to my previous questions about student financial assistance for students with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, none of the information that he provided is saying anything new that I didn't know about. My point is that the grant for \$8,000 is for those students with disabilities who get to post-secondary education. I am talking about students who don't get to go to post-secondary education as defined by SFA. My question is

why is it that, when we gave the lion's share of student financial assistance, this House approves \$11 million and the federal government gives only \$1 million, why is it that we have to follow their guidelines? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is consistent. It's always been that way. There is a federal program that's possibly underway, \$193 million that the federal government has identified to assist persons with disabilities to get into the workforce. These are opportunities for us to look at programs in support of educational programs, Mr. Speaker. It does offer us opportunities to provide assistance for those who can't qualify for the SFA Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The whole problem with that is when it's not under legislation and protected under legislation, it is an unequal treatment and the students with disabilities have to follow one program to another and go to different line-ups to make their case. Mr. Speaker, why then doesn't the Minister look at a separate program that's created by this government that does the same thing as SFA but that would not violate the guidelines of the Government of Canada?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a good suggestion and I guess that's what we were leading to with our program where we have the \$100,000 of the Literacy Association, the federal funding and we may be able to lead towards that type of suggestion that Ms. Lee is making. I have to respect the fact that we have our Student Financial Assistance Program, which is consistent across the country and we rely on that to be consistent with all jurisdictions, including the two territories. The opportunity is there for us to develop something new here, Mr. Speaker, that would serve that particular purpose that Ms. Lee is referring to. We have to address that in that way.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are important points here. The \$100,000 to the Council for Disabled Persons, however good that may be, is temporary. It's with non-government organizations. It's at the whim of the government of the day. The important point here is to have a law, a program under the law, that says that students with disabilities have equal rights. So would the Minister consider establishing a program backed by a law?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we are not very far from knowing the federal funding situation. Once we know that, then we can move forward on this whole area. I would certainly look to solidifying a program that would be base funded, that would be there for similar purposes as we do for our Student Financial Assistance Program students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this really hasn't anything to do with what's going on with Canada or the rest of the provinces or anything. It has to do with the government's commitment and willingness for them to show that we are prepared to legislate the right law, to right the wrong, and protect the students with disabilities with laws. Will the Minister consider passing a law?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 110-14(6): Financial Assistance For Students With Disabilities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, any programs we do, especially if we put them into law, we have to make sure the funding is there to make sure that it is guaranteed to be there on an ongoing basis. For that reason, I do need to know what our position will be with respect to accessing the resources and in order to be able to solidify this type of program that Ms. Lee is speaking of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions.

Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to tell me what the current mandate of the NWT Housing Corporation is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to read exactly what the mandate of the NWT Housing Corporation is, if I may: "The mandate of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is to assist communities to assume the role of providing housing to their residents and to contribute to the northern economic development. This is achieved by providing mentorship and support to communities, technical research and services, financial support, information

sharing, training and economic development." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you can't go wrong by reading the mission statement of the department mandate. Can the Minister tell me then what programs and services are being delivered by the Housing Corporation outside of the mandate he just read to us?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of important points I would like to raise here. We are working in partnership with communities trying to assist communities to assume a greater role in the delivery of essential services, housing, whether it be through public housing rentals or home ownership programs or repair programs. We want to make sure our policies are flexible enough to allow the communities to assume a greater role. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been contacted on several occasions now in the last couple of weeks regarding what the Housing Corporation does and how they have deviated from their initial mandate that was developed in 1970. I was asked how building houses or housing projects in Alaska and designing software and software training fits into the NWT Housing Corporation's mandate, while the aboriginal housing mandate that the whole corporation was built around is no longer there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To offer the precise answer...(inaudible)...activities outside the Northwest Territories. We are in the Northwest Territories promoting our own programs. We also do other construction for the RCMP, for example, as a revenue-generating entity so that we may be able to support other developments throughout. Our main mission and our main objective is to provide those communities with the ability to help themselves further their housing needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next point was going to be that the Housing Corporation had deviated considerably by building houses for RCMP members, by projects outside of the NWT and by taking on initiatives such as software training while on the initial mandate, we seem to be losing ground. People in our communities, the wait list is growing and the people who can qualify are no longer able to take on some of the programs. So I would like to ask the Minister if he still feels that we are following the Housing Corporation mandate by providing houses to the people of the Northwest Territories?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 111-14(6): Mandate Of The NWT Housing Corporation

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are very consistent. We continually address key questions either through legal or social instruments we have under our mandate. We've tried to work with the communities. I think that's an essential point. We try to work with the communities in partnership, so we can address other housing issues. It varies for community to community, region to region, but we have in all fairness given adequate allocations to communities. Yes, sometimes we can't address enough because of the high cost, but we have met and we continue to meet the objectives set out under our mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Lafferty.

Question 112-14(6): Income Support Clients In Public Housing

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Jake Ootes, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. As the lead Minister on harmonization, what is the total amount that ECE is paying for the income support clients who are in public housing today?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not the lead Minister on harmonization, however, the question is fair enough. I don't have that available here and I will have to take the question as notice. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is being taken as notice. Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Bell.

Question 113-14(6): Housing Solutions For Health Professionals

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is again for the Minister of Health and Social Services and I was intrigued by his last response. I should be careful. I don't have his exact words here, and I will check tomorrow, but he indicated I think that in overheated markets like the one in Yellowknife -- I would agree with him -- there are many business opportunities, but that he's encouraging authorities to look at creative options for solving their housing needs in all communities. I am wondering if the Minister could indicate which authority he's encouraging

to have a look at creative options for housing at Stanton. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 113-14(6): Housing Solutions For Health Professionals

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This issue has come up in discussion with the deputy, with some of the JOC members about the possibility of working with a foundation or an arm's length body that would take on the challenge, that could put up housing working in conjunction with the authority, knowing full well there are rental resources available through the staff. I have also had some discussion with the authority staff, CEO, in Inuvik while trying to take a similar approach. It's something as well that has some possible beneficial implications. If it was looked at in a broader scope to deal with some of the concerns I know that Education faces. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 113-14(6): Housing Solutions For Health Professionals

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's clear we don't have an authority currently at Stanton and in effect, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is running that hospital. He has officials working out there to do that. I think some of the good ideas are going to have to come from the Minister's office. Would the Minister not agree that, in effect, he's running the hospital and that we are going to see some good solutions to meet housing needs? We can't wait for the next authority to be created. We have to deal with it now and the impetus is going to have to come from his office. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 113-14(6): Housing Solutions For Health Professionals

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The plan has been made by myself, as well as some of my colleagues across this House, that the Minister of Health and Social Services does have the ultimate responsibility for all matters that happen in the health and social services system. I take the Member's point, the issue of recruitment and retention, I agree, is not just one of pay and benefits. There are issues of housing. I take the Member's point. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Mr. Lafferty.

Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Jake Ootes, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. We are going to bring in the harmonization initiative. With any new initiative, we don't go in blindfolded or without any knowledge of what costs or what it is going to cost the government at all. So I would like to ask the Minister, what is it going to cost this government and our income support clients? How much it is going to cost them for this new initiative?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, in the way it is designed, my understanding was the program is cost neutral to the government and revenue neutral to the government.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister again, what is the amount that it is going to cost Education, Culture and Employment to go into this initiative? I'm sure they did their work and they must have all the information if they are going full tilt into this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, as I stated, it is cost neutral to the territorial government, and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is revenue neutral as well, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister, is it going to be that high income earners are going to pay for this whole new harmonization and the seniors and elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs of the Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, the intent behind the policy and the harmonization thrust, Mr. Speaker, was to ensure low income earners would continue to have opportunities to access public housing and for those who are in higher income brackets, it would be income tested, Mr. Speaker, to charge rents to those individuals who are above a certain threshold and that funding would be taken in. In addition, we were looking at reducing rents for other individuals and the amount that would be taken in would help to pay for the reductions in the cost of accommodations. There are a lot of people who will benefit from harmonization with reductions in rent, small reductions, but there are many, many people who will benefit from it, Mr. Speaker, through that process. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have to thank the Minister on that answer, but I asked him if he was pinpointing only a certain number of people in the North who will pay for the whole cost of the harmonization project. Right now, ECE is paying some amount. I would like to ask the Minister if we are sort of targeting just a small group of people to pay for the rent of all peoples in the North. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 114-14(6): Income Support Costs Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the surveys were done on the housing situation, it was realized that there were a number of people in various areas that were high income earners who were in public housing. The reason for harmonization was to address those specific concerns so that we can have housing provided to individuals who are in need and who are low income earners, Mr. Speaker. So the number affected was fairly minimal. The number affected positively is fairly high from that perspective. As well, we have decided that we would negate the impact, even on those who are in a certain threshold, by introducing a graduated scale of payment. The maximum would be \$200 a month and that would increase by \$50 a month to a total maximum of \$400 a month. So they would be grandfathered, in other words, all those individuals who would be in the program. Again, if they are high income earners, they would fall under that, Mr. Speaker, but the maximum would be \$200 a month for individuals. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Mr. McLeod.

Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask more questions on the harmonization initiative and I would like to ask my questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment as he is one of the Ministers working along with the Minister of Housing and we've heard very little from him up to this point. I would like ask if, since the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation indicated that there have been some problems with the communication strategy and there have been some breakdowns, I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what he's done to relay the information of this program to the seniors and students in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is we have provided all of the information to the Housing Corporation in order to insure this has been all transmitted to the various individuals that might be affected plus the various boards, the housing authorities and so forth, to ensure it was transmitted to individuals affected. This was the process that was decided upon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, given the Minister's answers, I take it the Minister has provided the information to the Housing Corporation, but that he has not seen any actual documentation that went from the Housing Corporation or from the LHOs to his clients. He has not been privy to that, I take it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am personally not aware of all the actions that have been taken, Mr. Speaker, but I can certainly check with my department to see what has been done on that end. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary. Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it discourages me to hear the Minister's statement that he has not been involved with it to the extent that we need him to be. I would like to ask him, while he is looking into it, if he is going to see if this program will negatively affect students that plan to move on to post-secondary but have houses in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process we used was to ensure there is an income threshold and it was felt that people over that threshold should avail themselves of private housing, wherever that may be. Those who are in the housing, at the present time, are grandfathered; they will not be affected unless they are above a certain income threshold. The intent, of course, is to provide housing, which we desperately need, for those individuals who are out there with low incomes, low income workers, income support clients who do need housing. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary. Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Minister must consider students as high income earners because he is not putting them in the same category as low income clients. I would like to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Premier stated he would talk to Cabinet about withdrawing this initiative and the Minister has had some time to consider that. I'd like to ask him what his position is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 115-14(6): Communication Of The Harmonization Strategy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Premier stated that he would speak with his Cabinet colleagues on this and we haven't discussed that yet, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Mr. Delorey.

Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the honourable Michael Miltenberger and it has to do with the talks going on at the hospital in Hay River right now, with the negotiations for the workers of the community health board. We know the system has been around for a long time, Mr. Speaker, and the negotiations have been going on for some time now with the workers there. I was wondering if the Minister could give me any kind of indication to how the talks are going in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that they are proceeding and that we are working with the authority and we have engaged in a collective bargaining process and it is moving. There is the issue of comparability and other complicated issues that are being dealt with, but it is progressing. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in further discussions with the hospital workers in Hay River, when the Minister was down their way back in January of last year, it was decided the government would not pursue taking the hospital workers in Hay River under the UNW as employees. Has that issue arisen again where there is the possibility of doing that again or is that issue of bringing the workers in Hay River under the government and UNW off the table?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are proceeding with negotiations with PSAC. I am not aware of any talks or any signals or any overtures to change that. I know our plan is clear and we are engaged in a process of good faith bargaining and that's what we intend to conclude. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister was talking to workers in Hay River -- and I don't have the minutes with me here -- the Minister did state the money would be there to bring the hospital workers in Hay River to parity with the UNW workers. That was a commitment. I am wondering if the Minister could commit that the money is still there on the table to bring parity with the UNW for the workers under the community health board in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I indicated that I was aware that I knew parity would be an issue in negotiations given the difference in terms of benefits and pay. We are at the table in good faith and we would honour whatever collective agreement is finally reached. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, it was noted that in order to bring the hospital workers in Hay River and the Hay River Health Board under the government, there will have to be legislation in place to allow that to happen. I haven't seen that legislation yet, Mr. Speaker. I have seen it on a list that was supposed to come forward. I would like to ask the Minister where is this legislation? When can we expect to see it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 116-14(6): Status Of Hay River Health And Hospital Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was checking on that today as well and the intention is to have it before Cabinet and this House by early next week.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Bell.

Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It's about harmonization. The Minister, in response to one of my colleagues, indicated that there would be a graduated scale of rent increases introduced and it would be capped at a certain amount each month. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me if that graduated scale applies to everybody equally. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would apply based on income threshold, Mr. Speaker. On an annual basis, there would be a \$50 increase in rent until a maximum of \$400 would be reached and it would be income tested, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry, I should have been more clear. What I meant to ask was whether or not that graduated scale applied to everybody or just to seniors and students. For instance, will it apply to a single parent living in a housing unit who is neither a senior nor a student? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would apply to all individuals and it's income tested. It would apply to all individuals.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

MR. BELL: Well, I am impressed because I have had constituents call me with huge concerns about \$300 and \$400 increases that's way over the cap. When I looked into it, I discovered that it seemed to be those caps that I thought would apply only if you were a student or a senior. So that's great. I will pass on the news. The other question I have is about grandfathering. If we are going to do this, it may mean that people living side by side in equal circumstances, but having been in the units only days apart would have different rents. We could have a senior in a unit right beside another senior in a unit paying much different rents in ideal circumstances. Is that not the case?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because they are public housing units, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to ensure that there are rules in place based on income and it is income tested. Therefore, an individual who is in a unit who earns a lot more money is in a position to pay more and is in a position to possibly access private housing. For that reason, that particular issue is in place. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here is an example. We have a senior living in a house who makes \$10,000 and has

been living in that house for five years. Their rent is going to be capped. After the initiation date of the program, the senior moves in next door, same circumstances, makes \$10,000 a year. He's going to pay a much higher rent. Isn't that the case?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I have a hard time following the analogy here, Mr. Speaker, in terms of \$10,000. I am not sure what the Member means by that.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Bell, could you restate your question and make it a little clearer?

MR. BELL: Sure. The idea behind grandfathering is that we are going to cap somebody's rent and freeze it. They won't get the full brunt of the new rent scale, but if you happen to move into public housing, you become a senior this year and move into public housing, you are certainly going to pay a much higher rent than the person beside you who may have exactly the same circumstances, except for age. Isn't that the case?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 117-14(6): Harmonization Strategy Rent Scale

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, the intent was to ensure that individuals who have moved into public housing under certain circumstances and with certain understandings, that that be addressed and it was addressed. Anyone new moving into public housing will understand the conditions of entering into public housing. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Braden.

Question 118-14(6): Canadian Federation Of Independent Business Comment On Fuel Taxes

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley. It's following on the delivery yesterday, Mr. Speaker, of the response to the NWT budget from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, which I understand has just recently opened an office here in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, the CFIB is complimentary in a number of areas of fiscal measures this government has taken, but it also challenges the government on a number, especially related to taxes. There are a number of taxes that it asks about. The question I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, regards the long-standing request of the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, to reduce our fuel taxes on the highway system. They suggest our rate now of 10.7 cents a litre is 73 percent higher than the Yukon's and 67 percent higher than Nunavut. They suggest it should be taken down to 6.4 cents per litre. Is this something that this government will be able to follow through on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 118-14(6): Canadian Federation Of Independent Business Comment On Fuel Taxes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue around taxes is one that we need to look at very carefully. I have not read the Federation of Independent Business's analysis of the budget, so I haven't had a chance to look at that. Mr. Speaker, we have to be careful too in using percentages because percentages can be deceptive in terms of what they really mean in differences, whether it's a difference between six cents or nine cents can sound like a lot if you do it on a percentage basis. If you look at our taxes compared to taxes across the country we find that our taxes are lower than most provincial fuel taxes, so I am happy with that side, that we are maintaining our tax levels as they are. The issue of lowering ours to the Yukon rate of 6.2 cents from what we currently have is one that we've looked at for a long time. This year is not a year where we can afford, as a government given a deficit, to be lowering these taxes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 118-14(6): Canadian Federation Of Independent Business Comment On Fuel Taxes

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing on the same taxation area, the payroll tax is a rather chronic item as well and we learned from the CFIB that it has gained the amazing support of four percent of respondents. As a popularity contest, payroll tax is a bit of a failure. Obviously, the CFIB says this tax should be reduced substantially, if not eliminated. Does the government see the day when the payroll tax can be taken off our books? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 118-14(6): Canadian Federation Of Independent Business Comment On Fuel Taxes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, there are some Members who would recommend that we go to 10 percent rather than remove it completely. There is a lot of debate on this issue. Mr. Speaker, if we were to do away with the payroll tax, we would also be tempted to do away with the northern tax credit that we provide to Northerners. As long as there is a net fiscal benefit for us in having the payroll tax, then we will continue it. It continues to be in our favour. It's certainly an advantage to people who live in the North and we do benefit from southern people who come and work here. At this point, I have no intention to remove the payroll tax. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: At this time, I will recognize the clock and that question period is over, but I will allow the Member to conclude his supplementary. Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 118-14(6): Canadian Federation Of Independent Business Comment On Fuel Taxes

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One further point is regarding local property taxes. The three that we talked about, Mr. Speaker, are within the top three or four on a list of criticisms or areas of change that CFIB is looking for. There is

a trend or tendency in the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker, for provincial authorities to download responsibilities to municipal levels. The CFIB says while its membership does not see this happening today in the NWT, it is very worried that this could be something we will want to do. I want to ask the Minister of Finance is it at all an intention of this government to download the responsibility for services and costs to municipalities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 118-14(6): Canadian Federation Of Independent Business Comment On Fuel Taxes

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, it is not our intention to download onto municipal governments. We have never taken that stand and at this point, we have no intention of doing that. While saying that, we have to keep in mind that property taxes have to reflect a reality that is out there. So I suppose taxes will probably go up as inflation goes up and other things rise in price.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Opening Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 29-14(6): Annual Report Of The Conflict Of Interest Commissioner, February 27, 2003

DEPUTY SPEAKER: In accordance with Section 99(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Annual Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the Legislative Assembly dated February 27, 2003.

Item 13, tabling of documents. Ms. Lee.

Tabled Document 30-14(6): Information On The Northern Graduate Employment Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table information on the Northern Graduate Employment Program provided by the Executive. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, Bill 6, Bill 7, Bill 8, Committee Reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6) and 6-14(6) with Mr. Lafferty in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. The committee is considering Bills 3, 6, 7 and 8 and Committee Reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6), and 6-14(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that the committee consider Bill 6 followed by Bill 7 and then Bill 8 and subsequent to concluding those three bills, we again resume

consideration of Bill 3 and Committee Reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently to continue with consideration of the budget of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): At this time, we will take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

Bill 6: Electoral Boundaries Commission Act

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would like to call the committee to order. We are dealing with Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. The Minister responsible for the Board of Management, the Honourable Vince Steen, do you have opening comments?

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Mr. Chairman, colleagues, I wish to represent this legislation which implements the direction of the Legislative Assembly. On June 19, 2002, the Committee of the Whole adopted the recommendation of the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause that the Assembly enact electoral district boundaries commission legislation similar to that previously in force, but with such changes as may be desirable to maximize public involvement and to ensure the effective representation of all communities.

The proposed bill would provide for an electoral boundaries commission to be established by resolution of the Assembly within two years after the 2003 election and every second election after that. The bill is similar to the previous act, but includes the following changes:

- A new provision clearly stating that the commission may undertake programs and measures to inform the public about the values and principles that underlie the determination of electoral boundaries and about the process that leads to that determination.
- Addition of the following to the list of considerations to be taken into account by the commission in preparing its report: census data; information in the register of electors; community boundaries and boundaries established under lands, resources and self-government agreements; transportation; language and culture; public input; communications; and special circumstances relating to any existing electoral districts.
- Several minor administration and technical changes.

Mr. Chairman, if required, and with assistance of the officials, I would be pleased to answer any questions on this bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the Minister wish to bring in his witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sergeant-at-Arms, please bring in the witnesses.

Please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my left is Mr. David Hamilton, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; and, on my right is Janis Cooper, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. We are now under general comments. Clause by clause? Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): The bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the committee agree that Bill 6 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill 6 is now ready for third reading.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. The committee is now considering Bill 7 with Minister Steen. Mr. Steen.

Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, and colleagues, I wish to present this amendment to the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council Act for consideration today. As Members recall, the Committee of the Whole on June 19, 2002 adopted the recommendation contained in the report of the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause, that subsection 2(3) of the act be repealed.

The proposed bill would amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act by deleting subsection 2(3) of the act. Mr. Chairman, this bill is being introduced at the same time as Bill 6, the new Electoral Boundaries Commission Act. Mr. Chairman, if required, with the assistance of the officials, I would be pleased for any questions of this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Clause by clause.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause by clause. We are considering Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the committee agree that Bill 7 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill 7 is now ready for third reading.

---Applause

Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Elections Act

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Committee is now considering Bill 8. I would like to excuse the Minister and his staff. I would like to thank them. Committee is considering Bill 8 with the Honourable Joseph Handley, the Government House Leader. Does the Minister have opening comments?

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I wish to present a number of amendments to the Elections Act that if approved, will ensure the efficient administration of the general election later this year. The main purpose of this bill is to remove the provision in the Elections Act, which disqualifies prison inmates serving sentences of two years or more from voting. This amendment is necessary in light of the recent discussions of the Supreme Court of Canada, *Sauve* versus the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, which found that a similar provision in the Canada Elections Act infringed the right to vote guaranteed by section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The bill also contains amendments to: provide additional clarification to the section of the act which ensures persons who are incarcerated, attending studies, or undergoing treatment outside the Northwest Territories do not lose their right to vote during their period of absence; adjust the time for a

candidate to withdraw their candidacy from 8:00 p.m. on nomination day, to 5:00 p.m.; also, require the Chief Electoral Officer to arrange the printing of the required number of ballots for an electoral district, extend the period in which the Chief Electoral Officer must arrange the publication of notice of an advanced poll in a newspaper and make minor adjustments of a technical nature to the English and French versions of the act. Mr. Chairman, if required and with the assistance of the officials, I would be pleased to answer any questions on these amendments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. The Minister has asked for witnesses. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Can the Minister please introduce the witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me are David Hamilton, Chief Electoral Officer; and Janis Cooper, legislative council with the Department of Justice.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Clause by clause.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause by clause. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): The committee is considering Bill 8, an Act to Amend the Elections Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): The bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the committee agree that Bill 8 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill 8 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Minister Handley and to your staff. Does the committee agree that we will continue on with Bill 3?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004**Department Of Education, Culture And Employment**

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to have his witnesses escorted in.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, please, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses.

At this time, I would like to ask the Minister to introduce his witnesses.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me today are Dr. Loretta Foley, the deputy minister for the department; Lesley Allen, the assistant deputy minister for advanced education and careers; and, Paul Devitt, director of management services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Yesterday, we had Ms. Lee still asking questions. Ms. Lee, would like to ask some more questions? Page 9-14, advanced education and careers.

Detail**Advanced Education And Careers**

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the last question I asked was with regard to the Teacher Education Program and why was it that this program was separated from many other advanced education programs that are being provided in the college. I believe that was answered. I wanted to ask another question on page 9-13.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, Mr. Chair. That's my answer.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sorry. Go ahead, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, I have a question about whether or not there is a formula for financing Aurora College in a way similar to what we are more familiar with. In grade schools, we are well aware of PTR formulas that are legislated and special funding on top of that. I would like to get a sense of how the government comes up with a budget for Aurora College.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For some details, I will ask Mr. Devitt to answer that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, the department, some years ago, developed a funding framework for the college. It is somewhat similar to what we do in schools, although I would say that

rather than being enrolment-based, its framework is program-based. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the enrolment rate play any role at all, or is it a combination of enrolment rates, numbers of students, plus the programs? What does it mean when he said the funding is based on programs? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Again, I will ask Mr. Devitt to answer that, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, again this is a fairly simple explanation, but it looks at each program separately. It does recognize that there is a maximum number of students who could be accommodated within a program funding allocation. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: How is it decided what the extent and number of programs will be for a college? Is it the board of governors who set out a policy decision about what programs that it wants to provide in a college, then it contacts the department and the department works with the college to see? I just would like to get a sense of...they provide to you a proposal, you look at what money you have available and then where do you set the limit? Or do you go and say we have about \$23 million?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will ask Ms. Allen to address this particular question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there are a number of programs that are what we call base funded. So we have ABE programs at each of the three campuses, we have specific programs in certain locations that are base funded as well. With any new programs, there is an annual process in which we go through a programs and services proposal process. We look at the government priorities, we look at the priorities of the regions and then we look at the funding we have available. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you for that. My final question then is, could I get some sense as to what the total amount of the allocation is that this government is providing to Aurora College this year? Maybe it's not fair for me to ask for anything outside of ECE, but going by the information that I have so far, there is the base funding plus a number of other things. So could I just get a general sense of what is the total envelope of money that's being allocated for Aurora College?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Ms. Allen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Yes, it's about \$25 million and that includes the \$23 million plus the additional programs such as the teacher education strategy, et cetera. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. We are on page 9-14, total contributions, \$28.188 million, total grants and contributions, \$38.677 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Education And Culture

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 9-17, education and culture, operations expenses, total operations expense, \$134.805 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under other expenses, the amount drops from the revised estimates of \$11.5 million to just over \$5.5 million in the 2003-2004 mains. What is the reason for the nearly \$6 million drop between what we are actually spending this year and what we are proposing to spend next year under other expenses?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: If you will bear with us for a moment, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The change takes place because we had a settlement of residential school payments; payments related to the residential school issue. That is the reason for the drop this year. There was a spike there for a year.

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

MR. DENT: Is that why the figures that are included on this page are also partly shown on page 9-18 and under instructional and support services? We see an almost \$4 million drop in instructional support services. Is that because part of some of the payments were recruited to that line as well, or is there another reason for the \$4 million drop in instructional and support services?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is correct.

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

MR. DENT: Moving onto another topic, I think Members have been generally supportive of the department's efforts to expand on distance learning initiatives and I think that this is certainly an area in which we had hoped we would be able to see better quality programs provided, particularly in some of our smaller schools and providing a broader range of programs there as well through distance learning processes. But I don't see any increase in terms of what we are putting into distance learning systems. The question I have to pose to the Minister is do we not see this as being successful? Is that why we haven't expanded on their use? Conversely, how can we expect them to be successful if we don't expand the funding to make sure that distance learning systems can be improved? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have found that the distance learning system is being accepted very well and we feel we are starting to achieve success with it. We have had a number of teachers qualified to become supervisors or presenters for students. Our indication is that the uptake is fairly good in this area with a lot of students taking the first access program and after that taking credit programs. We have found that there is -- I am going off the top of my head -- approximately 78...we do have some success in it. I will ask Dr. Foley to explain some of the success we've had.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Dr. Foley.

DR. FOLEY: I can tell you a few things, Mr. Chair. All high schools in the NWT now have a trained facilitator on staff except one, which is a change from last year. Facilitators in the schools can be trained by instructors in the NWT. When we began, they came out of Calgary. Now that we have a number of NWT teachers teaching on-line courses, instead of paying \$110 a credit, we now pay \$25. Some of the statistics we have for 2002-03 are incomplete because the year isn't over, but we have 91 students registered and 42 students have received credits so far. We are now working with Aurora College to see if we can work with them to determine a strategy for on-line learning. We want to look at the cost-effectiveness of pooling high school students and Aurora College students to create full classes, because part of the problem is if we have small classes. As I said, to date, we have 78 students who have completed and we have two more intakes before the end of the school year. So for the first two years, we have a total of 225 students who have taken on-line courses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the information. I was wondering if we could get information about where the uptake is taking place. Are we seeing this being accessed by students in smaller communities or is it typically the regional centres where the courses are being taken by students?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is being utilized throughout the Territory and all the communities. I should clarify that. It's not all communities, but many of the communities, Mr. Chair. We have a sheet here and Dr. Foley has some statistics which we can pass on to Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Education and culture, operations expense, total operations, expense, \$134.805 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 9-19, education and culture, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$52 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sorry, that's \$52,000. You agreed to millions? We have to have a correct there, that's \$52,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 9-21, education and culture, total contributions, \$118.954 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Included in that number is the task shown on page 9-19, cultural projects. I noticed that there is a drop of \$100,000 between what we are spending this year and what is proposed in next year's budget for culture projects. Could the Minister explain the drop?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Devitt to answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, it's the funding of the living history project that was included in the prior year. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: On page 9-20, the NWT Arts Council contribution for \$280,000 is shown. I just wanted to tell the Minister that I am quite pleased to see this doubling of the amount of money that's going to the arts council and would encourage him to continue to look for ways to increase the funding. I think we haven't, over the years, put enough money into supporting the arts, particularly art for art's sake. It's important that we don't try to tie all of our contributions to the economic side of art. I think we need to make sure that we can support the arts properly. I am pleased to see the doubling of the money going in this year over last year and would encourage the Minister to keep looking for ways to increase the funding for the council. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly appreciate the comments by Mr. Dent on that and we, along with Members, feel there is a need to address the arts issue. As Members may know, we have an arts strategy panel report and we hope to address that fairly shortly, from there to seek further funding. We are looking at Heritage Canada as a possible extra funding source. We don't have any indication yet whether we can get that, but they have been supportive of our effort to develop the strategy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Page 9-21, total contributions, \$118.954 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Total grants and contributions, \$119.006 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Active positions, information item, student loans. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on the information item on page 9-24. Referring back to the student grants on page 9-13, where \$8.489 million is allocated for student grants. How does that fit into this revolving fund? I am sure that I just don't know how to read this right, but loans granted here, for example, for this year and the past two years are in the range of \$4 to \$6 million. Could I get some explanation as to how this works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. We are still on page 9-23. We have not gone to 9-24 yet. Page 9-23, information item, student loan revolving fund, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I know. I was being listened to and I hope the department got my question and perhaps I could have the answer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Ootes, remember the question.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I am going to ask Mr. Devitt to speak to this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The amounts on 9-24 are for student loans only. They do not include the student grants on page 9-13. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The loans granted under this fund, is that part of that \$8.5 million approximately on page 9-13?

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chairman, no, it's not part of the grant budget, it's included under advanced education. The amount we include is for the expense of writing off loans, forgiving loans or remitting loans. That is included in other O and M.

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

MS. LEE: So then am I to understand that \$8.4 million approved under page 9-13, is all of that, 100 percent of that is a grant and the loan fund works separately altogether?

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

MR. DEVITT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct.

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

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I have a question about the student loans. I am specifically interested in the remission portion, which is the loans forgiven part here, I am assuming. Am I correct in understanding that there are now going to be different rates of remission for nursing students as compared to other students?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I will ask Ms. Allen to address that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, no. The answer is no. The nursing and the social work students will be getting an enhanced benefit of \$3,000 in the first year, \$3,000 in the second year, \$5,000 in the third year and \$5,000 in the fourth year. The remission on that will be the same as it is for student financial assistance students. If they are in large tax-based communities, it will be \$1,000 for every three months and if they are in non-tax-based communities, it will be \$2,000 for every three months. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The differential in the benefit that's provided, is there any concern that we might be open to a Charter challenge, this being a universal program? Is there any concern that other students might launch a challenge that says it's not fair that one class of student gets this benefit when another doesn't?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This came about because of the recruitment and retention policy that was developed for nurses and for social workers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am aware of how it came about. I supported all the efforts of the government and the department to increase the numbers of northern residents trained for the nursing profession. The reason I was raising the question is I was wondering why we had placed this benefit in a universal program and why we hadn't left the program with the Department of Health and Social Services. If they are the ones who are looking for increased uptake, it would seem to make sense to me that you not tinker with the universal program, but that you leave the department most impacted the opportunity to provide the funding if that is where it was seen as necessary to provide the incentives. I just wanted to know if they had ever sought an opinion as to whether or not this would withstand a Charter challenge.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that Health and Social Services did seek some advice on that. We did not.

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

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I will seek your guidance. I wonder if the Minister of Health and Social Services would be prepared to advise us on the results of that advice.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I can't answer for the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Can the Minister refer that to the Minister of Health and Social Services?

HON. JAKE OOTES: I can refer it to the Minister. I wonder if the Minister heard the question and wonder if the Member would repeat the question for the Minister. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask Mr. Dent if he would be so kind as to repeat the question, so I could get it in its entirety. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Dent, can you please repeat the question for Mr. Miltenberger?

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question was whether or not there had been any investigation to see whether or not providing a differential benefit to nursing and social work students over what is provided to other students would perhaps be in contravention of the Charter?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that when this was considered, all aspects of the questions were looked at and making sure we linked it to students as opposed to trying to deal with employees who also have collective agreements that they work under. So that's the information that I would give to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Dent. We are on page 9-24, student loan revolving fund.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 9-25, information item, detail of funding allocated to education authorities. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if I could get some information on this. I just happened to notice that, for example, Yellowknife No. 1 District Education Authority, the number of positions funded this year is 208 positions and the dollars allocated are \$18.425 million, but in the Beaufort-Delta, the number of positions are less than YK 1 but the amount of dollars is about \$4 million higher. I am wondering what might explain that discrepancy. Thank you.

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

MR. DEVITT: The formula contains in a number of areas cost of living adjustments, but one of the major factors would be the additional northern allowance employees would be eligible for in the Beaufort-Delta. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: So that would apply to all regions. I am sure there is a formula to take that into account and that is reflected in this table.

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

MR. DEVITT: The Member is correct. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a further information request. I wonder if I could be provided with the same level of information that's shown here for previous years; the number of positions as well as the dollars being allocated to every council and education authority from the year starting 1999-2000. This can be provided to me inside or outside of this House. If I could have that please, thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will provide that to the Member.

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

MS. LEE: One last information item request. Yesterday, I was provided with a table of expenditures for inclusive schooling funding. I wonder if the same thing could be provided going back to the same year, the year 1999-2000, a table of allocation of funding for special needs. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will provide that to the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Ms. Lee. Information item, detail, funding allocated to education authorities. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a question on funded positions under private schools and others. There is no number for funded positions. I'm just wondering why that would be. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll ask Mr. Devitt to reply to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: The information or the amount provided for private schools is a portion of the normal formula, therefore we have not included an approximate amount for the number of positions funded. I should point out that there is a portion for salary funding in there. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Can the Minister tell me if they can get the amount and the number of positions from these schools? Would they have that information?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can approximate the number for the Member.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. I think that would be a great idea to share with the Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Detail of funding allocated to education authorities, information item. Page 9-27, information item, college funding allocation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 9-28, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Detail of work performed on behalf of others, continued on 9-30, total department. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question under detail of work performed on behalf of others. The university and college entrance program detail shows that this funding is provided for financial assistance to status Indian students. Is that available to other aboriginal students in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is not available for Metis. It is available for Inuvialuit.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$10.319 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go back to page 9-7, department summary, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expense, total operations expense, \$210.474 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Advanced Education And Careers

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go to capital acquisition plan, cap 13, Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we've spent a considerable amount of time over the last few days talking about the proposed student housing renovations in Fort Smith. We got from the Minister some reports on particularly the Green House and Brown House yesterday, which outlined the deficiencies and the expected cost to repair them. In both of those documents, it was in the area of \$200,000 to \$250,000 to deal with the basic requirements, which we assume would mean dealing with the fire marshal's deficiencies that were found. Members were told that it would cost in the area of \$1.5 million to rehabilitate these properties. Given the size of them, I think we are hard pressed to understand why we would rehabilitate them when it looked like for very close to that price you could build new. In fact, that was what was wanted. So Members have had a considerable amount of discussion about this, and are of the feeling that if there are life safety issues with those buildings, that they should be dealt with. If that's going to take \$200,000 then that's what we should be doing in order to make sure that we can live with the code rules that are set out and enforced. In this case, we're told they're going to be enforced by the fire marshal.

Members don't have any problem supporting expenditures to make sure the buildings are safe. But we are not convinced that these two buildings should be renovated, and I think that it's time that we took another look at it and maybe spend a little more time deciding whether or not they are needed in Fort Smith. Members are going to probably be more easily persuaded that replacement is the way to go, rather than rehabilitating them. I think what we should be considering instead, is forgetting about these projects that show rehabbing the Green House Apartments, take another look at that issue. If the department needs to come back to this House for supplementary funds to deal with the safety issues that have been identified by the fire marshal, then I think that Members will be inclined to support that. But based on the discussions we've had to date, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to make a motion to delete the \$149,000 that is shown for the Green House Apartments for this, and encourage the department to come with a plan that demonstrates to us why we should be rehabilitating instead of looking at replacing, and having that sort of discussion with the Members.

Committee Motion 4-14(6) To Delete \$149,000 From Capital Acquisition, ECE, Advanced Education and Careers Activity in Fort Smith, Carried

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that the amount of \$149,000 in the capital acquisition plan of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, under the activity advanced education and careers for the Green House Apartment project in Fort Smith be deleted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion is being circulated. The motion is on the floor. The motion has been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, my riding consists of four communities and for the most part post-secondary education, including upgrading, is done in Fort Smith. I've been to the community and I've seen the state that these facilities are in. I cannot agree with some of the information that has been circulated. I think to remove the Green House Apartments and also to remove any upgrades to the Brown House Apartments is going to leave the Fort Smith campus in severe shortage of accommodation at this point. I can't support this motion and I will not be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of things. I think that we've seen quite clearly that there are safety issues at both the Brown and Green housing. We've seen a copy of an e-mail to that effect, and I don't think that that's something that should be dealt with lightly. But it's quite clear, from the capital plan, that the department isn't prepared to deal with those fire marshal safety issues this year, and that's a concern for me. I think if there's anything that we need to be talking about, it's dealing with those issues right now to make sure that those students are in a safe environment.

So I think our first step, whether it's \$200,000 or \$250,000 per housing unit -- I'm not sure what it is, we haven't seen a list of those safety concerns detailed -- I think they need to be taken care of now. I would certainly support and urge the department to come back with a supp for that money to deal with that this year, not wait. I mean if these are real concerns, there's no point in putting them off until something happens in the future.

I don't know if this \$149,000 is set to do that in the Green House but not the Brown. It's a concern for me.

The other issue I think that is critical here is the fact that we're prepared to spend \$1.3 million to renovate some seriously old buildings when the numbers that the government has given us to replace would be \$1.7 million. That seems so close to me that I don't understand why we wouldn't build new. We're going to tear these things down to the foundations and to the structures, and I think in those reports it indicates we haven't even opened up walls. When we talk about \$1.3 million for renovation, we haven't opened a wall yet to find asbestos or God knows what else. So I think that's a \$1.3 million moving target. If we know the cost to build new would be in the \$1.7 area, I think we're much safer to talk about building new. It doesn't make any sense to be renovating.

So my suggestion would be to come back for supplementary funds to deal with the safety issues now and forget about renovating these things. Let's see a plan to replace them in future years. But they should be up against all the other capital projects in Education and should have to compete, but let's talk about replacing not repainting and adding a little bit more insulation to some buildings that are 40 or 60 or something years old. I'll be supporting the reduction of this \$149,000, because I'm not sure exactly what this is going to do. But I would urge the department to come back for supplementary funds to deal with the safety concerns in these two buildings this year, not in three or five years or sometime when it seems that that's really the furthest date that we can possibly stand before we have a critical situation. So I will be supporting the reduction of \$149,000.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as we've heard, this has taken up quite an amount of time here in committee under the review of Education, Culture and Employment. The Minister provided us with information regarding this as the first concerns were raised. I raised again my concerns following reading that information, seeing that there was so much emphasis placed on what the fire marshal would do with these units if nothing were done. Under the threat of no funding coming forward, it seemed that they would possibly close these. But we haven't seen a fire marshal's order. We've seen an e-mail that talks about the possibilities that may be done. When we look at our plan again and laying it out, the facilities that are in the books, the 20-year needs assessment down to the five-year capital plan, and this one jumping the queue so to speak regarding these concerns and, again, with the fire marshal's order seem to be the main point of contention. I feel that with the information provided, committee is suggesting a different line here. One is we don't support, and I can't support putting...if you look at the five-year plan, this year it's scheduled for \$149,000, but in total it will be \$1.5 million. As we've seen, the figures in our government contracts are rarely right on, so that will probably go up by \$100,000 or so. Lord knows, as my colleague Mr. Bell, has stated. When you look at the reports, Mr. Chairman, that were given to us, in the conclusion of the Green House it talks about construction costs for minimal repairs being \$200,000. Total refurbished construction costs \$1.3 million, and replacement construction costs of \$1.7 million.

I have to agree with my colleagues on this motion. I think the department should go back to the drawing board and look at

replacing the units, not refurbishing. If we have to come up with \$1.7 million for new, then we'll get a 40-year lifespan instead of spending \$1.3 million or \$1.5 million and getting 15 years more out of it. It doesn't seem to make sense that we're willing to do that. Maybe they can come back. I'm sure the department can find within its budget, interim money to deal with the fire issues with the facility for the upcoming year. If they're that bad and need to be done, then they should proceed with those; or, if need be, come through with a supp. I recall last year we passed the budget and within three weeks or a month we had another supp anyway, so let's just follow the same course. We're getting used to it.

But on this funding I have a concern that if we accept this funding as it is, then we accept the plan for refurbishing. I don't think that's what we should be doing. That's not prudent fiscal management. If we're going to rebuild an existing place for \$200,000 less than we can get a new place, that doesn't make sense, and it will have a shorter lifespan on top of that. So I think that just doesn't fit, Mr. Chairman, with what I think we should be doing.

I'll support the motion based on urging the department to go back to the drawing board, deal with the fire issues, the office of the fire marshal's concerns, and go back to the drawing board to replace these units and come back to deal with those issues. I could support that on that initiative. That's why I would support this motion. I'm concerned if we put this one ahead, we buy into the whole plan of refurbishing, it doesn't make prudent financial sense as I see it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. I did speak against renovations of these two buildings yesterday a number of times saying that it's not the right idea to do that. I said that we should build new, and also that I see more need in Yellowknife and Inuvik than I do in Fort Smith.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yea!

MR. LAFFERTY: Like Mr. McLeod, I go to Fort Smith, I have constituents there. I even go to visit my constituents and ask their concerns. Their concerns, when I went to see them, was that Fort Smith students get priority in choosing where they want to live. Now outside students don't get priority. So why are we putting money into old buildings and trying to upgrade them, and then we find out that outside students are not even getting first choice? They have to go into second-choice buildings. Sometimes there may not be adequate space. I asked for the information from the Minister yesterday to see if we can get some of that information, but to date we haven't received it.

But as for the motion, I will support the motion. It's good government practice to have a needs study. Like the housing study we did, we know where all the needs are and then we spent the money in those areas. But in this case here we haven't done that. We're throwing money into old buildings and trying to keep them in the communities, and at the same time we're not looking at the needs somewhere else. So I ask the government to put a good plan together, get a brand-new building there that meets the needs. Right now if you take the 22 Fort Smith students out, then we're not doing justice to our

needs study. With 91 percent, if you exclude 22 of those students, your percentage is in the low 80s, so the need is less. The need then becomes more in Inuvik and also in Yellowknife. We didn't have the percentage of Yellowknife in the needs. We don't know how many students are out there in private accommodations. We know where all the students are living in Fort Smith, but that information is very vague for the other two.

Another thing is that we are putting money into renovations here, and then we're also putting money into renovations in Inuvik to old buildings also so we can put money into Fort Smith. It just doesn't make sense to me. Good business sense is like the Housing Corporation did. They did a great job with their needs study, and that's what we should be doing all over in every department. Just by experience alone, I've been visiting students every year and I know how the accommodations are. They're beautiful accommodations in Fort Smith. I wish something like that could happen in my region but it isn't, so I have to say that I will support this motion and that I hope this government can build new. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I sit on the Social Programs committee, so we have had an opportunity to consider the main estimates and the capital priorities of this government and the capital priorities of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Chairman, I have to say that I agree with my colleagues here, that when we are considering how to make the best use of our limited capital resources, that we need to think about the long term and we need to think about the best value for that money possible. I agree that if there are fire marshal requirements for renovations, that we cannot hesitate on those, that those need to be acted on and we need to do those.

I'm just really repeating what my colleagues have said, and suffice it to say that I'll be supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have pointed out that we do have a difficulty in Fort Smith in terms of older units that are there. Without replacement and renovations, we could hit a particularly critical problem based on the occupancy that is required for the community. This was the process that was used to identify the units that needed to be upgraded and units that need to be replaced.

As Mr. Devitt explained yesterday, if the potential cost is still there with this certain amount then new construction will be considered. Mr. Chair, also with respect to the immediate safety concerns, we are working with Public Works and Services to address the immediate ones, and no doubt we'll be able to correct those that are identified fairly quickly.

So, Mr. Chair, I can't support this particular motion. I feel that a lot of work has gone into identifying the need in the community, and in my mind it is very warranted. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a short comment for the record. I will be supporting this motion. I have indicated in previous debates that it's not a sound capital item from my point of view. In looking at the needs of capital investment within the college itself, then I also raise the question about where are our priorities in terms of the way we spend money for grade school capital needs versus student housing for adults. I think it should be made clear that we understand that those adults who go to school in Fort Smith are in need of housing as well, but we have to calculate that with the needs in Yellowknife as well as Inuvik.

Another thing that I think should be made very clear is that this motion makes it clear that we understand the need for capital investments to address fire codes and health codes and so on. But we have to be more prudent about the way we spend the long-term and the bigger renovation costs. So I just want to put that on the record so that I show the reason for my vote. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

We're on capital acquisition, Education, Culture and Employment, advanced education and careers, total advanced education and careers, revised number, \$3.744 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Education and culture, total education and culture, \$5.184 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, revised figure, \$8.928 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I'd like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing.

I'll call the committee back to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to recommend committee continue consideration of Bill 3 and Committee Reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently to take a look now at the Department of Executive, the budget for FMBS.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Department Of Executive

Financial Management Board Secretariat

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Minister responsible for FMBS, Minister Handley, do you have any opening comments? Mr. Handley.

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to be here today to present the Financial Management Board Secretariat's 2003-2004 main estimates. The 2003-2004 main estimates propose total operational expenses of \$26.939 million. This is a \$2.824 million, or 9 percent, reduction from 2002-2003. This reduction is due to several factors.

1. Completion of the pension review project which involved deciding whether to stay in the federal Superannuation pension plan. With conclusion of the project, a reduction of \$2.039 million and six positions is proposed for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. This is not a full reduction of the resources provided for this project, as three positions are required to work with superannuation and insurance carriers in an effort to improve coverage and services to employees, as well as reduce overall costs to the GNWT.
2. Removal of the \$1 million associated with the hydro power initiative. This work has been transferred to the NWT Power Corporation. The requirement for further resources for this initiative will be dependent on whether agreements are in place with aboriginal governments to pursue specific projects.
3. The settlement of the equal pay complaint. The settlement outlines a three-year process to identify eligible employees, verify service, process payments, review irregular situations and make final payments. A series of changes will be made to the make-up of the equal pay team and their duties. The 2003-2004 changes result in a funding reduction of \$1.250 million. The Government of Nunavut will continue to pay 44 percent of shareable costs as per the division of assets and liabilities agreement.

The secretariat's main estimates include funding increases for the following items:

1. A \$779,000 increase to salary and benefits associated with collective agreement changes.
2. The addition of one position for a labour relations officer in the Fort Smith region as a pilot project to assess the impact on client service and labour management relations in adding regional labour relations services.

3. A \$150,000 increase related to the issuance and monitoring of loan guarantees to support the establishment of secondary industry in the Northwest Territories related to resources development.
4. A \$226,000 increase to provide pay and benefit services to the Fort Smith Health and Social Services Board and the Deh Cho Health and Social Services Board which is being funded from a transfer from Health and Social Services.

The secretariat's proposed capital acquisition plan for the 2003-2004 fiscal year includes \$600,000 for information technology projects.

1. \$230,000 has been included to continue the work started in the current fiscal year to review and identify potential financial information systems solutions for the government. This review is intended to provide decision-makers with sufficient information to determine whether to invest significant effort in developing a new financial system. This project is expected to cost \$400,000 and be completed by March 2004.
2. \$230,000 has been allocated to complete software upgrades to the existing financial information system to keep it functional while a business needs analysis for its replacement is performed.
3. \$200,000 has been allocated for hardware and software development and support tools in support of a knowledge management strategy.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Does the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development have any comments, Mr. Roland?

Standing Committee On Governance And Economic Development Comments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Financial Management Board Secretariat, FMBS, manages and controls the government's financial, human and information resources. The FMBS, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Executive offices make up the Department of the Executive.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the chair of the Financial Management Board and his staff on Wednesday, January 15, 2003, to review the secretariat's draft main estimates for 2003-2004.

The committee noted a net \$359,000 increase in operations expense for FMBS from their 2003-2006 business plans. FMBS explained that this net increase is due to a \$93,000 adjustment in amortization expense; a \$226,000 transfer from Health and Social Services for the Fort Smith and Deh Cho Health and Social Services Boards for the provision of payroll and benefits support; and \$40,000 for the development of evaluation capacity in support of the social agenda action plan. There were no changes in capital expenditures for the secretariat from its 2003-2006 business plan.

Corporate Capital Planning Process

During the committee's review of the FMBS's 2003-2004 draft main estimates, the government's corporate capital planning process, CCP, remained a primary concern for most committee members. Committee issues that arose from its continued consideration of the CCP included:

1. The primary rating criteria, the foundation of the CCP, places a primary and secondary priority on people and assets respectively. This results in more capital funding allocated for more developed and populous communities. A number of Members commented that if this criterion remains unchanged, small communities may never see any significant funding or improvements to their infrastructure.
2. The evaluation process for the CCP is conducted by the Capital Review Committee, which is comprised exclusively of deputy ministers. The committee stated that while the decision-making process has been transferred to the deputy ministers, it is the Ministers who are ultimately accountable to the residents of the Northwest Territories.
3. A more equitable approach that incorporates an improved and more equitable distribution of capital funding to small communities must be implemented.
4. Committee members noted cost overruns in large projects have been funded at the expense of other projects.
5. In most small communities, government capital expenditures are often the sole source of economic development.

Committee members recalled that at the end of the review of the 2003-2006 business plans, the Premier at a meeting with AOC agreed to review the CCP process, taking into consideration the concerns of the Regular Members. AOC informed the Premier that it would like to comment on any proposed changes to the CCP prior to the introduction of the government's draft 2003-2004 main estimates in February of 2003. To date, neither standing committee has received correspondence or briefings on proposed changes to the current CCP from the government.

Technology Services Centre

The government's IT support services will be centralized under FMBS within its new technology services centre, TSC. The TSC will be responsible for providing a centralized service desk, desktop, network, server and network authentication support services to departments. Services rendered will be charged back to the respective department, board or agency and the staff of 29 will be comprised of IT staff transferred from the departments.

Although committee members appreciated the efficiencies associated with the centralization initiative, the committee hoped that this was not another unnecessary exercise to increase staff or funding. Committee members recalled that a similar exercise in the previous Assembly was initiated and completed by the Department of Public Works and Services. The centralization initiative must ensure services are not needlessly duplicated.

Regional Reorganization

Some committee members observed that there has been growth in the number of active positions and correspondent funding for the communities of Fort Smith and Fort Simpson. No increases in active positions or funding was evident for Hay River, a community in the same region as Fort Smith, which is experiencing a greater demand for programs and services.

Committee members note that many departments have made changes to their organizational structure to prepare for program and service delivery functions in line with anticipated self-government agreements. The committee is concerned that there may be increased costs associated with any realignment of programs and services along self-government lines. Committee members remarked that these incremental costs associated with self-government are the responsibility of the federal government.

To his knowledge, the Minister assured that there is no regional reorganization planned or underway. In a subsequent letter to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, the Minister confirmed there is no government-wide undertaking to reorganize its regional structures in anticipation of self-government or any other development.

Clear And Consistent Financial Reporting Protocols

During the committee's review of the Department of Transportation's capital expenditures, committee members made note of the increase in capital funding that was attributed to the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund. The committee asked the department for an explanation of how the funding was accounted for within the Department of Transportation. The Department of Transportation referred the matter to the Department of Finance, who in turn referred it to the FMBS.

FMBS explained that monies from the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund is accounted for within "deferred capital contributions" of the government's overall summary of revenues and not within the Department of Transportation. However, Members later noted that funding from the federal government's airport capital assistance program is accounted for within the department under "capital recoveries" in its revenues, recoveries and transfer payments schedule.

The committee commented that the government's books should be clear, consistent and in plain language. Committee members encourage the government to adopt a standardized reporting process for revenues as well as expenditures.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Would the Minister be wanting to bring in any witnesses, Minister Handley?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I will, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in, please. Minister Handley, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses, please?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: With me are Lew Voytilla on my right, secretary to the Financial Management Board Secretariat, and

Rob Taggart, manager of corporate services for Financial Management Board Secretariat. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. We are looking for directorate, general comments. Ms. Lee.

General Comments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question on the Minister's opening comments, item number two where it speaks about the removal of \$1 million associated with the hydro power initiative and it further states that this work has been transferred to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. I am wondering if the Minister can advise us as to whether any money is being transferred to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation on this initiative.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in the current year, 2002-2003, we transferred approximately half a million dollars. Next year there is no money to be transferred. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. Once there, then, what sort of mandate or direction went with that \$500,000 for this year? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the mandate that went with the money is the same mandate that was originally with the Financial Management Board Secretariat and that is to continue to explore, do research and feasibility reviews on potential hydro projects in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. Is it possible for the Minister to provide a copy of any written document that pertains to that correspondence to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation stating this mandate? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we can provide a copy of the contribution agreement. That, I think, will answer the questions. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Could I be also provided with the total money spent on this hydro power initiative by the Financial Management Board Secretariat in the life of its program? I think it is the last two or three years. An itemized account of it. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions around one of the items the Minister mentioned in his opening comments. It has to do with the funding increases. In point three of his opening comments was a \$150,000 increase related to the issuance of monitoring loan guarantees to support the establishment of secondary industries in the Northwest Territories. Are these typically related to the diamond polishing guarantees that we make, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, certainly the loan guarantees in the diamond industry is part of it. We also anticipate that as the Mackenzie Valley pipeline issues heat up and become more likely, we are going to see more and more requests for loan guarantees. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get an idea of what sorts of loan guarantees the Minister envisions coming from the Mackenzie Valley development?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we do not have a full policy developed yet that will include the oil and gas industry, but we have been reminded continually by some Members that there is need for us to be open to having loan guarantees to businesses that can show us that they are likely viable and to be prepared for that eventuality when it happens with the oil and gas industry, as well as with any future mining that might be happening, or, in fact, for any other ones that may seem appropriate. Mr. Chairman, simply put, the policy has not been developed yet to do that. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have we had to make good on any guarantees yet in the secondary diamond industry?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes. We have had to pay the bank on one loan guarantee, roughly \$2.6 million, and we have an arrangement whereby the guarantor is paying us back. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get that confirmed? I believe I heard the Minister say that the person or the company that we had provided a guarantee for is actually going to pay us back the entire amount that we had to make good to the banks.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we had a guarantee from a parent corporation who now are paying us back.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will that pay back include interest on monies advanced? Since we do not have any cash sitting in the bank, if we spend the money it is typically on our operating line. So it costs us money to pay the banks back money that we have guaranteed. Do we recover that or is that lost funds?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the agreement we came to with the parent company is that, for the first five years of the five-year agreements we have in place now, the parent company will not pay us interest on the money. So that would be money that we would have to absorb. But at the end of five years, then that is all subject to review. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if I can find out over what length of time will the company be paying back the \$2.6 million?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, at the most it will be 10 years; hopefully sooner.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just to continue on a little more on this line of questioning about loan guarantees, the Minister states that there is an increase for that. My question is, what do we have totally outstanding in loan guarantees to do with the secondary industry?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The outstanding amount, Mr. Chairman, is \$8 million.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So that is the total of loan guarantees that we have for the secondary diamond industry. All guarantees? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, that is all there is. That is in addition to the \$2.6 million that we just referred to in answer to Mr. Dent's question. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that guaranteed debt included in our net debt numbers?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, it is not included in our net debt.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we can strike another \$10 million off our borrowing capacity. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is reported as a contingent liability. So if we had to make good on it and we could not collect it from anywhere, then it becomes a liability. But until then it is categorized as a contingent liability, so it is not part of our net debt.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another aspect of this same line of questioning. I do not think there is any doubt that the introduction and growth of this new industry to the North has been helped by the government's guarantee for companies starting up. But I do recall some of the discussion related to why we are doing this in the first place was because Canadian banking and financial institutions were really quite unfamiliar with the diamond industry and were unwilling to take on this kind of a risk because of that unfamiliarity. It is my understanding that they were saying, well, we need to watch how this develops, we need to build our own expertise and develop our own risk management plan. What I wanted to ask about was whether the Minister is seeing any change or progress in the expertise and the ability of the Canadian banking system to finance this kind of thing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, there has been and is a change happening gradually. That is why our total loan guarantee is only at \$8 million. Some of the more recent companies, bigger companies that are coming north either are coming with more cash of their own to put into the business or else have arrangements with diamond banks elsewhere. So we are seeing some changes. In terms of the Canadian banks being any more willing to give the loans and so on on rough diamonds, no, there has not been a noticeable change yet from Canadian chartered banks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if this is something that we are working on. Are we shooting for this? I guess it seems an industry as wealthy and really as stable as the diamond industry should be able to look after itself in this

vein. As I have said, I support the function of government in introducing it, but is this something that we could look forward to someday getting out of without putting taxpayers' money at risk and seeing it handled entirely within the entrepreneurial world? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as Mr. Braden mentioned earlier, the loan guarantees and support provided by our government has certainly been beneficial in terms of creating a diamond polishing industry in the Northwest Territories. So it has made that industry possible. I think without it we would not see it. The diamond secondary industry is not a big industry in Canada yet, so with our chartered banks in Canada where the decisions are made in Toronto and so on this is not something that attracts their attention. I think eventually it may happen or else we will see diamond banks moving into Canada. At this point, no, there is not a lot of interest by Canadian banks. It has been some time since I had discussions, but I have had discussions with representatives of banks about loan guarantees in the rough diamond area and they just do not know enough about the business. I expect that over the longer term we will see it happening, but not in the immediate future.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to ask the Minister what service charges do we pay Nunavut for the work we are doing for them?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Financial Management Board Secretariat does not have any arrangements with Nunavut, so there are no service charges paid by this or earned by this department with Nunavut.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

Detail

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Detail. We are on page 2-37, directorate, operations. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under directorate, it is written down under the area of self-government where the Financial Management Board Secretariat is working with Aboriginal Affairs and provides advice to them. I would like to know from the Minister in that area, when it comes to the self-government discussions and in an area that was highlighted in our report about regional reorganization, what kind of advice does the directorate give other departments? We have heard that there is no government-wide regional reorganization going on, but the numbers show that in fact some departments have been moving already in that area. So is this a one-off sort of thing? One department comes in, Financial Management

Board Secretariat gives its advice and what impacts are there in the fact of our financial resources? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in terms of any organization to accommodate self-governments and so on, this department does not provide any advice to the other departments in our government. Our government does not have a position on this. The only advice we would provide through the Financial Management Board Secretariat would be on the financial implications of any self-government agreements or negotiations that are going on.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So who would monitor the potential impacts of some of the decisions being made by the departments when it comes specifically to realigning themselves on the basis of self-government discussions that are going on? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, at this point there are no government restructuring or reorganizing activities that are going on to accommodate self-government, so there really is not anything to monitor. I would say that departments are continually looking at their regional organizations and trying to fine tune it to maximum efficiency. So there are always small changes going on, but there are no organized department-wide plans that I am aware of where anyone would be organizing for future self-governments. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm aware that one of the departments, Health and Social Services, is in fact doing some work -- unless that's been halted -- in the area of realigning itself with self-government discretion in the Beaufort-Delta region. I'm aware of that. I'm also aware that the negotiators in the Beaufort-Delta are responding quite negatively to the fact that they feel this government has overstepped its boundaries in addressing that.

My concern comes out of the financial end. If we're expending what little resources we have available to ourselves to realign in advance of self-government going ahead, then we're already spending our money, and why would the federal government come back and reimburse us? We already know the federal government has talked about giving us back our incremental costs, but there hasn't been agreement to what would be considered incremental costs. So that's why I ask these questions. Under directorate here it states that this body provides advice to other departments responsible for the implementation of comprehensive claims and so on. That's why I ask the question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this department's responsibility is to provide advice to departments on financial

implications of self-government or potential self-governments. In terms of other department reorganizations, there are always reorganizations going on, whether it's...I don't know if the Member is referring to the Sahtu health board and the talk about having one and so on. Then that kind of issue has to make organizational sense. It would have to come to Cabinet and to FMB if there were financial implications some day, but that certainly hasn't happened yet.

Mr. Chairman, to do anything like that now would be presuming on the conclusions of self-government and we're not doing that. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's good to hear the Minister say that, but it does raise a concern with me because the terms of reference were developed already for work to be done in that specific area, and looking at reorganization of health boards. One of the last reports for Health and Social Services talked about too many health boards, so that's why I would ask the question. We can't find enough money to try and keep our services at the levels they are or improve them, but we're going to find money to set up an administrative process. I think that totally belongs within the federal government realm when we talk about self-government financing. As the Minister says, that's too early yet, but I feel that in fact we're already starting to do that. Any work done now in that area is costing us some money, it's taking somebody away from what they could be doing on existing programs and services. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, if the Department of Health and Social Services is developing a terms of reference or doing some review on their internal organization, then that's really a matter within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health and Social Services and his department. It's not something that we would be able to veto or to provide advice on unless we were asked for it. It's something that they would be doing. Depending on what their conclusions are, if they want to make some major changes, they would have to come through Cabinet and Financial Management Board at that point. But up to now, we really have no role in that. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the reason I raise these questions under the Financial Management Board Secretariat is it's my understanding that the Financial Management Board is like the check stop that keeps everything in line when it comes to financial resource decisions made by our government. I think this is a significant one where if we're spending existing dollars implementing what could be, unless this government feels that it's not the federal government's responsibility and it's our responsibility, then that would be news to me. So I think we need to clarify where we are and what our stance is as a government. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, our government has no position or no plan in terms of responding to self-government so that's not really an issue.

With regard to department reorganizations or reviews of their organization, unless they come to us for money, then we really don't have input into that decision. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We're on page 2-37, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$5.9 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-39, directorate, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$1.238 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The federal share of superannuation costs, we have a couple of boards listed here. We have the Workers' Compensation Board and the NWT Power Corporation board. Does our superannuation fall under this category as well, the GNWT's own Superannuation costs, or is that within the Department of Finance? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The money that is shown in here is money from the contribution we receive as a government from the federal government for superannuation costs. This is just a proportionate share to the Workers' Compensation Board and the Power Corporation. So it's just loaned to them. It is part of that contribution from the federal government.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under our own GNWT costs or potential costs, there has been a fair bit of discussion and concern in the past with the federal government changing its superannuation plan. We've since had agreement that they would continue to fund a portion of ours so we wouldn't be hit with such a...I think it was a \$12 million to \$13 million figure. Is that still out there, or has there been agreement now with the federal government to continue with that process? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is still an outstanding question and will be part of the formula renewal negotiations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Contributions, total contributions, \$1.238 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Labour Relations And Compensation Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-41, labour relations and compensation services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7.855 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Government Accounting

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-43, government accounting, operations expense, total operations expense, \$10.383 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-45, government accounting, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$8.170 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Correction on that last figure. It was \$7.180 million. Mr. Dent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if I could seek the committee's consent to go back to page 2-39.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Member is seeking consent to go back to page 2-39.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Okay, we'll go back to 2-39. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has also got to do with the superannuation costs. I notice that we have two items here: federal share of superannuation costs. The last sentence under each item says that the subsidy has provided term funding assistance, or has ceased the subsidy, but the federal government has provided term funding assistance to offset the increased cost. My question is when does the term end? How long are we getting this term funding for?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, unless we negotiate an extension, then it will end on March 31, 2004.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We'll call that figure again. Grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$1.238 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Government Accounting

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go back to page 2-45, government accounting, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$7.180 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just looking at the numbers here, 2001-2002 actuals at \$5.4 million, and 2002-2003 main estimates \$7.1 million, revised main estimates the figure stays consistent throughout now. So what are we looking at for actual figures? Are we using up our total allotment that has been asked for? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, at this point, we're estimating that the total expenditure will be approximately \$6.3 million, in which case we would lapse the difference between the \$7.1 million and the \$6.3 million. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking at our revised figures, it's consistent now. Why wouldn't that be adjusted to state what the Minister just stated here? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, when we put the main estimates together we didn't know when the phase two rate application would be complete and in effect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Handley, did you want to add to that? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, so the \$7.18 million was our best estimate at the time of what would be required.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister also inform us as to the portion that is not used up, does that just go back in general revenues?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, it goes back and is lapsed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 2-45, government accounting, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$7.180 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Budgeting And Evaluation

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-47, budgeting and evaluation, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1.478 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Audit Bureau

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-49, Audit Bureau, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1.243 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-50, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-51, technology service centre, information item. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just under this area they have expenditures equaling \$3.7 million, but to be determined for all other income from all the other departments. Is this going to be offset from what he'll collect from other departments?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that's correct. All the departments will contribute to that amount. But we haven't been able to prorate it yet, not knowing exactly when each department would come on the system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 2-51, information item, technology service centre.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-52, information item, technology service centre.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-53, information item, technology service centre, active positions. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to confirm that these positions are in fact coming from other departments, there are no new positions being created. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll ask Mr. Voytilla to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All of the positions, of course, their costs are recovered through the rates that are set and charged back to departments. So this operates on a break-even basis. The only position that was new and staffed as an additional position was the director of the TSC. There are three management positions that have been staffed internally, and then the rest of them are technical positions all staffed internally.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Page 2-53, information item, technology service centre, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-54, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$639,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go back to page 2-35, Financial Management Board Secretariat, program summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$26.939 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go to capital acquisition, cap 3, Financial Management Board Secretariat, directorate, total directorate, \$400,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question on the financial information system review. We're talking here about a review, so can we get some clarification on that? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, because that is part of the cost of the overall system. I suppose it's in some ways similar to engineering costs on a capital building or something. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That leads me to another question. Usually when you do have that planning, beforehand you have an estimate of how much it will cost after that. But you have nothing for future years here. What is their thinking?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we don't have anything in the future on it because we're not at the point yet where we know what the replacement would cost. It's, I suppose, again similar to a functional review when you are looking at a building. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Functional reviews, do they normally fall under O and M costs?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we need to look at replacing the FIS system, so at some point we need to do an assessment of what our needs are for a new system. Early on we don't know what that cost is going to be in the end. So at some point in the future we'll know what the cost is and be able to put it in. But right now we can't even estimate what the replacement to FIS is. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the department has no estimates potentially of what this might cost in future years. I've seen estimates put in documentation and I've been told...I will use a specific example. In Inuvik the Aurora Campus facility, Public Works and Services did a review, gave some numbers, a figure showed up in the capital plan, reviewed potential drawings and whatever, a figure was established at \$7 million and some, which is much less than the public services review. At least it was put in the books. Do we have anything like that in this case? Is it a shot in the dark?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, what number we would put in would depend on what makes sense to put into the new system. The amount would be somewhere between \$2 million and \$15 million. We could plug a figure in, but it's meaningless at this point, Mr. Chairman. It's very ballpark. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are on cap 3, Financial Management Board Secretariat, directorate, total directorate, total directorate, \$400,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Government Accounting

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Government accounting, total government accounting, \$200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In headquarters, we have the same thing, information system, \$200,000; under government accounting, \$200,000. Are they both reviews?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is maintaining the functionality and the life of the old existing system we have right now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Total government accounting, \$200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$600,000. Does the committee agree that that concludes the review of the Financial Management Board Secretariat?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Delorey.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering 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; and Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted and that Bills 6, 7 and 8 are ready for third reading and, Mr. Speaker, I report that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a seconder? Mrs. Groenewegen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker. I request that we go back to item 13, tabling of documents.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you seeking unanimous consent?

MR. MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 13, tabling of documents.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Deh Cho is seeking unanimous consent to go back to item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. McLeod.

REVERT TO ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 31-14(6): New Rent Scales 2003

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment indicated that the graduated rent scale applies to all housing clients. I would like to table a document called New Rent Scales 2003 that states that it only applies to seniors and students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Any other items under tabling of documents? If not, item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at adjournment today and again at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Orders of the day for Friday, February 28, 2003:

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

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

- Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
- 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
- Committee Report 6-14(6), Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's 2001-2002 Annual Report

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third 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

22. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until 10:00 a.m., Friday, February 28, 2003.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

