



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**14<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Monday, March 10, 2003**

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**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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#### 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>

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, March 10, 2003****Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, 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):** Colleagues, before we begin with orders of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep and heartfelt appreciation to the Members of this House, to the staff, to the people of Yellowknife and people across the North for their prayers and expressions of condolences to my family and I on the recent loss of my wife Elaine. Her contribution to the North and people of the North will continue to be remembered in many ways. I want to say thank you for allowing me the time off to be with my family and thank you to Deputy Speaker Krutko for filling in for me and I want to thank you for your genuine kindness that has helped ease our loss over the past few days. Thank you.

Today is Commonwealth Day. The Commonwealth is home to more than 1.7 billion people, a unique family in 54 countries, with many faiths, races, languages and cultures, spread across every continent and ocean in the world. The dynamic and vibrant network of partnerships that exist among its people give the commonwealth its unique strength in promotion, democracy, development and cooperation.

The second Monday in March is observed annually by all members of the Commonwealth. This day is used to promote understanding about global issues, international cooperation and the work of the modern Commonwealth. Each year, there is a different theme. This year's theme for Commonwealth Day 2003 is Partners in Development. Development is about people, their quality of life, and the choices available to them as they strive to reach their full potential. It is about finding new ways to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, education and jobs, healthcare, transportation, safe living conditions, good government and a stable economy.

Commonwealth Day is celebrated in different ways. Many cities, for example, host multi-faith observances. The largest is held at Westminster Abbey in London and is attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth parliaments, and legislatures mark the day with speeches and events.

Today, the Royal Union flag, also known as the Union Jack, will be flown along with the Canadian flag on all Government of Canada buildings and establishments across Canada to mark Canada's membership in the Commonwealth of nations.

Commonwealth Day is an opportunity to remember the values, traditions and aspirations we all share as Commonwealth citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 33-14(6): Public Service Initiatives**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the more than 4,000 public service employees who work for this government are the backbone of our programs and services. It is their efforts, skills and abilities that allow us to deliver top quality programs to Northerners. Today, I would like to speak about two initiatives that allow the government as a whole to better support our employees so they, in turn, can continue the work.

The first initiative is the introduction of a new employee recognition program to promote and recognize the efforts and achievements of public service employees. In last year's recognition survey of all government employees, staff suggested ways to improve the frequency and nature of recognition. This program is based in the results of that survey and provides a broader approach to employee recognition.

In addition to improvements in the existing retirement and long-service awards, there are new parts to the program.

Departments are able to implement their own employee recognition program. Department recognition may be formal or informal and will recognize outstanding achievements of employees or teams that support departmental goals. Service application awards have been created to recognize the commitment of long service employees who are leaving the GNWT and are not eligible for retirement.

As well, I am pleased to announce that the Premier's Award for Excellence will be given on an annual basis to teams or individual employees for outstanding achievements that have had a positive effect on government. In honour of those achievements, the Premier's office sponsors an annual award event in June during Public Service Week. Recipients are chosen through a simple process that is available for anyone wishing to nominate an employee or team. The process for nominating individuals will be available shortly.

Awards will be given to employees or teams whose achievements demonstrate excellence and innovation in meeting the objectives of government. Examples of the types of achievements that could be recognized are:

- creative solutions resulting in improvement to government-wide systems or processes;
- exceptional performance on an ongoing basis;
- outstanding commitment to complex projects or ongoing activities;

- unique contributions that demonstrate excellence and innovation; and,
- personal milestones that support government objectives.

Mr. Speaker, the government is also taking steps to assist employees with strong management and leadership potential to gain the skills and experience necessary to take on progressively more senior management roles in the future. The management assignment program will get underway later this month and will provide individuals with assessment, training, developmental assignments, coaching and mentoring to help them develop their professional skills.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize and appreciate the dedication of our public service. These programs demonstrate our appreciation and the government's commitment to supporting those who are carrying out the programs and services necessary to serve the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

**Minister's Statement 34-14(6): Proposed Municipal Government Legislation**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back. Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling proposed amendments to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, the Hamlets Act, and the Charter Communities Act. These proposed changes, along with the amendments to the Settlements Act which are still under development, will modernize the legislation governing municipal governments in the NWT.

The process leading up to these proposed amendments began in 1995 when my department, in partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Municipalities, initiated the municipal legislation review. Phase one of this review was completed in 1997 and led to several housekeeping amendments to fix specific problems with the existing municipal legislation and also the Property Assessment and Taxation Act.

Mr. Speaker, phase two of this process began in 1997 with the circulation to all community governments of the discussion paper Empowerment Through Community Government Legislation. This paper was intended to facilitate discussion of comprehensive issues within municipal legislation. The paper stimulated a great deal of discussion during subsequent consultations over the course of the following two years. The proposed amendments I will be tabling later today are the direct result of this process.

Highlights of these proposed amendments include:

- broader bylaw-making powers for local governments;
- limits on municipal liability for certain matters and activities;

- greater ability of councils to set their own rules for procedure;
- simplification of the financial reporting requirements;
- expanded corporate powers including expanded borrowing abilities; and
- increased ability for municipalities to enter into agreements with government bodies other than the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to highlight the fact that these documents are still drafts as consultation and development continue. Just recently, officials from MACA met with representatives of the local government administrators of the Northwest Territories for a day-long technical review and comment session. This session was extremely productive and may result in a number of possible further amendments to this proposed legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, amendments to the Settlements Act are still under development and I anticipate that all four municipal governance bills will be ready for introduction to the Legislative Assembly in June 2003. Tabling this proposed legislation now provides us with the opportunity for informal consultation and input on this important legislation prior to introduction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' Statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

**Minister's Statement 35-14(6): Canada Winter Games**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to provide an update to Members on our NWT Team's results from the 10<sup>th</sup> Canada Winter Games recently concluded in Bathurst – Campbellton, New Brunswick.

Team NWT consisted of athletes, coaches, artists and mission staff from 10 NWT communities participating in the sports of biathlon, badminton, curling, cross-country skiing, figure skating, speed skating and squash and the national artist program, which is part of the games.

During the two weeks of competition I am extremely pleased to report that the NWT won three medals and finished ninth overall, our best placing ever.

---Applause

Our medalists were:

- Mike Argue of Yellowknife who captured two medals in cross-country skiing, a silver in the men's ten kilometer classic and a bronze in the seven-and-a-half kilometer pursuit race; and
- Sarah Daitch of Fort Smith who won a bronze medal in the women's five-kilometre pursuit cross-country skiing race.

Other notable performances included:

- fourth and eighth place finishes for biathlete Lindsay Bolivar of Yellowknife;



- a sixth place finish for the women's cross-country skiing relay team in the four by five kilometre relay; and
- three top 10 finishes for biathlete Brendan Green of Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of the NWT, I would like to pass on congratulations to these individuals and all team members who were ambassadors for the NWT.

In the continuing tradition of the games, these young people represented us well and have now become role models who will go on to encourage many others to follow in their footsteps and reap the benefits of participating in sport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. It was a fine performance and the Territories are very proud of them. Item 2, Ministers' statements.

#### **Minister's Statement 36-14(6): Minister Absent From The House**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jim Antoine will be absent from the House today to attend the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada annual conference in Toronto. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

#### **ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

##### **Member's Statement On Trihalomethane Levels in Northern Drinking Water**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back. Mr. Speaker, the issue of Trihalomethanes, better known as THMs, is again receiving attention on newscasts across North America, THMs are formed when chlorine combines with organic matter in the water supply. Mr. Speaker, water problems are not new in my constituency. There are water problems in Aklavik with regard to *H. pylori* and also in the community of Tsiigehtchic where colour and odour are a major problem. Mr. Speaker, the community of Fort McPherson is one of the communities that has had a major outbreak with THMs in its water supply.

It has been known for some time, Mr. Speaker, that THMs in drinking water can lead to higher rates of bladder and colon cancer, and they are also associated with miscarriages and low birth rates. Recent studies have shown that exposure can also come from breathing water vapour and also by exposing your skin through bathing and showering in this water.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to take proactive measures to reduce the levels of THMs in the drinking water of our communities. This government must take steps to ensure public confidence and public awareness of the potential harm that THMs can cause. This government must educate the public about the importance of personal water filtering systems and other methods of lessening THM levels, not only in our

treatment facilities, but also in our homes and in the means of transporting water in our systems.

Mr. Speaker, water is an important component in our daily lives. Yet, Mr. Speaker, this natural resource in the NWT is not immune from THMs, as elsewhere in Canada. Responding to this, the government must ensure the water is safe to drink and to bathe in. This great injustice cannot be done to our citizens of the NWT when the questions are unknown and the effects are comparable to what we see in southern Canada. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his Members' statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mr. Krutko, you may continue.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, a great injustice is being done when the citizens of this territory can no longer have faith in the safety of their drinking water. At all costs, the faith that we put into the government and into the people we trust to protect us must be restored. Mr. Speaker, there are major lawsuits in southern Canada right now on the THM problem, which is now being detected in miscarriages in women. So at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services exactly what this government is doing about the effect of THMs on our people in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

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

##### **Member's Statement On Focus Future Career Symposium In Hay River**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you back to the House, as well. It is nice to have you back.

Mr. Speaker, I have often spoken in this House of the need to maximize northern employment. We need to keep our Northerners working and we need to inform our youth and adults of the many opportunities and jobs that will be coming available as the North continues to develop.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to a very worthwhile conference being held in Hay River. Mr. Speaker, on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, Hay River will be hosting a career symposium. The theme for the symposium is Focus Future. The goal of the career symposium, Mr. Speaker, is to provide career-related information to youth and adults through personal contact with representatives from small business, industry, both the private and the public sectors, and post-secondary institutions. Mr. Speaker, the career symposium will provide career, labour market and learning opportunities for the youth and adults of Hay River, the South Slave and the Deh Cho regions so they may make informed educational and employment-related decisions.

Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that over 1,500 people will take part in this career symposium. This is a very worthwhile forum for both participants and exhibitors alike. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Ministers of Education, Culture and

Employment; Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development; and Municipal and Community Affairs for their support for this career symposium. Mr. Speaker, I believe the career symposium will be a very worthwhile event and I encourage all Members of this House to attend on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Advice To Cabinet Ministers On Roles And Responsibilities**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it really is good to see you back here. I'm not embarrassed to say that I missed you a lot while you were gone. Mr. Speaker, I think I can title my statement today as general lament to the Cabinet Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, a Minister stated that he was insulted by remarks that he wasn't doing his job. I thought about this over the weekend and wonder how insulted he would feel if he were trying to advocate, on behalf of his constituents, bringing forward gaps in laws and regulations with evidence that supports the need for a change, only to be told over and over again a big fat no. What's worse is the rationale for the no's is always because things are the way they are and they cannot be changed.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I've seen this approach from all or most Ministers. The latest performance by a Minister on amendments to the Territorial Parks Act were deplorable. What about the incoherent answers by Ministers on harmonization? Pushing papers and going to events and going to meetings cannot be an alibi for inaction or an excuse for non-action. If they really thought about it, Mr. Speaker, they would know that behind every issue we bring forward, there are real life stories with real suffering or real injustice being done by the government's action or inaction. People are being excluded from programs when they should be included.

So I have some advice for all Ministers, and I want them to know this in their heart; it is not their job to be the protector of the status quo or to be the mouthpiece for the departments' policies and guidelines. If everything was fine and dandy the way things are, why should we meet in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker? Ministers have to get out from under whatever albatross they've put themselves under. It is their job to know and to follow the policies and legislation under their stewardship, I agree with that. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it is more important that they remain open-minded about the shortfall in their rules, and they should open up to the advice from the Members of this House and the constituents at large that they serve, and be strong enough to change them if necessary.

I say this, Mr. Speaker, because I'm absolutely fed up with answers that say things are the way they are because that's the way they have been before me and they will always be the same after me, no matter what. This has been the case with the whole array of questions I've been asking about the shortfalls in the SFA. I could go on and on and on and I don't want to repeat everything, Mr. Speaker, because I think I will

get a chance to ask that question. I really would like the Ministers to consider that everything we are bringing up here has a point and a meaning, and we deserve respect as much as they do themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On 2003 Western Canada Adult Hockey Tournament In Vancouver**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to report to the constituents in Inuvik that some of their finest have travelled down to Vancouver to take part in the 2003 Western Canada Adult Hockey Tournament. Mr. Speaker, the team won a berth in this event from playing in the Balsillie Cup Tournament last year. We represented the North and our constituency quite well as we won our division in a hard-fought game yesterday. We had to travel through the night to get back here, and many of the people from our constituency will see some of the players get off the plane today in Inuvik, wearing their trophies.

I'd just like to mention the names of those players: Chris Balla, Tom Williams, Donald Kuptana, James Day, Duane Smith, Gordie Kasook, Todd Moran, Neil McLellan, Parker Israel, Daryl Black, Turpine Cockney and I took part in the event and proved that we might be old, but we still can do it. We are bringing the trophies home, and I would just like to let my wife know that I survived. Thank you.

---Applause

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

**Member's Statement On Diabetes Testing Program**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to welcome you back to the Assembly. This morning, here in the Legislative Assembly, a number of us, and I hope the staff and the people who work here too, took advantage of the diabetes testing program that was put on here in the Great Hall by volunteers and professional staff. It was a pretty simple procedure, Mr. Speaker. They just gave our fingers a little poke, drew a little bit of blood and then in a couple of seconds were able to give us a reading on our blood sugar levels. It is not the real analysis that needs to be done, but it is a good signal and it is very simple and I appreciate that they came into the Legislative Assembly to do that.

Diabetes is something that is fast becoming recognized as a very, very serious problem across North America, but especially here in the NWT, Mr. Speaker. It is estimated that about one in 20 of us has Type 2 diabetes and the Canadian Diabetes Association says that for every person who knows he or she has diabetes, there is one who does not. So there are many people who are not aware that they may have this life-threatening, if not life-changing disease.

Here are some of the questions that everyone should consider. Are you over 45 years of age? Are you overweight, particularly around the middle? Do you get enough exercise? Are you

Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian, or African? Is there a history of diabetes in your family? If you said yes to two or more of these factors, your risk of having diabetes increases. If you are 45 years old, you are advised to get your blood sugar level checked every one to three years.

Type 2 diabetes is largely preventable. Its onset may be delayed by a healthy lifestyle, some healthy lifestyle choices, such as diet, weight control and exercise. Diabetes can be managed through monitoring, testing, lifestyle and sometimes the use of medication. It's very simple. The professionals tell us to eat properly, get enough exercise and don't smoke.

Mr. Speaker, diabetes prevention, early detection and management are all areas that we can do a better job of. I want to acknowledge the work of Paul Hanna of the NWT Diabetes Association for taking the initiative and helping out nurses Mary Deans and Kerry Mitchell of the Shopper's Drug Mart. Mr. Speaker, it can start with each of us getting a very simple test, and that was demonstrated this morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

#### **Member's Statement On Annual Inuvialuit Regional Corporation Hockey Tournament**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the weekend of February 28<sup>th</sup> to March 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year, the annual IRC hockey tournament was held in Inuvik. When it comes to bragging rights for 2003, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to provide the House with some details of the winning team. The team was sponsored by Northwind Industries. The majority of the players come from the electoral district of Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Northwind Industries is a local contractor to the oil patch and is the sponsor of the winning team. The team members are: Captain Tim Gordon, who was also MVP of the tournament; team members Corey Wainman, Raymond Wainman, Josh Campbell, who was also top defenseman of the tournament, Gary Gordon, Phillip Harry, Scott Gordon, Joel Lennie, Thomas Anthony, Charles Martin, Dwayne Seward, Mickey Ipana, Greg Connell, Patrick Blake, who was also top goalie of the tournament.

Mr. Speaker we hope to see this team in this year's Labatt's hockey tournament here in Yellowknife. As MLA, I wish to congratulate them on a fine win. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

#### **ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize in the visitors' gallery today the grade 7 and 8 students from the Weledeh Catholic School here in Yellowknife. Welcome.

---Applause

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to welcome two schools to our Legislature today. Mr. Handley has recognized the Mildred Hall students, pardon me, the Weledeh Catholic School students and their teacher that's here with them is Trent Hamm. I would also like to welcome Mildred Hall students and their teacher Janet Arthur. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize from Edmonton, Mr. Bill McKeown, executive director for the Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut division of the CNIB. As well from Yellowknife, Christina Vernon, the regional director for the NWT and Nunavut CNIB. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize one of the pages in the Chamber, a constituent of Great Slave, Sam Gargan who is celebrating today his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thank you. Happy Birthday, Sam, from all the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. I would like to take this opportunity to say hello to my mother in Fort Smith, Thebacha. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

#### **ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, a recent scientific study supported by Health Canada has shown that exposure to Trihalomethanes, or THMs, in the drinking water increase certain types of cancer and also has an effect on miscarriages. Also the United States Environmental Protection Agency acknowledges the risk of THMs and has recently lowered its acceptable level from 100 parts per billion to 80 parts per billion and the Canadian government is presently reviewing it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know whether the government has reviewed any data on cancer and miscarriages in the NWT and has investigated the connection between that type of cancer and exposure to THMs?

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

**Return To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is aware of the issue of THMs and the concerns that they are high. The most recent studies as of January 17<sup>th</sup> indicate that the level of THMs, according to the information I have from environmental health, are within acceptable limits. I would be happy to share this information with the Member. I just got it off my e-mail today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have grave concerns with the effect of THMs as there has been a major outbreak in Fort McPherson with THMs. It has exceeded the national standards and it has for almost two-and-a-half years before anything was done to clarify this problem. I would like to ask the Minister, given that the scientific studies have demonstrated the connection between exposure to THMs and various types of cancers and the effect on pregnancy and the complication it does have on women, does the government have any data regarding the cost to the territorial health care system and the result of THM exposure? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just restate that our information is that the level of THMs is within acceptable limits. This testing was of January 17<sup>th</sup> and it's something we want to continue to monitor. I am not aware of any direct scientific evidence we have that has indicated a direct link to any miscarriages that may have happened in the Member's riding and the existence of THMs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister will he table an independent study in the community of Fort McPherson where they have had exposure to THMs, and can he tell me exactly have there been any increases in bladder cancer, colon cancer, miscarriages and any birth defects?

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

**Further Return To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will pull together the information the Member has requested with regard to bladder cancer and birth defects, miscarriages and such and whether there may be any relation, direct or otherwise. We will get the numbers that we do have in terms of these types of illnesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the newest articles and what has been stated in the press across Canada, there are 200 women who are suing different municipal jurisdictions because of THMs. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services who has the responsibility here to ensure that the health of the people in the communities is taken care of. THMs is not a laughing matter. There's scientific proof that it has a direct effect on people's health. As the Minister responsible for health, are you going to do anything on this matter or are you just going to give me lip service?

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

**Further Return To Question 194-14(6): Data On Link Between Cancer And THMs In Drinking Water**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the testing as of January 17<sup>th</sup> indicates that the levels of THMs are within acceptable limits. The Member has asked for some information and we will pull that together. We will track it to see if there is any clear evidence that this has become the significant health problem that the Member may be assuming that it is. Our information clearly states that the level of THMs at present are within acceptable limits. Thank you.

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

**Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment dealing with the income support program. Mr. Speaker, currently the income support program has a policy that any client who earns money outside of income support, that that portion will be returned to the government. Can the Minister elaborate on that a little bit for me? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Return To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the income support program has two areas that could potentially be looked at in terms of what the Member has stated. One is the area of earned income. We provide, on a

monthly basis, Mr. Speaker, \$400 that an individual could earn beyond the amount of income support the individual receives. The other side of that is the unearned area, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of areas there that would be considered unearned income. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister give us how many dollars we are talking about in the area of unearned income that the department has a policy of taking back from clientele on income support? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for income support clients, the unearned income portion is not exempt, Mr. Speaker, so there is no dollar amount specifically attached to that, but there is to the earned income portion, as I stated. An individual could earn \$400 beyond the income support and that will be exempted, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of earned income, above the \$400 question, what kind of dollars are we talking about here? If the government decides not to touch those and allows people to keep their bingo dollars, how much money would the department lose?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is an area called unearned income. I don't have that amount and that would be very difficult to assess how much that would impact on the department, Mr. Speaker, without doing a lot of work on it, which we can do. I don't have that type of information here.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of information we have been asking for on this side of the House to deal with harmonization. We can't expect to make decisions without proper information, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Minister to provide the House with that information as soon as possible? If it's an earned income of over \$400, the department has a policy that says take a minimum of 25 percent up to a maximum of 100 percent; if he could give me that budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 195-14(6): Income Support Policy On Income Calculation**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has asked if we could provide information on the amount of dollars that would be affected by unearned income. I will instruct the department to give me that information as quickly as possible, so that we can pass it on to the Members, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that this government has a program that's combined with the Canada child tax benefit program. Our contribution is through an initiative called NWT child tax benefit. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me what the intent of this program is, what is their goal? What are we trying to accomplish with this NWT child benefit?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Return To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the national child benefit program was a national program in which federal money is passed to individuals in the Territories with children. We have developed, in parallel to that, an NWT child benefit program to help the working poor to ensure that the children of working poor have an opportunity to provide some extra funding, but all the money originally came from the national program. We supplemented that for different programs we have developed, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that this program that's in place is a program that would target the reduction of child poverty to ensure families are better off as a result of working. I wonder if the Minister if he could tell me if this program is working or not.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe it's working, Mr. Speaker. It provides a number of areas of support to the territorial support programs for various children's programs throughout the Territories. That's provided to the regions and, in turn, the communities. In addition, there is

money that goes directly into the hands of the working poor. So we feel that it does supplement their incomes, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am certainly glad to hear that and I am totally convinced that families that have income low enough to qualify deserve to hang onto dollars. However, I am quite concerned when these dollars are calculated as part of income to be assessed for rent that we are defeating the whole purpose of the target of omitting child poverty. Does the Minister agree that by calculating it as part of income for rent, that on one hand we are paying it out and on one hand we are taking it back? We are really not helping them at all.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, the funding that is provided by the federal government, we supplement that and we redirect it into a number of areas including the territorial workers' supplement which aids children and the territorial child benefit. So we have that as the income support side of the program, Mr. Speaker, and I am not sure that it does affect the housing income people, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Minister that when we make contributions to families with low incomes through the NWT child benefit, we are trying to improve the quality of life. When we take that money out of a program, any program that calculates this as income, especially a program such as harmonization, we are defeating the whole purpose. The end result is neutral. So does the Minister actually believe that these programs work together or are they conflicting programs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 196-14(6): National Child Tax Benefit Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the program will provide for the working poor an opportunity to have a rent reduction based on the amount of money earned and that's the total amount of money the family received. Anywhere up to \$3,833 is the limit and below that, they can receive a reduction on their rent, Mr. Speaker. So it works in harmony with each other. Any funding that is provided, the child benefit portion is part of the family's income, but it really depends on the total income of the family. Thank you.

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

**Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. I addressed this question to him earlier in the session with regard to mandatory days off during the Christmas period and the Minister informed me that it is an agreed upon process through negotiations with the UNW. I am also aware now, Mr. Speaker, that the UNW has approached the government on a couple of occasions to put alternatives on the table. The Minister didn't say that. I would like to know if they have worked with UNW to try to come up with some alternative measure so that employees' money stays in employees' pockets? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the provisions for the mandatory leave without pay days is in the collective agreement. I am sure that when we come to renegotiating the collective agreement, that both sides will look at this issue and determine whether or not they would bring forward any proposed changes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

**Supplementary To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe that proposal will meet the same destiny as the other ones the UNW has brought forward. I asked the Minister if he's worked with them or worked with the proposals the UNW has put in front of them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that each time we get together to discuss the collective agreement, that there will be proposals brought forward on this and other matters. I know there were proposals brought forward in the past and there were discussions made. Since the mandatory leave without pay days was introduced, there have been some changes, so we are continually working with the union to make this a good program for our employees and for their members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

**Supplementary To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of mandatory days off, the Minister had answered the

question if it's accepted. I will ask this question: Is it accepted that the government is taking what equals to 10 days pay from an individual, if they leave the government prior to December 19<sup>th</sup>?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how the Member arrives at the 10 days, but employees have 1.92 percent deducted from their biweekly pay cheque and that's what is used to annualize the cost of this leave program. I haven't done the calculation, maybe it comes to 10 days, but that's an agreement that's in the collective agreement. When we renegotiate, if the union wants to bring something forward, then we would be obligated to have a look at it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

**Supplementary To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's 1.92 percent, correct, to cover the five days that would have been leave without pay, but if an individual leaves before December 19<sup>th</sup>, that's the five days they would have off leave without pay, plus the 1.92 percent off of their paycheque throughout the year. Is that not correct?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 197-14(6): Alternatives To Mandatory Leave Provisions**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I understand the Member correctly, then yes that is correct and that's the provision we have negotiated in the collective agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have often spoken in this House about what we can do to improve programs and services for our senior citizens. One example of a government program that I think needs improvement is the Housing Corporation senior citizens' home repair program. I believe the income thresholds of \$37,500 for a combined household in order to qualify is too restrictive. Many of our seniors have worked for many years in order to retire comfortably, yet when they retire they find that they are not qualified for government programs for seniors due to income thresholds imposed by the government.

I believe the more fair and equitable route, Mr. Speaker, would be to take a sliding scale on income in order to qualify for the seniors citizens' home repair program. When I brought this issue up on income thresholds for seniors in the last session in October, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation stated that his department is working with the Department of

Education to review how they have incorporated a sliding scale into the program. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to state what progress his department has made since I last brought this up in October with regard to instituting a sliding scale for the seniors as Education, Culture and Employment did for the seniors' fossil fuel subsidy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, we haven't changed our policy as of this date. We feel we cannot compare the seniors' fuel subsidy program with the way we deliver the seniors home ownership repair program on the income tested. We feel there has been some discrepancy in the development of that procedure. However, I indicated earlier that we were looking very closely at increasing the income threshold, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to inform me if he or his department has met with the seniors' society in Hay River to talk about the senior citizens' home repair program since I brought this up in October. Has he met with the senior citizens in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I haven't personally met with the seniors' society in Hay River, although the President of the NWT Housing Corporation did meet with the NWT Seniors' Society in October to convey some of the progress and work we are trying to contemplate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

**Supplementary To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister please inform me, when that \$37,500 cap was put on the senior citizens' home repair program, when that was instituted and how often is that figure reviewed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, I don't have a specific time or date that it was

instituted. However, we are evaluating the current guidelines and we will certainly look at increasing the income threshold. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

**Supplementary To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to continue looking at this situation and take a sliding scale into consideration in developing a new program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 198-14(6): Senior Citizen's Home Repair Program**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we continue to consult with the seniors' society, we will look at the mandate of those policies and see what can be fitted into all the communities we do serve across the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 199-14(6): Strategy For Diabetes Prevention And Treatment**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Diabetes can be a killer, but it can be recognized and it can be managed. I wanted to ask the Minister for health and social services, does the NWT have a strategy for dealing with diabetes prevention and treatment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 199-14(6): Strategy For Diabetes Prevention And Treatment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker we do have a strategy and plans to deal both on the prevention side as well as work with people who are diagnosed. We are involved with exercises such as the one that took place in the Great Hall today in which we focus on trying to encourage people to take steps to avoid Type 2 diabetes. As the Member indicated, it is preventable and has a lot to do with lifestyle choices, to make the right choices, in terms of what they eat, and what exercise they engage in, and to not drink and smoke. We also have resources in place to assist people, once they are diagnosed, to help them make the transition to the lifestyle, eating habits and cooking habits that may be necessary to make sure they have a proper diet that does not exacerbate Type 2 diabetes. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 199-14(6): Strategy For Diabetes Prevention And Treatment**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I would like to see if I could get some more information on just what kind of resources are being applied in terms of dollars, human resources, with their own staff and potentially recruiting volunteers such as Rose with the NWT Diabetes Association. What are we doing to actually get this information out into the regions or the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 199-14(6): Strategy For Diabetes Prevention And Treatment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a health promotion unit in the department that engages in that function. As well, we have all the public health facilities in the communities, working with the nursing stations and the public health nurses to make the case we have about the issue of Type 2 diabetes. We have a significant part of our health and social service system geared towards active living, healthy lifestyles, appropriate eating, as well as dealing with the outcomes of people that contract Type 2 diabetes. Mr. Speaker, there are specific funds for health promotion that the system has dedicated to the work being done in all communities and in the department to try to address Type 2 diabetes, which is seen as one of the big cost drivers in the system. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 199-14(6): Strategy For Diabetes Prevention And Treatment**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, there have been in particular alarm bells in recent years about the incidence of childhood obesity, and especially how a poor diet relates to the onset of this seemingly totally preventable situation. What are we doing, to specifically target the problem of childhood obesity and its relationship to diabetes? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 199-14(6): Strategy For Diabetes Prevention And Treatment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has an active living strategy. As well, we are trying to sit down with the Minister responsible for Youth and with MACA and with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to see if we can blend some of our funding to, in fact, have it geared to doing practical activities and programs with children and youth to do the very things that Mr. Braden has mentioned. It is critical to get them engaged in active lifestyles and the right choices when it comes to eating, drinking and above all, trying to engage them in the very many opportunities for healthy activities that we do have in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Braden. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.



**Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and it is in regards to student financial assistance. Mr. Speaker, I've asked lots of questions on this. One of the things that the Minister has stated as to the reason why some of the categories of people that I have brought to his attention -- those with disabilities and the RCMP Training Academy students -- and the reasons why they are not included on their SFA is because the Minister and the department has to follow the Canada student regulations or guidelines. However, we know that out of all the money that goes into this fund, Canada funds \$1 million and GNWT funds \$11 million. So my question to the Minister is why is this against the general principle in life that we live by, which is that those who pay the pipers call the tunes. We pay millions; Canada pays one million. Why do we have to follow their rules? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Return To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been a consistency in approach to the SFA program. This program was redesigned in '99, Mr. Speaker. We made some changes in 2000 to make improvements for students but the principles in the programs were maintained and there are, as the honourable Member mentioned earlier, areas that need to be looked at. I committed before to have a look at that but they're mostly in the area of possible alternatives, Mr. Speaker, to maintain the integrity and principles of the program. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, other than the general tradition of doing it this way and the department choosing to follow this path, could I ask the Minister as to whether or not there is a contract that we signed with the government or is there something specific that ties us to the Canada student loan guidelines? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker there is, no doubt, a contractual arrangement between the federal government and ourselves, however, I don't have the details to that here. I could get that for the Member. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, maybe I should just ask the Minister whether or not he could look into it to see if there is a legally binding contract that we have with Canada's regulations and what the background of that is and when it was last revisited and could he provide the information to the House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. As an alternative, I certainly will do that. I'll have a look to see what the obligations on our part are, legal obligations, and I can report back to the Member on that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'm not sure whether the last part of your comment was audible. Would you, for the record, just repeat the last part of it there, Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member had asked if I could report back the information with regard to the legal arrangements regarding the student financial assistance program and I can report back and will report back to the House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to make sure we cross the t's and dot the i's, we know that we are going to be leaving and session will finish pretty soon here. Could I have the commitment from the Minister to do this by the end of the month at the latest? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return To Question 200-14(6): Student Financial Assistance Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Yes, I'll make that commitment, Mr. Speaker. I will do that.

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

**Question 201-14(6): Status Of The Stanton Intensive Care Unit**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I'd like to ask him about the status of the intensive care unit at Stanton. We've had very few reports from the department, either to committee or to the Members as a whole on this side of the House about the status of the ICU. We are getting dribs and drabs out to the media, but I am wondering if he could sort of officially let us know where things stand? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 201-14(6): Status Of The Stanton Intensive Care Unit**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, training is underway and we anticipate opening the ICU in the next few months. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 201-14(6): Status Of The Stanton Intensive Care Unit**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I'm wondering if the Minister could also provide me with some information on a number of -- I think it will end up being almost a year if I remember now that the ICU has been closed -- I'm interested in the number of NWT patients who've had to be diverted South due to the closure, and I'm wondering if we could put a price tag on the figure for medevacs and that kind of thing. Could he provide us with that sort of information? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that question as notice.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question again is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. This is nothing new to this House, Mr. Speaker. I have raised this question since 1996 and I continue to do so. Mr. Speaker, some three years ago, I asked a similar question to the Minister of Health and Social Services, then Mrs. Groenewegen. Same question and I was given the assurance that the government was going to look at this problem. Again, I would like to ask the Minister...Excuse me, wrong page.

Mr. Speaker, at the time I asked what her department was doing to look at the effects of THMs on the people of Fort McPherson. At that time, she gave me the reassurance that the department was looking at this situation. So I would like to ask the Minister, where is this information that the department has been compiling since February 2000 on the THM problem in Fort McPherson, that your predecessor committed in this House to look and study the problem to see if there is any inconsistency in regard to the increased number of cancer patients in that community? Can the Minister tell me where this information is?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Return To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to point out that the government has been very active in trying to address the concerns. We spent millions of dollars to ensure there is a new water source for the people of Fort McPherson and that it's up and running. As well, we continue to monitor the issue of THMs. The information I have indicates that there was a previous look at the miscarriage rates in Fort McPherson and there is not shown to be any increased frequency. I can commit to get that information and pass it on to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure if I am connecting with the Minister across the hall. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to monitoring the effect of THMs on the human body in regards to consuming it and what happens to the body. My question is what assurances can this government give the people of Fort McPherson of ongoing testing, so the people of Fort McPherson can be monitored to ensure there are no major increases in cancer or birth defects to the people of Fort McPherson? Can the Minister assure me that that's being looked at?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will state once again that the tests of January 17, 2003, indicate that the level of THMs is below the acceptable standard. It complies. It's not an issue at this point. We, as a matter of course, continue to track illnesses and diseases as they occur in communities, but in regards to these particular substances, THMs, my information from environmental health is that the most recent testing indicates that it's within acceptable standards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, with regard to the THMs, the monitoring of the effects of THMs on the residents of Fort McPherson, they have had THMs in their water system for almost four-and-a-half years. If you consumed water every day for four-and-a-half years, what effect does that have on your body? Have you monitored for the effects on the individual residents of Fort McPherson after consuming THMs in their water system?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we work on a daily basis with the health of the people in the communities. As I indicated previously, I will look at the miscarriages rates in Fort McPherson. I am not sure of any increased frequency. I will share that information with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister make an attempt to get the respective studies or reports or tests that have been done and give me a breakdown of how many tests have been done, how many people have been tested and exactly where are those reports today. Are those reports available to me as a Member or the community of Fort McPherson? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 202-12(6): Data On THMs In Fort McPherson Water Supply**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have already committed in this House to get the rates of cancer and other specified diseases and illnesses as requested by the Member. I will share with him the testing that's been done that indicate that the level of THMs are now within acceptable standards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation regarding some of the new programs. Mr. Speaker, when we first were elected to this government, we heard our Premier and also the federal government indicate that we would work government-to-government-to-government, which includes the aboriginal governments. I am quite concerned after looking at the list of people contacted for the latest resident initiative. It's not inclusive. Most of the aboriginal groups are not part of this list. There is certainly nobody in my riding that has been contacted. I want to know why the Minister is shying away from meeting and presenting this whole initiative to the aboriginal governments in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Return To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am not shying away from sitting down with the aboriginal organizations. I have, on several occasions, gone to the Member's riding two or three

times. I recall the NWT Housing Corporation sending out a moratorium on evictions in June 2001, and we've continued to work with that community, trying to resolve some of the outstanding issues. Mr. Speaker, in terms of harmonization, we have directed staff to make overtures to those communities to advise the committee members that we are looking at making a policy change and we have directed staff to communicate that to the LHOs, the stakeholders and the aboriginal leadership of the day. So we have done a substantial amount of communication and consultation. I am not sure if we can do much more to enhance that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the discussion has been taking place in the House, there's been a lot of contact from the public and the communities. As the Minister has indicated, he's not sure what else he can do. Among the suggestions that have been made to me is to have public forums. There's been a request made to me for the Minister from the community of Fort Rae and also Fort Simpson if he would commit going to those communities to have public forums to talk about the harmonization. Will he commit to that?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not had a letter or phone call from any leadership across the NWT objecting to this policy change. That doesn't prevent me from sitting down with either the Members who are uncertain about where we are going with this policy or the leadership. I am very open to sitting down further. If they have a forum, I am prepared to sit before them and indulge in a number of topical discussions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take it from the Minister's answer that he's open and willing to have public forums in different communities if the people in the communities forward requests to him. I am surprised the requests are being posed to me. I have directed them to pose these questions to him and he's not getting them. Maybe there's a problem in that area. I would also like to ask the Minister because there's been very little contact between himself and aboriginal groups, if he would commit to going to the different assemblies that are held by different aboriginal governments and make his presentation on the harmonization initiative to them. Over the summer, there are a number of those and I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit to them.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I may just refer back to my consultation and my personal appearances before a number of aboriginal organizations, I did appear with the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe before his leadership in Edmonton. I have also met with the chief and his advisors in Calgary and in Hay River. Certainly we have an obligation to continue to consult with all the vested interest groups and I am prepared to do that. Timing-wise, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to venture into those leadership meetings and discuss this further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister that he appeared before the Akaitcho chiefs as a Member of the non-tax-based communities and he wasn't there as a Minister to make a presentation on the harmonization. I don't believe he even mentioned it. I would like to ask one final request. As I mentioned before, there is a lot of concern regarding this issue. I would like to know if he would make the commitment here in this House to meet with the Aboriginal Summit and explain to them what this whole initiative is about. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 203-14(6): Consultation On Housing Programs And Initiatives**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure if that's in my bailiwick to appear before the Aboriginal Summit. I will have to confer with my leadership here on this side of the floor. What I was referring to, Mr. Speaker, if I may, just to respond to the Member, I did appear before the leadership and at that time, I was trying to point out the harmonization was not one of the topics on the leadership's agenda. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Finance. As the Minister responsible for the entire budget of the NWT, I would like to ask him to help me paint a picture of the NWT. In our fight against harmonization, I have been asking the different departments in Committee of the Whole about where government jobs are in the NWT. So I would like to ask the Minister of all the jobs in the NWT, can the Minister provide the House with information on which communities are earning how many dollars, community-by-community, region-by-region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Nitah, I understand there is a motion on the floor to be debated dealing with that issue and we are dealing very closely with the debate that will take place in the motion. I am not sure whether or not I should let your question

stand. If you would word it in a different way than you did ask it. Mr. Nitah.

**Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just take harmonization out of the picture. Can the Minister paint us a picture of where the government jobs are in the NWT in terms of salaries being made, not by individuals, not by positions, but by government job salaries? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I would be pleased to provide that information. In fact, I have asked my staff to work on it. They will give us a total salary amount by community for each of the communities in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, that amount will not include those agencies and boards that are not in our 'PeopleSoft' system because that will take a lot of work to try to integrate that. I can give a number, but it will not include those not on PeopleSoft, primarily health boards. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the communities I represent, there are no health boards, so that's not a concern for me. I would like to ask the Minister about a schedule. When can we expect this information? Can we expect it tomorrow? Will you be presenting that information in the House?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I hope to have it tomorrow. I won't make a promise, but if not tomorrow it will be the day after. I expect to have it tomorrow. I will provide it to the Member and if the Member wants to table it in the House, that's certainly his right to do that.

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

**Supplementary To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister to look into communicating that information to the people of the NWT, so that the people of the NWT know where the economic bases are in the NWT. I think it's important if we are going to, as a government, provide programs and services and design the social delivery mechanisms, that they understand options that people face in every community in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Member that we do table and make public a geographic tracking report that includes all our expenditures by community across the government. It's already available for Members. It takes awhile to put it together, but annually we file that information. It's total amounts, it's per capita amounts. There is a lot of good information in that document that's already tabled.

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

**Supplementary To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason I am asking for this information is I am hoping that maybe if the bureaucracy revisits these numbers, which are very depressing for the non-tax-based communities, that they will start feeling a little bit and devolving some of these government positions into the communities, so that we could create an economic base elsewhere. So I would like to ask the Minister again, would he do something to communicate a bit better for the people of the NWT, not just those people who are observing governments and government roles and responsibilities on a daily basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 204-14(6): Geographical Distribution Of GNWT Salaries And Benefits**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, our government is very open. We do put a lot together, say reports that detail a lot of information by community. I am not sure what the Member is asking me for. If he's suggesting a copy of that report to every community leader or if I provide some other specific information, I will do whatever I can to make sure people understand where our money is being spent and they can give me feedback on whether they feel it's a fair allocation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier because I don't think he realizes how serious this THM problem really is because I believe there is a liability to this government, not only the Minister responsible at the time, but this government as a whole. There are some major lawsuits being filed elsewhere in North America on the THM connection between cancer and miscarriages. Will the Premier intervene to ensure that your Minister carries out his responsibility to ensure that we do a thorough review to see if there are any liabilities associated with THMs and exposure to THMs by way of drinking water, showering or even having a bath in that water. Will the Premier

ensure that he puts a priority on this and have his Minister take it up as a priority item?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Return To Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is always our responsibility to support our Ministers and to take comfort in the way they handle their portfolios and responsibilities. This is the approach that all of us on Cabinet take and we will support the Minister in handling the issue and ensure he does it in a full and comprehensive way. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier tell me how soon will he direct his Minister to carry out such a review to see if there's a correlation between an increase of cancer in the communities where THM has been detected in amounts exceeding national standards and what the effects are with regard to women and miscarriages?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Further Return To Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is advised by his department who are in touch constantly with other health officials in the provinces and with Health Canada and he will deal with the concerns raised by the Member in a thorough way. So I assure him that we will ensure that the Minister reviews and addresses this issue in the way that it deserves. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary To Question 205-14(6): Direction to Investigate Dangers of THMs**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope the Premier is committed to ensuring this has some conclusion to it. I have asked it some three years ago, similar questions in this House, yet today we find out from this Minister that he doesn't really know what the figures are. I would like to ask the Minister could he ensure that he has something back to this House at the next sitting in June?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Further Return To Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will make that commitment. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary To Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier if he would also ensure that the community of Fort

McPherson is involved in any review and any correspondence that comes by way of this government, so the local municipalities and the residents are aware of any of the findings that come forward out of this review by this government.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Further Return To Question 205-14(6): Direction To Investigate Dangers Of THMs**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, in light of all the discussion that's taken place and the response the Minister has given on a number of different questions, I would like to ask him if he could tell me if the NWT Housing Corporation views the housing situations in the bigger communities versus the smaller communities in a different manner. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Return To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, from a philosophical perspective, we need to work with the communities, so that at some point in the very near future, hopefully they can deliver their own housing programs. Hopefully, the NWT Housing Corporation will provide training, provide support and financial assistance to those organizations that are willing to assume that responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Minister states that he doesn't see them any different then. However, I think the Minister will have to agree that there is a difference between the larger centres that have housing markets and the smaller centres that are non-market communities. Can the Minister tell me if he does differentiate between market and non-market communities and who are they?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do differentiate. Again, our whole philosophy is to try to make our housing program delivery more flexible and meet the various

needs in communities. It differs dramatically in some communities from others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that. I think maybe the Minister should consider making all new initiatives towards housing on a two-tier system because the concept of one size fits all doesn't apply here. He's also recognized that and I think most of us in this House would agree to that. Would the Minister commit then for all the new initiatives that are being considered and ones that are being planned for down the road, that there should be a different focus and a different spin put on them as making them apply to larger centres versus smaller centres or market versus a non-market community.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, in the course of the last three weeks, I have been trying to extrapolate the importance of trying to make those program delivery services very flexible, trying to meet the various scaled economies, the demography of each community and also the regions. We certainly want to work with those interest groups to continue that progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Minister indicate he's looking at different options and trying to look at different ways to deal with some of the discrepancies between the larger centres and the smaller centres when it comes to housing and new housing initiatives. I would like to ask the Minister if he would share that information for the different options he's considering at this point. Would he share that with the House, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 206-14(6): Housing Programs In Small Communities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we can work with private home ownership, modifying the various policies required and I am certainly willing to share as we come to some finale as we try to establish where we need to change those policies accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for oral question period is over. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS**

**Bill 9: Youth Justice Statutes Amendment Act**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Social Programs has completed its review of Bill 9, Youth Justice Statutes Amendment Act, and wishes to report that Bill 9 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 70(5) and have Bill 9 ordered into Committee of the Whole for today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 70(5). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Rule 70(5) has been waived and Bill 9 is on its way to Committee of the Whole for today.

Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

**ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 42-14(6): Proposed Municipal Government Legislation**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a document entitled Proposed Municipal Government Legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Tabled Document 43-14(6): Package Of Hansard Excerpts Regarding Trihalomethanes**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a bunch of questions that I have raised since 1996 to 2001 with regard to THMs and water problems in my riding.

**Tabled Document 44-14(6): Trihalomethanes, THM, Briefing Note And World Wide Web Articles**

Also I would like to table information with regard to THMs and the different articles that are available through the Web.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notice of motion. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**ITEM 14: NOTICE OF MOTION**

**Motion 9-14(6): To Move Harmonization Strategy Documents Into Committee Of The Whole**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 12, 2003, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta that Minister's Statement 28-14(6) and tabled documents 26-14(6), 31-14(6) and 41-14(6) be moved into Committee of the Whole for debate and, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Motion 10-14(6): To Change The Strategy To Harmonize Income Support And Social Housing**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 12, 2003, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the harmonization strategy be changed to exclude single parents living in public housing and, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 and deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to wave Rule 44 and deal with his motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. McLeod, you may proceed with your motion.

**ITEM 16: MOTIONS**

**Motion 9-14(6): To Move Harmonization Strategy Documents Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that Minister's Statement 28-14(6) and tabled documents 26-14(6) and 31-14(6) and 41-14(6) be moved into Committee of the Whole for debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I am just going to pause for a moment while copies of the motion are being distributed. We have a motion on the floor and the motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 and deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 and deal with his motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mr. Krutko. You may deal with your motion.

**Motion 10-14(6): To Change The Strategy To Harmonize Income Support And Social Housing**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the harmonization strategy will unfairly treat single mothers living in social housing;

AND WHEREAS the strategy will result in family maintenance payments being treated as income and calculated in rent of the social housing unit;

AND WHEREAS it will result in a significant increase in rent and will lower the standard of living for families headed by single working parents;

AND WHEREAS those rent increases will force single working mothers to make choices between paying their rent and feeding their children;

AND WHEREAS the strategy will force single working mothers who have made productive choices back into income support so that they can support their children;

AND WHEREAS this strategy will further highlight the inequities between a single parent on income support and single parents who are only accessing social housing;

AND WHEREAS there are still far too many inequities and fundamental unfairness in the definition of calculating income for the purpose of income support and rent assessment and public housing;

AND WHEREAS further investigation of the impacts of the harmonization strategy on seniors, students and single parents is required;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the harmonization strategy be changed to exclude single parents living in public housing.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We have a motion on the floor and the motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think we have seriously realized the implication this harmonization will have on different segments of our population, especially single mothers. We have a lot of single mothers who, for reasons of their own, may have had break-ups with their relationships and have had children and have gone on their own. They've made a choice with regard to bettering themselves, getting off income support, going to school, getting a trade or being an accountant or working within an office administration position. They are on their own. They are raising their five children.

Mr. Speaker, I had a call Friday from a single mother who has five children. She's on her own. Presently, she pays \$678 for public housing. She has a full-time job. Yet, because of the harmonization program, she met with the Housing Corporation and was told as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, her rent will go from \$678 to \$1,269, almost doubling what she's paying right now. Mr. Speaker, it's because she is receiving maintenance payments from her ex-spouse.

At the same time, it costs the individual to shop for her five children, she spends almost \$800 every two weeks just to feed herself and her children. I don't think the intent of this program was to seriously affect those types of people. You can hear from the Minister, you can hear them saying there are no major impacts. That is a major impact. I, for one, have a real problem, Mr. Speaker, when we see the direct effect where single mothers find themselves on their own making a productive choice to go to school, get a trade, get themselves a full-time

job but now are told you will now have to pay more for rent because of maintenance payments.

We talk about really understanding what this harmonization would do to individual people in our different sectors, our seniors, students, single mothers, single fathers. I don't think we've really thought this through. I have a real problem when I get calls from my constituents, especially single mothers, telling them their rent will double as of April 1<sup>st</sup>.

We talked about doing justice of the people of the North, make positive choices, get off income support, go to school, get a trade, get into the workforce and when they do, what do we do? We hit them in the head with a hammer. We have to start realizing that this harmonization is a lot more than just slapping two departments together. It might be easy for the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to sit back and say it's going to do great. Sixty or 70 percent of the people won't be affected. The 60 or 70 percent of the people you are talking about are on income support. What about the people who have gotten themselves off of income support, made that positive choice and now they are saying I have made it and I am going to be able to raise my children knowing the income I have. Now they are being told sorry, your rent has just doubled as of April 1<sup>st</sup>.

I think, as a government, we aren't being fair. I think the implication of this decision is going to go a lot further than single mothers and our seniors and our students. This is a political gamble and a government that's on its last legs before an election is committing political suicide. As a government, on that side of the House, who stood up and voted down the bill a couple of days ago, I hope they take the moral choice here and let the people decide on this side of the House which way we should go. We've given you some direction and maybe you should follow it for once instead of asking questions.

So I would like to ask my colleagues on this side of the House who support this type of inequity with regard to harmonization on our single parents who right now aren't on income support. They are in public housing paying their way. They have full employment. They are taking care of their children. What is this going to do? Put them back into the cycle of saying I am better off going on income support. Why should she struggle to feed five children knowing this will have a direct implication on the cost of living to herself, her children and the community that she's in? I don't think we have calculated what it costs to maintain a home with five children or what it costs to maintain a home with ten children.

So I would like to ask my colleagues to support me on this one, knowing that this is injustice at its best. So at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will ask for a recorded vote to ensure that we do see where people stand on this one. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion, the honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the Members of this House are aware that this is an issue that causes great concern to myself and all the people in my riding. A lot of people have said that rents are going to go down. What about the people that will benefit from this program?

Well, I haven't been able to point a finger to anybody in my riding that is going to see their rent go down more than \$20.00.



In fact, everybody is going to see an increase. This whole program is not only about income support and housing, it is about anybody and everybody in public housing. Mr. Krutko raises a good point, that it is going to cause undue hardship to the single parents in the communities because, from now on, we will see all income rolled into the assessment. Child support payments, that are being received by some of the mothers, including some of the fathers, will now be calculated. Child maintenance payments, child benefits, something that we are trying to improve the quality of life, we are trying to eliminate poverty. We are giving it with one hand and now we are going to take it back with the other. It really doesn't make any sense.

The programs are not consistent. They are running head on into each other and that affects all the single parents in the communities. The income tax payments are now going to be clawed back, they are going to be forced to pay a portion on them. That is going to draw a huge spike in income. So we are going to have to be chasing all tenants in social housing on a monthly basis. I can't believe that this government can sit there and say it's not going to cost us any more money because we right now have calculated everything under the sun, even honoraria, that some of the parents and some of the people that live in housing are collecting will be taxed, and clawed back. Babysitting money will be clawed back. That is just unrealistic and it goes too far. Where is the line drawn?

I think this whole initiative has been derailed; the Cabinet is just refusing to look at reality. They don't want to be seen as backing down. They don't want to be seen as making a decision that will make them look like they made a wrong uninformed move at the outset. We have to really take a good look at this. We don't know what the effects are going to be. We are, in a sense, going to be forcing everybody, especially the single parents, onto income support. We won't have any alternatives in our communities. We won't have all the different programs that the larger centers have; we don't have that benefit. We only have social housing. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to support this initiative and if anybody needs assistance, it is the single parents and I'm going to be supporting this motion. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion, the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in favour of this motion as a seconder of this motion. Mr. Speaker in three weeks, unless something is done to rethink this or defer this or change this in a drastic way, this will become a new rule for the government and I realized that when this was introduced and the details of it, that it will benefit some people. It will benefit two-thirds or more of the people out there who are under this program, but I think we cannot ignore the situations that the rest of the people will face with this new rule.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that whenever we do change the rules there are some who fall between the gaps but I think that I cannot ignore the fact that a difference of \$500 to \$1,000 is a big jump for those who cannot afford it. When I was briefed about this policy, I was assured that the gap, the biggest increase would be no more than \$200 and that those increases will be phased in and now the information that I'm getting is that might not be the case. I have to be concerned about that, Mr. Speaker.

As I sit here and listen to the debates going back and forth, two things come to mind. One is that I have never seen a policy with this much discord, this close to implementation. I think that that has to give us something to reflect upon. You know, we are a consensus government and perhaps if we had a different sort of government, government as a majority, it could pursue policies that they believe are right and that are in line with their political philosophy or the political platform that they ran on. That is not the kind of government we have here. The rule that we follow is that there has to be some general consensus that this is the right thing to do and I don't see that happening, Mr. Speaker. I have to be concerned about it.

The other thing is something about this really reminds me of the federal gun law legislation. I think somebody, you know, sitting in Toronto decided guns are a bad thing, and we've got to get them registered, and that should not be a problem. Well I don't think that they ever knew what a big part of life guns are to some people in Canada. It's only when they started going out and counting them, that they realized they were way behind in terms of how to implement it, having the people to do it, what people use it for and we know the sorry story of that.

Mr. Speaker, I think this may put into question the whole notion of what people think of as an income, how people use social housing in our communities. I'm starting to get phone calls from people in the communities to tell me that this has to be relooked at. People in the communities are saying what can we do to change the government's mind. I stated on Friday that I might be the only riding without social housing, but I cannot ignore it when I get calls from people who are genuinely concerned about what this means. If this is a really good policy, the government should be able to convince the Members, and Members should be able to go out there and be able to explain the pros and cons of this and be able to explain the net benefit of this. I don't see that, and that is a concern to me.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned on Friday, that I don't have any direct communication from my constituents but I have been privy to communication from single mothers in the city who are going to see their rent go up by hundreds of dollars in a month. I don't need to state again, that every \$50 or \$100 in the pocket of single mother with four kids, who has to budget every cent, that's a big thing. I simply want to get the Ministers and the Cabinet to reconsider that and work out what is the impact of this, how will it be implemented, what it means for one category of single mothers, and others who are in income support and who's not, ones who are in social housing and who's not.

We have already seen different categories of senior citizens, those who move in or who has been there forever, who are there already. They are not going to be impacted because they are going to be grandfathered. Those who move in April 1<sup>st</sup> will be treated differently. Maybe this was a bigger thing than the government thought it was, maybe it is not as simple as the government thought it was. I am prepared to be convinced of that, Mr. Speaker, but I know that having been in the shoes and having argued on my point, it is a very frustrating thing when you can't get your questions answered. So, for that and all the reasons that I've stated, I am in favour of this motion and I am pleased to be seconding it again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion, honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too am standing up in support of this motion. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I don't particularly agree that we should plug a little bit here and there but April 1<sup>st</sup> is coming along right around the corner. The government is not budging on this harmonization. Mr. Speaker, you know the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act, just submitted a report to this House. It is a good report. That is something I wanted to spend my time talking about this week and last week, but this harmonization has taken all my time and energy. I wanted to speak about recreation and sports activities for youths and elders in our communities, but harmonization has taken all my time and energy.

Mr. Speaker, in this House, when you were absent, our colleague, Mr. Krutko had to take your place. That left three of us Members on this side of the House to represent 28 communities and their interests. When they put government officials forward, they cannot represent the interests of their constituents, so they come to us. That makes it very difficult for those of us who represent the smaller communities in this House. The votes in this House do not represent the communities. They represent the population, but they do not represent the diversity of the Northwest Territories, the diversity of the communities and the challenges that every community faces. Every one of them are different; some greater than others. But harmonization is taking that away from us.

Communities tell us, we need your help to make life a little easier for us, but this is the help the government is responding with. Elders are saying we need to participate in our communities so we can help pass along our traditions and languages, et cetera, but this obviously doesn't make it easier.

Mr. Speaker, I've been asking the government, through Committee of the Whole, to tell me where their employees are. Harmonization, income support and public housing are something that's an option in the communities. Employment sometimes is not an option. People are being forced off of income support because of the vigorous delivery mechanisms and design in the system. They fall off the face of the earth, they are no longer unemployed because they don't bother answering that question. They are no longer looking for government assistance because they're tired of government over handling this. When they have to explain their bingo incomes, their little carving incomes, all of the other incomes, that forces them away from government. They end up in the regional centres, capital cities, end up on the streets. Is that what we're telling our citizens?

I told the House, Mr. Speaker, that this affects the Constitution and the political representation of this House, as well. When these kinds of policies force people away from their communities because we don't provide them with other options, they move here. That population base has an impact on how we represent in this House. To me, that's the biggest issue, the scariest issue. If our policies are going to force people into the regional centres and into the capital, then our communities are going to disappear. That diversity that we know as the Northwest Territories will disappear. We'll have maybe six communities, but no representation in that area. It will likely be a lot easier for government and its bureaucracies then. The question I ask the government is if they don't want to be in public housing, if they don't want to provide services and programs to those who are needy, then why are they in them in the first place? Why can't they just give the money to the

communities and let them deliver it so they don't have to feel the headaches from it?

Mr. Speaker, single parents will feel this the most. But we don't look at them for phasing in projects or programs. No, you make this much, you're going to pay now. If you can't afford to pay, we have income support that you can fall onto.

I'd like to see this harmonization die. I'd like to see the government pick up the tools again and start building from scratch. Maybe then, knowing our feelings, knowing the situation in the communities, they'll do a better job. So if this is going to help weaken harmonization, then I support this. As I said, single parents will feel the most pinch, but there are other people out there. One of the areas is the confidentiality of people; people's human rights to privacy we don't seem to recognize or respect. When we ask them to sign a letter of waiver so that other agencies of government can dig into their private lives, are we asking hey, you're down, sign this thing. If you don't sign it, we're not going to help you. That's harmonization and I can't support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Motion 10-14(6) be referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. We have a motion and it appears to be in order. Do you have a copy of the motion for the Members to be circulated? Just a minute; we're hearing points of order being asked. Let's keep cool here. We have a motion that has been put on the floor. The House has not seen the motion, and I think this would be an appropriate time to take a short break until we get a hard copy of it. The House will rise and return in a few moments.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will come back to order. When the House took a short break, an amendment to Motion 10 had been made. For the record, I'd ask the Minister to re-read the motion into the record. All Members can have a copy of it. Mr. Minister.

**Motion To Refer Motion 10-14(6) To Committee Of The Whole, Carried**

**ON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Motion 10-14(6) be referred to Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. We have a motion and the motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. Is the House ready for the question? All those in favour of the motion? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motion 10-14(6) is now referred to Committee of the Whole. Item 16, motions. We have a point of privilege. What is your point of privilege, Mr. Krutko?

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, the whole idea of having people come forward and making our issues heard is through this House. It's through the floor of this House that we are enabled to raise issues, give direction to this government so that they can deal with some of the policies and regulations that aren't working in this government. I, as a Member, have the responsibility to be the voice of the people that have voted for us.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I've allowed you a little bit of leeway there, but what is your point of privilege? What is the point of privilege, Mr. Krutko?

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, in regard to a motion that's put forth on the floor giving the government direction, the direction of dealing with it on the floor of this House through this forum and dealing with it in Committee of the Whole does not have the same weight. A motion that should have been dealt with on the floor should have been dealt with on the floor. The motion that we dealt with last week, the government basically said that they had to stand up because the direction that was being given was a change of policy. Now we have a policy here basically where it's being quashed by this government...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Krutko, I need you to be more specific than that as to what your point of privilege is. Do you realize what privilege means? What is your point of privilege?

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege as a Member of this House to ensure that my constituents' concerns and issues are raised in this House, not through Committee of the Whole. The only avenue we have to us is through motions, and for this government to put forth a motion to defer basically shows us how weak this government really is, and basically they're a lame duck government. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I needn't take this under advisement any further. The point of privilege that the Member raises is not, in fact, there. The House has followed the rules, and the rights of the Member have not in any way been disenfranchised. There is no point of privilege, Mr. Krutko.

Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The Chair will just go back to item 16, motions. The Chair will call again for motions. Motion 8-14(6) is on the orders paper and will be called again tomorrow as the mover is not here to continue. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha.

#### ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

##### Bill 12: Nursing Profession Act, Carried

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 12, Nursing Profession Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the continuation of the Northwest Territories Registered Nurses' Association, the professional association for nurses as a registered nursing association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The bill also provides for the regulation of the profession by the association and requires, with some exceptions, that persons engaged in the practice of nursing be registered with the association. The bill consequentially amends a number of acts. Some of the key provisions of the bill are concerns of the following matters:

- describing the scope of the practice of registered nurses and nurse practitioners;
- setting out the powers of the association to manage its affairs, including the powers to make bylaws, to elect and appoint members to its governing body, and to register members and issue certificates;
- authorizing the association to establish or adopt the mandatory competence program for its members;
- setting out the duty of the association to review the conduct of its members;
- providing for the possible termination of the functions of the association with respect to the nurses in Nunavut;
- setting out rules respecting various aspects of the practice of the profession, including the use of the title Registered Nurse and Nurse Practitioner;
- providing for the enforcement of the practice restrictions set out in the act;
- providing for certain transitional issues, including the continuation of membership in the association.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor and the motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Is the House ready for the question? All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 12 has had second reading and, accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

##### Bill 13: Deh Cho Bridge Act, Carried

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Minister, with the approval of Commissioner and Executive council and on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, to enter into agreements whereby a concessionaire will construct, operate and maintain the Deh Cho Bridge across the Mackenzie River. The concessionaire will have the powers and responsibilities of a highway authority under the public Highways Act in respect of the bridge, and the government may charge tolls for vehicular use of the bridge in accordance with regulations authorized by this bill. This bill also provides for the appointment of transport officers, for the penalty for offences under the act and regulations, and for the enhancement of regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House is ready for the question. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 13 has had second reading and, accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, Bill 4, Bill 11, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6), 6-14(6), 8-14(6) and 9-14(6), also Bill 9 and Motion 10-14(6), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We have several items to deal with: Bill 3, Bill 4, Bill 11, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6), 6-14(6), 8-14(6) and 9-14(6), and Motion 10-14(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I'd like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently, specifically, first of all, to deal with the Department of Public Works and Services, followed by the Housing Corporation.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, we'll take a short break and continue on with Public Works and Services.

---SHORT RECESS

#### **Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004**

##### **Department Of Public Works And Services**

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Before the adjournment, the Minister of Public Works made his opening comments. At this time, I would like to ask the chairperson of the committee responsible for reviewing the department under consideration if they have any comments. Mr. Roland.

##### **Standing Committee On Governance And Economic Development Comments**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of the Department of Public Works and Services and his staff on January 16, 2003, to review the department's draft main estimates for 2003-2004.

The committee noted a net \$586,000 increase in operations expense for PW&S from their 2003-2006 business plans. PW&S explained that this net increase is due to a \$35,000 adjustment in amortization expense and by the assumption of responsibility for the Fort McPherson water haul contract of

\$551,000. There were no changes in capital expenditures for the department from its 2003-2006 business plan.

##### **Administration Fee Of 16 Percent To Communities**

As previously stated in the general comments, the committee spent a considerable amount of time during the business plans exploring this issue and made two recommendations to the department in order to increase both community capacity and maintain consistent delivery fees. The first recommendation was for the department to not implement a planned seven percent increase in the administration fee the department charges the communities over and above the fee for any work provided by PW&S. The committee felt that the four communities affected by the rate increase would be caused undue hardship by the increase as they had not incorporated it into their yearly budget planning.

Further to this, the committee also recommended that the Minister approach the four affected communities with new draft contracts allowing for communities to contract out necessary repairs to their infrastructure, including current water and sewer services contracts with PW&S. During the last main estimates review, the Minister had stated that new contracts had been drafted and would be signed by communities over the summer of 2002.

During the main estimates review for 2003-2004, the committee asked if any of the four communities had new agreements with the department. The Minister stated that none had been signed. He also stated, however, that the planned increase of the administration fee to 16 percent was going ahead for implementation on April 1, 2003. To justify the increase, the Minister stated that he had been directed by the Financial Management Board Secretariat to obtain full cost recovery for all services provided to the communities.

The committee once again must state that it does not support any administration fee levied on work done by the department for communities. The committee is aware that the majority of the money spent by the community on services is ultimately recovered from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. The committee does not feel that it is appropriate for PW&S to unilaterally impose a charge which will ultimately come from another GNWT department. Therefore, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommends that the Department of Public Works and Services immediately suspend all proposed increases to the administration fees charged to communities for water/sewer maintenance services until such time as the GNWT has a consistent process of charging administration fees for work provided on behalf of others.

In response to a letter from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, the committees were informed that the government has agreed to suspend the planned increase to the current administration fee of nine percent. Members are pleased to see that the government intends to further discuss this issue with the affected communities.

##### **Evergreening And IT Services**

As previously stated in the general comments, the GNWT has adopted a three-year replacement schedule for desktop computers called Evergreening. The GNWT stated that for desktop and presumably laptop computers, the government

has concluded that a three-year replacement cycle is the best balance between functionality and cost.

The standing committee recommended in their report on the business plans that the government review this program and extend the three-year replacement schedule wherever possible. In their reply to the committee, the government stated that it will review the program but still regards the three-year replacement schedule as a necessary expense.

The standing committee reiterated their support for the extension of the current three-year replacement program in its recommendation under the general comments.

The standing committee also recommended in the report on business plans that the government consider the donation of computers deemed to be obsolete by the government to communities and non-governmental organizations. The Government agreed with this recommendation and stated that it would explore the options.

Members are aware that the knowledge management strategy will attempt to centralize and harmonize computer service and purchasing for the GNWT. The standing committee would like to be assured that there will not be excessive additional costs for IT services once the knowledge management strategy is fully implemented.

#### **Delay Of Capital Projects**

Members are aware that while funds have been approved in the House for several capital projects, many of those have been delayed far beyond what would be considered reasonable by members of the public.

Members are concerned that money that has been approved in the House should not be routinely carried over into future years but should be used at the time of its approval.

Two examples were brought forth by members. The curling rink in Aklavik was approved in the capital acquisition plan over two years ago, and yet the project has yet to be started. Another example of a carried-over project is the water plant project in Tsiigehtchic. Members asked for and received a complete list of capital projects and their current status from the department.

The standing committee is of the opinion that the delay of some capital projects causes vital government resources to be tied up while other capital projects languish due to a lack of funds.

#### **Water Quality Concerns**

Members are aware that there are a few communities that are concerned about the quality of their drinking water. Given the vital importance of this issue after the tragedy in Walkerton, Ontario, the standing committee would like to be assured that the department is doing everything possible to ensure clean, healthy water for all residents of the NWT.

During the review of the business plans, the committee asked about several boil water restrictions in prior months for several communities. The department stated that the alerts were put in place largely because communities were having difficulty taking water samples to a testing facility in the proper amount of time. The standing committee asked that the department assist remote communities with their delivery of water samples to testing sites to ensure water quality.

The standing committee would also like the department to thoroughly review the responsibilities for all testing of water done by the communities, GNWT departments and health officials. Members are aware that there were significant changes to the formula funding for communities over the past two years. There are concerns that some communities may not be aware of their current roles and responsibilities for the testing of water. The standing committee would like to be assured that water safety remains of utmost importance to the department.

#### **Environmental Liabilities**

The standing committee had asked during the business plan review for a timeline schedule for the clean-up of environmental liabilities managed by the department. Members were pleased to receive this list and review it. However, the department neglected to provide estimates of the costs associated with site clean-up. Members requested this information and it was provided.

Members noted that the government will likely be coming forth with a supplementary funding bill in order to address some of the larger site clean-ups.

#### **Petroleum Product Revolving Fund**

As Members reviewed the business plans for the department they were alarmed to see a projection forecasting the deficit of the petroleum product revolving fund to extend past its legislated limit of \$5 million. The standing committee expressed their concern to the Minister who replied that he would likely have to approach Cabinet with a plan to write off some portion of the debt.

In the main estimates, however, Members were pleased to see that the department is no longer projecting a deficit past its legislated limit. The department stated that significant savings were achieved due to a mild winter season and significantly less money spent to subsidize fuel as well as having had the good fortune of an excellent winter road season last year.

The committee, however, remains concerned that should these mitigating factors change, the revolving fund will once again be placed in a precarious position. Members would like to encourage the department to carefully monitor the deficit of the revolving fund, but would strongly discourage the department from raising prices in order to stabilize this fund. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the Governance and Economic Development's committee report on the Department of Public Works and Services. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree the Minister brings in his witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses in?

Mr. Minister, for the record, can you introduce your witnesses?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my right is the deputy minister of Public Works and Services, Bruce Rattray; and, on my left is director of petroleum products division Michael Aumond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Welcome, witnesses. General comments. Mr. Bell.

#### General Comments

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question that starts with some comments on the second page of the Minister's comments. He indicates that PW&S works with other departments to deliver direct services to our residents. They provide technical and professional support. I think it is the case that PW&S handles the competitive process in certain instances on behalf of departments. Can the Minister confirm that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's correct.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** I would like to ask the Minister about the recent award of somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$1 million of computer equipment on a sole-source basis to a southern company, Hewlett Packard, I believe, in the South despite the fact that there are local vendors who supply Hewlett Packard products. I am sure this issue is on the Minister's radar, so I am wondering if you can give me a blow-by-blow or a synopsis of how the contract ended up coming to be sole-sourced and maybe he can start with indicating on which department's behalf PW&S was conducting this work and then give me a summary of events. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for giving us the opportunity to clarify this issue. I will ask the deputy minister to respond to the questions raised.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, that particular purchase was done on behalf of a number of departments. The largest component was for Health and Social Services for computer equipment to support some new systems that they are currently developing and installing. A very small portion was for the technology service centre which has been established by the chief information office of the government and it is intended to be for use of management of the government's desktop systems. Then, related to the Health and Social Services project, but also related to Public Works and Services computer data centre operations, there's a component that was used for enlarging the storage area network that the department has in place for storage of data on behalf of a number of departments. That whole project was approximately, when we initially priced it out, it was in the range of about \$1.4 million. The majority of equipment that was purchased is available only directly from Hewlett Packard and is not available through northern

suppliers. There is a small portion of the order which is available through northern companies, however it was deemed to be financially beneficial for the government to include that equipment as part of the overall order in order to obtain some additional volume discounts.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Comments? Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the deputy give an indication then as to which proportion of the contract he believes northern firms could have supplied?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, approximately 19 percent of the order could have been supplied by northern firms or northern firms were certified to be able to provide that equipment by Hewlett Packard.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** I would just like him to confirm that that 19 percent number was arrived at by contacting Hewlett Packard to ask them which pieces of equipment northern firms would have been certified to provide. Is that how we arrived at the 19 percent? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, that's correct. We contacted a Hewlett Packard representative and they advised us who was certified to provide that equipment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I guess I am a little bit confused and maybe the Minister or the deputy could speak to the urgency of sole-sourcing with a southern company. Was there some sort of imminent time pressure here that would have made it not feasible to not go out to local tender to determine what parts of this contract could have been provided by northern firms? I have had occasion to meet with most of the computer contractors in town and they vehemently dispute this 81/19 split, the 81 percent Hewlett Packard indicates it had the sole ability to distribute and the 19 percent that could have come from northern firms. They question those numbers and would suggest that the northern component could have been much higher.

Furthermore, and I guess I was curious to know what incentive Hewlett Packard would have to indicate that so little of it could come from the North and they may be aware of the reality that really Hewlett Packard guarantees, by indicating so much of it had to come from them, they assure themselves of getting the sale on that equipment. If this had gone to tender, it's quite possible that some of the northern bidders would have specked equipment that was Hewlett Packard compatible, other brands, and wouldn't have necessitated Hewlett Packard getting all the work. It certainly seems Hewlett Packard would have an incentive to downplay the amount of the content that could have come from northern supplies and, if we are taking Hewlett Packard's word for the 19 percent as the number, does the Minister not have some concerns? So I guess I question the urgency for going sole-source and the numbers, the 19 percent, and whether or not Hewlett Packard might not have had an incentive to suggest that so little of it would be available in the North. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** I am going to ask the deputy to respond to that, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Deputy Minister, Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, first off I will speak to the incentive part of it. Approximately 25 years ago, we standardized on HP equipment at the data centre. We have been operating almost exclusively with their equipment since then. This purchase was specifying Hewlett Packard equipment only. So there was no incentive on the part of HP to avoid going to public tender because we wouldn't have accepted anything other than HP equipment.

With respect to the timing, timing was less than an issue here than the Member was indicating. The real rationale for us going sole-source was again the fact that Hewlett Packard was the only supplier of 80 percent of this equipment. So under the contract regulations, that was justification for a sole-source contract. There is no other supplier.

Probably from an operational review, there is a great deal of advantage to us in having one supplier for this equipment, having the order placed with one group that is then responsible for supply, installation, troubleshooting, warranty, configuring of all of these individual pieces of equipment to work together as a total system. It was important for us that even the small pieces of equipment that were part of the order were installed by the same people who were installing the large pieces that we had to get from HP. This is a highly complex system and it will take Hewlett Packard factory-trained software engineers and hardware engineers to install it and get it functioning in our environment. So that was a primary consideration for us.

There is a time pressure with respect to the Health and Social Services project. They do have scheduled, for the consultants that are working to develop their system, for the end of this month and the system has to be delivered and installed in time for them to do that, but that was less of an issue at the time the tender was put out than the other points that I have raised.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Okay. Thank you. I wonder why the department wouldn't go out to the business community in order to determine what capacity there was to, first of all, sell the equipment to Public Works and then do some of the services and warranty work to install these other pieces that the deputy has spoken to. I wonder why we wouldn't go and talk to the business community in order to have them enter into this discussion of capacity. I think the department would have recognized that by sole-sourcing this, they were going to ruffle some feathers. There are a lot of businesses who have made significant investments in the North, based their business model on the policies of this government and feel that the due process was short-circuited here and I think what they are really asking for is, if they indicate that they couldn't provide 80 percent of this equipment, why not give them the chance and have that discussion, so that we collaboratively arrive at that conclusion, if that is the real conclusion. Why just go to Hewlett Packard in the South and ask for their take on this? I wonder why we wouldn't get into this consultation with the business community. It doesn't seem like it would take long to assess capacity in the situation like this.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, in retrospect, given the feathers that were ruffled, that probably would have been a good idea. We did know who could supply the equipment because we did contact Hewlett Packard and we found out from them who was qualified to supply the equipment. The companies that are established in the North will probably never be in a position to provide that same type of equipment. It requires a level of expertise that Hewlett Packard is able to afford to maintain, but typically small businesses would not be able to because there isn't a large enough volume of business here to ever support that. So it seems to us to be fairly straightforward that, with the input we had from Hewlett Packard, there was a strong case for the sole-source and we did not anticipate that others wouldn't understand that. The next time, perhaps we will anticipate that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another question to this specific contract, I am not sure, but maybe I will ask. I understand that there is a certain process for these types of contracts, IT contracts, and there is a certain channel they typically go through. Typically they are handled, my understanding is, by the purchasing manager of IT equipment in Public Works and Services and I understand that that wasn't the case in this instance. Can the Minister confirm that this was a different course of events than would be perceived to be the norm?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, I am not entirely sure what the Member is referring to. A lot of the preliminary work on the Health and Social Services system was done, as I understand it, within Health and Social Services itself and in consultation with their consultants. It was fairly late on in the exercise that discussions took place between Public Works and Services and Health and Social Services on the integration of that equipment into the data centre. During the course of those discussions, Health and Social Services requested that Public Works and Services put the order together and go through the procurement process. That's essentially how it developed and how we handled it. We went and began discussions with Hewlett Packard and eventually put the order in and awarded a contract.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just speaking to the inner workings of Public Works and Services, not so much to Health. In this case, I know that some of the contactors in town, after learning about the sole-source, went to the person who's typically responsible for the letting of these types of contracts in Public Works, and that's the purchasing manager of IT equipment – and I may not have the title correct – and this gentlemen told them he wasn't involved in this specific process and wasn't the person to talk to. So it seemed to them that this had not gone by the normal course. Can the deputy confirm that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the Member may be referring to the purchase orders or the procurement that we do on behalf of departments for the smaller desktop systems. We have been purchasing on behalf of other departments and last year, I

believe, we purchased probably \$1.25 million worth of equipment from local companies. Normally that is processed through our North Slave district office and there is a manager of procurement and warehousing that handles those transactions.

This equipment did not go through there because it was for the data centre and it was such highly specialized equipment for the data centre that we don't very often purchase that type of equipment and it doesn't go through the district office. Because of the specialty nature of it, our data centre staff are directly involved in those purchases and that's what took place in this situation.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he can continue on with my picture painting of the economy of the NWT by telling us where he's got his departmental staff located in each of the NWT, by numbers, not by positions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, is the Member asking for actual numbers of individuals in communities?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am just trying to get the Minister to paint us a picture of where his staff is located by numbers by community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, we have headquarters staff located in Yellowknife; we have a North Slave office that's located in Yellowknife; we have area and regional offices in Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson and a small area office in Norman Wells; a large regional office in Inuvik. We have a number of small communities that have individuals, one or two staff members, but since much of the hands-on operation of the department was privatized, we have much fewer of those than we did about 10 years ago.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Mr. Chairman, can the Minister tell me how many employees he has on staff at this point in time in those offices? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, we currently have 190 positions, as indicated on page 5-18.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** There's a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I have more questions on the same topic. I was trying to get recognized again.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Okay, Mr. Bell. I have some other names on the list and then we will get back to you. The Chair will recognize Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the report of the committee, there are a couple of areas of concern, such as the administration fee that's been imposed on communities by this department of 16 percent, which is supposed to take effect April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Chairman, my concern is that the communities already have an existing agreement with the department for water operation agreements, which is 6.5 percent. Those agreements, as far as I am concerned, still stand unless the parties agree to a new agreement. As we heard in the report that was read out by the chair of the committee, Mr. Roland, to date none of those agreements have been signed. Mr. Chairman, my concern is that as the department responsible for assisting communities to build capacity and working with communities to get qualified people trained and in place to eventually offer the communities the ability to take over these requirements... such as having several infractions with regard to the water regulations and also with regard to the notice that's been given to communities regarding the boil water orders which have been issues in some communities. As a government, we are responsible for helping communities to build capacity and also being able to take over programs and services.

We always hear the government or department saying go ahead, take it over, no problem, you can have it. It's easy to say that but unless you have capacity and you have people in the community that are trained and knowledgeable about the operation, you will not be able to automatically unilaterally take over a program. What is the Minister doing as a department, and also the Minister of Public Works and Services, to work with communities to build that capacity and also offer the training that's going to be needed, so that you have trained, qualified individuals to take over the project, take over the water operational programs and sewage delivery programs, so that you have knowledgeable people, trained people, qualified people that know what they are doing so that we don't have the problem of no capacity in our communities. What are you doing to work with communities to build that capacity by way of training and also working for the qualifications for people who are going to take this over, so they are qualified, trained and knowledgeable about what they are taking over?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I could speak, first of all, to the fee we charge for administration of the water and sewage services in the communities. In the existing agreements with the communities, the identified administration fee is nine percent. Over the past few years, Public Works has not been charging the nine percent. They were charging in the range of six percent. However, about two years ago, we got direction from FMBS that we were supposed to charge enough to recoup our costs. Public Works identified that as 16 percent. We then started charging the communities this rate, however, we thought that we could work out agreements with the communities and identify this rate in the agreements by April 1<sup>st</sup>. In response to



the recommendations from the standing committees, we took this back to FMBS and FMBS agreed that we could go with what's in the existing agreements, which is nine percent. That's what our plan is at this time.

At the present time, we've made the communities aware of this and we are negotiating with the communities on new agreements. We expect that we may be able to reach signing of these agreements by the end of this month, possibly at the same time as the Beaufort-Delta conference is taking place. In relation to the communities assuming responsibility and having concerns as to the capacity to carry out and meet the responsibilities, for a number of years now, we've had a training program which certified water treatment plant people, operators, including the truck drivers, if that's who was the identified water treatment plant operator. We have programs where these people can get certified. This is an ongoing program that we've had for a couple of years in cooperation with MACA and Health and Social Services. What we are prepared to do under these new agreements, Mr. Chairman, is we would identify criteria where we could turn over more and more responsibilities to the community for water delivery as they show capacity and they have the trained people. We would not be asking them to take this on if they don't have the trained people. I believe some of these recommendations came from the Member and the departments, both MACA and Public Works, are following up on these recommendations, including having a meeting with all four community leaders in those communities that we still have water operating agreements with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have had discussion with the Minister on this and I think we have to have some sort of a plan in place and a strategy of how we are going to be able to, at the end of the day. It's a good one that we have to ensure that the community has the capacity and the resources to train people and take on the infrastructure that they are going to eventually take it on. The concern from the communities is the whole aspect of the liability in taking something on knowing there is a liability associated with it. What are we doing with regard to the area of liability when it comes to water treatment and the concerns communities have about not having adequate infrastructure or facilities to take it on?

I will use the example of the McPherson water problem we've had where it made some major expenditures and we turn around and get water trucks put into the community with no allowance for water trucks to be stored in a garage facility. You have to make room by moving other infrastructure, which the hamlet owns elsewhere, to find the space and then renovate existing facilities. There's no capacity to plan for more garage space in the community and also to allow for communities to realize that when you take on water operations such as the water delivery project in McPherson there is a lot of overhead. There is wear and tear on your vehicle, there's mechanical cost, and if you don't have a mechanic on staff, you are going to have to have a mechanic to do the servicing. So there are all these things that are unforeseen. I would like to ask the Minister, knowing there are some challenges out there that communities will have to take on especially when it comes to the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure, the water treatment plant, the water trucks, is that something that's going to be discussed when you meet with the communities to look at

a plan with an implementation plan attached to it? Will there be such a scenario with regard to the planning for the takeover by the communities?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the particular meetings we are talking about where the community leaders are together with the department would also include officials from Municipal and Community Affairs because MACA is really the department that's funding all this. What we would do, with Public Works, is make both the community and MACA aware of what's needed before the community could be expected to take on the operation of the facilities. That's what our part would be in those particular meetings. We are already doing most of this. I think that right now, the administration from the communities is meeting with our regional superintendents on this as well as trying to address the liability aspects of this agreement.

Right now, we would have to have our agreements drawn up in such a manner that they are approved by Justice and they meet the requirements of the government. We can't give any guarantees to the communities that we don't have the capacity to do. So I presume the communities are in the same position. If they are not comfortable with signing the agreements for legal purposes, then they would be checking with their legal people as to what is required. My understanding of all this is, at the regional level, this is being ironed out by the superintendents and the hamlet administrators. So I am expecting that when we go into Inuvik at the end of the month and meet with the leaders, it's going to be pretty well all worked out. There is no doubt that MACA would be assuring that the communities won't be put in a position where they have to take on the operation without having the proper facilities and the infrastructure. Thank you.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to offer some general comments regarding the computer procurement contract the department is engaged in. It's in line with what the Member for Yellowknife South already indicated. Mr. Chairman, it's really frustrating to hear about these sorts of stories over and over again where the department flagrantly and explicitly ignores its own business incentive policy. I guess it's not a surprise when the Minister has already indicated on record that he thinks the BIP increases are a cost of doing business, so it's really no surprise that this was not adhered to this time around.

I understand the department has indicated that this would not have fallen under BIP. This was a legitimate sole-source contract because of the fact that only one supplier could supply this. Mr. Chairman, that just doesn't wash. This is another case where the Minister is not paying attention to what it is they are supposed to do. They get a piece of paper in front of them. On the surface, it sounds good. The government has \$1 million to spend on computer equipment and you will get the best deal if you get it from the biggest and largest company and we will save \$100,000. If that's the case, we could bundle up all the money we spend on computer purchases and that could probably end up in the multi-millions and we could just call Mr. Gates or somebody in HP and say we have \$10 million to spend on computers, what's the best deal you can offer us. To say we saved \$100,000 is very short-sighted.

We are under such a strict budget that government departments get so much on computers and they feel pressured to do as much as they can with that computer money, but that really is not taking into consideration other important factors that government should consider. Government is not just a purchaser, I believe. The government money we spend on hiring people and buying things has a major impact on our industries and IT industry in the North is quite fragile. These contractors who try to make a living and turn a profit for their businesses, they need contracts like this to have a go at their business balance sheet. We see over and over where small businesses start a business and they do all the little projects and they have little training programs and they make thousands here and thousands there, but they can't participate in the major projects that could secure the viability of their business.

We have heard many times about government bundling projects into such a big scale, that small businesses cannot bid on it and it appears to me that this is a case where that's happened again. If the brains got together and worked out a contract proposal where it's made so big and difficult that not one small business in the Territories could take it or bid on it...It's not a hard job. But as a government it is incumbent on the government and a department like Public Works to think about what it means. They have \$1 million to spend on computer contracts, should we just give it to a multi-million corporation anywhere because we are going to get the best deal?

Saving \$100,000 is not taking into consideration a whole array of other things that the government should consider. Capacity building of IT industry in the NWT, there are multiplier effects on every dollar the government spends, every dollar the government spends multiplies into \$3 or \$4. It multiplies into different employment opportunities for people who are involved in the IT industry. It is the small computer businesses in the Territories who provide training. They provide support services to different levels of government in different communities. I don't think that DPW in a small community will call the HP guy or gal to come and fix their computers or provide network services.

I just want to put it on record that I am very disappointed that this Minister is engaged in another action that shows complete disrespect for their own policy, the government policy, the business incentive policy just as it happened with North Slave Correctional Centre. Contracts were bundled up there. It was stated by various Ministers that BIP was costing more money and that resulted in an electrician company, a long-term business, losing out on a bid on a very, very small percentage. I believe that the government or a department may gain \$100,000 here or \$100,000 there, but in the long run it is really sending out a negative message, a very discouraging message to small businesses that are maintaining business here.

In the long run, I think the government is losing out on the dollars anyway. The people are asking what are the consequences of government not adhering to its own policy. I don't know what the consequences are, but we are being told here that everything was above board, that this was a legitimate contract that was allowed to be outside of BIP. We could hear lots and lots of rationales and reasons why, but I think what we are really lacking is on the part of the Minister to really think about what it is they are doing or what their department is doing and evaluating pros and cons of the

decisions they are making and implications that their decisions have on our businesses and our population that we should be mindful of in this Assembly.

So I was listening to the answers the Minister and the department were giving to Mr. Bell. I don't want him to have to repeat all that over again. Maybe I should ask the Minister why he couldn't have divvied up this project so more businesses could apply for it and at least give the businesses a chance to bid on it and then the department could figure out whether or not this was at all possible for northern businesses to supply. Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I will respond from the Minister's aspect of this. I would like to assure the Member that personal opinion is not the issue here. Whether I support BIP or not is beside the point. There is a process in place that we follow. There's a process in place for both the department and the public to use if they feel there are issues in relation to BIP. If they have questions as to whether or not BIP is being followed properly, there is a committee that they can go to for advice and it's the same from the public aspect. I am told there is an appeal process, but from the Minister's point of view, I am told this is not a BIP issue. This is strictly a contract procedure that we are using. The process is allowed. I believe the department has already given an explanation as to why we did it, the way we did it. I will allow the deputy to speak to that, but I feel that most of the points were already addressed when we responded to Mr. Bell. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Rattray, do you want to add something?

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, I will reiterate that 80 percent of the value of this purchase was for equipment that no northern supplier could provide, so there was no opportunity to break that up into smaller pieces that would allow them to participate. It's not simply supplying the equipment that's at issue. The reason HP doesn't certify companies for reselling of this equipment is because they don't have the support capability for it. It has to work together as a unified system. Breaking it up would be like buying a truck a piece at a time. It's just not feasible to do that. It has to work together as an integrated whole.

The portion of the order that could have been obtained from northern contractors was valued at a little over \$200,000. By not including it in the overall order, we would have lost approximately \$100,000 in volume discount savings on the total order. BIP never contemplated paying that type of a premium for participation by northern businesses.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. The Chair will recognize Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, have been contacted by people in Yellowknife that were disappointed that this has been handled this way, the contract for computer hardware. I have to say that it's unfortunate, but it seems like it's a continuing theme. It hasn't always been this department, but I certainly have a considerable number of concerns about consultant contracts that have gone out from various departments in this government for the provision of IT services.

We almost always seem to set certain standards that require that a large southern firm has to be the one that's sourced to provide the service or, in this case, the hardware.

Without trying to rehash everything, I know I have certainly got to echo the concerns about supporting northern business and making sure we develop the capacity in the NWT to have some of this expertise become home grown. One of the reasons we decided we needed a business incentive policy was to encourage the development of local business, northern business. We are always listening to the Minister of Finance talk about how having more people in the NWT translates into a bigger grant. We get about \$17,000 per capita.

So it continually surprises me when the government, after saying we have a business incentive policy and that we want to encourage business, and that we want to develop capacity, and we are continually talking about ways we can develop capacity in the regions and then when it comes to business, we sometimes say it's going to cost too much to do it here, we are going to have to do it another way. It's going to cost us less. That's not much different than saying, rather than buying in the North, we should buy modular homes from down South and ship them out to communities because that would be cheaper and we would get more houses that way. We might be able to do that, but we would have far fewer jobs and that might translate into less money to buy even fewer houses than what we can put up now.

So we need to take a look at the broader economic implications of not supporting northern business. Mr. Rattray has talked about buying a truck a part at a time. Well, there wouldn't be much of an after market out there for extra truck parts if people didn't do that. In fact, it's an amazing number, something like 60 percent of all new vehicles or new trucks, in particular, are modified by after-market parts. So it wouldn't be unusual to be able to find, I don't think, different parts that could perhaps work together.

I can't believe we are talking about how 25 years ago we standardized on HP. What would have happened if we had standardized on Wang or IBM or some other brand? We would have had to change. Why are we trying to say that in 25 years the technology of other hardware providers can't match what we are getting from HP, a company we standardized with 25 years ago? Of course, HP is going to say they have to provide it. They have a good contract they are going to get. I would be very surprised if we couldn't find somebody to bid on competitive hardware to HP. There is no reason you couldn't put in the tender documents or the RFP that the vendor had to make sure that all of the pieces worked before they got a substantial amount of the money. So you would be fairly well protected to make sure that it was going to happen. At the very least, by going out to RFP or tender in the North, you would at least have helped to transfer some of that technology by developing the partnerships between northern contractors and southern suppliers if the southern ones really do have to come into it.

I have often brought up issues in this House where we have been given the argument that because of the knowledge management policy, we have to do things a certain way. In my experience, in my opinion, I have seen too many occasions when people have used the knowledge management policy as a means to over spec the supply and require that large southern firms deliver the goods. I think that's a real mistake. I

don't know why we keep doing it, but I can't believe 25 years after we standardized on HP, we haven't taken a real look at whether or not we need to maintain that standardization. What we brought in 25 years ago certainly isn't working today. I can't believe we are talking about the same operating system. Platforms couldn't be anywhere near the same, so what difference does it make if we standardized 25 years ago? If it's more than three years old, it's most likely outdated. That's something that we have heard from the government itself when it comes to Evergreening. So if we are Evergreening everywhere else, are you going to say we haven't been doing it here?

Mr. Chairman, I am astounded that there hasn't been any real effort – and it's not just this department by the way, but anywhere in government – to look at some of these major computer contracts that we let, both on the consulting side, software side and the hardware, that would allow northern companies to demonstrate that they could do the job. I think if we put the right specs out there, we would find that we could. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to respond to two particular points the Member brought up, then I'll have Bruce respond as well. I'd like to point out two things here. The department, in the time that I've been a Minister -- about four years now -- we've been continuously told to keep costs down; do whatever we could to keep costs down. Then when we do, we're criticized for doing it. We're saving \$100,000 here, but nobody cares. They say it could have been spent better elsewhere, or the advantages would have been better or we could have seen more than \$100,000 worth of benefits. I'm getting one message one way, and then another message when I do it the other way.

The second thing is, for the same four years I've been hearing from the Members that they want everybody to have the same kind of computer equipment in this government. They were criticizing the departments for everybody having their own brand of computer equipment. So here I have a department that is trying to stay within the type of equipment that they're familiar with, and furthermore, from the information I'm given, it would simplify delivery, installation, troubleshooting and warranty. Well, from my point of view, that satisfied the other point that the members have been bringing up steadily; that everybody have the same type of computers. So that's what I've been doing here, and that's why I agreed with the department's decisions. Mind you, the decision was made before it was brought to me. But that's to allow them to manage. I don't manage this thing every day, they do. But if an issue is raised, then I do look to see if we are meeting the government's policies. As far as I'm concerned, we're meeting the government's policies and we're meeting the concerns expressed by the Members. I'll ask Bruce if he has anything to add to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Rattray, do you have anything you want to add to that?

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, no, I have nothing to add to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. Dent.,

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I'd love to see where a recommendation was made in this House that everybody in this government should have the same type of computer. I have no argument with economy and efficiency. I think that's exactly what we need to have. But we don't know whether or not that \$100,000 has cost us six jobs. If it did, we'd be money ahead spending it. So unless the department is working hand in glove with the Department of Finance to examine in a macro-economic way what the impact is of the government's spending, I don't know that anybody can answer that question.

I don't disagree that we need to be economically efficient. I think we should. But in my experience, and I don't claim to be an expert when it comes to computers, but I have experience with 30 or 40 of them, and I have lots of different brands that work together very well. I've had different operating systems that worked together very well. So for me, it's really difficult to understand why we can't say that you have to get your specs in order, put out an RFP or a tender, and part of the conditions are that the system has to work when it's installed and has to do what it's supposed to do, and then let's see what Northerners can do. But I don't think at anywhere in this House there's ever been somebody saying that we should buy only one type of computer. At least it certainly wasn't something that I recall being discussed. I would say, from what I've seen of the computer market, there are all sorts of hardware out there that will deliver the same sort of performance. One day one brand is better than the next, and it's really hard to stay on top of which one is the best, but we should be buying whatever is the best on whatever given day the tender or RFP comes out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. I didn't hear any questions there but, Mr. Steen, did you want to comment?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am not a computer expert either, and that's why I have to rely on the department's information that was given me. That was the advice that this was the best way to go. Maybe there is room in the department to work closer with the computer companies in Yellowknife or wherever to get a better opportunity for them to improve their businesses, and I don't argue that point. I think the department should make that effort if it's possible for them to do it. But on the other hand, I have not heard any evidence that they did not make the effort and it was not possible for the private sector to respond as to what we were asking for. So I have no problem supporting the department's decision. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. The Chair will recognize Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I want to ask the Minister a couple of questions specific to this contract. I'm wondering if the Minister is aware that one of the local contractors in town had been working -- it's my understanding, they've indicated to me -- with the Department of Health and Social Services, spending a lot of valuable time, a lot of valuable resources in helping the Department of Health and Social Services identify their needs with regard to what eventually became this contract, their technical needs, to help the Department of Health and Social Services sort of frame up what type of equipment they would be requesting. They'd been working, I understand, for a year, and invested a year's worth of time and effort, hoping to one

day have a chance to bid on this contract. I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether or not he's aware of that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we weren't involved in that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Minister Steen. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. The deputy has made the case for bundling and suggested that money was saved. You've heard from this side of the House the question about whether or not money was really saved with the bundling. Instead of insisting on HP compatible equipment, it's quite possible we still would have ended up with HP and we would have gotten a better price from HP because they knew they'd have to compete. So I don't know that we can really say that we're certain we saved \$100,000.

But philosophically, one of the things we've heard from the larger private-sector companies operating in the Northwest Territories, specifically I'm thinking of BHP and Diavik, is that they recognize the need to get away from bundling contracts. They, I guess, see that northern firms likely would not be able to have the capacity or be competitive on them, and have split up a lot of contracts to allow for some northern value added. This is something that the private sector has gotten into, not because they have to, but because they see that it makes sense and it's something that they feel a good corporate citizen should do in trying to build northern capacity.

Our government doesn't seem to take the same approach, or at least in this case they didn't take that approach. They felt that despite the fact that by their numbers 20 percent of it could have been tendered by northern companies, they felt the bundling and the savings were more important than working to build northern capacity. I guess that's what disappoints me. We know that that means there was tax revenue lost, there were transfer payments lost. We don't whether or not this cost us jobs or didn't cost us jobs, and I don't think we'll ever have an accurate read on that when it comes to specifics.

But I think we have this philosophy. We expect the private sector, and appreciate that the private sector adheres to this to a large degree. I think it only make sense for this government to do it. This is the flagship department, let's keep in mind, when it comes to competitive process, when it comes to contracting. I think all of the departments take their marching orders from this department. Certainly, if this department can do this, let's keep it in mind that other departments are paying attention to how they conduct themselves. I really wonder what other departments will do when they see this kind of conduct.

I think the departments try very hard here to make the case that this was the best expenditure of public dollars. I think it runs roughshod over our philosophy that says we may not always get the absolute best dollar, but we think there are other things that come into play here and we recognize that and that's why we've set up something like this BIP. It may be difficult to measure and that's something that we're trying to do over the next year -- the Department of RWED is -- but it still is important. It was important enough to the members of this House to not throw away the BIP and to not do away with the policy in total.

I would just like to express that I am disappointed that the bundling happened in this regard. Again, I'm disappointed that we didn't check with the local business community to determine what capacity they really did have to deliver on some of this stuff. I can tell you that after seeing the list of things that were purchased, they dispute the 80/20 split and say it's more like 60/40. Had we consulted with them, we could have had that debate and I'm sure rectified a lot of these issues one way or another, but we didn't and that's unfortunate. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think it's important that we point out that we're not just purchasing equipment, we're purchasing a system. It's not a system where you have disconnected hardware systems. One of the main points supporting this vision of the department, and which I supported, was the fact that it wasn't just a suggestion of \$100,000 savings. Both points had to be taken into consideration. The second one is that you had one supplier doing the installation, the troubleshooting and the warranty, and that was an important part of this decision. It's not just trying to save \$100,000. The department is well aware of the government's policies and practices. As a matter of fact, what has been suggested to industry to do, that is break down larger contracts to allow smaller companies to be able to bid on them, is something that was suggested by the government. I agree with the member that if we say we recommend to industry to do this, then we follow the same procedure. But I believe the department did take into consideration this policy, and we did try to follow the policy to the letter. It's just that at this point in time it's no longer where it's part of a BIP issue, it is more of a contracting issue, and the department feels that this was the best way to go. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I do recognize that this is part of the larger system. As the Minister has said correctly, this was about installation, it's about troubleshooting, it's about warranty. I think it's also about training. I'm certain Hewlett Packard will be up here training the government staff to be able to operate the system adequately. But I think the one thing that we have to recognize, in my view, is that we missed an opportunity here to build some northern capacity in these areas. The deputy has indicated there probably will never be anybody in the North who's qualified to deliver a contract of this nature because it's so specialized, it happens so rarely and there are so few big customers. I don't know if that's true; it might be. But I think we can be certain that there will never be the capacity in the North to deliver on a contract like this if we don't involve northern companies.

Now when we do need troubleshooting, we're certainly going to have to fly somebody up from Calgary or Edmonton in order to look at the system. I think if we would have had one of the northern contractors involved looking over the shoulders of the engineers doing the installation, being involved in some of the warranty discussions, learning about troubleshooting and watching some of the training be delivered, certainly we would have had an ability to then have some capacity built and have northern operators be involved. There would have been -- as I spoke the other day in the House -- some transfer of technology, and I think that's a very important goal for us. So I do keep in mind that this is part of an overall system. I just

think in this instance we missed the boat to build some capacity.

I think the folks here, the local northern firms bidding on these contracts, believe in the North, they're here because they love the North, they want to make this their home, they want to be involved here, they want to do business here and I think we have to give them that chance to do that. It is important to recognize that their business model has been premised on the idea that the government will give them some preferential treatment, or at least allow them to have access to the competitive bidding process on a number of these products.

The Minister has indicated to me that he has no qualms with the way the department handled this contract, and is satisfied that it has adhered to the policies and was well within the regulations. I think members on this side of the House have indicated some dissatisfaction and some reservations, and had hoped that the government would do things differently in future. I don't get the sense that the Minister is prepared to commit to that. But I'd like to ask the Minister if this contract were to come up next week, would the department do anything differently or would they undertake the exact same process -- sole source. If it was the same contract and they felt that somebody in the North couldn't handle the work, would they do things exactly the same way another time around should this contract come up in a week or a month or a year? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the question is hypothetical. But assuming everything is the same; the same issues were raised, the same type of tender and RFP was put forward, it would have been done basically following the policies of the government. If it's BIP, then we follow BIP. If it includes a contract aspect of it, then the department will follow the contract aspect. But if the member is suggesting that we would pay more attention to certain points that were raised here, we definitely will. But I can't respond to the specific question because it's hypothetical. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Minister Steen. The Chair will recognize Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is in the area of water quality with regards to concerns I raised earlier today in the House, and also with the notice of a boil water order in communities which your department is responsible for, knowing that there is a question of not only process, but a liability question. I touched on the THM problem in Fort McPherson. I know certain efforts were made to improve the water quality in Fort McPherson, but we still have other communities. I've raised the issue with regard to Tsiigehtchic where there's supposed to be an improvement to the water treatment process there. There are still concerns with the colour of the water, and also the smell of the water. Also in the community of Aklavik where there was a percentage in the water system called H. pylori, in which doctors were prescribing antibiotics for residents of Aklavik to take because of the virus which you get from the intake of water.

So I'd like to ask the Minister or the Department of Public Works who is responsible for the testing, sampling and looking at the whole water quality aspect of water treatment facilities in our communities -- especially in my communities where your department does provide that service in Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson and also Rae-Edzo -- exactly what is your

department doing in consideration of the water quality question; not just looking at the quality of water, but the side effects that we're seeing in our water by way of studies that I mentioned with regards to research and with regards to different scientific findings of THMs, the effect that it has on cancers and also miscarriages in women, and also with the problem in Aklavik where we're seeing large numbers of cancer cases in our communities?

I always hear from my constituents, asking if there is a correlation between the increase in cancer in our communities and the water quality and how the water has been treated in the past with chlorine or other types of chemicals. I'd like to ask the department if you document all the types of chemicals or additives that you add to the water system to process the water during certain times of the year, where you have large increases or spikes indicating increased mercury or increased metals in the water or, in the case of THMs if there are certain things you have to do to treat the water? Is all that information documented so that, if at any time in the future we have a major lawsuit on our hands, we, as a government, will know who the fingers will be pointed at and who will be held liable with regards to the court cases we're seeing in southern Canada?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I'm going to refer most of those questions to my deputy. But from the aspect of water treatment facilities and improving water treatment facilities in the communities, in relation to Tsiigehtchic, we expect that that project will be taken on this summer and completed by this fall. So Tsiigehtchic should have filtered water by this fall, and the purpose of that is to remove the colour from the water. That's the reason for the filtering process.

In relation to the reports on water samples, the department does do water sampling where we supply the service and our people are responsible to turn those over to the environmental health officer. I believe it's the environmental health officer who then identifies whether or not there are certain conditions of the water that have to be addressed. We would then take that to Health and Social Services, and they would identify what we have to do, what Public Works would have to do, or MACA would have to do in order to address the issue.

I'm not aware of the issue that the member mentioned in Aklavik, so I'll ask the deputy to respond to that particular issue.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, as I recall, the issue in Aklavik came up a couple of years ago and it had to do with a bacteria that was speculated to be found in water tanks in the community. It had less to do with the supply of drinking water and more to do with proper cleaning of tanks. But that's about as much as I recall of that particular issue. I think there was an individual from one of the universities who wanted to do some more research on that issue, and I simply don't know whether or not they've carried on that research someplace else or not.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just on the area of water testing, I'd like to ask the Minister or his department if we have expanded the testing of water from just looking at the basic requirements. Do we look for things such as THMs or other forms of bacteria, or do we just look at the colouring and the different types of heavy metals that may be in the water by way of mercury levels? I'd like to know from the department, have we seen an increase in the type of testing that we do to detect other types of heavy metals or other types of products that may find their way into our water system? You touched on the Aklavik situation, which I believe was H. pylori, or something to that effect. That was the title that was put on it. You have THMs, then you have the colouring problem in regards to Tsiigehtchic. I would like to ask the Minister, knowing what happened in Walkerton, that they tested for certain things, is there an additional type of requirement that we are now required to test for different types of bacteria that may be in the water? Are we expanding the testing of water in our communities, or are we just continuing to test for the basics that presently might be under the Canadian health standards? How far do we go with our testing?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe the testing aspects of the water are done by the environmental health officer. We're just required to supply the samples. We then get direction back as to what treatment we have to do to make the water meet the standards. In other words, if we have to put chlorine or whatever in, that's the direction we get back from Health and Social Services through the environmental health officer. I believe that's the process that is involved. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** The reason I ask is because there seems to be more testing. Right now, basically the water tests are taken at the water treatment plant. Do we take tests from the lake itself, into the water intake system, into the water treatment plant, into the water truck and then into the home? Do we check all these different areas, testing water right from the intake from the water source to the turning on of a tap in someone's home? How far does that test go? Are we only testing in one area, or are we testing in all different areas of the water process so that we're testing at the front end and also we're testing at the back end so that we know exactly what the quality of the water was when we brought it in out of the lake, what the quality of the water is once it goes into the treatment plant, what's the quality when it comes out of the treatment plant, and what's the quality of the water once it's turned on in someone's home?

You have mechanisms in communities where water is either delivered through a water truck delivery system or a utilidor system. You have storage tanks underground. So how far do we test this water? Do we just test it after we get a notice from environmental health and then go back to try to nail some of these things down? How vigorous is the testing that you really do, or do you just test the water at the treatment plant?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'll ask the deputy to respond to that specific question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Minister Steen. Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, there are three different kinds of testing that are done. First is an operational type of testing to ensure that there's sufficient chlorine residual in the water to control bacteria. Typically those tests are carried out between one and three times a day. Depending on the type of system, it will generally be tested in a couple of different locations.

In a trucked system, you test the water that's in the truck. In the pipe system, you will also test at the end of the pipe, to make sure that in fact there's sufficient chlorine residual. Frequently what they'll do is they take a sample out of a building and test for chlorine. Chlorine is important because that's what controls bacteria, and bacteria tends to be the contaminant that's of most critical concern.

With respect to the second type of testing, and that is bacterial testing, we do that, or at least the water plant operators will take samples, or samples will be collected by the environmental health officer on a schedule as dictated by the environmental health officer. Again, those are typically done in a number of different locations in a community, and they are done on a frequency... I believe Canadian drinking water guidelines suggest that, for every 1,000 people in a community, sampling be done once per month. So in a community of Yellowknife's size, that's the way they would calculate it. If the community is smaller, they would do it no less than four times in a month.

The third type of testing that's done is for chemical contaminants or chemical characteristics, and that varies from the more esthetic parameters such as taste and odor, appearance -- so the colour -- up to the more significant potential contaminants which would include heavy metals or radiological products. Those types of tests are done -- because they are fairly complex tests, they are fairly costly tests and those parameters don't change on a daily basis -- once a year, I believe it is. There are 24 of those chemical and physical parameters that are tested for. In addition to that, as part of that, Trihalomethane, THM, is tested typically on a semi-annual basis, unless it's an area where we have a particular concern with it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray. The Chair will recognize the clock and rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Minister and your witnesses for appearing.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will come back to order. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole? The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

#### ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do I have a seconder for the motion? The motion is in order. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko, seconds the motion. The motion is in order.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

#### ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

**Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Territorial Parks Act, Carried**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 2 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

#### ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m., a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at 10:30 of caucus.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 11, 2003:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. 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

- Motion 8-14(6), To Modify the Strategy to Harmonize Income Support and Social Housing

## 17. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act
- Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act

## 18. Second Reading of Bills

## 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004
- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act
- Bill 9, Youth Justice Statutes Amendment Act
- Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2002-2003
- 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 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, Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's 2001-2002 Annual Report
- Committee Report 8, Report on the Review of the "Report of the Auditor General to the NWT Legislative Assembly for 2000 and 2001"
- Committee Report 9, "One Land, Many Voices": The Final Report of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act
- Motion 10-14(6), To Change the Strategy to Harmonize Income Support and Social Housing
- Minister's Statement 28-14(6), Harmonization of Income Support and Public Housing
- Tabled Document 26-14(6), Letter from Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations Chief Samuel Gargan Regarding the New Rent Scale
- Tabled Document 31-14(6), Information for Public Housing Tenants: New Rent Scale
- Tabled Document 41-14(6), List of Organizations Contacted Regarding Harmonization

## 20. Report of Committee of the Whole

## 21. Third Reading of Bills

## 22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 11, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.



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