



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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### Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

### Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

### Mr. Leon Lafferty

(North Slave)

### Ms. Sandy Lee

(Range Lake)

### Mr. Michael McLeod

(Deh Cho)

### Mr. Steven Nitah

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, March 11, 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, Honourable Tony Whitford

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford):** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Before we begin today, I would like to remind Members, and caution Members and Ministers, prior to statements and question period that any statements or questions by Members or replies by Ministers dealing with the harmonization strategy will be ruled out of order by the Chair. The strategy for harmonization of income is on the orders paper for today and Members will have ample time and opportunity to deal with that issue at the appropriate time. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 37-14(6): Good Governance For Community Councils And Boards**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to advise Members of a new approach to governance training for northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, this government has spent much time discussing the many challenges facing community governments and non-government organizations in the North. We have all recognized the need to strengthen and develop individual and community capacity. A key element in building community capacity is ensuring that elected and appointed leaders have the skills they need to carry out their responsibilities.

Just over a year ago, Municipal and Community Affairs joined forces with the departments of Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment and the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to develop a generic workshop series on governance. The goal of the workshops is to improve community capacity and local decision-making. The workshops focus on the elements of governance that are common to all elected and appointed governing bodies, including municipal councils, band councils and health and education boards. The workshops, which are offered through the department's School of Community Government, will enable councillors to enhance their knowledge and skills in governance, focusing on the following key areas: roles and responsibilities; leadership; planning; programs and services; community constitutions; financial awareness; governance and the law; the senior administrator; effective meetings; teamwork; exercising authority; and, emerging governance.

Four regional pilot project workshops using the new resources were recently delivered in Rae-Edzo, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith and Inuvik. Participants included municipal council members and staff, band councillors and representatives of health authorities. The sessions were well-received. Participants identified additional areas where training modules should be

developed and several requests have been received to take the training into other communities.

Mr. Speaker, training in the aboriginal languages is also a critical component of the workshop series. In partnership with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the School of Community Governance is prepared to make this training available to any region or community in their aboriginal language. Workshops have recently been provided in the North Slavey and Dogrib languages. Upcoming governance workshops are scheduled in Gameti and Wekweti in the Dogrib language and we hope to offer a workshop in Inuvialuktun in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, the training provided by MACA's School of Community Government and its partners represents a great opportunity to work together to build community capacity in governance, which is essential to effective community operations, programs and services delivery. Developing leadership skills in our communities will also support implementation of aboriginal self-government agreements.

I am proud to work together in partnerships with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to contribute to the building of northern community capacity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

**Minister's Statement 38-14(6): An Apprenticeship Program Success**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Mr. Speaker, good afternoon to all Members of this House. Today I rise to update you on the progress the NWT Housing Corporation is making in support of the occupational trades training and certification program.

I am pleased to announce that the Fort Resolution Housing Authority has two apprentices who have successfully completed their trade, which includes their inter-provincial red seal. I would like to take this opportunity to express my congratulations to Dean McKay, who obtained his carpentry certification and Tyrone Fordy, who obtained certification as an oil burner mechanic. Thanks to their hard work and dedication to the program and to the support of the Fort Resolution Housing Authority and the NWT Housing Corporation, the community of Fort Resolution has just increased its capacity in terms of successfully developing its people.

Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation has met with officials from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment as

well as community partners and, based on the success of the apprenticeship program, the corporation is expanding its commitment to this valuable program where possible.

It is clear that the occupational trades training and certification is working to help build our territory and strengthen our people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 3, Members' statements.

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement On Success Of The United Way In Yellowknife

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity today to update my colleagues and the public on the Yellowknife United Way campaign. We all know intuitively that the Northwest Territories is very generous and there are many, many fund raising events held every year and most of them are very successful. Think back to the Run for the Cure and the kinds of fund-raising efforts that happened and the numbers that were coming out of a campaign like that compared us to cities like Halifax, much bigger cities, Mr. Speaker. I think that is something we often see in the NWT.

If you remember about a year ago, there was a newly formed chapter of the United Way in Yellowknife. It's first ever fundraising campaign began last October and to date, I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, they have been successful in raising about \$63,000, both through payroll deductions and through donations. I think this is great news. We know the United Way is an international charity committed to building strong and healthy communities and they support many worthwhile programs and services. How this money will be spent will be determined this spring. It will be an RFP process and community organizations can put in proposals and I think the United Way is doing something very good here. They are recognizing that they want to try to fund programs that are going to have timelines of two to three years. We know many NGOs are telling us they don't have the manpower, the resources or capacity to be continuing reapplying for funds. I think this is a great approach as to how the money might be spent. Also, Mr. Speaker, much of the money can be donated to specific Canadian charities registered in the NWT. For instance, if you have payroll deductions coming off your paycheque, you can decide where your money will go.

I have had a chance to take a look at the registered charities in the NWT that are signed up with the United Way. There are well over 100 of them and I think my colleagues will be interested to know that many of them are not in Yellowknife. I know that was a concern when this was being discussed, that this would help Yellowknife and it wasn't going to do much for outlying communities. It looks like there are about 15 Hay River organizations on here, 10 to 15 from Fort Smith, some from Providence, Resolution, McPherson, Good Hope. I think this is a great start, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure we will see more and more organizations join the list. If you are curious or interested to see the list of organizations, you can go to [www.yellowknife.unitedway.ca](http://www.yellowknife.unitedway.ca). I think this is a great program. Mr. Speaker, I think we should also thank the Minister of Finance who allowed the payroll deduction to take place. I

hope my colleagues will join me in thanking this new organization for their hard work. Thank you.

---Applause

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

#### Member's Statement On Access To Legal Aid For Family Law Matters

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise an issue that many of us have brought up in this House and that's the issue of access to legal aid for family matters, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's been brought to my attention by a number of my constituents that a problem continues to exist and is becoming worse with respect to access to legal aid and more specifically to legal aid involving family law matters. It's my understanding that only the most urgent family law such as custody matters are being dealt with in a somewhat timely manner. Other matters considered less than urgent await assignment to a legal aid lawyer, in some cases for up to a year.

People waiting for legal aid support are being frustrated and are forced to make decisions that sometimes jeopardize their position when their matter reaches the courts. We have people living in fear for their life and who are forced to continue living in abusive relationships, who are living in poverty and who are living in fear of losing their children. All of this is real and severely impacts the emotional state of those who have to live in this environment.

Mr. Speaker, one of the effects of increased development is increased social problems. If our legal aid system is unable to meet our current needs now, the matter will only worsen. There is a shortage of lawyers practicing in this field when the government has to look at recruiting additional lawyers in addition to actively seeking alternative methods of mediation to deal with specific matters that could be settled without litigation. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen, in questions posed to him in previous sitting of this House by my colleague, Ms. Lee, confirmed that this department is planning to introduce more collaborative law rather than litigation to solve family law matters. I will be asking the honourable Member to share with us what, if any, progress has been made in this area when he plans to introduce solutions that can result in the backlogs of these cases being reduced. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### Member's Statement On Support For Community Summer Student Employment

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are finishing off our session here. Spring is coming up and our summer is coming down. Students will be leaving school and wanting to enter the workforce. Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, introduce employment opportunities for university students and we've made a budget available.

Unfortunately, we've determined through statistical information that most of those students are working for government departments and hardly any are working for industry. Very few work for chiefs and councils, municipal councils, Metis councils and NGOs in our communities. So this program does not seem to have an effect outside of government.

One of the reasons for introducing this program was to give students an opportunity to gain experience. Mr. Speaker, we need experience outside of government as well. I would like to encourage this government to see what they can do to communicate this program to communities, consult with communities so they can take advantage of this program, so that the chief and council, the Metis council in each of our communities can take advantage of these dollars so they can hire the students in our communities. It may make a difference in the communities for high school students. Sidewalks in our communities are something badly needed. Mud is a problem. We are trying to address it with chipsealing, but we could do with short-term solutions for the time-being, Mr. Speaker. Those kinds of things I would like to see this government do to address the employment issues in our communities. I will be asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to see if he is willing to go down that road with me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Electronic Health Care Record System**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the residents of the NWT have a fundamental right to quality health care. I also believe we must continually upgrade and improve our equipment and information systems, so that our health care providers are equipped with the tools necessary to provide quality health care.

To that end, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative and absolutely vital that an electronic health record system be implemented in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I believe our government's current use of health care resources does not directly correspond to the values of efficiency and accountability for the people we serve, the residents of the NWT.

Without an electronic health record system in place, Mr. Speaker, our health care system in the North is extremely vulnerable and the health of our residents is at great risk. Mr. Speaker, medical error is the eighth most likely cause of death for Canadians. It costs an estimated 10,000 lives per year. We can no longer, as a government, afford to ignore these pictures. Mr. Speaker, these figures beg the question of how many people have to die without an electronic health record system being implemented in the NWT. You cannot put a price on what saving even one life would mean. If we continue without an electronic health record system in the NWT, Mr. Speaker, there are increased risks to our residents from physicians being unable to access a patient's past medical history. Mr. Speaker, due to the absence of an electronic health records system and given our transient population in the NWT, it is currently impossible for a physician practicing anywhere in the North to access a patient's medical history if they were

seen anywhere else previously in the NWT. In this day and age, that is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, in the recently released Romanow report on the state of health care in Canada, the electronic health record was a key recommendation. Mr. Speaker, our doctors cannot practice safe and comprehensive primary care without an electronic health record system being implemented. We need to provide our doctors with the tools that they require to do their job for the sake of all residents of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Responsibility For Resource Development Capacity And Preparedness**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot about the pipelines and major developments that are going to take place in the North in the next while and I think we can't lose focus. We can continue to point our fingers at the federal government, but I think we have to turn the finger around to say we are also responsible for these developments that are going to take place in the North. I believe this government has a fundamental responsibility when it comes to the management of our wildlife to ensure we not only protect it, but also the traditional way of life for our hunters and trappers to ensure that any major impacts on them, or the areas they harvest, are going to be considered for compensation. We have a responsibility for management of our forests to ensure that we have protection in place, and also so we can develop our forest products in the Northwest Territories to benefit from these major developments.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is time that this government realized that we cannot continue to blame the federal government for the lack of capacity in our communities. It is this government's responsibility to build that capacity, ensuring that the people in our communities are prepared, have the resources and the human resources to deal with the environmental assessment process to deal with the whole pipeline application process, and to ensure that we, as a territory, have the infrastructure and resources in the communities.

I think it is great to have the resources at headquarters, but that's not where the development and impact is going to be felt. It is going to be felt in our communities. It is going to be felt by the residents in our communities and we have to ensure that we minimize that impact through our responsibility as government. We have to ensure that these developments don't have a major impact on our health care system and our education systems, and prepare ourselves to be ready for those developments when they happen.

I think we have learned from the Norman Wells experience. We've learned from the diamond mine experience where we've had to work with industries to develop social and economic agreements and develop training programs to develop the capacity so that we could benefit through the secondary industry of diamonds. We have to do similar things for oil and gas and I think this government has to start developing its own scenarios on how we, as government, are going to be prepared

for the pipeline development. Are we prepared or will we continue to blame the federal government for all our errors and problems that we have? I will be asking the Premier questions on this matter later. Thank you.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On GNWT Procurement Policies**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about something that has been brought to my attention and that of other Members in the House. It has to do with the government's procurement and contracting process. In the latest case, Mr. Speaker, it involved upwards of \$1 million for purchasing computer equipment and services. As more and more information is being made known, it may prove to be the case that the government had no other option but to go to a large southern supplier, Mr. Speaker. It could be that the materials and services being bought were such that it was too sophisticated or required types of warranties and services that could not otherwise be had in the North.

But the main problem here is that the northern suppliers were not given an opportunity to have a say, yea or nay, as to whether they could partake in it or not. Mr. Speaker, the problem I'm having is that we have heard this type of argument before. Not too long ago, this government deliberately bypassed its own BIP policy because we believed the premium was too high. That resulted in a long-term northern business losing out on a contract by a very small margin. In the latest case, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has argued that this contract went through the sole source contract process and all the rules were followed. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we have the government making decisions without thinking through the implications of what they are doing and the messages they are sending out in doing it.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that there is a good broad philosophical principle to uphold in policies such as the Business Incentive Policy, and that is that we, as a government, are more than a mere consumer of products like computers or a builder of a facility. We have to understand that we cannot go about making purchasing deals that only look at what is the best value for the buck right here, right now. This has to be factored in along with a number of other factors that contribute to the public good that the government is supposed to fulfill. The government should know that there is an additional value called a multiplier on every dollar that is spent. Every government dollar spent in the community multiplies three to fourfold in jobs created, local businesses maintained and new industry fostered.

This is how we build community capacity, and if these projects continue to be too big and too sophisticated for the local IT suppliers to bid on, then those businesses will continue to stay too small and too unsophisticated in the government's books. That is not fair, Mr. Speaker, and that is not right. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to do better and we can do better only if the government and the Ministers' departments will just think through their choices, and I ask for that sort of action now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Bathurst Inlet Port And Road Project**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to focus on an issue that has not received much attention from this government that will have a huge impact on the Ticho and Akaitcho regions, as well as Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories and Canada. This issue is the proposed development of the Bathurst Inlet port and road project in Nunavut. Because this project runs through the Slave Geological Province, which is in both our territories, any activity there has significant implications. This area includes all of the mining developments to date between Yellowknife and the Arctic coast and has the greatest resource deposits in both of the territories.

If this Bathurst road proceeds, it will likely become the main supply route for the mines and communities in the area. This will disrupt the existing resupply business from the Northwest Territories and the southern provinces. This area is also home to a variety of muskoxen, moose, bears and the Bathurst caribou herd. This herd has its calving ground north of the proposed routes. I am concerned about the impact this road will have on the caribou. My people rely extensively on the caribou as food.

Mr. Speaker, within the next month the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs is expected to decide which type of environmental review the proposed supply road will undergo. The two options are to do either a part 5 or a part 6 environmental review. A part 5 review involves only the Nunavut Environmental Review Board; the part 6 review includes input from all affected parties and participation is funded.

Mr. Speaker, this project involves transboundary issues. It has the potential to shift the transportation and economic focus from the Northwest Territories and could severely affect our caribou herd. I think it is really important that we ensure that a part 6 federal environmental review of this project is undertaken and that a spokesperson from the Northwest Territories is appointed to represent the Western Arctic interests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Capacity Building For Oil And Gas Development**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my colleague from Mackenzie Delta's comments about capacity building, more in the area of oil and gas, Mr. Speaker. Previous to this day, earlier in the session I raised a question and concerns about the establishment of DIAND's oil and gas office in Yellowknife, and said that they should be building an office and moving people to where the activity is, Mr. Speaker. That would go a long way towards building capacity in the Northwest Territories. I can understand the need for bodies around the capital city but, Mr. Speaker, we



have electronics, we have systems in place so that people can communicate on a daily basis without having to be in a central location.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to find out later on in question period if we know where, in fact, is this going to happen and how many bodies would be moving to the North and if that has all been decided or is that still up in the air? So I will be asking the Premier those questions later on. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Member's Statement On Weekend Activities In Thebacha**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to briefly, in this House, highlight some of the activities that are going to be taking place in Thebacha this weekend. Mr. Speaker, starting late Friday morning, we are going to be opening the first of 12 seniors' independent housing units, along with my colleague, Mr. Allen, who is coming to town to do the official ribbon cutting. I would like to thank the committee led by Leon Peterson that worked so hard at housing and the local authority to make this happen.

This weekend, as well, is going to be Wood Buffalo Frolics so we hope there is a break in the weather. As part of the Wood Buffalo Frolics, the PWK grad committee is putting on an auction, and that auction is going to be done by the Speaker whose legendary golden, dulcet tones are going to raise scads of money for the graduation committee in Fort Smith. So it's going to be a very busy weekend in the community and I would like to commend all the volunteers and people who have made this possible. I would like to thank Minister Allen and the Speaker for coming to the community to help us with these festivities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure for me to introduce and recognize my constituency assistant in the House today, Pearl Benyk.

---Applause

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It also gives me great pleasure to introduce my constituency assistant, Mr. Steven Norn from Fort Resolution. He's expecting a baby in town here.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to welcome you all to the Legislative

Assembly to watch the proceedings. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

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

##### **Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with some questions regarding my Member's statement on family law. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice if he could tell me, when it comes to family law matters, what is the average waiting time for legal aid files to be assigned to a lawyer?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

##### **Return To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the exact waiting time, although we would like to acknowledge there is a backlog in family law cases. We are quickly working on trying to find a resolution to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### **Supplementary To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me how long it takes for a family law file to be settled?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

##### **Further Return To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we are at the convenience of the court system. As well, we are trying to find more lawyers to deal with family law matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### **Supplementary To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's two non-answers in a row. I would like to ask the Minister then, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lee introduced some questions in this House to the Justice Minister regarding collaborative law. Mr. Speaker, I admit, I had to look up what that meant. The Minister indicated he would be bringing some collaborative law solutions to this House. What is he doing in order to reduce the backlog of family law cases?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

##### **Further Return To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will read verbatim from my appearance before a standing committee on the budget. "Yes, we are trying to hire more family law lawyers." It's been a difficult task, I must admit. We are trying

to encourage suggestions to reduce the backlog and the amount of cases before the courts. We are trying to use a collaborative law practice rather than the conventional judicial system. So there is an effort by the department and legal aid to try to reduce some of the waiting time, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad there are some initiatives being made, but I don't know if we are really making any progress. My understanding is the backlog of cases is growing. Can the Minister confirm that we have gone from a certain number and now that number is escalating on a daily basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 207-14(6): Legal Aid For Family Law Matters**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, many of the items here before us, there is a fluctuation in cases and we are trying to make sure we have sufficient legal aid support to try to help reduce the backlog. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to my statement, I would like to direct my question to the Premier. We hear a lot about what's got to be done for a pipeline and how we have to get the federal government on board and how we need the federal government to start funding infrastructure and whatnot; yet, this government has some clear responsibilities. We have non-renewable resource strategies, we are responsible for wildlife in the NWT and also we are responsible for program delivery, especially in the areas of education and training. Mr. Speaker, with a pipeline coming down the valley, it's important that we, as a government, be prepared. So I would like to ask the Minister, do we have a plan in place so that this government will bring in legislation to deal with the aspects we are responsible for such as amendments to the Wildlife Act, development of a non-renewable resource strategy, so that we can implement some of these ideas?

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

**Return To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the administration and management of non-renewable resources, diamonds, oil and gas, all lands and waters remains with the federal government. It is true wildlife is the responsibility we have and we are working with the public and aboriginal governments to deliver a Wildlife Act in the near future, we hope. Primarily the responsibility for making sure the North is prepared to benefit from development of non-renewable resources, we believe, has to be continually faced squarely with the federal government. We do our share to do what we can with our limited resources to prepare the

communities and the people for what we hope is a positive future in non-renewable resource development.

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

**Supplementary To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has a responsibility to ensure that the residents of the NWT have the resources. We are prepared so that when a developer comes to our doorstep and requests us to have input and requests that we basically have meaningful input into any process whether it's through a public hearing or looking at a specific project, that we have the capacity in our communities such as economic development officers having technicians to help us review the information that is in front of us. Is the government doing anything to assist communities to develop that capacity so when developers knock on our door we are prepared for them?

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

**Further Return To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ability of this government to deal with developers coming into communities, whether they are mining companies or oil and gas companies is limited. It always has been limited. We continue to say that the federal government must take responsibility, primary responsibility, for getting our communities and businesses well prepared to deal with development as it comes to us and to benefit from it. As a government, we advocate development, we promote it and we've sent a message to industry, the federal government and public that what we are advocating is a positive approach and a well-prepared approach to development. In order to sustain it, we need the federal government to step up and take a positive attitude and an aggressive approach to make sure the proper resources and planning are there so that all of us can benefit. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a massive bureaucracy out there that's called the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have a lot of technicians, policy analysts, specialists we have hired in the different areas, the oil and gas industry, the diamond industry, in this government. What does a community have to do to access those resources, so they can come into our communities to assist the communities so when an application is dropped on the table, a community can go through it and analyze it knowing they will have input into this process? Does this government have the ability to get those people out of headquarters and into the communities to help our residents?

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

**Further Return To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the staff that we have and the resources we have presently are fully engaged. We do not have additional resources available to undertake what the Member is suggesting. The federal government, I believe, is obliged to step forward and help us make sure our roads are properly maintained, developed and finished so that development can happen in a way that will benefit us. The federal government has to take primary responsibility for helping us fund the training programs that are required so that our people are trained and educated to do the jobs that will be coming forward. I believe the federal government has to take the responsibility for making sure the many boards and agencies that deal with environmental and land use planning and the developmental aspects of development as it encroaches on the North are dealt with and communities are prepared in order to deal with those. So we still insist that our government is not resourced properly. We are on a fixed formula and there is no mechanism right now for us to benefit from resource development because those projects that are now having revenue flowing from royalties are going all to the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure this government has any responsibilities to anybody in the NWT. What are we doing to prepare ourselves for a major development such as a pipeline down the Mackenzie valley? Does this government have a plan in place to deal with that?

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

**Further Return To Question 208-14(6): Oil And Gas Development Readiness Plan**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government, I believe, is of the view that we are ready and if the federal government engages with us in making sure we have the infrastructure dollars required, if we get the health dollars we believe we need and are entitled to, if we get access to the training dollars we believe are required, if the federal government properly resources the aboriginal communities so that they can get economic development dollars, business development dollars in place, as is their mandate, then this government will not only have the plan, but have the resources available to throw additional dollars into the communities, so we can be more than ready to benefit from the development that we see coming. Thank you.

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

**Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we speak a lot about capacity building in the NWT and, in this day and age, we should have no problem employing government people and employing people in all the communities. We don't have programs for the development of those positions in the

communities, but we do have one program called the hire-a-student program and it's carried by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment that was introduced last year. Before I ask specific questions, I would like to ask the Minister if he could refresh our memory of what this program is about and the budget associated with it. Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question to the honourable Member. We devote \$1 million to the program for summer student hiring and it is based on a subsidy of \$5 per individual per hour. It is done by application by companies, organizations, aboriginal groups, whoever it may be, municipal governments, to our government. The companies would make the application on behalf of the student when they hire the student, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through statistical information, we determined that the majority of the dollars, the \$1 million, was spent here in the city of Yellowknife by the Government of the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Minister what is he doing to ensure that that doesn't happen? What is he doing to ensure the \$1 million is spread throughout the North so companies in Holman, people in Fort Resolution, people in Lutselk'e can take advantage of this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member has a very good point. We want to ensure that this money gets to the regions, to the companies throughout the territory, be it company or organization. Municipal governments can apply, aboriginal governments, aboriginal businesses, anyone in business, Mr. Speaker, can apply for this funding. It has traditionally been on a first come/first serve basis, but we are in the process of advertising it and ensuring that as many people will become knowledgeable as possible. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, too many times we, as a government, create these programs and services and the only people who know about it are government employees. Therefore, it's the departments who take advantage of these programs and services, so we recycle the money within government. Would the Minister consider putting a cap on it, say perhaps 30 percent of the total budget be going to the territorial government and leaving the rest for

other businesses and other government bodies in the NWT? This will ensure that it's spread out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of summer employment is certainly an important one for many students to be employed as possible, but it's important that we ensure that as many students in the regions and communities get employed, if that's where they wish to be employed. Sometimes it is difficult to ensure that employment is created in the communities. We depend somewhat on applications from companies and organizations to create that employment, then we can support that with funding, Mr. Speaker. We are certainly very interested in that approach to ensure that we do it more and more in the regional centres, that being communities and other centres.

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

**Supplementary To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has been in the NWT for 35 years. Two questions in this House have determined that the majority of jobs are either in Yellowknife or the regional centres, not in the communities. Therefore, I say there's one program where government can limit its involvement to 30 percent, so that other agencies and governments can take advantage of it. There are no government jobs in our communities. There are one or two employees. Therefore, I am saying let's spread it out a little bit. The only way I can think of doing that without relying totally on the ability of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to communicate is to put a cap on it. Would the Minister consider to put a cap on government involvement of this \$1 million to \$300,000? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 209-14(6): GNWT Hire A Student Program**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can certainly take it under consideration. I don't know what the implications of that would be, but certainly, as I mentioned earlier, our interest is there to ensure opportunities are provided for the businesses and organizations in the communities and that we ensure if there are students who wish to work in those particular circumstances, that we try to promote that. I can certainly guarantee to the Member, that we will make our best efforts to ensure that we promote in these communities, in all of the communities, and that we ensure that the information is out there for companies and students to know about this. Thank you.

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

**Question 210-14(6): DIAND Pipeline Readiness Office**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question would be directed to the Premier, along the lines of my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, we became aware early in our session that DIAND has announced it is getting ready for the pipeline by putting \$10 million towards the Pipeline Readiness Office. They mentioned that it would be established in Yellowknife. Has that been done? Is that an agreement that is signed and is proceeding? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 210-14(6): DIAND Pipeline Readiness Office**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an announcement that came from the federal Minister, Robert Nault. It is money that the federal government is putting in place to open an office, to hire staff to help them get ready for the real possibility that a Mackenzie Valley pipeline will be proposed by producers and aboriginal groups in the next few months. So we are not privy to the information. I believe it has been announced, the money has been allocated and the office will be opened and staff will be hired, as far as I understand, all based here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 210-14(6): DIAND Pipeline Readiness Office**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along the line of capacity, for example, business goes where the activity is and it's proven, Mr. Speaker, through the petroleum show that's put on in Inuvik. It's sold out now, two years in a row, and again this coming June. It just shows business will go where the activity is. I am just wondering if the Premier will, on behalf of this government, discuss with the Minister of DIAND to see if there is a possibility of moving that office to other areas. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 210-14(6): DIAND Pipeline Readiness Office**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the initial discussion I had with Minister Nault was two years ago. At that time, we indicated that our preference would be to see this office and the staff placed in communities other than Yellowknife because the oil and gas activity is along the Mackenzie Valley. We mentioned Hay River, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells and Inuvik as possible sites that they should consider. He indicated at that time that he was prepared to look at that, so we can have some communication with the Minister to determine whether the additional staff and resources that are going to be coming to the North to fulfill the oil and gas responsibilities of the federal government could be placed in those communities that I named. I don't think they are open to relocating the present office at this time, but we can ask that question as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 210-14(6): DIAND Pipeline Readiness Office**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has stated publicly that the federal government has to come to the table and provide resources and capacity building in communities in the North and I think that's very good. Hopefully he will be able to put this into that basket. Can the Premier provide us with information as to what new jobs might be established and provide that to Members? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 210-14(6): DIAND Pipeline Readiness Office**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, in the '70s, all the staff were in Hull, Quebec. So it can be seen positively as a change in attitude perhaps by federal officials. We can contact the Minister's office and continue to send the message that we want oil and gas pipeline development resources located in places other than Yellowknife, to make sure that along the right-of-way, in the regions where oil and gas development is occurring, that those will be the places where federal officials should be located. Thank you.

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

**Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, several months ago, there was quite a crisis in the health field because of a lack of qualified personnel. It was a big public issue. The Minister announced that the government would be putting \$8 million-plus into recruitment to try to deal with that. It was welcomed by the public. Could the Minister tell the House if we have seen any results now from the recruitment that was promised with this \$8 million?

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

**Return To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the vacancy numbers as of December 31, 2002, overall combining GPs and specialists, were 24.4 percent. Mr. Speaker, we've since added 19.5 positions; 16.5 GPs and three more specialists. We are in the process of working with the medical association to stamp those. We just signed a good agreement with the general practitioners which has been put on the medical association's web site, which is part of a recruiting tool, I understand, that lays out in detail the package, but at this point, while we have the resources in place to add to the doctor complement, the issue is finding doctors. These numbers as of December 31<sup>st</sup> are somewhat dated. We still have positions to fill. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware if we have filled any of the new positions that we brought the funding in for?

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

**Further Return To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that they -- I don't have the specific positions -- have had some successful contacts and commitments at Stanton. Also, in some of the communities, there have been some unfortunate situations where we have lost the services of some of the doctors due to personal circumstances, but there has been some success. I know the medical community, along with management at Stanton, are working to staff all positions we have. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister sounds very optimistic that we are going to fill all the positions, but it seems like it's been quite some time and it doesn't sound like very many of them have been filled. What is the Minister going to do to improve the recruiting efforts that are now underway?

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

**Further Return To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we want to successfully conclude an agreement with the specialists, which is an outstanding item. Then we are going to continue to work with the medical association. We are looking at the services of a qualified, specialized recruiter as another option to try to assist us, given the new resources we've put in and the number of positions, nearly a 30 percent increase in positions of doctors that we have added to the system. So we are going to try to wrap up and I would like to point out that this is a very competitive market. While we, as a government and as a Legislature, voted the money in, the number of doctors available to fill the positions across the country has not increased. We just have to be more aggressive. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned working with the medical association. I would think that physicians would have a vested interest in seeing these positions filled to bring down their workload. Has the Minister considered not only working with the medical association, but putting the job of recruiting right into their

hands? In other words, funding the medical association to actually run the recruiting process.

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

**Further Return To Question 211-14(6): Recruitment Of Health Care Professionals**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree that the medical community has a vested interest in seeing these resources spent as the money has been voted and getting the doctor positions filled. At this point, we are working collaboratively. We may reach the point where turning it all over to the medical community is a possibility, but at this point I think it is best done as a collaborative effort. Thank you.

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

**Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement, I believe it is imperative that an electronic health record system be initiated throughout the NWT. As I stated earlier, an electronic health record system was a key recommendation from the recent Romanow Commission report. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services please indicate to this House what steps his department is taking to ensure electronic health records are being instituted throughout the NWT?

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

**Return To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is absolutely correct when he indicates the need for this particular function and systems upgrade. We have developed terms of reference for a medical electronic patients record improvement project. We've laid out timelines. We want to start working on this and we have already started to work through the development of the terms of reference. We have received a proposal by Dr. Affleck who has been working in Yellowknife initially and in some other communities on a scaled down approach to the electronic health records but they as well realized, if we were going to do this right, we need it system-wide. That as well has been recognized in the action plan. The intent is to look at Dr. Affleck's proposal and see how it fits within the work we laid out in the terms of reference. As well, we are going to try to access some of the money that is going to become available through the new health care money, a significant chunk which has been dedicated for health information systems.

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

**Supplementary To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly think there are fundamental risk management and liability issues for the Department of Health, for all authorities

across the North, in not having medical information management systems that are capable of tracking patients' medications, illnesses and disease. The doctors are doing the best they can, but they need a system in order to properly diagnose and treat patients. What is the Department of Health's contingency plan for potential lawsuits rising from patients whose diseases were left unchecked or from families whose loved ones have died from a lack of electronic health records? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raises one of the concerns that has driven us to look at this important issue and that is the fact that a lot of our information systems, when it comes to patients and medical records, are on paper and don't often travel with the patient. As a Minister, I have listened to a legion of issues that result mainly from poor information, lack of follow-up, missed appointments, information not following the patients. So if an individual or their family or their estate chooses to launch a lawsuit at this point, we would deal with that on a case-by-case basis. Very clearly we recognize the need to do the improvements to get the system updated and that's what we intend to do through these terms of reference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Minister and his department are doing work in this area because I think it's vital to our health care system. I think I heard the Minister say he is prepared to put in the resources necessary to do this. I would like the Minister to commit to providing both the financial and human resources necessary to implement an electronic health records system in all health and social services authorities in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have had money in the business plan, in the budget that just came through. We will continue to put and add in money for this particular initiative in the business planning process and we will proceed with the work as it's laid out. We will hopefully be given the funds necessary to implement this system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the Minister mention as well that they will be trying to

access federal dollars to implement this system and get it going across the NWT. I was wondering if the Minister could inform the House if he's aware of the Canada Health Info A(sic) program and the millions of dollars that are committed for the purpose of providing electronic health records across Canada? Is that the program the Minister is talking about trying to get health care dollars from the federal government? Is he aware of that program? Is that where the money is coming from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 212-14(6): Electronic Health Records System**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is one external source. We, as well, want to look at the details when the federal government actually tells us how they want to put the money they've promised into the system. Mr. Romanow noted a concern for this. So we are going to take advantage of existing funds. As well, we are going to try to access whatever new funds may become available and make our case as a territory for need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Premier. They are in relation to a topic that's already been talked about and that is the development coming up, especially in light of the recent pipeline news. At least one national newspaper has declared that the Mackenzie Delta is the winner of the pipeline race. That may be so. I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to see that this rather uncomfortable couple of years that we were going through with our neighbour to the west is over now and we are engaged in collaboration and cooperation as the Premier said the other day. The Premier has indicated he's on his way to the Yukon by the end of the month to work on a new agreement. I wanted to ask, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier could outline for us what are the main elements of cooperation and collaboration in this renewed relation with the Yukon? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the day after the Premier of the Yukon was elected, he contacted our office and asked to speak to me. We had our conversation. It was an expression of interest to take a positive approach to working with the Northwest Territories to seek out those things that we have in common, the things we all need and to find ways in which we can work cooperatively in partnership. I agreed with that. We met a few days later in Calgary and had a longer conversation about that. On Thursday morning, I will be travelling to Whitehorse to sign a memorandum with Premier Fentie to meet with the Premier and his colleagues and the caucus there, as well as with the Yukon aboriginal leadership in an attempt to show the serious manner

in which we see this new development and to build on it. So, in short, Mr. Speaker, the intent is to sign a memorandum that will say we have differences, we set those aside, we have common interests, common goals, and those are the ones that we are going to work on together and we will begin that relationship commonly through signing. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In relation to the pipeline, there is certainly a lot of common ground there and collaboration that we could go on. In fact, the Mackenzie Delta, I think, has already got quite a number of business relationships and linkages with business in the Yukon. Should we be expecting or anticipating that there may be some preferential agreements or advantages that we would be offering the Yukon as construction of a pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley becomes more of a reality?

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

**Further Return To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some of the common issues that we have immediately are, of course, to see the upcoming proposal to build the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline as a positive development for both territories and to agree to find ways in which we can all benefit from that project as it is developed and is filed with the National Energy Board and to see how that can fit into the planning of bringing natural gas out of the Yukon through the northern end onto that project.

As well, we have the Porcupine caribou herd, the issues of the calving grounds in Alaska and in the immediate need to continue to support the Gwich'in from Alaska, from the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in their continued effort to protect the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd from unnecessary encroachment by oil and gas development and from many legislative initiatives by the American government.

We recently did some work together on trying to get a fair deal from Ottawa in regard to help and we will continue to collaborate on that. We know all three territories are suffering from a lack of an economic development agreement that all other jurisdictions in Canada enjoy at this time. So we will focus on that. Tourism is another issue that I think we will be having some discussions on. So those are some of the areas which we've agreed to look at and start working at together. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very comprehensive list and I'm really pleased to see those are areas that we are going to be covering and can look forward to. In regard to the pipeline, Mr. Speaker, the Premier was quoted

in recent media coverage as saying that every person in the Territories will benefit from this great project and be a partner in it. How can we anticipate that we will see the benefits of this project spreading to all residents of the NWT? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is our intent to keep working and to promote development but to also to promote the notion that every person in the Northwest Territories should benefit from development that occurs within the Northwest Territories. A list of ways in which we can benefit has been articulated in some point or another by this government, but we know that as development happens in the mining sector and also in oil and gas there is a need for many things. One is a health care system that is properly funded, a social safety network that is there for people that require it, that depend on it, that have full right to expect it to be there; to have money for the roads that bring the trucks to resupply the mines, that bring exploration companies to the areas that they want to study; to see that environmental cleanup is done so that the past environmental messes that were left in this country are cleaned up, so that people are assured that it will never happen again; to see that there is economic development money available.

There is a considerable list of requirements that we need, and in particular we need to say to the federal government time and again, that we will continue to do that and take a positive attitude and believe that, as late as it is, there is still time for the federal government to partner with us as we are starting to partner with the Yukon, to work together so that we can truly maximize all the opportunities that will be coming as more development comes. By partnering with the federal government, with neighbouring governments, we can give the confidence to our people that we are doing and will continue to do everything that we can with all governments and all parties to develop the confidence that we are ready, we can be ready and we will be ready. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Supplementary question, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, those were quite far ranging visionary answers and it's actually the kind of answer I wanted to hear. I'm trying to look beyond where the office jobs are going to go for this project and see what will really make a difference, not just next year but 10 and 20 years from now and for the next generation, Mr. Speaker. The kind of things the Premier has been outlining and my questions and others this afternoon, involve really an enormous communication job. What kind of communication strategy is the government looking at to help communicate all of these things to all people of the NWT?

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

**Further Return To Question 213-14(6): Cooperation Agreement With The Yukon**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, probably the largest and most essential part of what is required before development can truly benefit everyone in the Northwest Territories, individuals as well as governments, is the confirmation by the federal government that revenue sharing and devolution will happen on a timely basis before pipeline construction starts and that revenue sharing will contain a net fiscal benefit that will make sure that we do get properly resourced as development happens but also to help us to get a net benefit so that we can prepare for development and handle development as it happens, as well as have sufficient dollars to benefit from it on an ongoing basis.

We need that. We know the communities need the capacity, as Members have indicated, to address the issues that they have to deal with, the developers and the exploration companies that will come to make demands, and the many issues communities need to deal with. So the capacity has to be there. Again, revenue sharing for this government, for aboriginal governments, is absolutely essential. This government itself will look to the transition document that we are preparing for the next government to make sure that the limited resources that it has are properly maximized, so that everyone is assured that all options are explored and that we are making the best use of our existing dollars. The corporate planning we are doing, the transition document that we are preparing, I hope, will help address that. So the way this government is now, the way departments are, the way we run programs and services, even the way the Premier's office is resourced will be looked at. Thank you.

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

**Question 214-14(6): Bathurst Port And Road Environmental Review**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Premier of the NWT. In my Member's statement, I mentioned that in the next month, the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs will make a decision as to what type of environmental review, either a part 5 or a part 6, the Bathurst road and port project will undergo. I would like to ask the Premier what is the position of Cabinet and himself on the environmental review process. Do they support part 5 or do they support a part 6? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Mr. Speaker, I would have to take that question as notice. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Justice and it's to follow up on the questions from the Member for Deh Cho regarding the lack of funding for legal aid. Mr. Speaker, we just recently went



through the budget and the information that I know is that there has been no increase in funding for legal aid. There have been no new lawyer positions placed in there. We know the backlog of legal aid files has been increasing. So I was curious to hear what the Minister meant when he said he was doing what he can to solve this problem. What did he mean by that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Return To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are dependent upon federal funding to help deal with legal aid services issues. That funding is administered through the Department of Justice to the Legal Services Board of the NWT. That's the pretext to my answers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe those people who are on the waiting list... there are hundreds of files that are waiting to get a lawyer... I think they would expect a better answer from the Minister of Justice than to say he's just been talking to his federal counterparts. For example, we put in \$10 million for student financial assistance, even though the Government of Canada only puts in \$1 million. So why can't the Minister do his part and put some extra money in there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been informed by the Legal Services Board that it's not only a matter of funding, it's also a matter of recruiting lawyers to work within the context of family law matters. There are some problems with trying to recruit, even though we have among the highest tariffs in Canada, second highest compared to Nunavut. So the effort of the Legal Services Board continues to recruit lawyers who deal with family law matters. That is what I am trying to convey to the Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's right for the Minister to pass the buck on to the Legal Services Board either because we know the legal aid lawyers don't even get half of what other lawyers would get in town. It is still again about money. What has the Minister done to put extra money into the pot? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our survey, we are finding that we believe there is sufficient funding to maintain the status quo. If demand increases, we will continue to look at that as a priority question. Again, as long as we are having some problems or the Legal Services Board is having some problems recruiting family law lawyers, then certainly we will continue to communicate with them from that perspective. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what survey he is looking at. Does that survey include the Members' statements and the Members' questions from this House that suggest there are hundreds and hundreds of people on the waiting list and that the Minister has to take action on it? What actions has he taken as the Minister of Justice to address the problem with the lack of funding for legal aid? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 215-14(6): Shortage Of Legal Aid Resources**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were a number of questions raised in the last six months. I met personally with the federal Minister of Justice, Martin Cauchon, here in October. We had recognized him in the gallery. We had gone down to Calgary and legal aid was one of the major topics. It's a problem nationally. We have consulted and communicated with the Legal Services Board and its current chairman. We have acknowledged the problems. I stated that in this House. We acknowledge there are some national problems with the level of funding in the provinces and territories. There's not an easy solution and I am prepared to try to find the solution. Again, it's done in concert with my provincial and territorial colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I would like to ask him about the recent Health Canada announcement. I think it was March 6<sup>th</sup>, at least that's what their Web site indicates, Mr. Speaker. The announcement was in relation to the primary health care transition fund and the Yukon receiving \$4.5 million. I know we were slated about that amount. I think it was something like \$4.7 million, but I know we haven't seen a cheque. I wonder if the Minister could update us and indicate why other provinces seem to be getting money and we are not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are still eligible for \$4.7 million. This is a four-year program. We have done all the work like every other jurisdiction and the federal government, as my colleague pointed out, has yet to cut the cheque. There was talk of wanting to do an announcement with the federal government about all the good things this primary health care transition fund is going to do, but we've declined until they actually show us the money. We have groups and projects all set to go, but no money. I think we are the same as every other jurisdiction. They know what they are going to get, they know what the projects are. The program is there, but for some reason the federal government has moved at a glacial pace on initiating this program.

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

**Supplementary To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think glacial is an understatement. I think the money was announced in September of 2000 and as the Minister indicated, this is four years worth of money available, but time is running out on us. If we don't get this money...I am curious to know that. Maybe the Minister can speak to that. What happens if we don't have this funding approved before the drop dead date? Do we lose the money? Does it simply get rolled over to us in some other capacity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's our hope the money will be soon forthcoming so that we can be ready to go. At this point at least, like every other jurisdiction, we are basically docked and loaded, as they say, and ready to go on the initiatives. The last thing we want to do is engage in another debate with the federal government as they proclaim the same new money over and over again because they have yet to disburse the money they already committed to years ago to the provinces and territories. So we would like to be up and running as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Minister's assessment, was our signing of the 2003 health care renewal accord critical and was this money contingent on our signing that? We know Romanow recommended, when the federal government is going to dole out health money, that there be certain criteria and certain strings attached so they know how the money is being spent. Is our getting this money contingent on the signing of the accord? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue of the accord, I think it's more contingent upon Health Canada getting its act together so that they could not only follow the form of the announcement, but give us the substance of the money so we can do the work.

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

**Supplementary To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have seen how our government proposes to spend the \$4.7 million, should we ever get it. I wonder, was it thought that we would have to spend the \$4.7 million first and be reimbursed by the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 216-14(6): Primary Health Care Transition Fund**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was not an option for us as it wasn't an option for most jurisdictions to upfront the money for the federal government. The plan for us has been to work with the government, sign contribution agreements, and get ready as they indicated they wanted us to. The big problem was they never came across with cold, hard cash. So now we are in a position a year later of trying to move on this. We have already put \$26 million of new dollars into our Health and Social Services budget. We don't have the capacity to fund federal government initiatives that they announce to a lot of fanfare and then don't deliver on.

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

**Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier again a question about capacity building. We've heard the arguments on both sides about how we have to build capacity in the NWT to take on oil and gas activity. Is there anything in the works concerning the transfer of certain responsibilities that may be presently in the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development such as oil and gas specialists to where the activity is taking place?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The chair wasn't clear to whom you were directing the question. Mr. Handley?

**MR. KRUTKO:** Minister of the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

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

**Return To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the question related to services and so on that are in RWED. It's not in my portfolio. I don't know if there is anything that is being considered for transfer in order to build capacity. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has been pounding on the federal government's doors for more money to build capacity to deal with development. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the FMBS, have we received any assurances from the federal government that we will be seeing dollars to assist residents of the NWT and this government to build that capacity?

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

**Further Return To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, no, we haven't received any assurances from the federal government for any additional money other than the funds we currently receive through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and other programs, but there is no additional money that's been committed by the federal government to us for building capacity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have developed a report, we have a non-renewable resource strategy, we've had the infrastructure strategy, we've put a lot of money and resources into all these strategies. I would like to ask the Minister, in those strategies there were certain provisions for dollars not only to help us build infrastructure, but also to help us get the resources to build that capacity. Have we heard anything back regarding those reports we submitted to the federal government to assist this government to build that capacity?

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

**Further Return To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while the federal government appears to be sympathetic to our needs to build capacity, we have not received any positive response in the sense of financial contribution to help build capacity for either our government or to us to help aboriginal governments to build their capacity. We have, Mr. Speaker, spent a fair bit of our own money to build this capacity particularly with the maximizing northern employment initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister thought of any other endeavours or ideas we could put forth? I know during the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the previous Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd, made reference to look at taxing resources so we can get money out of those resource developments, so that when they do take place we can get some revenue back. So has the Minister looked at alternatives such as taxing the resource development that is taking place in the NWT?

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

**Further Return To Question 217-14(6): Capacity For Oil And Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that over the last three-and-a-half years, I have thought of every possibility for us to be able to generate more revenue to invest back in our people. That includes some of the initiatives that we tried ourselves, whether it's charging the resource industries for a toll on highways, for example. We've looked at that. We have looked at various other ways. A minerals tax, an oil and gas tax, those things have also been considered and are continuing to be considered. We've looked at payroll tax. There are many options, so we have not only looked to the federal government. We've tried everything ourselves to find ways to generate more revenue to build the capacity of our people to be able to take on the jobs and opportunities that come our way. There is a whole host of things we've been looking at and continue to look at. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period is over. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. Item 10, petitions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**ITEM 10: PETITIONS****Petition 3-14(6): Rental Rates And Affordable Housing In The NWT**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of affordable rental housing. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 27 signatures of Yellowknife residents and, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Government of the Northwest Territories create effective ways for tenants and landlords to resolve disputes over excessive rent increases. Further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories work with developers to enable construction of affordable rental housing units for the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS****Tabled Document 45-14(6): GNWT 2001-2002 Results Report**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Towards Improved Accountability: GNWT Results Report 2001-2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Tabled Document 46-13(6): GNWT Response To The Social Agenda: Progress Report March 2003**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table Progress Report March 2003, Doing our Part: The GNWT Response to the Social Agenda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION****Motion 11-14(6): Extended Adjournment of the House to June 4, 2003**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 13, 2003, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, March 13, 2003, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, June 4, 2003; and further, that any time prior to June 4, 2003, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

**ITEM 16: MOTIONS****Motion 8-14(6): To Modify The Strategy To Harmonize Income Support And Social Housing, Carried**

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

WHEREAS the harmonization strategy fails to meet the needs of seniors and students in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the strategy penalizes seniors who are forced to take in family members when there are no other accommodations available in communities by adding the senior's pension income to the household calculations;

AND WHEREAS the complete lack of rental accommodation available in small communities is not conducive to family members moving out of a seniors' home;

AND WHEREAS the strategy continues to place the responsibility for rental remuneration with the head of the household in many cases the senior on a fixed income rather than apportioning it among working members of the household;

AND WHEREAS seniors on fixed incomes who have secured loans based on their available income will have difficulty servicing their loans due to their rent increases;

AND WHEREAS the harmonization strategy will consider student financial assistant loans as income for the purposes of calculating rent assessment in public housing;

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

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the harmonization of income support and social housing strategy be implemented in the tax-based communities only. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the debate in the House last week, a lot of Members raised concerns, some for and some against the motion of implementing the harmonization initiative. We have seen from a few of the Members on this side, we saw that some of the larger centres were for the harmonization initiative, some were against it just because there wasn't enough information out there. So we did have a vote on the motion. We have the picture that some of the urban centre MLAs want this program in place. So we figured we would accommodate them by putting a motion in place that they can't refuse. This is the motion we have come up with. I support the motion because we are going to deal with everyone and I think it's going to be fair to everyone by not implementing the smaller communities, but leaving it only for the larger centres, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Motion To Amend Motion 8-14(6), Carried**

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

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Motion 8-14(6) be amended by deleting the words "implemented in tax-based communities only" after "social housing strategy be" and substituting "deferred until no later than March 31, 2004;

AND FURTHER that a working group of regular Members and Ministers of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly be established to conduct a comprehensive review of the harmonization strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I seek a recorded vote.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Let's go one step at a time here. We have a motion to amend and that's what we will deal with first. The motion to amend is in order. We will circulate a copy of the motion. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote on this motion.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member is requesting a recorded vote. This is on the amendment. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this session of the Legislative Assembly has been dominated by this harmonization program. Those of us who have represented the smaller communities see the major impact, the negative impact, that harmonization will have on our communities and our constituents. We have been fighting in this House, explaining to our colleagues and to government the reasons why this harmonization should not go ahead. We have managed to poke holes in the harmonization program. We know our constituents have not been consulted properly. There is more work needed.

Obviously, government and a lot of Members in this Legislative Assembly believe that harmonization is something we must do in the future to encourage people to take advantage of employment. That's something that I agree with entirely. How we get there, Mr. Speaker, is important. We have to be sensitive to the fact that there are few options in the communities and fewer options in the Territories in terms of housing. Public housing clientele are going to be affected very negatively, especially those single parents, elders and students.

We are in a transition period and I believe that by establishing a working committee of Cabinet Members and Regular MLAs to go through this harmonization program in its entirety we will ensure that the sensitive factor of the confidentiality of clients of income support and public housing is addressed, that single parents will not be forced to see rent increases so drastic that their only option is to move south or get on income support. Those kinds of questions need to be asked and answered and the harmonization program should address all those things. Today it's not. I think this is a motion that will address this issue. We will go ahead with it, but we will do it responsibly. I support this amended motion. I encourage my colleagues in this House to do the same so we can do a better job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. To the amendment. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week when the first motion on harmonization came up, I stood and enumerated a number of issues I had with the harmonization initiative. I pointed out how the communication had been inadequate, how I thought the implementation was flawed because it wasn't being phased in for all of the people it would affect and it was only being phased in for seniors and students. I had challenged the government to recognize that it needed to be changed so that it wasn't a program that had to be only cost-neutral. I think that's at the heart of what the problem is. If we insist that the program be cost-neutral right off the bat, you can't phase in everybody. It's not right to expect people to make dramatic changes or deal with dramatic changes in their rent all at once.

So I think that in theory the issue of harmonization is a good way to go. I think we should treat people the same whether they are single parents or seniors if they are in need. I think we have to find some way to make sure that the kids who live in single parent families have the support that our society thinks is necessary to give them, just as we think it's necessary to support seniors. I don't think we can do that if we have to have a system that's cost-neutral.

So in spite of my concerns, I thought I had gotten a signal from Cabinet that they were going to announce some changes to the program in how it was going to be brought forward and implemented. So at the time, I didn't support the motion to defer. However, Mr. Speaker, not having heard anything from Cabinet that has dramatically changed the manner of implementation, I will at this time be supporting this amendment and then the amended motion if this amendment passes because I agree that the implementation needs to have some examination. It needs to be brought forward in a manner that is reasonable and fair to all of our constituents. So, Mr. Speaker, with that I just wanted to say that I would encourage all Members to support this amendment.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the amendment.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. A request for a recorded vote has been made. All those in favour?

**Recorded Vote**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. McLeod, Mr. Bell, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Braden, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Roland, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those opposed?

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Delorey.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those abstaining?

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Steen, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Those in favour, 10; those opposed, one; those abstaining, six. The motion to amend is carried.

---Carried

To the motion, as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS****Bill 14: An Act To Amend The Public Service Act, Carried**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We have a motion 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

Bill 14 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, Bill 4, Bill 9, Bill 11, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6), 6-14(6), 8-14(6), 9-14(6), Motion 10-14(6), Minister's Statement 28-14(6), tabled documents 26-14(6), 31-14(6) and 41-14(6), and with the authority given the Speaker by Motion 4-14(6), the Committee of the Whole is authorized to sit beyond the time of adjournment until a committee is prepared to report, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have several items to deal with: Bill 3, Bill 4, Bill 9, Bill 11, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6), 6-14(6), 8-14(6), 9-14(6), Motion 10-14(6), Minister's Statement 28-14(6), tabled documents 26-14(6), 31-14(6), 41-14(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee continue consideration of Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), and 5-14(6) concurrently to first of all examine the estimates for the Department of Public Works and Services, followed by the NWT Housing Corporation and then the Legislative Assembly.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** At this time, I would like to recognize in the visitors' gallery, Monica Ayha, a constituent of the Member for North Slave. I would like to welcome you to the House.

---Applause

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we will take a 15-minute break.

---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. Prior to the adjournment, we agreed to continue on with the consideration of Public Works. I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services if he would be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to bring in witnesses.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Does the committee agree the Minister brings in his witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

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

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

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

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**Detail****Directorate**

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We are on page 5-9, directorate, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I notice under the activity description that records management for the Government of the NWT is handled by the directorate. Over the years, I have been approached by local businesspeople in Yellowknife who have suggested that the GNWT could save a considerable amount of money on warehouse space by handling their records management through microfiche or other methods of putting documents into a smaller space, electronic and film. Has the department made any moves at all in this or will we keep storing paper for the foreseeable future?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will ask my deputy to respond.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, as a records management group, we have been looking at different approaches to storing records. Our priority, though, at the current time, is to manage the paper records that we presently have and ensure that we have systems in place to adequately track and retrieve those records. There are a number of initiatives that we will be doing over the next little while with other departments to look at such

things as document imaging systems. That's part of a plan that the Informatics Policy Committee has been looking into. We are not currently hard-pressed in terms of storage space for paper documents. Consequently there is not a sense of urgency towards identifying those alternative storage mediums. Eventually that will be an issue.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If space isn't an issue, I am sure that it would be easier to retrieve information if it was stored differently than it is now, in boxes and filed away in a warehouse. Is there any interest in moving towards a modern day records management system, or is this one that is seen as being an issue where the cost really doesn't justify the effort of changing the records management systems we have now?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the member noted that cost is a consideration and certainly document imaging systems and trying to move everything over to electronic format, for example, would be an extremely expensive exercise. There are certain documents, however, where that seems to be a requirement and I expect that what we will find is we are moving step by step towards more of those systems rather than trying to convert everything over wholesale. My guess is we will find some particular applications for new storage mediums and we will move into those first.

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

**MR. DENT:** I take it then that one of the approaches might be that we will start with new documents coming into long-term storage, looking at archiving them by different methods. Is that what I am hearing? Is that one of the ways which we are going to move? If we are not looking at a wholesale conversion of what we have on file right now, are we looking at making the move starting with new documents coming into the system? Are we also then working to make sure that whatever system is adopted is a common one across the government so that we don't wind up with each department having an incompatible method of storing documents? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, in response to the first question, it's likely that what we will do is identify subject areas where there is a requirement for ongoing retrieval of those documents on a regular and recurring basis. Many of the documents that go out to the records centre are not required on a regular basis, consequently the ability to access them through an electronic system is not as great. So rather than converting all new documents over, my guess is that in the future what we will be doing is identifying blocks of documents, particular types of documents and using a document imaging system for those. For example, the FMBS, when it was dealing with the pay equity dispute, had a large volume of records that were put onto a specific document imaging system, so they could be retrieved during the court proceedings that took place with respect to that issue. They required regular, recurring access to those documents and an electronic system provided that to them. That kind of access isn't normally required for a lot of our documents.

In terms of whether or not we will be doing this as a coordinated-across-government approach, the intention is, yes, we will do that as a coordinated-across-government approach. However, in our preliminary look at it, it does appear that different types of documents require different types of document imaging systems. One single system may not suffice for everything.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** At this time, I would like to recognize Mr. Joe Auge up in the visitors' gallery. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Directorate, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7.525 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Asset Management

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Asset management, operations expense, total operations expense, Mr. Roland.

#### Committee Motion 9-14(6) To Suspend Increases To Administration Fees For Water And Sewer Maintenance, Carried

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the committee in its report has a committee motion to move. I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Public Works and Services immediately suspend all proposed increases to administration fees charged to communities for water/sewer maintenance services until such time as the government has a consistent process of charging administration fees for work provided on behalf of others. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Asset management, operations expense, total operations expense, \$35.105 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Asset management, grants and contributions, grants, \$260,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Contributions, total grants and contributions, \$289,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total grants and contributions, \$549,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Systems And Communications

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 5-15, systems and communications, operations expense, total operations expense, \$839,000.

#### Committee Motion 10-14(6) To Extend The Three-Year Replacement Cycle For Desktop Computers, Carried

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, I have a committee motion. I move that this committee recommend that the government extend the current three-year replacement cycle for desktop computers wherever possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Systems and communications, operations expense, total operations expense, \$839,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Petroleum Products

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Petroleum products, operations expense, total operations expense, \$749,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Infrastructure, another information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Systems and communications, active positions, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Public stores revolving fund, another information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

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

**MR. DENT:** Are we on page 5-23 right now, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 5-23, yes. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one of the lines here at the top of the page says that operating expenses are recovered through the price structure to achieve a break-even operation. I was wondering if I could ask the Minister if that is the case? Does the petroleum products revolving fund actually break even?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, may I redirect the question to Mr. Aumond.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intent of the petroleum products revolving fund is to break even after a year's worth of operations and, as evident by the sheet in front, we've been unable to achieve that objective. I might add that's why we have the stabilization fund which is to make up for any losses or surpluses of the fund on a year over year basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intent is to break even after a year's operation, but how often are prices moved in relation to what the purchase is? If the government purchases oil at one price, if the price is higher than what it was say two months ago, is the price that we sell the fuel at raised to reflect the new purchase price or do we maintain the same price for perhaps longer than a year at a time?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Every year after either the winter road resupply or the summer barge resupply, we take an accounting of what our costs are for those shipments and look at our cost versus the previous year. If it is higher, what we do is we advise the Financial Management Board of that and the Financial Management Board will then make a decision upon whether to raise prices or not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have prices been raised to match the increased cost over the last four years, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Director of petroleum products.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, in the last four years, the price of petroleum products charged to communities has gone up 26 cents a litre across the board.



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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Even with that, our purchase price must have gone up more because looking at the budget books, it appears we are expected to have a \$230 million deficit in the stabilization fund for this current year and we are projecting a \$92 million deficit...Sorry, \$92,000. It's \$230,000 and \$92,000 rather than millions. Excuse me, it's not quite as bad as it first sounded. I guess my question comes back to, if we are showing deficits here, why do we say we are trying to have a break-even operation? If the price of fuel in the smallest communities is so high that we need to subsidize someone, and I am assuming that's where we are delivering these products, then that should be part of the thing we look at through the budget process as well. I think Members expect, this being an essential service, that there may be grounds for a subsidy and I think it should be presented as that and not presented to us as a break even if it's not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a good point the Member raises and we will take that under advisement for future years.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Petroleum products revolving fund, information item. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up on Mr. Dent's line of questioning. The assumption is that we want to try to recover the cost of the product from the user, but the numbers are showing that we're not. Under what policy or mandate or legislation does the petroleum products fund collect money? What drives pricing policy? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** I will ask the deputy minister to respond.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, they actually come into play under the Revolving Fund Act. The petroleum product revolving fund is mentioned in that act. With respect to pricing policy, the policy is dictated by the fact that we break even. When we are not able to break even or we make a profit, the stabilization fund is put in place that allows for those kinds of calculations. There is a limit on the fund of \$5 million that we can't exceed, but within that we can have variations on a year-by-year basis. In fact, the variations have been deficits for the last number of years although, given the size of the overall program, they've been quite close to a break-even point.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** The point that Mr. Rattray mentioned, that when the pricing can't break even then the stabilization fund kicks in, that's the point I am looking at. If the fund or if the pricing can't break even, what kind of problem or barrier or difficulty does the department have in making sure that it breaks even? Is there something that's lacking or is there a gap in our policy that says we can't break even? That's what I am trying to dig at here in this pricing policy.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, I am not completely sure I followed the Member's question, but what we do on an annual basis is we try to project what our expenses and our revenue will be for it and we try to match the two. There will be some variations on a year-by-year basis because it's not possible to predict accurately what will be the actual volume of fuel that we are going to be consuming. We are not able to predict what the cost of the fuel is going to be. We set our prices with the FMB's approval on the basis of the most recent resupply that we've undergone and our most recent projections of costs and revenues. At the end of the year, we may be a little bit above or a little bit below there and we've actually been fairly close over the last few years. Where we miss slightly, it becomes accrued debt in the stabilization fund. Then it becomes an issue of how we deal with that accrued debt. That's an issue that we deal with the Financial Management Board on.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate Mr. Rattray's answer to my rather fuzzy question. I will see if I can be a bit more precise. According to the information before us, Mr. Chairman, we are anticipating a closing balance after the coming fiscal year, a deficit of \$4.5million. We have a limit of \$5 million. What then are the options for restoring or balancing the fund? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the options are limited. We have the option of recommending to FMBS an increase in petroleum products, which could see a reduction in the deficit over a year or a number of years or like we've undertaken is we recommended to FMBS that we write off the \$4.5 million deficit and start new. One of the problems we are experiencing, and this probably was expected, we don't have the same economies of scale we had before division. That's playing a major part in our ability to break even. We also have to keep in mind that this is an essential service and we have to keep the product affordable in the communities, otherwise we may have a serious problem.

Right now, there is no doubt that, even though we may have the same priced product this year as we had last year, obviously that's not going to be the case if the price of petroleum products keeps increasing. So it will probably be reflected in the summer barge product and in the winter road product next year. The only way to address that would have been to increase the cost to the communities to break even.

There is another aspect of this. The \$4.5 million is applicable to all the communities that were on the system at the time of division, for instance. Since then there are some communities that are off the system. Therefore, other communities would be paying for something that may have been looked at as the deficit applicable to a different community. That's one of the reasons why we recommended to FMBS that we just write off the \$4.5 million because it's money spent. Nobody really owes us this money, it's just money spent. The only way you can say somebody owes you is if we try to make it apply to all our customers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** I guess we are getting into an area that is before committee and another bill, Mr. Chairman. There is, in

fact, an item in the supplementary about writing this off and we should be taking that up at that time. What I wanted to do in this discussion is try to find out more about the policy approach that we have. It seems where we want to make sure petroleum products are still available, as the Minister says, it's an essential service and I don't want to see any community restricted in its ability to get a fuel product when it needs it. However, if there are going to be these kind of financial supports or backups to communities, it's something I would like to see better supported in policy and approach so we all have a sense of how this is managed and what we have to anticipate in it.

I understand the government already carries the cost of the tankage, the liability and the management of the infrastructure in communities. None of that cost is passed on to the consumer. We are only trying to collect the cost of the product. In a year, we are seeing over time we've amassed a deficit of \$4.5 million over 15 communities. We just don't have much of a base for it. I am not going to carry on the discussion on this page anymore, Mr. Chairman, other than to anticipate the discussion we are going to have under the supp. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the Member that we should have a policy to guide us. Right now, the policy that Public Works follows is, when we have a need for a price change, we inform FMBS which is the only practice we have been using up to now. FMBS decides whether we have a price increase or not. A policy would definitely give better transparency to the whole thing.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** At this time, I would like to ask the Member for Thebacha if he can remove his gum. We are not allowed to bring any food or anything into the House. We are only allowed to have water to drink, so can you remove your gum at this time? Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell us in the areas of the petroleum product revolving fund, the communities that are currently using this service and which communities are getting into the red and which ones stay in the black so we can have an understanding of where the cost factors are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have that information. I will ask Mr. Aumond to read off the information.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I could read off the names of the communities by product, if the Member wishes. Would he like all products or was there one specifically he was looking for? We have six or seven different products. I could read them all if he wishes, but maybe he's only looking for a couple.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deficit we are facing in this area, it deals with all products so let's just stick with that area for now.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can read them off or we could provide copies.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Mr. Chairman, just for the record, maybe he could read them off or just stick with diesel and gas. Those are the two most utilized gas products in the communities that I represent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will do the P50 heating and the gasoline. This is a subsidy that just would reflect the operations of PPD. It wouldn't reflect any capital infrastructure.

In Lutselk'e, Mr. Chairman, for gasoline, we are providing a subsidy of 11.9 cents a litre and for P50 heating, there's a positive subsidy of 2.94 cents a litre. In Wha Ti, we have a positive subsidy of 1.78 cents a litre for gasoline and 14.56 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Rae Lakes, we have a subsidy of 2.6 cents a litre in gasoline and 10.72 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Snare Lakes, we have a positive subsidy of 2.32 cents a litre in gasoline and a subsidy of 17.66 cents a litre in heating fuel. Correction, Mr. Chairman, in Snare Lakes we have a subsidy of 15.64 cents a litre in gasoline. In Jean Marie River, we have a positive subsidy of 2.32 cents a litre in gasoline and a positive subsidy of 3.74 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Nahanni Butte, we have a subsidy of 5.04 cents a litre in gasoline and we have a positive subsidy of .86 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Trout Lake, we have a subsidy of 4.03 cents a litre in gasoline and a subsidy of 6.71 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Fort Good Hope, we have a subsidy of 13.65 cents a litre for gasoline and .94 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Tulita we have a subsidy of 6.53 cents a litre in gasoline and a positive subsidy of 10.22 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Deline, we have a 5.48 cents a litre subsidy in gasoline and a subsidy in heating fuel of 14.49 cents a litre. In Colville Lake, we have a subsidy in gasoline of 24.98 cents a litre and in heating fuel of 11.45 cents a litre. In Tsiigehtchic, we have a subsidy provided for gasoline of 18.37 cents a litre and a 10.66 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Sachs Harbour, we have a subsidy in gasoline of 26.49 cents a litre and 9.11 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Paulatuk, we have a subsidy in gasoline of 17.33 cents a litre and 10.65 cents a litre in heating fuel. In Holman, we have a subsidy for gasoline of 17.07 cents a litre and for heating fuel it's 5.01 cents a litre. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if we could get an explanation of the difference of a positive subsidy and a straight across subsidy.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A positive subsidy is the amount of money, the price over and above the total cost to deliver the product, so it would be like a profit.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, so in layman's terms that means that some communities are subsidizing other communities so the petroleum products division can provide subsidized delivery of petroleum products in the communities mentioned. Is that correct, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess that could be an assumption somebody could make but there is really only one community that doesn't have any product subsidized out of the 15. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Mr. Chairman, I'd ask which community but that is not important. I'm wondering, Mr. Chairman, if these numbers are consistent in the last few years. The reason I ask is that maybe it's time the government got out of the petroleum products division and addressed the need for essential services in another way. FMBS could work with these communities so that a business could be established there, recognizing the consistent nature of the subsidies over time and addressing those needs directly from the Financial Management Board perspective, eliminating the need for the petroleum products division entirely from the government. Has the government or the Minister ever considered doing something of that nature? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, we have over the years, on a number of occasions looked at the opportunities for privatization of the petroleum products division. We've also looked at the opportunities forthcoming with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. None of these have proven to be viable options. From the analysis that has been done, all would anticipate some increase in the cost over and above what the petroleum products division incurs.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister or deputy minister ever considered my suggestion about getting rid of PPD, recognizing the numbers of subsidies that the government has had to provide? If we could get out of the cost of administration, the cost of delivering, the cost of purchasing, etcetera, etcetera, we would see some savings. We could just provide subsidies to set up organizations or private companies in each of these communities to deliver a few products and services, and just provide them with subsidies, recognizing that there is an extra cost and that we do recognize that this is an essential service, a service that could be delivered by an entrepreneur in the community without assistance from the government through subsidies, not through physically delivering the service in the community. Has that ever been considered by the government? Thank you.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the earlier privatization studies considered the option of smaller firms undertaking to deliver the services in communities and arguing against that is the loss of any kind of economies of scale, in terms of doing the various tasks. As the Member realizes, somebody still has to go out and purchase the fuel. Somebody has to ensure that the quality is maintained. Somebody has to deliver it in the communities. All of those things still need to be done, so there will still be costs incurred by all of that. Added on top of those costs is the higher cost of doing it as a very, very small operation rather than as the larger operation that we are currently managing. So all of the analysis that we've done so far indicates that, yes, you could do it that way but it would be more expensive and the cost would either be carried over to the government if it wished to increase the level of subsidy it provided or would be carried over to the consumers who would be paying more at the pump or for fuel delivered to their homes.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I imagine that there will be a measured cost but by going down this road, we will consistently see an increase because the fuel prices will consistently go up. What I am saying is, we're not giving the communities an option. We're not giving the communities an opportunity for a business to be created in those communities. We are hanging onto this petroleum products division at a cost. In doing that, if we do decide to go down this road and we privatize the petroleum products division to each of the communities, all we have to do is recognize that a subsidy is required in those communities and, if we provide that subsidy through the Financial Management Board, it will eliminate the need for a petroleum products division. Public works could still provide the technical support as part of its role and responsibilities. What would be the cost savings, or the increased cost in the short term, when you eliminate PPD as a government office? Has there been a cost benefit analysis done on using those particular options? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are perhaps two points I should bring out here. One is that the department's direction from FMBS and Cabinet is that we no longer consider privatization as an initiative. However this doesn't prevent private enterprise from coming into a community and establishing themselves and selling the products as they see fit. If that was to happen, for instance if a community was to set up itself and start selling products, then we would just simply get out of the business and eventually turn our inventory over to them including the tanks, the tank farms. We've done this in the past but we don't have direction anymore from Cabinet or FMBS to go forward with the initiative for privatization unless the initiative is taken by the private sector or the community to do it on their own and then we will just get out of the business. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** At this time, I would like to warn the Member for Thebacha again that you are not allowed to be chewing gum in the House, so you are warned for the second time. Member for Thebacha, are you challenging the Chair? You have been warned. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just so long as the Minister has answered the last question there I would like to ask him, if we privatize more communities, would that drive the cost of other communities' fuel prices up, and then pretty soon one day we wouldn't be able to handle the subsidies for the communities that are still under the petroleum products division?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, definitely it would because we will have fewer communities to spread a subsidy over. In this particular case, if the number of communities is reduced then it is obvious that the rest of the communities are going to have to pay for the subsidy to keep the revolving fund from going over its capacity. Thank you.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you. So in other words the Minister is saying that it is not a very good idea to privatize. If we've gone that route already, then is there any way of going back so we can spread the subsidy over more communities and lower the costs? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, we've been given direction not to privatize any more on a list of our own. However, if the private sector wants to move in on a community and set themselves up and eventually build the capacity to do the thing themselves...as a matter of fact we have the example of Wrigley that has recently done this. If they have the capacity, we would just simply consider this and turn our inventory over to them. Thank you.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you. Can the Minister tell me how many communities have privatized in the last eight years?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe it's Wrigley, Fort McPherson and Tuktoyaktuk.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister give us the amount of the increase to each community because of the privatization? What's the cost? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is no increase due to that particular privatization. The only time you may see an increase would be that there would be fewer communities available to actually cut down on the revolving fund deficit amount. But there won't be any increase due to the privatization of any one particular community.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question was, because of the three communities privatizing in the past, has there been an increase in the fuel costs in the other communities?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, only if we were to have all the communities involved in writing off this \$4.5 million. What we're asking is that the \$4.5 million be written off so that we start clean. Otherwise the number of communities that are left will be seen as taking on some of the cost of supplying petroleum products in the other communities that were in fact privatized. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Petroleum products revolving fund, information item. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to continue the line of questioning that I had going with the rapport I had going with the Minister and his staff. Mr. Chairman, the Minister has indicated a political position taken by this government that there's not going to be any more privatization unless an organization, or a community organization or an entrepreneur in a community starts a business alongside with what the government is providing so far. I'd like to ask the Minister if that happens -- and we know it happened in other communities -- would the government and the Minister consider the current subsidization of the delivery of those fuel products to any of the communities mentioned by Mr. Aumond, so that there is some kind of competitiveness from the entrepreneurs and the government does not have all the advantages at the beginning of any kind of competition there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I'll ask my deputy to respond to that.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, we could raise that point with the Financial Management Board but, to date, no, we haven't considered providing a subsidy to communities that have a private sector company delivering the service.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, so I'm assuming that... Let's take Lutselk'e for an example. For a long time individuals and organizations within the community wanted to take on the responsibility of a private venture. If these organizations decide to go after this product for service delivery in a private business, the government then realizes all of a sudden we'll get out of this competition, you guys don't need any more subsidies. Is it only if we operate that you need a subsidy? Is that what the government is saying? That only when the GNWT is operating are subsidies required and, if it's a private organization, there are no subsidies required? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the member's concern and suggestion is in fact being considered in the broader sense of the government's overall consideration of subsidization of different types of activities. For instance, there is a suggestion that at one point we could charge every community what it costs us to deliver the product. Then those people who need assistance would go either to Health and Social Services or Wildlife or whoever to obtain a subsidy from them, rather than us doing it this way. However, it has not gone any further than just the discussion stage at this time. If there is someone willing to set up and there is a subsidy involved, there's no doubt that the person would have to charge the delivered landed cost to break even, never mind make a profit. No doubt, it's going to be very expensive for the communities then. There would then be some form of request to the government that we subsidize.

One of the reasons we were considering something like this is because, in some communities, we started realizing that some of the industrial activities that were taking place in the range of the communities, we were in fact subsidizing them by allowing them to buy gas at our prices rather than bring it in themselves. So we did take that into consideration. But it hasn't gone anywhere right now. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm not too worried about those discussions. They happen all the time within government. It sounds like a piecemeal and administrative nightmare to me, just in what the Minister is talking about. But currently, is it a practice of government that if they are in business in any community and there's another private entrepreneur that wants to start a business, that they'll get out and they'll take their subsidies with them. Is that what the Minister is saying?

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

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

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if that's correct, then this government is discouraging entrepreneurship by using the fact that it does cost more to deliver certain services in certain geographical locations, and only if government is the one that's delivering that service will this government subsidize or recognize the need for subsidies in this area. What I'm trying to suggest is an opportunity for the government to get out of the delivery of this program and service by recognizing that there are people in these communities that could do the job just as well as they can, and that they should get the same kind of treatment that government gets when government delivers these products and services in the community.

All I'm saying is we have an opportunity here to save nearly \$1 million in salaries alone in this division. With 11 people averaging \$100,000 a salary, with benefits and all, factoring in the costs for renting office space, etcetera, etcetera, there are some savings that could be had here. Capacity could be developed in communities, only if government in this area wants to get out of business, and recognizes that there is a subsidy requirement. Who knows? Once you agree on a

subsidy per year and the cost goes up, the individuals in these communities could raise their prices and they'd take the political heat, not the government. There's a possibility of that happening. If the fuel price goes down, they could drop the prices and get the benefits rather than government. I'm just suggesting a different way of delivering this program, a suggestion that might save this government a lot of money and a lot of headaches, and develop capacity in communities. That's just a suggestion, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I look at this as a whole new approach. You know, the department is open for a proposal of this nature and we would take it to FMBS for consideration. We can't make the decisions on our own; however, we could make recommendations as to whether there are benefits involved. This is the new approach to the whole subsidization program involved with petroleum products. So I'm prepared, if somebody can come forward with a proposal like that, to move it up. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question also concerns the petroleum products division. Right now the last community that was privatized was Tuktoyaktuk. Now I've seen some correspondence indicating that they want to buy some of the assets, such as the tank farm that's in Tuktoyaktuk. I'd like to ask the Minister what is the selling price of that asset? Have we done an audit to see exactly what the cost of that asset is, or are we looking at the area of liabilities? Is there also a liability that's associated with selling off a tank farm, and what's the book value of that asset?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the agreement we had with Gruben's Transport was that at a certain time after we were involved with privatization, they would then have the opportunity to purchase those tank farms that Public Works has. That was to come up next year. However, they approached us recently to purchase the tanks for a nominal fee and, in return, they would take responsibility for all the environmental liabilities related to that tank farm. We estimated, I believe it was in the \$500,000 range of liabilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, right now the government has reviewed the assets of this government, and a tank farm is an asset. It has a value to it. There was a cost associated with constructing this asset. There's a cost associated with carrying that asset on our books. I'd like to ask the Minister again what is the appraised price of this tank farm? You said it's for a nominal fee of \$500,000, so I'd like to know what is the actual price to replace such a tank farm and what's the value of that asset?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask Mr. Aumond if he has that information.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. PPD is right now actually getting a professional appraisal done of that facility and we're awaiting the report from the firm that is undertaking the appraisal. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister mentioned that there was a nominal fee offered by Gruben's Transport. Could you give us the amount of that fee? What's the offer that's being made to take over that tank farm?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, \$1.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Very interesting, Mr. Chairman. Right now you have a tank farm sitting in Fort McPherson that they've been trying to negotiate with this government to try to privatize and try to negotiate with your department to take over that petroleum product. Also there was a question about the fuel product in your tank. It seems like we've gotten quite the runaround from your department. But it's amazing, in Tuktoyaktuk you're able to hand over the last privatization of petroleum products in the Northwest Territories which was in Tuktoyaktuk, and all of a sudden we find out you're willing to sell the tank farm for \$1. I'd just like to know is there some sort of a practice that goes on here where you treat one community differently over another community? There's a tank farm sitting in Fort McPherson which is an asset of this government, which is also an environmental liability to this government to clean it up. So I'd like to ask the Minister, will you offer a similar arrangement to the community of Fort McPherson for \$1, that if they take over the tank farm that you'll offer it to them for \$1, no questions asked?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the reason that Public Works and Services recommended to FMBS to accept the offer was they agreed to take on all the liability costs, the clean-up costs, which were estimated at \$500,000. They agreed to take on all that and to save the government in the future from any future environment costs related to that tank farm. So it's not just for \$1. It's a savings to the government of \$500,000 minimum that we would have had to spend to meet the environmental clean-up that we're estimating for that particular tank farm.

In relation to whether we do it for another community; if the community wishes to consider that or a private firm wishes to consider that, they simply have to write us a request and identify how or what the advantage is to the government to do this. This is really what happened with Gruben's. They identified that they would save us approximately \$500,000 in clean-up costs. I don't have the amortization costs of those tank farms at this time, but FMBS agreed that it was a reasonable offer and we've accepted it. So the door is open, Mr. Chairman, if some other private firm wants to do the same thing in Fort McPherson. But keep in mind that it's not just \$1. You have to take on the responsibility and take on the cost of the environmental clean-up. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe in the Auditor General's report a couple of years ago there was the question about environmental liability and a recommendation that this government should do an assessment of all these environmental liabilities. One of the areas they were looking at is in municipal infrastructure, such as the sewage lagoons and tank farms. I would like to ask the Minister, since you mentioned that there was an environmental audit or review done of the Tuktoyaktuk tank farm, how many other tank farms have we completed an environmental audit on to know what the costs of these clean-ups are elsewhere in the Northwest Territories?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, just for the record, I'm not saying there was an environmental audit done for the Tuktoyaktuk tank farm. I'm saying that that's what they offered us in relation to what they estimate would be the cost of the environmental clean-up. We agreed with that, based on the information we had. I can ask Mr. Aumond what environmental assessments we've had done on which tank farms. I believe we have some information on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have undertaken environmental assessments on all our facilities. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Well I've asked this question in committee. I'm not trying to get the department to duck the question, but I believe that we have an obligation to do environmental audits on all our assets to see what the liability to this government is. If we, as a government, are simply going to try to get out of liability by handing these liabilities over to somebody for \$1, I think there is a question about legal criteria under the FMB's policy on disposal of assets, that we are not allowed to dispose of them knowing that there is a long-term liability that may occur in the future. I would like to ask the Minister again, is that now the practice of government, that in order to get out of liabilities we simply slough them off to someone else for \$1?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'll have Mr. Aumond respond to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said earlier, we've undertaken environmental assessments of all our facilities, and even a couple of our old ones. I believe we provided the cost for each of those communities for those tank farms to the committee.

With respect to Tuktoyaktuk, the clean-up itself is estimated to be at least \$500,000 or \$600,000. I think it's worth noting that once that clean-up happens, it's going to be incumbent upon whoever undertakes that clean-up to undertake a code upgrade to the facility which, in itself, is going to be a \$1.5 million to \$2 million capital investment required on top of the clean-up. So the total cost, whether it be to the GNWT or in this case to EGT in Tuktoyaktuk, if you look at those two together you're talking about a \$2 million commitment,

minimum, after taking possession of the tank farm. It wasn't our intent simply to enter into that type of an arrangement so we could transfer the liability. We want to ensure the liability will be taken care of, and part of the discussions with EGT will try to make sure that that's undertaken. It's not just the environmental liability on its own, it's also the associated capital to upgrade that's going to be required once that happens. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Minister, did he get a legal opinion from the Department of Justice with regard to the disposal of assets and the question of liabilities?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'll have Mr. Aumond respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working with the Department of Justice on this issue very closely. They are there to make sure that whatever arrangement that we enter into -- EGT in Tuktoyaktuk, if we are able to come to an arrangement -- that it's aboveboard and it's a legal and binding agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** So I assume by that answer, you don't have a legal opinion from the Department of Justice. I'd like to ask regarding the disposal of assets of this government, there's a disposal process that it has to follow, so I'd like to ask the Minister was that tank farm offered to any other private entrepreneur who may have been interested in buying that facility? Was there a public offer made for the disposal of assets?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I believe I indicated, at the start of the agreement we had for privatization with Gruben's, there was an option for them to purchase those facilities after a certain time. We were just abiding by the agreement.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Petroleum products revolving fund. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just looking at the salaries, there seems to be a major increase in the main estimates for 2002-2003 to the tune of just about \$200,000. I'd like to ask the Minister has there been an increase in the number of people in this department since the last main estimates?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't increased the PY complement in the division at all. The increase of some \$94,000 from 2002 to 2003 is increases in the collective agreement and some salary dollars that we've had budgeted for some casual help, and its assistance to help us through summer barge resupplies.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** In regard to the cost of goods sold, it seems that there's been an increase in the amount of sales of fuel products. Is that because the communities that are no longer involved in selling petroleum products out of the communities, in which it's only the smaller communities where these sales are taking place? Could you explain why there's such a drastic decrease in goods sold?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct. The main reason for a decrease in the cost of goods sold is that we're selling less fuel due to servicing a couple fewer communities in comparison to the prior year, and we're also selling less fuel, probably due to a milder winter than what we've experienced the last couple years and the previous ones. Those are the two main reasons for the decrease in the cost of goods sold. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a pretty drastic decrease with regards to your sales. It's almost \$1 million. That's a major decrease, considering what your previous estimates were. I'd just like to ask again, do you have a breakdown or listing of where those sales are taking place? In which communities are you seeing an increase in sales and in which communities are you seeing a decrease in sales?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the member to clarify. Is he talking about cost of goods sold or sales?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I'm talking about your sales. Have you seen an increase or decrease in sales, and in which communities have you seen an increase and in which communities have you seen a decrease in sales?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** I don't have that information here with me, but generally, across the board, we are selling less fuel in all our communities, with the exception of maybe a couple like Wha Ti, for example. That jumps out as a community where we're actually selling more fuel. But generally across the board, we're selling less fuel in every community.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you. In earlier discussions, the Minister mentioned that we are subsidizing some businesses in the oil and gas and mining sectors because they are purchasing fuel and gas, et cetera, from a particular community where petroleum products are being distributed. So I'm trying to see if there's a correlation between his statement that we're subsidizing the oil and gas and mining industry where the petroleum products are being sold. Do we have any way of tracking that, to show that there has been an increase of development in a particular community?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Where we may end up subsidizing the oil and gas industry, if indeed we are, would be through local contractors. We have been approached by oil and gas players up and down the valley on a few occasions, and we've made arrangements where we have provided them with fuel at a cost which we incur no loss on that sale. We can provide information on that, and we can provide information of what the sales are in each community on each product. That's not a problem either. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I just have another question regarding the sale of the different tank farms. As we know, there is fuel in the tank farm in Fort McPherson. I'd like to know, in regard to selling off the tank farm in Tuktoyaktuk, does that also include fuel products in the tank?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The fuel that was in the tanks in Tuktoyaktuk that the government had was sold to EGT back in 2000 when they took over providing those services in the community. EGT now uses that tank farm -- or they lease it from us -- and they buy their own fuel and put it in there. So the only thing we're talking about selling is the infrastructure and the land that the infrastructure sits on. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Let me get this clear. They purchased the fuel from you, or were they the agent to sell the fuel product that was in that tank which this government paid for? Were they the agent that delivered that fuel product, or did they buy the fuel outright for a set amount? What was the cost that they purchased that fuel for outright?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We buy the fuel and we sell it to EGT for what it costs us. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Was the fuel paid for in one lump sum, or was it paid for over a 12-month period? Was it paid through a monthly installment basically on sales, or was it paid for upfront because that's my understanding? So I'd like to ask, for the record, could you clarify that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. EGT provides for the payment of that fuel in one lump sum payment. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** In regards to the tank farm in Fort McPherson, there are fuel products in there. Could you tell me exactly how much fuel products are still in that tank farm at the present time, and will those fuel products... Well, maybe you can just answer the first question. How much product is still in that fuel tank in Fort McPherson and exactly what's the value of that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** I don't have the exact figure to date, but it would be safe to say there's about 1.5 million litres worth of diesel in the tank for which we have come to an agreement with the local agent fuel provider in Fort McPherson. So in about a year from now, that fuel should have been consumed in the community as sold to the local distributor. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** My other question was what's the value of 1.5 million litres of fuel sitting in those fuel tanks?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have a few minutes. Mr. Chairman, it's worth about \$880,000.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** We've had previous discussions with the Minister, we've had discussions with the community trying to negotiate some sort of workable solution on the privatization of that operation, and it seems like it hasn't really gone anywhere. I'd like to ask the Minister, knowing that the privatization is no longer there, but knowing that in your earlier comments you said what you try to do once the private sector has moved in, is that you move out and you try to dispose of your assets. I'd like to ask the Minister, is he still open to the idea of negotiating the privatization of that operation in Fort McPherson?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my knowledge, PPD is not operating in Fort McPherson. There's a private firm there that has been distributing fuel for close to two years now. So, I mean, it's already happened. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister made a commitment to the community that he was going to negotiate. Now you're telling me that the offer is no longer there to negotiate. The Minister and I were at a meeting with the chief and people from the co-op to look at the privatization of that tank farm and the fuel products. I'd like to ask the Minister is that commitment still there from yourself as the Minister?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I would have to go and check my correspondence, but I believe the last correspondence we had from Fort McPherson was that they withdrew their offer.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Was the offer \$1 to take over your tank farm?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Well from the earlier comments, it seemed like that offer was good enough to allow the department to privatize



the tank farm in Tuktoyaktuk. Why isn't that offer good in other communities?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, Fort McPherson is basically privatized. We have a private firm operating. If they were to make an offer to us for our inventory in the tank -- and I believe they did this in the past -- and for the tanks themselves, including the clean-up cost, we would definitely consider it, because we have already done it for one company. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Can I get that commitment in writing?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, if the firm writes to the department, the department will take the request to the FMBS and to Cabinet to see if in fact we can go through the process, the same process we're using with EGT right now. We've taken that to FMBS with a recommendation to go forward with it. That's why it's now going through the legal process before the deal is signed off. But basically it would be the same process for a request from Fort McPherson.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Petroleum products revolving fund, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

Information item. Petroleum products revolving fund. Active positions. Page 5-25 details of work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would just like to ask the Minister's department, do you charge an administration fee to these different agencies that perform work on behalf of us in regards to 16 percent, say administration. I would like to know, what is the administration fee that you charge for services provided to these different agents?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the only administration fee applicable to the work we do on behalf of others is for Nunavut services. Contracting back of services, for that we've charged 6.5 percent.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just like to ask the Minister why is it that you are trying to charge a proposed 16 percent, which is now suggested to be nine percent, to communities when we are charging a lower fee to another government, Nunavut at 6.5 percent, and they are suggesting nine percent to our communities. I would like to ask the Minister exactly why are we charging non-residents of the Northwest Territories a fundamentally lower fee than the residents of the Northwest Territories?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the 16 percent that the Member refers to is not just administration, there's a planning or management fee included in there, and that is why it is as high as it is. In relation to the other ones, we don't do that type of thing, we just administer. That is why there is a difference in the charge.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would just like to ask the Minister about the contract we have in place with the Nunavut government. Who spells out the 6.5 percent? Is there actually a legally binding contract between the parties for such a fee?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Rattray.

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the contract was put in place, if I recall correctly, by the Executive or Financial Management Board Secretariat, and it was an umbrella contract that all departments had sub-agreements under. Those sub-agreements specified the different services that the individual departments were to provide and it was subject to the terms of the main agreement. The main agreement was where the administration fee was specified. We're really not involved in those agreements anymore. We are not providing any services to the Nunavut government. We are not planning on any for the coming year. They have indicated they don't require our services any further.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would just like to ask the Minister's department, knowing that there has been a motion put forth in committee to look at doing away with administration we charge the communities for water and sewage maintenance services, I would like to ask the government, are you going to enact that motion that that has been a recommendation put forth through this procedure?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we took the recommendation and we dealt with it in relation to other recommendations that came from the committee through the FMBS. We explained to them, or I should say we had MACA explain to them, what exactly this nine percent covers in the agreements that the communities had with Public Works and Services. MACA indicated that if we were to do away with the nine percent, MACA would then have to reduce the grants to those particular communities because they would not be paying those costs. Other communities that were doing the services themselves were actually carrying these costs through their subsidy from MACA for water, sewage and services. How it works is that MACA just can't wipe it off for four communities without affecting how it relates to the other community grants that they would receive for the same services. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure if the communities even planned for this increase in this year's budget so I would like to ask the Minister, knowing that you have requested an increase to the original 16 percent, was there allowance given during the budget process that there will be increases in those communities in regards to the

water and sewer subsidy program, knowing that there was going to be an increase in cost associated with delivering that program in their communities. Did the Department of Public Works make a request to MACA to increase the amount of money to communities for the water and sewer program, knowing there was an increase to the administration fee that you were going to charge?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Public Works and Services did not approach MACA with a request for more funding for the communities to cover the costs of the 16 percent, simply because MACA was already giving these communities these funds to do this thing on their own behalf. If they had Public Works and Services do it for them, then they would be paying Public Works and Services with the funding that they were given by MACA. Every community received program funding in their water and sewage subsidy for management and planning related to the water and sewage program. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Page 5-27, detail of work performed on behalf of others, continued. Page 5-28, detail of work performed on behalf of others continued, total departments. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Sorry, next page.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Details of work performed on behalf of others continued, totalling department \$1.134 million. Page 5-29, revenue, recoveries and transfer payments. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under other revenues, it says water and sewage and maintenance services, and we see a major increase in regards to the amount \$1.209 million. Could the Minister give me a breakdown of what that amount is for?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the deputy will respond to that question.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, approximately \$400,000 of that relates to assuming responsibility for water and sewer services at Rae-Edzo and there are some other increases there that reflect projected costs for services in the other communities as a result of increased costs in labour and materials. Then there is the increased cost for the additional three percent over and above what was being charged to communities before for administration costs.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think he answered my question. My question is could I have a breakdown of what the \$1.209 million is for? What is the actual cost breakdown; where does that money go?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, I can give that breakdown by community if that's what he is asking.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Yes, I would like to know where this \$1.2 million is going and how much is going into my riding.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** In Aklavik the projected revenue for 2003-2004 is \$108,000. In Tsiigehtchic, the projected revenue is \$47,000. In Fort McPherson, projected revenue is \$676,000 and in Rae-Edzo the projected revenue is \$378,000.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, I gave a copy of this to the hamlet of Fort McPherson. They were not aware that they would have to pay for that increase with regard to their process. This was not budgeted as part of their budget process. Do you just unilaterally charge administration fees and not allow for the communities to build the fees into their budgetary process, so that they know that this amount will have to be paid and they can budget for it? The budget they have is the same amount they received last year, not knowing there would be an additional cost of \$676,000 that will be charged back, plus a nine percent administration fee. That was not planned for. I would like to ask the department again what have you done to inform MACA and the communities that this increase in service fees will be attached to the bill that they will receive this year from the Department of Public Works?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I believe in MACA's estimates, there was \$250,000 more for Fort McPherson to cover these costs.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, knowing there have been supplementary appropriations that have come in the last couple of years because of chargebacks or costs that weren't part of the hamlet's expenditures where they have to come forth with a supplementary, why is there such poor planning in this area when it comes to burdens on municipalities, that they have to restructure their budget. Sure, you are going to give \$250,000 to the community, that \$250,000 is probably for expenditures made last year. For Fort McPherson, you had \$676,000 in the budget, so they are still short \$400,000. Where do they get that?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the \$676,000 is total revenue we anticipate we are projecting that we would be getting from Fort McPherson for water services. The community is already base funded, plus they obtain revenues from the sale of water to consumers in the community. Those two sources, their base funding from MACA and the fees they charge for consumption of the water, provide the majority of the dollars that are required to pay for the services that we provide, plus the truck services they provide in the community. A large chunk of the increase has to do with the truck hauling that's taking place now. Again, we are not completely sure with the new system what will be the ongoing operating costs for both the truck system and the operation of the new truck fill station. We are not completely sure what the ongoing operating costs will be, which is why we have been consulting with the community and

with MACA on a regular basis over the last year to try to determine some of those costs and to try and ensure the community is not caught short.

MACA has provided funding in the current year and is proposing to provide funding in the next year, again to ensure that the community is not caught short. So the community has been aware of all of these costs on an ongoing basis. What we haven't been able to do is finalize what an ongoing budget figure will be for them because we need some experience with operating the plant, with operating the truck haul before we can provide some solid numbers. Both MACA and Public Works have been working very closely with the community to try to determine those and to make sure there are adequate resources available.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to your comments, you said there was \$400,000 going to Rae because of the three percent increase. What's the three percent increase?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the three percent increase is the difference between the six percent administration fee we were charging before and the nine percent administration and planning and management fee we are planning on charging beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just getting back to Aklavik, you had \$108,000. What is the \$108,000 for? Is that the administration fee for providing the service in Aklavik?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the \$108,000 is the total cost for providing the service in the community.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Is the nine percent over and above that, the administration fee?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the administration fee and the planning and management fee are included in that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been speaking to the Minister on the whole idea of trying to work with the communities to eventually allow them to take over this responsibility. A good example is the water truck services in Fort McPherson. It's been going on two years since we switched over to the new water source. When will this department have a rough calculation and estimation of what the real operational cost of that system is going to be? We heard it was going to take a year. We are going on two years now. How long will it be before we have an actual cost breakdown of what the operational costs will be of providing that service?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the contract runs out with the existing contractor, we would have a year's operation which we could then use as a judgement of what it would cost to operate on an annual basis. It's also the figure that MACA is waiting for so that MACA can adjust the...(inaudible)...to the communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Revenue, recoveries and transfer payments. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the department have a breakdown of the costs for the last year? We are almost going into two years of this operation now. The hamlet wanted, before they took it over, to have the actual costs associated with running that operation. Knowing your department is responsible for overseeing this project, do we have the cost breakdown to date based on the month-to-month cost calculations of this project? You estimate \$676,000. What is that cost based on a monthly breakdown?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, the community does have all of the information in terms of the costs of the operation because we are billing them back for it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I didn't ask if the hamlet had the information. I asked if you had the information. You had the information and gave it to somebody else. Do you have the information?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, yes, the department does have the information. We use it to prepare the invoice that we provide to the community.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Can the Minister or deputy minister say what is the rough estimated monthly cost for that operation?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, our estimated cost for 2003-2004 will be \$676,000.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** What is the average monthly cost of this operation? It's going to be higher in the winter, less in the summer. Do you have an actual breakdown cost? From what I heard, it was costing \$18,000 a month just for diesel fuel. Is that an accurate figure? Could you tell me what's the cost associated? What is the breakdown of that cost per month?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** That works out to about \$56,000 per month.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Since I am not getting much information from the deputy minister, I would like to ask for that material to be given to me so I can see for myself what that cost breakdown

is. It looks like the deputy minister doesn't want to answer the question, but that's what this process is for.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Did you want written information?

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could I have the printed materials for the breakdown of the monthly cost of this operation for the last month? This project has been going on for two years. That was the whole reason the hamlet was not willing to take this on.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, we can supply the member with the information. It won't be an estimate. It's going to be the actuals that the community has been billed for over the time we've had the contract with them.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would like to ask the Minister, does that also include the garaging of these vehicles? Does that include the heating cost associated with garage space?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, at the present time, I believe the hamlet is supplying the parking space through the department, so we won't have the breakdown of that cost because that's something they would know.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could the Minister and his department give me a rough estimate, since it's costing you \$56,000 a month, what does that cost break down to? What is that for, the vehicle operation, the operator, the fuel? What is the breakdown of that \$56,000?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** I will ask Mr. Rattray to respond.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, I don't have the actual number with me but the largest component of the bill is the truck contract for hauling the water to the community. That's by far the largest component.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could I get a breakdown of that, please?

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, yes, I will be providing that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one quick question. I apologize if this material has been covered in any great detail but I wanted to ask about the permitting, specifically going mains to mains, 2002-2003, 2003-2004. There's a bit of a jump, say, in electrical permits and that looks really to be about it, but I am wondering if the Minister could tell me if this was an anticipated increase in the number of permits or if we have raised numbers here.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Minister Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will have Mr. Rattray respond to that. Thank you.

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

**MR. RATTRAY:** Mr. Chairman, that's an anticipated increase in the number of permits. We haven't changed the fees.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Revenues, recoveries and transfer payments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Go back to page 5-7, department summary, Public Works and Services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$44.218 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Asset Management

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Cap 7, Public Works and Services, capital acquisition plan, asset management, \$200,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Systems And Communications

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Systems and communications, \$320,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Petroleum Products

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Petroleum products, \$923,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Total department, \$1.443 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Does the committee agree the Department of Public Works and Services is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** I would like to thank the Minister and his staff.

## NWT Housing Corporation

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The next department to deal with is the Housing Corporation. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister responsible if he has any opening comments. Mr. Allen.

### Minister's Opening Comments

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 2003-2004 budget for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Chairman, as this will be the last budget of the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, I would like to take this opportunity to look at some of our accomplishments as well as the plans to ensure we continue to address the housing needs of our residents.

Mr. Chairman, we have requested a total contribution of \$52.971 million, which represents an increase of eight percent over the corporation's 2002-2003 allocation. Including other revenue sources of \$47.263 million, the corporation will spend over \$100 million on housing in the NWT this year. This figure includes contributions from our federal funding partner, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The contributions outlined in these estimates will allow the Housing Corporation to work towards fulfilling the affordable housing strategy, which provides for suitable, adequate and affordable housing for all NWT residents. The Housing Corporations' affordable housing strategy aims to create approximately 780 new homes for low to moderate income families across the NWT over the next five years. Mr. Chairman, this year alone the Housing Corporation has completed 652 projects of which 205 were projects that put families into new homes, and 447 repair projects. In addition, we have completed 243 service maintenance calls to low income seniors and disabled families to ensure their homes are operating safely and efficiently. The corporation also provides stronger supports to private market developers to assist with the development of additional market rental and homeownership homes. These steps will provide much needed support to build housing infrastructure to keep pace with the current cycle of economic expansion.

Mr. Chairman, the Housing Corporation has developed specific goals and strategies to assist with the expansion of private housing by working with the private sector to establish an environment that encourages the construction of new private housing. An example of this includes recent changes to our guarantee on interim financing program that now provides guarantees to lending institutions for developers that have a 10 percent equity position for new home construction and 15 percent on new rental unit construction. Mr. Chairman, this is a substantial reduction from the previous 25 percent equity requirement and the corporation has also reduced its fee for this service from 1.5 percent to only half a percent.

Mr. Chairman, the NWT Housing Corporation has taken the lead on the issue of homelessness. The corporation led a GNWT interdepartmental working group to address homelessness and completed a comprehensive strategy, which I am now reviewing with my Cabinet colleagues. It is important to note that the Housing Corporation has set aside \$500,000 for the funding to address this serious issue in the upcoming year.

The estimates also include new funding to address disparities amongst what the corporation has identified as the critical six communities. What this means is that six communities have been identified as substantially further behind in their housing development and overall housing need than other NWT communities. They include the communities of Lutselk'e, Hay River Reserve, Fort Providence, Fort Liard, Wha Ti and Fort Good Hope. Mr. Chairman, it is hoped that by focusing the much needed \$1.7 million to catch up funding towards these communities, we will be able to make a real difference in addressing housing needs to similar levels as other communities across the NWT.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to report that the NWT Housing Corporation continues to forge new partnerships and joint projects with community and aboriginal development corporations. The Housing Corporation is completing the final stages of its universal partnership agreement that provides for substantially greater decision-making authority at the community level. Mr. Chairman, both the joint ventures and the new universal partnership agreement will go a long way to give our communities and aboriginal groups the tools they need to help solve their housing problems in the community and by the community.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by saying that funding provided to the NWT Housing Corporation will be well spent, creating solutions to the housing issues that our territory and our residents face in the upcoming year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This concludes my remarks.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to ask the committee responsible for reviewing this department if they have any comments. I will call on Mr. Bell.

### Standing Committee On Social Programs Comments

**MR. BELL:** The Standing Committee on Social Programs met on January 16, 2003 to consider the main estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Since reviewing the corporation's 2003-2004 proposed budget during the review of the 2003-2006 business plans in September of 2002, the standing committee noted a \$747,000 increase in the amortization estimate, as well as a \$1.72 million increase relating to the community development action plan which will help address serious housing issues in Lutselk'e, Hay River Reserve, Fort Providence, Fort Liard, Wha Ti and Fort Good Hope.

### Accountability And Universal Partnership Agreements

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs have many concerns with how the NWT Housing Corporation, NWTHC, will monitor programs and services delivered by local housing authorities, LHAs, under universal partnership agreements, UPA.

While supportive of the concept of empowerment and allowing LHAs to make their own choices in how to deliver housing programs in their communities, there needs to be systems in place to ensure public money is being spent effectively.

Past experiences suggest there needs to be an emphasis placed on the inspection of new construction and renovations. Members are aware of serious deficiencies in the construction

and maintenance of social housing units. In some cases the same LHA or development corporation that constructed or renovated the social housing unit was also responsible for signing off on the unit as complete. This is unacceptable to committee members.

The NWT HC spends a significant amount of money per social housing unit because of the high cost of construction and materials in the North. To ensure value for money, it is essential an efficient inspection program be in place.

In discussion with the Minister and his officials, committee members were informed that part of the annual audited financial statements included the auditor verifying work was accomplished by taking a representative sample.

For example, members note an auditor would be qualified to ask a social housing client whether the LHA added a porch to their unit. The auditor would not be qualified to determine whether the porch was properly tied to the rest of the structure, whether sufficient insulation was placed in the floors and walls and whether the porch was adequately blocked or pinned to bedrock.

In response to a question asked during the business plan review, the NWT HC stated that the corporation usually conducts interim and final inspections on construction projects. Committee members were concerned with the use of the word "usually". It seems to imply there is an ad hoc approach to ensuring the terms of construction contracts are fulfilled and that the NWT HC is receiving value for money.

During the business plan review, the Standing Committee on Social Programs questioned the need for the Housing Corporation. If the corporation's focus is on developing community capacity through the development of such mechanisms as universal partnership agreements, it stands to reason there should be an oversight function as part of the process.

Members believe the Housing Corporation is evolving into a funding mechanism for local housing authorities to ensure the orderly flow of funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing and the territorial government to the communities. The committee questioned whether this function could be accomplished through the use of a shell corporation administered through a government department and has asked that the future of the Housing Corporation be examined as part of the transition planning to the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Legislative Assembly.

Prior to the adoption of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Members of the Legislative Assembly were kept well informed of the activities of the NWT Housing Corporation within their constituencies.

The members of the committee understand the need to protect the privacy of persons accessing social housing, but would point out that the total lack of information now available to members hampers their ability to monitor the activities of the Housing Corporation and represent the interests of their constituents.

There is an unnecessary amount of time being spent on verifying information provided to members by their constituents with officials of the Housing Corporation. Members of the

committee also believe the NWT HC is wasting valuable resources on determining the amount or type of information they can release to Members involved in constituency work.

The committee appreciated the commitment of the Minister and his officials to work on a protocol that will allow for the release of information to the Members of the Assembly in a timely manner that respects the privacy of the client and addresses the needs of the Members.

#### **Harmonization Strategy**

The Standing Committee on Social Programs notes harmonization of the way income is calculated by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's income support division and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will become effective on April 1, 2003.

Members are pleased this oft-delayed initiative is being implemented and believe the new system provides for the equitable treatment of all residents of social housing. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the NWT Housing Corporation are to be commended for their efforts in ensuring the development of an equitable program.

There will be glitches as this program is implemented. The Housing Corporation is encouraged to work with clients to mitigate the effects on their households.

#### **Regional Reorganization And The Housing Corporation**

Members note the NWT Housing Corporation reorganized their regional structures from three regions to five districts aligned with land claims two years ago.

The standing committee is not opposed to regional reorganization but are concerned with the apparently ad hoc approach and the lack of coordination, planning and direction provided by Cabinet to the departments.

It is obvious that regional reorganization, whether official or ad hoc, has cost implications to this government. If the purpose is to align the administrative structures of the departments with land claim agreements, the associated costs must be part of self-government negotiations with the federal government and should not be absorbed by the GNWT.

This concern was passed on to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and was subsequently relayed to the Minister of Finance for a response.

The Minister's response indicates the government would be analyzing incremental costs and entering into negotiations with the federal government for funding to address these costs.

The committee hopes the government's optimism is justified. Mr. Chairman, at this point, I would like to turn over to my colleague, the Member for Hay River South.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Continue, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### **Software Development Costs And Marketing**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the business plan review, members questioned an apparent focus on the marketing of the Housing Corporation's

Maintenance Management Operating System, or MMOS, a proprietary software program.

Members found this focus somewhat disturbing, given the belief the core business of the Housing Corporation should be to provide and help in the development of affordable housing for Northerners.

The information provided by the Housing Corporation indicates they expect to recover all of their software development and marketing costs in the very near future.

Members are willing to give limited support for the marketing of the MMOS program with the understanding that the primary focus of the Housing Corporation should be on building housing and supporting the development of the housing industry.

#### **Collection Strategy On Mortgage Arrears**

The lack of a cohesive collection strategy for mortgages in arrears held by the NWT Housing Corporation was the subject of comment by the federal Auditor General in last year's report on other matters.

Past practices did not allow for timely collection or establish a consistent process to deal with mortgages that are in arrears.

Information provided by the corporation, subsequent to our meeting on the draft main estimates, indicates a strategy has been implemented to ensure timely payment of mortgages and which also recognizes that some people's circumstances have changed, meaning they can no longer pay their mortgage.

The committee did have concerns with the communication component of the new collections strategy. The Housing Corporation needs to provide written explanations for the new policies, as well as the individual counselling proposed in the strategy.

The strategy is to concentrate on those clients who have the financial wherewithal to address their mortgage arrears and not on those clients whose circumstances have changed.

#### **Somba K'e Healing Centre**

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs have expressed concern in the past with the fate of this former Northern Addictions Services facility.

The Housing Corporation has been, in effect, subsidizing the operation of a facility which does not deliver any programming on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Members also note the facility has been underutilized by the present operator and, given the fact they recently lost a service contract with Corrections Canada, there is no reasonable hope of meeting ongoing operating costs.

The standing committee believes the NWT Housing Corporation has been more than accommodating in their attempts to help the operators of the Somba K'e Healing Centre maintain a viable operation.

The reality is this facility is secured through a mortgage to the NWT Housing Corporation. The mortgage was originally provided because the facility would have some benefit to the

residents of the Northwest Territories. There is no reason the Housing Corporation should continue subsidizing in the absence of any tangible benefit to residents of the NWT.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased with the Minister's commitment to work with the Department of Health and Social Services to determine the best utilization for the Somba K'e Healing Centre, including the possibility of using it as a new Territorial Treatment Centre for Youth.

#### **Transitional Housing, Residency And Program Eligibility**

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs note there are policy gaps that need to be addressed on a pan-territorial basis to ensure that all residents have equitable access to social housing.

The Transitional Housing Program in Yellowknife is designed to help people without accommodation make the transition from outright homelessness into adequate and appropriate housing.

The paradox is that, because these people in transitional housing are deemed to be in adequate housing, they do not qualify for social housing under the point system used to determine program eligibility. The present low vacancy rate in Yellowknife and the resultant slowdown in turnover of social housing units further compound this situation.

It is obvious there needs to be minor tweaking of the transitional housing program and the program eligibility point system to actually let people make the transition into public housing where appropriate.

In discussing this situation with the Minister, Members were concerned to hear there was no overall territorial policy on eligibility for social housing, particularly as it relates to residency requirements and that each local housing authority establishes its own residency requirements. In some communities, you have to wait two years to be eligible for social housing. In Yellowknife, you are eligible in six months if you are from the Territories and nine months if you are not.

Residents of a community should not be penalized for leaving their home communities for education or economic opportunities by being denied access to social housing on their return.

Members of the standing committee believe there needs to be a consistent policy on residency requirements across the Territories that assures residents of equitable access to social housing while respecting the mobility rights guaranteed under the Charter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will be.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

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

Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witnesses?

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to introduce Mr. Tom Beaulieu, president of the NWT Housing Corporation to my left; and, Mr. Jeff Anderson, chief financial officer of the NWT Housing Corporation to my right.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Welcome, witnesses. We will take a short 15-minute break and then continue.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. General comments regarding the NWT Housing Corporation.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**Detail**

**NWT Housing Corporation**

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Detail, page 8-9, budget summary, NWT Housing Corporation, operations expense, total operations expense, \$52.971.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Corporate summary, information item. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Executive, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-15, information item, policy, programs and informatics. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-17, information item, finance and administration. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-18, information item, finance and administration, grants and contributions. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-21, information item, debt repayment. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger, do you have something to say or do you have a question? Page 8-23, information item, human resources. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-25, information item, operations. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-26, information item, operations, grants and contributions? Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in a Member's statement in questions directed to the government, I asked about government housing for teachers, nurses and other professionals. Has the Housing Corporation looked at the possibility of getting back into government housing so that they address these shortages in our communities? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer basically is no, however, we do work with the community organizations in terms of private rental markets, and some of our programs were redesigned to address some of those critical questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in Fort Resolution, we are anticipating that there's going to be a shortage of housing available for the upcoming school year. Is the Housing Corporation working with the community organization in that community to address that problem that's on the radar screen? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, staff housing or any type of professional housing is not under the mandate of the NWT Housing Corporation, although I think our funding mechanisms will assist those communities that want to look at introducing rental market accommodations. And, yes, we are prepared to discuss some financing options with the local corporation, per se. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, who has the mandate for that particular area of housing? Is it the department responsible for the delivery of that program and service?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.



**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the conversations have evolved, there is no staff housing policy in the Government of the Northwest Territories, it is non-existent. Again, our emphasis then would be under our economic instrument to work with the local corporations to see if they would undertake that initiative. I believe if we do speak to supporting professional housing, that is done through a financing option. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what kind of financing option is available to local corporations so that they can provide the necessary housing for teachers in our communities; affordable housing, Mr. Chairman. Affordable housing is the key here. We know that teachers come and go on a very consistent basis, contributing to irregular delivery of education programs and services in our communities. The cost of housing is a major issue for the teachers. So the financing options that the Minister is referring to that's available to local corporations in communities, is the end result providing affordable housing to our teachers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, we don't have a mandate to provide professional housing, per se. What we are saying is that we can and we have increased the loan guarantee program from \$10 million to \$30 million. That would allow private developers to enter into the commercial rental market at 15 percent equity, and that's what we're advocating at this point to try to stimulate that sort of professional housing development. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that may very well work for a place like Yellowknife where if you build a building it's consumed right away. But if you're asking a development corporation or a private business entity to get into similar arrangements with the government to provide housing needs in the community for teachers, there's going to be two months a year that that house is not going to be occupied. Is that being recognized in this new financing option? I'd like to ask the Minister, who is responsible for providing housing to our professional people in the communities? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll only speak in the context of the NWT Housing Corporation's mandate. Under the social housing agreement, we are responsible for public housing, providing home ownership programs, and I think we're on record as listing 16 different program deliveries. But we do not have a mandate to provide for professional housing. We have introduced a funding mechanism where we would provide loan guarantees. So it's really the initiative of the local development corporations or some other community entity to provide that to professionals. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, again one of the problems that I see on a consistent basis on this side of the House where I'm responsible for the programs and service delivery of this government in the communities I represent and a lot of the communities in the Northwest Territories, is that when departments and corporations come to us and in this sitting they have a tunnel vision. It's not part of our responsibilities, so we can't help you.

So I'll ask a simple question. Has the Minister communicated, or is he in contact with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to identify the possibility of working in collaboration to provide affordable housing for professional people in the communities, whether it's the Minister of Health and Social Services in his responsibility to deliver health and social service programs and services, or the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Minister and his responsibility in delivering his departments responsibilities? Now I think the government has to start working together, especially in the area of housing, so we can have quality educators in our community and that they can stay.

So I ask, has the Minister communicated with the other Ministers to see if they can help address their needs, the needs of the communities if you're not going to be able to provide a decent deal for corporations, the same kind of deal that's available in market communities? That deal is great for Yellowknife and for Hay River where there's a housing market, but there is no market... A teacher is not going to buy a house in Fort Resolution. They'll rent for a few years. That's what we're trying to make them do: stay for a few years. But we can't expect them to buy a house and expect them to sell it at the same price, because there is no market in our communities. So the Housing Corporation being the only entity of this government that provides housing, have they talked to the other departments to see if they could help with their needs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Just with regard to your question, the Minister responsible for staff housing is the Chair of FMBS. So does the Minister want to refer the question to his counterpart on staff housing, because this is where the question is going but it is not really the responsibility of this Minister. So if the Minister wants to refer it to the Minister of Finance?

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think perhaps it would be helpful if we could address it this way. Under the NWT Housing Corporation Act and under its mandate we have our obligations under the social housing agreement. We provide for public housing, social housing and a broad number of other housing funding mechanisms. Yes, we do administer the staff housing portfolio for FMB, but I think it is the government policy that they will not enter into staff housing.

What we're trying to emphasize here is that we do have a mechanism, and I think it's a fair process, that would allow each community to access. If the Minister responsible for the FMB would be prepared to address the other component of the Member's question, then I would ask the Chair to permit that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the FMBS, Minister Handley, in regards to staff housing.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I got all of the question, but the question is why don't we get back into staff housing. Let me put it this way, a number of years ago we got out of staff housing and we only have a few units left that we're ready to turn over to communities. It's our view that housing is very much a community issue, that it's best if a lot of this is handled at the community level.

With regard to staff, the problem we have and the reason why we got out of it in the first place is the cost of it. When we got out of it, it was costing us about \$25 million a year just to manage and own housing for staff. To get back into it is going to cost us at least that much money, and the operating costs of doing it. Because we can't do it for some public servants and not do it for others, under the collective agreement we would have to do it for everybody, everywhere if we did it. The cost is horrendous. We would instead prefer to encourage people in the community as businesses to build and provide rental housing. We might even consider getting into long-term leases as a government on those kinds of things if private businesspeople in the communities want to do it.

The other one is if teachers, professional people, want to get into mortgages and own a house in a community which is a natural way to do it, then we'd look at creative ways of doing that. But we don't want to get into owning houses as a government. It's too expensive. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thanks again, Mr. Chairman. There was one question in the member's statement, and that was with regard to communicating with other departments. Yes, we have. We've been working with ECE and H&SS on a policy base, and also a directive to looking at housing to look at various aspects of whether we can work with local community developers. Again, I think we made reference to the fact that we are prepared to work with community organizations and community groups on a number of fronts to address that key question. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, operations, grants and contributions. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you. Under operations, the operations division says they supply design and contracting. I'd like to ask the department, for the people out there who want to build their own homes, if they were interested in some of the designs that the department had would they be able to access those designs? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly encourage design build, sub-build. I don't think we're really tied directly into trying to negate that self-initiative. I'll ask Mr. Beaulieu to respond more from a technical side to clarify my statement. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** President of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the Housing Corporation can make designs available to individuals who

wish to build that design. We also make the material package available.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Operations, grants and contributions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-29, information item, district operations. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Information item, capital acquisition plan. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to go back to page 8-28.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Member is asking to go back to pages 8-28 and 8-29. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is an area where the district office works delivering programs and services. I know sometimes we have other departments that deal with departments and things like that. I would like to ask them if they have the technical skills to do assessments on structure, multiple structures, multiple dwellings; if they have the technical people there who could help other departments, like DPW does? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recognizing that's a staffing issue, I'd ask the president of the corporation to respond to that directly. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** President of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Depending on the size of the building, the Housing Corporation does have some expertise in assessing buildings. Depending on the size of the building, we have three individuals who do design, we have three individuals who are at headquarters positions that help with the projects, and we have project advisors in the field. Usually when there is a larger building, I think that the corporation would look to a private engineering company to do the design and also specifically because of the complexity of the foundation on larger structures.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we use DPW to do a lot of our assessments, they have some technical people. I'm just wondering, because DPW charges so much money to other departments, I thought maybe the Housing

Corporation would, at no cost, do our assessments on multiple dwellings like six-plexes or even 12-plexes if they have the technical skills to do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** President of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we have the technical skills to be able to assess units that are four-plexes, six-plexes and so on. I'm not familiar with the chargeback from another department or what position we'd be in to work for a local organization.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** District operations, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-31, information item, capital acquisition plan. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the area of capital acquisition, where does the Housing Corporation get their materials -- the raw lumber -- to build and repair houses in the Northwest Territories under its mandate?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** President of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The normal process is that we tender to the various building suppliers across the territory. We sometimes get into an arrangement with a local corporation that can provide with us dimensional lumber.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, some of us in this House have constituents and constituencies that have a larger renewable resource in the forest industry. Has the Housing Corporation ever considered using northern products to build for Northerners? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Minister Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, when we talk about our economic instruments we have a bit of a record of working with local producers. Again, most recently we met with the Fort Smith Metis who are sponsoring a small sawmill operation in Salt River. We met with the Fort Liard band last October, and also a year ago last spring we met with Jean Marie River to look at doing some log work. We, as a corporation, are mainly into the marketing of that product and also, if we can, we wanted to develop some log home kits to use as demonstration projects. Yes, we have attempted to work with three of the major communities in the South. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Fort Resolution community, through the NWT Development Corporation, had a sawmill for the longest time. That sawmill was badly managed and they shut it down, leaving an

economic void in that community. There is still a great desire in that community to get back into the sawmill business. I'm wondering if there is room within the capital acquisition or the purchase of the materials that the Housing Corporation could make a commitment to a sawmill of that nature to buy raw materials from that sawmill so that they have an economic base, and that raw material be used in the construction and repair of housing projects for NWT residents. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to just address this question by saying that we are attempting to work jointly with RWED on a number of issues with regard to rough lumber. I believe the volume requirement of the NWT Housing Corporation based on certain standards would make a small, portable sawmill operation in Fort Resolution very viable. Although I want to just speak briefly to this, we can somehow deal within the context of the current political situation so that, yes, if we were able to support it from a marketing perspective, it's certainly, in our opinion, viable to work with a community that has a certain allotment of harvestable timber. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's certainly refreshing to hear a Minister responding in that nature. It's going to be this kind of collaborative work that's going to ensure that we can maximize the economic potential of the Northwest Territories and its resources, including the non-renewable resources. I'd like to ask the Minister if he could commit his corporation to determine what materials, all materials required by the Housing Corporation to see what market areas a portable sawmill or a larger sawmill with finished products possibilities are not only in Fort Resolution, but in other communities in the Northwest Territories. I think it's about time that the money that we spent in building homes for our people in the Northwest Territories is spent here in the Northwest Territories supporting our local economies. I believe that the political environment today is conducive now to this type of economic development, and I would strongly encourage the department to look deep and hard to see what kinds of materials could come out in the Northwest Territories and could be used by the Housing Corporation so we don't send our money south. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly we're more than willing to undertake economic measures and try to assist the communities. Certainly on a volume basis, we can't procure enough rough lumber because of the demands throughout the territory and the large projects we are beginning to fund. I'd certainly like to take this a step further and work more closely with RWED to determine what kind of investment they could offer as well, and we could be the buyers of that product. So I'm certainly willing to take that first step.

As well, we're working with ECE on developing some vocational trades training. So there are a number of interesting and very possible projects. Also set out long-term strategies to enhance those economic initiatives, so it's all part of the territorial...(inaudible). Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have another session coming up in June. I wonder if the Minister could come back to us with some kind of plan or a draft discussion paper, some kind of position so that we could start looking at this seriously. I don't want to just leave it in the discussion form. I'd like to see what kind of commitment I could get from the Minister to return to us with a draft direction or whatever it's going to take, with collaboration from the Minister of RWED and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly we'd be interested in sitting down with my colleagues to try to draft up something that's equitable for the South Slave, and also perhaps for other southern communities as well. I think from an economic perspective, this is certainly most feasible and viable in terms of rough sawn lumber. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation being the end market for lumber in the Northwest Territories, would the Minister and his staff also hold discussions with the current suppliers, the people who sell these materials in the stores in the Northwest Territories, to see if they could also be a market for these sawmills so that we don't cut off any businesses midway? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point, from what our volumes are or the volumes that can be presently met in the Northwest Territories, we can purchase internally and that will help us sustain some local economies. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would just like to remind Members again, I don't take this lightly, I have warned people about chewing gum in this House, I notice that Mr. Steen is chewing gum in this House and I would like to ask Mr. Steen to remove his gum. We should show some respect in this House. There are certain rules that we follow and one of them is we are not allowed to have any food or anything to chew. All we are allowed to consume is water so I would like to request Mr. Steen to remove your gum, please.

Capital acquisitions plan.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-23, capital acquisitions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, 8-32.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-33, capital acquisitions, continuation of information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-35 contributions to local housing authorities, information item. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, contributions to local housing organizations is a very important area of responsibility of this government. The housing corporation is currently discussing with some communities the universal partnership agreement, Lutselk'e being one of the communities that is interested in taking on that responsibility. I know for a fact that it takes five or six people to deliver housing programs to Lutselk'e but, when we asked to negotiate this, we asked for those positions to be moved to the communities but the housing corporation does not want to do that.

Now, the question I have to ask the housing corporation is how seriously are you negotiating these universal partnership agreements? How seriously do you want these communities to succeed in taking on more responsibility? If you deliver housing programs and services in the community, if you are not going to devolve the positions or the financial resources to hire those positions, then as far as I'm concerned, the housing corporation is not serious to do so. So I ask, is it a common practice to devolve responsibility to communities without proper resources? Does the housing corporation like to see the communities fail? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From a political perspective, our mandate again is to help the communities develop capacity. We are trying to do that through a number of forums. The intent here is to provide advice, guidance, financial assistance, technical assistance and to make sure that they are not doomed to fail. From a financing perspective, I ask the president to speak to that specifically. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** President of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The NWT Housing Corporation is attempting to negotiate universal partnership agreements with five communities with the plan to negotiate partnership agreements in all the communities that are interested in negotiating partnership agreements. The resources that are needed to deliver these programs to the various communities is something that is being worked out between the housing corporation and the community governments. We feel that it is difficult for us to respond on the amount of full time positions that it would take to deliver programs to one community, however, we know that we have a staff of around 100 and we are delivering in 33 communities across the Territories. Some communities are bigger than others and require more resources but we are attempting to do

a fair allocation to the communities that we are negotiating with at this time.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, from a political perspective the Northwest Territories needs major faster building in the communities. From a political perspective, Mr. Chairman, if we devolve responsibility to communities and don't devolve human or financial resources to deliver those programs and services as best as they can to the current level of delivery of those programs and services, Mr. Chairman, we are setting them up to fail. So if it takes five people to deliver all housing programs and services in the community of Lutselk'e, why does the Minister feel that it would take that community less human or financial resources to deliver the same programs or services?

With the last department I came up with the same thing, when we do the work in there, we'll subsidize ourselves but when a private entrepreneur takes on the responsibility, you don't need subsidies. That's not a philosophy that I'd like to have of our politics or corporations. It doesn't work that way. We've set them up to fail and if we continuously do that, we will never develop capacity in the communities and we will always administer a welfare state. That is exactly what we are doing.

I know I've been through that already. Health and social services boards in the communities were set up to fail, now there is no capacity in that community to deliver those programs and services. Now the government has a perfect excuse not to deliver or negotiate any further devolution of the responsibilities of this government. So I ask the Minister again, would he consider devolving the resources necessary to deliver these programs and services to the same level that this corporation currently has when it negotiates these agreements with the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some interesting points that I would like to raise here and one is that the LHOs, the local housing authorities, have their own set of bylaws and they have their set of governance afforded them under the NWT Housing Corporation Act so they do have some autonomy in how they govern themselves. They have been in existence since the '70s and they have developed a certain level of capacity. What we are talking about here is now taking a set of programs and transferring them over into their governorship and that will allow them first and foremost to make decisions, take some responsibility, be accountable for the delivery of those programs and services.

What we are saying is that once we can work with them under a partnership agreement, we will be able to lend them the expertise so they do not fail. That is part of the overall concept of the UPAs, so they can provide us with adequate resources to carry through that mandate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what I see is a political downloading of programs and services that is causing a headache for the Minister and his staff of not wanting to follow suit with the financial or human resources. There are

three people in the local housing authority in Tu Nedhe, one manager and one administrative staff and one maintenance guy. That doesn't cover all the housing needs in the community. It doesn't nearly come close to what is required to deliver proper programs and services in that area. Now they are operating on a shoestring budget. They are operating in crisis management mode in all these communities. No doubt about that.

While we have bureaucracy sitting top heavy in our regional capital center, we are having a hard time. We want to devolve this problematic area but we don't want to devolve any financial or human resources to do the job. Now, the Minister just again hid behind the local housing authority. Not my responsibility. These guys have a 25-year history, Mr. Chairman, of continuously being in crisis mode for the housing required in our communities... continuously. It's a recent phenomenon here in Yellowknife, a recent phenomenon in Inuvik but in Lutselk'e it is a 25-year history of need. In Fort Good Hope it is a 25-year history of need.

That is what we have to address. If we are going to provide them with the mandate to do that, the responsibility that this corporation currently has and is getting millions of dollars for, then let's provide some of that millions of dollars down, streamline it down to the communities. If we are going to mandate it and do it, let's give them the resources to do it. That's all I am saying, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we proceed through this budget session, we did address some of the key questions. Lutselk'e was one of the six communities identified as being in critical need. We provide additional money to catch up to their housing needs. The Member of Tu Nedhe is expressing the fact of where we are stepping in terms of the administration. I feel that each community is being treated fairly, although there may be other areas we can identify that we could tweak a bit in terms of the UPA concept. Again, we want to work with the communities and we have in some previous consultations with the specific community and try to identify some of those areas we can improve upon. Recognizing we are a small corporation, we have limited resources and it's co-funded with the federal government. We have developed a fairly strong strategy to deal with the conflicts of affordability and also from the administrative perspective provide that level of administrative support in trying to encourage those communities to take the responsibility of delivering those housing programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, contribution to local housing organizations, Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we have to take that word "fair" out of his context and examine it. Maybe it's fair from the Housing Corporation perspective, but if you look at it from the community's perspective, it's not too fair. It's not fair to ask the local body that the Minister appoints to manage this. It's not fair to the manager of the housing authority that he or she is not entirely resourced to do so. I would like to ask the Minister, maybe you should get up from behind your desk and go to the community, send some of your staff to the community, maybe live there for a little while to understand the challenges. I know what you are trying to say, we are trying to devolve and

make it work but you don't make it work by devolving responsibility without the resources to make it happen. Let's revisit the resources you are allocating under the universal partnership agreement, so it can work. It's not very difficult. It doesn't take a genius to figure out if you don't provide proper resources, nine times out of ten, every effort will fail. That's all I am saying. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will take the comments to heart and we will review it. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, contribution, local housing organizations.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-36, information item, contributions to local housing organizations.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Active positions, information item, page 8-37.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, page 8-38, lease commitments, infrastructure.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 8-39, information item, former income statements.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Go back to page 8-7, department summary, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, department summary, operation expense, total operation expense, \$52.971 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the NWT Housing Corporation has been concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** At this time, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out.

## Legislative Assembly Of The Northwest Territories

The next department on the list to deal with is the Legislative Assembly. At this time, I would like to ask the Speaker if he has any opening comments with regard to department estimates. Mr. Speaker.

### Speaker's Opening Comments

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, colleagues. I am pleased to present the Legislative Assembly's 2003-2004 main estimates.

The Legislative Assembly is proposing a total operation expense of \$14.432 million for the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's important to indicate that the Board of Management, in preparing the business plan and main estimates, is guided by the input of Members and I hope it's representative of your needs. Ultimately your direction, either by legislation, regulations or policy determines the level of financial and human resources necessary to provide services to Members and for the day-to-day administration of the Legislative Assembly offices. The board and the Clerk's office are always looking for ways improve the quality and level of services and we remain committed to providing those services in a cost-effective, open, transparent and accountable manner which is what the people of this territory deserve and expect of its elected Assembly.

I would like to remind Members that the appropriations of the Legislative Assembly provide funding for the statutory officers of the Assembly. Funding is provided to the offices of the languages commissioner, the conflict of interest commissioner, information and privacy commissioner and the chief electoral officer.

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year the implementation of the new Human Rights Act will take shape. There is no funding currently identified to fully implement the new act but I can assure Members that we will be coming forward for supplementary funding early in the new year to begin the implementation phase of the new Human Rights Act.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure I do not have to remind you that the proposed main estimates before you today cover the dissolution of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly and the transition to the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. In an election year, there are increased costs for the conduct of the general election, which will not be required in subsequent fiscal years. There are also some reductions in costs as, traditionally, committees' activities taper off and Members' budgets and allowances are prorated in an election year. However, it would appear that the government has a number of legislative initiatives that may negate the historical reductions we can make in an election year. I can assure Members that there will be sufficient funding for committees as they carry out their responsibilities in the months leading up to this general election. The main estimates before you today, Mr. Chairman, contain a number of forced growth items including:

- \$434,000 for the office of the chief electoral officer to continue preparations for the conduct of the November general election;

- \$160,500 transition allowance for retiring or non-returning Members;
- \$21,000 for orientation for the Members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly;
- \$34,600 overall increase to Members' constituency budgets, which is now tied to the consumer price index;
- \$40,000 for furniture and equipment for the new Members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, heading into the transition to a new Assembly, always makes for a hectic period of time for MLAs and for our staff as well as the numerous government officials that support our work. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedicated work of the staff of the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories. It takes a dedicated staff and civil service to provide the work we do as a Legislature and government.

I would like to advise Members that we have had a productive last year with an increase in the number of events in the Great Hall and our Caucus Room. These events bring in people from all walks of life, from across the territory, Canada and internationally which serves to enhance our exposure and to promote the NWT.

Mr. Chairman, the Speaker's office will continue to take steps to enhance the cultural diversity of our Legislature and you will see the results of our efforts when we sit later this year, when our Pages will be wearing new uniforms. The uniforms are the result of the work of a number of northern artists, Susan Marie, Darcy Moses and Karen Wright-Fraser. The Speaker's office has also been working on the development of a cultural enhancement program for the Legislative Assembly building. We hope Members will see these two initiatives as enhancements to the appearance of this wonderful facility.

Again, Mr. Chairman, and colleagues, the Board of Management has made every effort to address the needs of the Legislative Assembly and has endeavoured to secure the level of financial and human resources necessary to meet these demands. However, the board and my office, like Members, are ultimately responsible for the decisions we make collectively, as elected representatives of the people of the NWT.

I look forward to the Members' comments and questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** For the record, Mr. Speaker, please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your permission, I would like to introduce my witnesses. On my left side here is Mr. David Hamilton, clerk of the Assembly; and, on my right hand side is Myles Moreside, director of corporate services for the Legislative Assembly.

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

#### General Comments

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think I have ever asked questions on the Legislative Assembly but, since this is

the last budget, I do have some questions that have been brought to my attention. I just want to keep it short. The first one is the Great Hall. I think the Speaker mentioned in his speech about how well used this facility is. I have two questions on that. Whenever we have special functions, and we do have a number of them, and I am glad to see that the facility gets used very well, but how about the security people who move furniture around, is that part of their service? Do we pay them to do that or is that just something they do as part of their work?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's part of the contract. There are a number of different things included in there and that's one of them. That's part of the contract.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** These aren't really life changing questions here. The Speaker mentioned different changes he's going to make to the office, cultural enhancement and so on. I noticed lately that the drapes we used to have in the Great Hall aren't there anymore. Is this part of the cultural enhancement project?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Member is referring to those tapestries that were so elegantly hanging in the gallery. They are out for cleaning at the moment. We are having some work done on the overall image of the building. We want to see whether or not they will be replaced in that same position. They could be returned in a short time. There is going to be an overall plan and the Members will be involved in the overall review of the cultural vision of the building. That may be included in it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** I don't know if this is something that the Board of Management has been discussing or anything. People have asked me about what happened to those tapestries, I shouldn't call them drapes. They were important and people appreciated seeing them there. I wasn't aware they were gone for cleaning. I am hoping they will come back. I am not sure if you could replace them in an economical way and I don't want to see a whole lot of money spent to replace those when the ones that were there were doing a good job. It was pictures of landscapes of the North, so I would like to see them come back unless there are other suggestions for cultural enhancement in the works. If that's the case, then I would like to state that I wouldn't want to see something that's going to cost us a lot of money.

I have another question, and this is something that someone brought to me who works at night. She dropped by the Legislative Assembly building, and she asked me why the building is lit up so brightly at night. I don't know the answer to that and I want to put it on public record. Have there been recent enhancements done to the building that makes the dome light up so bright and is there extra cost, bills? These are some serious questions. I want to know if it's costing us any extra money.

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I think the Members will probably recall it in last year's budget that was brought forward and was approved by the House. The honourable Member is correct, we've gone ahead with lighting up the outside of the building. It isn't on all night. It's on for parts of the evening and certain events. Certainly we don't light it up in the summertime. When we don't need to, we save money. In the wintertime, it is one of the tourist attractions, and we've received a tremendous number of compliments on the way the building is now visible from the town due to the lighting. It's still not quite finished.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** For the benefit of the public, are there extra lights that make it light up so much or is it something different we did?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Yes, they are low sodium lights that are energy efficient and you will see more lights this year than in the past years because it is a new project that is going to be a part of the capital site enhancement, but they are energy efficient lights, as energy efficient as we can get them.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** I don't think I heard about the extra expenditures that we have allotted for that extra lighting in the building. I would like an answer to that and I have a question on the security system because I noticed a camera outside my window.

---Laughter

There is this round camera. I just noticed it, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Could I have some order in the House, please. Ms. Lee, continue your question.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know it is public money we are spending for various security measures. I did notice a camera that is a round ball and I just want to know...

---Laughter

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While it does lend a little bit of humour to the conversation, it is a very serious question Ms. Lee asks. I would like to assuage her fears. These are not roving cameras. They are fixed in certain positions that are pre-assigned. This was part of the security package that was put before the House some time ago. Yes, it did cost us \$225,000 to do all of the work, including the light, that has included the camera for security reasons. The safety and security of the staff and the Members are foremost in the mind of the Speaker. The Speaker had put forward a much larger plan prior to that, but the House gave us direction which we followed. There are several new cameras that have been put up and they are monitored by the security. They are in positions that are not as easily watchable by the staff and that's the reason they are there. They are not mobile. They are only fixed to a certain area. It's there to enhance the safety and the security of the building and the honourable Members.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** I realize there was a budget approved for this sort of expenditure last year, but I might have missed this but was there some kind of directive or some rules we are supposed to follow as a Legislature in Canada that served as some kind of impetus to upgrade our security system? What was the cause of us having to take these steps to install cameras and lights and things for security?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of different factors that come to play in this. The Speaker had been into the various assemblies across the country, Ontario being one, Alberta being another. We got some ideas from them as to what we could do for security in our building. Perhaps it's not as well-known to Members, but there has been some concern by the Speaker's office and security here for the safety of the Members. There have been some threats in the past and these are just precautions. We have increased the security by using a camera system. We have increased security by using a lighting system that is not quite finished yet and will be as soon as the temperatures warm up a bit and a couple of extra staff during the sitting times. We are very aware that we live in an age now where if we didn't do anything, we could become irresponsible. Our insurance rates are always a factor and that is probably the cheapest way we can reduce a threat to a Member and also reduce insurance rates.

The other thing, Mr. Chairman, is buildings like assemblies, they necessitate special consideration to be given to the physical movement of elected people within the building, employees, visitors, that is the reason we have the pass system that we have. There are perhaps even more elaborate systems that we could put in, but we've come up with a very effective and moderately priced system using the cameras, lights and additional security people.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Legislative Assembly being a territorial institution represents the territorial tourism the best. I don't see too many tourists in my neck of the woods, Mr. Chairman, I would like to talk a bit about the Pages that provide us services in the Legislature. They do a great job. They make our lives a lot easier and the lives of our clerks a lot easier. I would like to ask when a Member brings in Pages from their communities, what is the responsibility of the Member? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the past, the Pages would be selected from the schools here in Yellowknife. There was very little cost associated with it except for the wages we would pay the Pages and the uniforms they would wear and getting them to and from their school to here. At the request of the Members, over the years the board has agreed to allow Members to bring in students from their ridings up to so many a year to match with those that are here already. In the past, it was the total responsibility of the Member for transportation, for food and lodging and the care of the students while they were here. The policy was that the schools would do the selecting and not the Members and that the



Member would be responsible for the student to page us while they were here. In response to the Members' requests, the board agreed to pay the transportation costs, and part of that transportation cost would come out of the Member's constituency budget. The board agreed to pay for two students a year for each of the ridings that chose to bring students in here. However, the responsibility for the page when they were in town, in the city here, would be that of the Member. The Legislative Assembly could not and should not get involved in the keeping and maintaining of students. It takes on a very serious responsibility and that is why the Members are asked to be responsible for their Pages coming from their communities.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, from the Speaker's answer, I would assume that I would be assuming the liability if I decide to bring in Pages from my communities. I don't have a choice in the selection, so I can't bring in my family. Whoever's kid I bring in, I'm going to have to assume the responsibility. I would like to ask the Speaker then, Mr. Chairman, what is the responsibility of a Yellowknife Member when Pages come from Yellowknife?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Speaker, the witness.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In answer to the Member's concerns, that there is no responsibility for students that come here. The school assigns the student, picks the student based on the selection criteria of the school. They must be good students, able to be away from school for that period of time because it does take in half of each day. The parents must complete and sign the appropriate forms. They must give that release, a medical release must also be assigned and the Legislative Assembly must be aware of any medical condition of the student and social insurance numbers and stuff, like technical data. But the Yellowknife Members, each of the ridings in Yellowknife, are not responsible for that, it is strictly a school selection and recommendations.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, you and my colleagues would probably agree with me that there is some inequity here. We're a territorial institution, this is the house of the people. What happens in here affects everybody and why shouldn't the students in my communities or from Holman Island, Fort Smith, Wrigley, Jean Marie River, Fort Good Hope, Tu Nedhe have the same opportunity as a student that is living in Yellowknife to come here and experience how their government provides program and services to them. This house should be an example, not a restriction, to these students. Those kinds of programs make a world of difference to a little girl or a little boy. These kind of little things would motivate a student to work hard all year to achieve the grades they need so that they could qualify to come here for a week. I ask, Mr. Chairman, that the Speaker direct his staff to remedy the inequity on this issue here. I would like to have the same opportunity for my students to come here and serve us in this House, the same opportunity as a student has in Yellowknife, and why don't I have the same responsibility as a Member from Yellowknife when the students from my schools come here? I shouldn't have to take responsibility for my student, who is a Northwest Territories resident, to serve his Member here in the House. It should be the responsibility of the Legislature. They

should take on that responsibility and any liability that goes along with it. That's the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker or Mr. Chairman, I mean. I apologize.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Question to the Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct in some parts of his comments here. The students that are serving as Pages here from across the Territories are examples to the rest of Canada. They are the youngest Pages, probably, in the Commonwealth if I dare go far so far as to say that. They are truly an example, a good example and truly they do aspire to other things. I think that the Member would be very, very proud of his students if he were to take responsibility and bring them in. Already, we have had five different Members bringing in students under the criteria that we've used. The board has gone a long way already to meet Members requirements for Pages and it is a system that I am very proud to support, but I don't think that the Members would want this Legislative Assembly to become ultimately responsible for babysitting students. The Members themselves, should take on that responsibility and be proud of getting their kids in here, and I think the community would applaud the Member for taking that kind of responsibility, and parents would feel secure in letting them stay with the Member, rather than in a hotel somewhere under the supervision of the Speaker or his staff.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the Yellowknife Members want to help babysit my constituents who provide the same services that their constituents do, then maybe I will agree to that but this is just another example of the blatant inequality of how this government provides services to the communities. Why should I be responsible for babysitting my constituents so that they could provide a service in this House when five other young students are here at no expense to their Members? Not a dime, not time, no responsibility. Again, how do you justify an institution that is territorial to benefit only a select few? I'm a busy man, Mr. Chairman. I have a meeting after this. I have a person waiting for me to finish here so I can go meet with him tonight. I have meetings first thing in the morning. A Minister who's got a responsibility to a department and the entire Cabinet is very busy. Do you think they have time to babysit? Should they be responsible to take care of people that are students that provide us services? Can we expect them and ask them to do so? It's restricting me; it's restricting an opportunity for my constituents to participate in this House and the procedures of this House. I do believe that it is the Legislative Assembly's responsibility. If they are going to make that opportunity available to students in Yellowknife, then it is only right, if not a human right, if not a legislative right but it is the right thing to do to make those same opportunities for my constituent and every other constituency in Northwest Territories, not just Yellowknife.

It should have to depend on the participation of their Members. The Members are here to represent their constituents in matters of politics and all areas. We shouldn't have to take on the added responsibility that other Members get for free. I represent two communities and by extension I represent three, four political bodies. That's a lot of responsibility. Some Members represent four, five and six communities. That's a lot of responsibility. Well we have seven Members here that represent one community and they get this for free. Where is

the equity in this? Where is the fairness in this? No, I don't agree with the Speaker. It should not be the responsibility of their MLAs, it should be the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly and if they intend to go along with this, then I have to assist...

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Nitah, your time is up. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am afraid I can't comment too much on the honourable Member's concerns. If he wishes, he may take those concerns to the Board of Management and the board will review the suggestions. The board and the Speaker certainly feel that we have a good program, and we'd like to continue this. If there are ways of improving it, we'd be glad to do that. But there are certain liabilities, there are certain responsibilities I'm sure that the honourable Members will agree that we cannot take on and should not take on. I'll leave it to the honourable Members to make that decision.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just have two short questions on the opening comments, particularly on page 3 where it references, "we will see a reflection of our cultural diversity through the uniform the Pages will be wearing." Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the Speaker and his staff are well aware of the cultural diversity in the Northwest Territories, and I would like to ask if all the cultures will be reflected in these uniforms.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Whitford.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think over the years we've seen various changes in the uniforms from the Pages. We've tried at different times to reflect what is now two territories -- Nunavut and the Northwest Territories -- and some of the uniforms the honourable Member will remember, there were sealskins with beads, and there were vests. We've tasked a group of northern artists to come up with ideas, and come up with a design for reflecting the northern cultures. Ms. Marie is well-known, as is Darcy Moses and Ms. Fraser, and the Members will, I think, be pleased when they do see them. I'm not able to show you at the moment or describe what they are at the moment, but I think that the selection will meet with the approval of the members.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to hear that. I know that the three artists who are mentioned are extremely proficient in their profession. However, I'm wondering if there was any effort made to obtain artists with an Inuvialuit background, so that the uniforms reflecting Inuvialuit culture would be designed by Inuvialuit artists.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Speaker, Mr. Whitford.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The uniforms are part of what we would like to see the Legislative Assembly reflect eventually. There was a request for proposals sent out, and the three people involved here were the ones who submitted to the team the best proposal, and those are the ones who they selected. A lot of people had an opportunity to put forward proposals, and those were the ones we thought

were the best and we went with. I'm hoping that when we do see the end result that they will reflect the Inuvialuit culture, as they would the Sahtu or the Metis or the Dogrib or the Gwich'in, and we could go on. I don't know if we can cover everything, but we certainly will give it a try.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that the Assembly Board of Management probably took into consideration the fact that the best reflection of culture is through the artists, to actually have an artist who has a background in that particular culture. I'm not suggesting that the three here are not familiar with the Inuvialuit culture, but at the same time I would have liked some assurance that the Inuvialuit artists were given opportunity to respond request for proposals, or tenders, whatever the Assembly put out.

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again I'm not sure how we could guarantee each member equality in reflection of the particular culture. But when we did put the request for proposals out, people of the North, from Thebacha to Nunakput, had an opportunity to submit proposals. I don't recall whether or not we got any from that area. We had to move on and we did, and I'm sure that the artists will endeavour to reflect the true North in their work. We also have, and will have in the next little while here, people speaking to Members about what they would like to see in the Assembly. I, for one, would like to see some plan come up that will capture the whole of the North in a very few square feet within this building, of different areas or different regions and different traditions, and capture the spirit of the North. I think we've done a magnificent job already -- we try hard -- and I think that each member should be looking forward to speaking to that group that are tasked to come up with a plan for the cultural enhancement of the building.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. This will be my last comment here, but I'm sure that the Legislative Assembly is not going to close down in the next year or two, so I would suggest that over time I would like to see some uniforms made by Inuvialuit artists; the same as our Mace reflects all of our communities and our cultures. I think there were some Inuvialuit artists involved in making the Mace, so I'm sure that we could find some Inuvialuit artists who would be pleased to take part in designing uniforms on a small scale, on a small percentage of the overall number of uniforms, that would reflect our culture.

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure that we will, in the future, meet even more of the honourable Member's expectations. I think that from where I'm sitting, I'm looking at an Inuvialuit carving sitting over the top of the Speaker's chair. There's the reflection of the talent and work that is in our Mace here. If you look out at the back of the hall here, you'll see an enormous sculpture that was created by Inuvialuit carvers. I think that his concerns are probably very well represented in this building as it is, and we hope to work to achieve even more in the future, with his input.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Three points; first I'd like to reflect on Mr. Nitah's discussion about Pages, and Pages coming in to serve here in the Assembly from the communities. I learned something tonight, that we have perhaps in the Commonwealth the youngest Pages of potentially any Parliament, and I think that's something we should be proud of and we should enhance. The discussion is one that I would like the Board of Management to pursue -- and I would only like to recommend tonight, Mr. Chairman, that perhaps through the course of our discussion, Mr. Whitford as the chair of the board, and the Members have heard enough and I hope that this can be carried to Board of Management at its next meeting or a meeting in the near future -- that it could consider revisiting the policy on how Pages are brought in from the communities. I think it is an issue that deserves some further consideration. But I would like to at least recommend that we leave it to the Board of Management to consider.

A question that I would like to pose, Mr. Chairman, regards public access to the Great Hall. There was a request that came in last year at some point. A territorial group wanted to use the Great Hall for a workshop. Because of some considerations that were in our policies at the time, their request was declined or denied. That's fine. It was done by the rules or the ideas that were on the books at the time. But I do recall that the Board of Management, in response to a request from me, said they would reconsider the policy of access to the Great Hall. I'm wondering, Mr. Chairman, if that policy has indeed be reconsidered, and do we have a new set of criteria for access by public groups to the Great Hall? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I am aware of the concerns of the member. Part of the decision to make the decision that we did was based on concerns by committee chair. At the time, the committee was reviewing a particular bill and it was too close to the meetings of the committee and the group that was going to be meeting. Board of Management is always concerned with the non-partisan use of the Great Hall. We have certain restrictions as far as picket signs and protests, where there are concerns, so we enforce that. We're also concerned when groups want to deal with certain issues that are perhaps to be confused with committee meetings that are taking place at approximately the same time on the same subject, and this was part of it. The policy hasn't been developed yet that will totally address all of the concerns of the public. I think there has to be some latitude for the board to make certain decisions on particular use. So that's where it stands.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So just for clarification, has the policy of access to the Great Hall been considered and has it been decided to leave it as is, and that is the decision of the board? Just for clarification. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, we haven't yet finalized the decision. We're having some difficulty in determining the interpretation of non-partisan, which is

causing the most concern. We're trying to come up with a proper interpretation of that term.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the answer and I'll continue to monitor the meetings and the agendas of the board and see if we can work toward a revision of that policy. I don't have it before me tonight so I don't want to pursue it anymore in this context.

The third and final item I would like to ask about, Mr. Speaker, and it concerns potentially -- let's call it part of the décor -- and the symbol and the identity here in the Legislative Assembly. I would direct members' attention to the polar bear hide that's on the floor in front of us, colleagues. This is obviously an important symbol and I think a popular one and a well-respected one among Northerners, and obviously among visitors. Our bear is sort of showing signs of use and fondness, as the hair on his poor snout is getting kind of threadbare. Some of the taxidermy around his great jaws is a little shabby. Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the restoration and the care of this bear is something that is under the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly. To restore his dignity, could the Chair look into some restoration? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's indeed a very good comment, good question on the honourable bear that is here. This bear has a long, long history for this Assembly. This bear was donated by one of the honourable Members -- I think Mr. Pudluk -- some time ago. He used to be Deputy Speaker and a long-serving Member, the Dean of the House for a while. Indeed it has seen an awful lot, and it's felt an awful lot as well. It's an attraction for young people. Indeed it is losing its hair, like some of the honourable Members.

---Laughter

As soon as the Assembly is over, Mr. Chairman, this bear is going to be taken by a taxidermist company here in town and properly stabilized and restored to its dignity. Mr. Speaker would also welcome any other suggestions for a display of some of our history, some of our historical connection to the land. A suggestion has been for the honourable Member for Nunakput to donate to this House a muskox carpet, perhaps, or a bison from Thebacha or the Deh Cho that would symbolize the connection to the land. But I can assure the honourable Members that when they return in the June session not only will they see new uniforms on the Pages, but a rejuvenated bear.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Okay, great, thank you. If the board would be so kind as to share any information it can find out about hair restoration, some Members, I'm sure, would appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my remarks.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to take too much time; it's getting fairly late, but I do have a couple questions. Mr. Nitah raised the issue of Pages, and it's been a very good program and I've tried on an annual

basis to try to get a couple Pages in here and it's been working out fairly well. However, I'm quite concerned when Mr. Nitah brought up the issue about liability. It was always something I thought was covered under this House, and I'm not so certain anymore. Could the Speaker tell me when we have Pages travelling en route and when they're here, who assumes the liability? Do I assume it as an MLA when I bring Pages down? Is it my liability? Do I have to assume the liability on that? Could the Speaker answer that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, indeed, the Member is quite correct in his concerns. There are two different types of liability, I assume. When the Pages are travelling with the honourable Member, they're covered to the same extent, I've been informed, as duty travel if they're assigned to be here for that particular purpose. If they're on their own, they're on their own. That's a different matter, if they come on their own. But if they're coming with a Member and they're the responsibility of the Member, they would be covered under duty travel.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I also asked about when the Pages are here in the city of Yellowknife, does the liability fall under my responsibility?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. The honourable Member is correct. In the past -- and I'm going only on historical data here -- the Member would assume that responsibility. They would be happy to chaperone the students, to put them up in their own accommodations and to look after them, or in a hotel with a chaperone. I believe some of the honourable Members have had their constituency assistants travel with them, stay in a hotel with them, and they took on that responsibility. The honourable Members in the past have always enjoyed that kind of rapport with their young people. You know, this Legislative Assembly has made a lot of effort to involve youth in its programs, and we take great pride that we're going into our fourth year for Youth Parliament, which is recognized throughout the Commonwealth as being one of the forerunners in Youth Parliaments. It takes place in here every year. It is very well represented by students from across the North representing the honourable Members.

But for the Page program, historically, Members took on that responsibility, chaperoned the students or had their assistants do that, and the program seemed to have worked well.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I do take pride in bringing Pages to this House, however, I was never aware that I would be personally liable. I think that's something that has never been spelled out up to now. We, as out-of-town representatives, are certainly at a disadvantage then. I mean, it's bad enough we have to come to Yellowknife to hire our staff here because that's the only way we can be fairly efficient at being involved as things happen around here, and if we don't utilize some of the services in the Great Hall and other things; but now the Pages, I have to be personally responsible. Isn't

there some kind of an insurance program we could access that would cover this?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think maybe the direction that we're going in is probably not quite correct. We're talking a lot of insurance as far as financial and this type of coverage. I don't think that's what I meant. I'm referring to the responsibilities that the member would assume, and assure the parents that they're going to supervise the young people who come here. They're going to take them under their wings, so to speak, and be more responsible for the moral part of it, for lack of a better term. They're going to get to bed on time, they're going to get up in the morning on time, they're not going to be rowdy or doing things that they normally wouldn't do.

I think that's what I was probably referring to, more than the sense of an accident happening. Youth who do come here as Pages are generally quite responsible. In the past, the supervision given by the honourable Members has never been that onerous. They've never had... Very, very few, in my recollection have ever been a problem. Perhaps getting them down to eat on time and getting them up in the morning to have their breakfast on time and to get down to the Assembly on time; those kinds of things are really incidental and they're minor inconveniences at best.

I think the direction that this is taking seems to be that is a tremendous load on the Member. I assure you it isn't. It could be seen by the community as being a very important part of young people's upbringing, and a very valuable contribution to the community by the honourable Members by doing something like this. I see the direction going in an area here where we're talking about insurance and stuff like that. That's not what I had in mind. It's the parental guidance that the parent has tasked over to the honourable Members, that they should be more than happy... I would be more than happy to take it on.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, as Mr. Nitah pointed out, there's a double standard here. None of the Yellowknife MLAs have to look after... They don't take any responsibility over their Pages. We, on the other hand, have to assume liability over them, and we have to pay for it out of our budgets. A lot of times, I have to consider whether I should bring in Pages or take a trip to my riding. This is a completely different set of responsibilities, and it's not about getting them out of bed on time or putting them to bed. Those things are fairly easy to take care of, and I'm sure every out-of-town MLA here does that. But how can this House expect us to be liable, personally liable, for our Pages when they come from the community? That is a real... That's a complete, two-tiered system when we start dealing with other MLAs versus the local MLAs. So I'd like to know if the Speaker would look at this whole situation, and see if we could at least try to balance it out. I don't think everybody was aware that we would be personally responsible for our Pages. That could be a huge liability if something happened.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I'm getting a bit concerned with the vision that some of the members are getting with what their responsibilities are, and talk of personal liabilities. I don't think that that was the intention of my comments. When I refer to liability as a responsibility of parental responsibility, you're bringing someone here and you're going to look after them. You're assuring the parents that you're doing that. I don't think it's a matter of them getting hurt and that you're going to be personally responsible. That's not the issue.

As far as the fairness is concerned; well, if the honourable Members don't think this is fair, then they should bring some recommendations to the Board of Management. We'll take that under advisement and see if we can come up with something. Currently we pay for the transportation of two students per year per member. We've gone that far. If the honourable Members wish to have this changed, then approach the Board of Management, make the recommendations to the Board of Management. The Board of Management, in its wisdom, will make its decision based on that and perhaps come forward with more money to do it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I'll take the direction from the Speaker and bring the issue to the Board of Management. It's certainly a big issue and it just can't be overlooked anymore. It's something that has to be balanced out. We should not be put in a position to be liable, in terms of getting sued or anything if something happens to the Pages. Everybody should be on the same playing field at this point.

I also just want to ask the Speaker about affirmative action. I see in his opening comments he's trying to get the House to reflect the traditions and the culture. I'd like to know about the affirmative action content in his staff. People tune into this House every day and we don't see a lot of aboriginal staff in this building, at least not up front.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard the comments and the concerns of the honourable Member. I can assure him that we've given it our best shot over the past little while. We do have a good number of aboriginal people working within the building. The honourable Members have their choice of who they hire, as well, for their assistants, and I think they set the trend as well. But we follow the normal hiring practices here, and be assured that affirmative action is one of the things that we apply as is required. I'm not sure where we can go with that at the moment but, as positions come available, aboriginal people should be encouraged to apply. Then certainly the Affirmative Action Policy will be enforced and applied wherever it's necessary.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you. Just a couple of points. On the Page program I've been listening, and I'd like to also recommend that the Speaker, as the chair of the Board of Management, take this issue to the Board of Management to look into it further. I acknowledge that and I appreciate that I think the Page program has improved over the last two or three years, because prior to that we didn't have a system where the out-of-

town members could bring Pages here. But I think it is a fair point that the Yellowknife Members take it for granted that our school children come here and they get to see the workings of the Assembly and have the benefit of it, and that similar services and programs should be available to the other Members and their young constituents.

This is such an honourable place, and I know that Youth Parliament, for example, has given an opportunity for the young to come here and see what their Members do. I know that the Paging program in Ottawa is one that is very prestigious and that attracts students from all over Canada to serve as a Page in Parliament, except that I guess in Ottawa, they have older Pages and some of them are in college and university, so you don't have to worry about looking after them and lots of other things that come to play here. So there are a lot more cost implications, I appreciate that, because we have Pages who are much younger.

Maybe to accommodate the out-of-town MLAs, maybe we could raise the age of Pages who come from out of town. Maybe they could be teenagers. Well, maybe they need more care, I don't know. But there are lots of other things to consider. I know that for Youth Parliament, lots of staff actually volunteer and give up their personal time to supervise them for 24 hours a day. So just to have them for a week is the thing. But if Board of Management could put their brains into it and address the matter in detail and in a thorough manner, maybe all of these issues could be looked at and addressed. I think that if we could come up with \$250,000 to put a camera outside of my window, I think that we could address our minds to come up with a program to address this issue and to really give a fair chance. This is not about the Members, it's about the kids who could have that opportunity to see what happens here and I think that's very important. So that's one issue.

The second issue that I want to ask the Speaker to bring to the Board of Management, and it's something that came to me when I received correspondence from the Speaker's office in February... I don't know how much of it is public so I don't want to divulge too much, but I think that we're aware that there is some sort of succession planning in the offing and I'm sure that appropriate and well-deserved recognition will be given in due course. So I know that the Board of Management is considering this, and I'm wondering if the Speaker would consider looking into some sort of affirmative action for the management of the Assembly? I say this because this is such a symbolic place and we are looked upon as a public example to do good and to follow the policies of the government wherever possible. For me, the House officers and Clerk's office is the management of the Legislative Assembly. I really believe that wherever possible that it should reflect the affirmative action that we espouse.

So I'd like to know if the Speaker would address with the Board of Management to set up a program to train and hire aboriginal House officers and women House officers, as well as everyone else. I mean that for future planning. I don't mean that for any of the incumbents here, because I know we are certainly given very good service and advice and I appreciate that very much. But I think that whenever an institution like this is going through succession planning that only comes once in a while, it might be a good time to look at that. So I'd like to know if the Speaker would be willing to bring that to Board of Management.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, those are good comments, and be assured that the board has already looked at succession planning and it will consider all of the things that the honourable Member has raised. It's already begun and we're just waiting for some feedback, and we certainly will take into consideration what the Member has put forward.

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

**MS. LEE:** Further to that, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Deh Cho brought up statistics on affirmative action. I think that the stats would show that the Legislative Assembly as a whole could do better in terms of affirmative action stats. I think probably I could say that about most of the departments.

Another thing I want to add to that is the Clerk's office encompasses a whole array of services. Most of the work done in the Assembly is under the auspices of the Clerk's office, and House officers, to me, are the management. They are the top of this Assembly, and that should be where the affirmative action should be most applied and reflected. In your discussion with the Board of Management, I wonder if you would make sure that there is an internal mobility focused in that as well, because in every department we want to make sure that affirmative candidates are brought in, then moved up, trained and given opportunities to be promoted and grow in those jobs. The guiding principle of affirmative action is that there are no barriers put in place that would discriminate against one group or another.

So in your discussions with Board of Management about this, I want to make sure that you will address your mind to making sure that you look within the government to see who may be able to be placed in a position to be trained to be a House officer, along with everyone else who are in place so that it properly reflects the population that we serve. I think that there's a lot of work being done by the Speaker's office to make sure our cultures are reflected in our surroundings, as well as the manpower that's used here; man and woman power.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments the honourable Member has made and I believe the Board of Management will take those considerations and deal with them. One of the elements in the succession plan is to recruit or actively seek out and recruit affirmative action people and put the training in place that will see them achieve what the honourable Member is suggesting. I think if you look at the workforce, it does reflect to a greater degree than probably is visible the affirmative action guidelines, the length of time people are here, born and raised in the Territories. We would certainly welcome more suggestions on how to improve this from the honourable Members as time goes by.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** General comments. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as we all know, we are going into an election year and there is going to be a transition between this Assembly and the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly. In most cases, coming from the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly and then going into the 14<sup>th</sup>, I really notice a difference with regard

to accountability, protocol and what you are accountable for and what you are not accountable for.

One thing I see is there is more paperwork than ever before. I think that there is a point of accountability, but there is also a point of overkill. I would like to ask the Board of Management have they considered, knowing there is going to be a transitional document of some sort for the new government, have they looked at the Members' Handbook or our rules and procedures that we have to operate under with regard to the problems we have run into with accountability or expenses, for travel, for the problems we run into in trying to do our job as a Member, what you can do and what you can't do?

I feel that this 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly is more restricted than we were in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly. To do your job, you have to keep looking through a microscope to see if it's okay to do it or it's not okay. You have to get permission to do this and you have to pack the handbook around with you. Are there any efforts going to be made to have a review of existing policies and guidelines that we have in place for Members to carry out their responsibilities as elected Members to this Legislature? And is there going to be input from Members of this Assembly to have a say on areas that are controversial and the possibility of looking at recommendations to the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly, so they can have a chance to rework some of these rules to make them more workable?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The honourable Member's comments are appreciated and heard. I personally don't know of any review of the handbook that's taking place because I have always assumed and have been assured that it does follow the Legislative Assembly's policies. This is just a guideline to meet those particular policies. There are things that are perhaps difficult to deal with, but a simple phone call or a meeting of the administrative staff will certainly clear that. I don't think that we can operate without rules and guidelines. Those guidelines are there and have been modified since I first started in the Assembly and it makes it quite clear and oftentimes too clear.

If the Member has some particular suggestions that we could use to enhance that book or the transition to the next Assembly, we would certainly appreciate them and it would help us and the next Assembly make things more streamlined. But be assured that the policies and acts that have been set out by this House and the government are being applied and I don't wish to see that changed, smoothed out, yes. If there are some suggestions the honourable Member can make to help us, we certainly would entertain that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, that's exactly what I am asking for. Will there be input from the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly to look at the policies and guidelines we follow and make recommendations to the Board of Management or the Speaker that these things should be changed or considered through the transitional document for the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly, that these are things maybe you should look at through amendments of the Legislative Assembly Act or look at the acts and regulations they have in place. I will use an example, this just happened lately with regard to a funeral. I got a request from a constituent to go to a funeral. So you get the request, I got a letter from the band

council in McPherson to attend a funeral. Then I am told you can't go because it's outside your constituency.

The North is a small place. Everybody knows each other. Regardless of where you are from either through marriage or relationships or whatever, we are spread out throughout the whole NWT. A constituent moves from one riding to another person's riding. In the North, these are day-to-day things. That's what makes us unique. Everybody has a connection to someone else. Yet, we don't draw lines on a map and say sorry, if you die on that side of the line, you are out of luck. That's what it's coming down to. My view is in things like that, common sense should apply. Common sense should state that there is a direct association between yourself and a constituent and a family member, that if that's what the community is requesting that you do, so be it. But because the way the rules are, you can't be seen in another constituent's riding or be seen in another geographical area because it's outside of your geographical constituency. Common sense things.

As a Legislature, sometimes these rules that were put in place go overboard and the whole aspect of accountability is getting so stringent that every time you want to do anything, you have to get permission. As a Member and an elected official of this government, there should be some leeway given to Members to say you are accountable to your constituency first, but you are also accountable to the expenditures you make as a Member. There has to be a balance there. As a government, we sometimes lose sight of who we are representing here. Are we becoming the bureaucracy within the bureaucracy or are we there as a Legislature to ensure we have the flexibility to carry out our duties as elected Members without being hindered or put into a situation where there are things that you want to do and you don't have the ability to do it. People in our communities that want us to do something, they think we can pick up the phone and do it just like that. If you say sorry, under this rule I can't do that, I am restricted, I can't be seen as fund raising or donating money. Yes, rules are okay but we are in a small geographical area. The way things are done in the North aren't done in Ottawa or wherever else.

My concern is we made amendments to the Legislative Assembly act and we made some changes to the way Members have to abide by certain rules and there are times that we should review those rules to make sure they are workable and are working for the extent that they were put in place for, but not to handcuff the Member from trying to carry out his responsibility. There have been a lot of arguments between staff people in the Legislative Assembly and Members. I think if that's happening, it tells me there is something wrong with the way people are interpreting the rules we have in place. I think we should look at our rules to see what's working and what's not. All I am asking for is that we have the opportunity to do that during the term of what's left of this 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, so we consider making some recommendations to the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly to consider those changes.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments by the honourable Member are welcomed as they always are. The honourable Member will, for personal recollection, know that he's approached the board many times for dispensation on certain rules that affect everything from

travel to housing. The board has always taken things into consideration when it's in the best interest of meeting the Member's needs and falling within the policies and guidelines as set up by this House. We aim to please.

The board would more than welcome any contribution the honourable Member would make by way of letter or presentations to the board to deal with specific issues. Accountability is an issue, I guess that's interpretable. We certainly are in the forefront of how we do things here. The public will watch how the Members conduct themselves and what we do for Members. Know that we are looking after the best interest of the people of the Territories. The Board of Management would certainly be happy to hear and read what the honourable Member would put forward to them.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was following the comments made by Mr. Nitah and Mr. McLeod earlier on the issue of Pages. I would certainly welcome the Board of Management taking a look at that issue and ensuring that they consider the points raised by those two Members in terms of bringing Pages in from communities outside of Yellowknife.

I know that the board is always concerned about budgets and living within our means. The fiscal outlook is not perhaps as bright as we would like. So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to suggest that when the board takes a look at that, they might want to take a look at where the money could come from. I know I would certainly be prepared to support a reduction in the Legislative Assembly's participation in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I think reducing it to the membership and the Speaker travelling to functions is probably appropriate. I would think we could save a considerable amount of money if we didn't send a raft of Members off to different things around the world with this organization. I, too, would encourage the board to take a look at it and fund it from within. Let's improve the access for Members to bring Pages in from their communities, but let's stay within the budget and stop sending so many Members to different parts of Canada and around the world. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his comments. If that's the direction that this House gives the board, we certainly would be pleased to entertain that kind of a suggestion. It is this House that approves the budgets and it would be this House that would authorize any kind of change such as have been suggested by all of the Members. If there is an increase in the Speaker's budget to bring in more Pages and to look after them by putting in the necessary stuff, if the House approves that kind of money, I am sure that that kind of a policy could probably be arranged. It's just that from past experience, perhaps not always the best teacher, but it seemed to have worked in the past and the Members were quite pleased with what they were doing, but times are changing. The board will take under advisement any suggestions made by the honourable Members to make the representation by Members and their constituencies more known in this House and to enhance cultural opportunities and the educational opportunities of young people in this House. The board will take direction from the House. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Mr. Chairman, I certainly appreciate the support from Members on this side of the House on my request for consideration of Pages being brought in from every community in the NWT. I think it's only fair that that's done.

Mr. Chairman, in the last little while we have been arguing quite passionately over harmonization policy. I have asked every department about their employees in the communities. I won't make the Speaker and the Legislative Assembly an exception, so I will ask the Speaker how many employees does this Legislative Assembly have in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Mr. Chairman, we don't have any programs out in the communities other than the honourable Members and their constituency offices that they may or may not have and the equipment that they have. The business of the Legislative Assembly is in this building. Its investment is within the honourable Members, all 19 of them. That's as far as we can go with it at the moment. Every four years, we increase our staff considerably. We have some 360 people working for a short period of time to get all of the things necessary to conduct a proper and orderly election of the honourable Members every four years, but that's about the extent outside of the capital business.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sometimes I think this government should use the number of hours used as a statistic instead of percentage of employees, especially in the area of affirmative action. However, Mr. Chairman, four of us, including yourself, when we exclude Cabinet, represent 28 communities. Yet, we don't have much more resources than those Members who represent one community or one community having seven Members. It takes a considerable amount of time, energy and resources to represent all those people, all those communities and all those interest groups.

For that reason, Mr. Chairman, I encourage the Speaker as chairman of the Board of Management to look at ways to improve our budget, so we can have people employed in each of our communities that we represent, so we could bring information from those communities and we could send information through the constituency assistants to the Members of our communities. Not only political direction but if RWED has a new program, we could inform our constituents through that office. If Education, Culture and Employment has a new program, we could inform our constituents through that office. Currently it's very difficult to do that. A lot of us at this time of the year have to consider laying off staff members that we have. We usually have one here in Yellowknife. It's not equitable to hire one staff member in Res and not one in Lutselk'e. If a person like yourself Mr. Chairman, represents three communities, you can't hire three people in each community because you don't have the budget. I think it's high time to recognize the workload that each Member has in their representation.

I don't know how many times we have said in this House we are experiencing unprecedented levels of development, political development. I have an Akaitcho Territory negotiating

implementation of treaty. It's a government-to-government relationship with this government and the federal government. I represent the Metis Nation of the NWT. They are doing the same thing. I have three diamond mines in my constituency. We have a pipeline going down the Mackenzie Valley. We have all kinds of other developments. That takes our time. We just finished the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act. That took a lot of time. We had to create a special committee to review the relationship between this government and non-tax-based communities. That takes a lot of time. We just agreed to establish another community to look at harmonization a little closer. That's going to take time. That takes time away from our families and our constituents. I think it's only fair that this government recognizes it. The Members need the resources, so the Members can do the jobs they got hired and elected to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his comments. The board has always been responsive to the needs of the individual Members as they put their cases forward for not only the work that they do in their constituency, but their own comforts while they are here in the capital city. We have always managed to meet within our budget or seek a few dollars more to be able to accommodate and we greatly appreciate any comments and suggestions that would come forward to make our job easier and representation better across the Territories. That same offer still stands.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**Detail**

**Office Of The Clerk**

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Detail. Page 1-9, Office of the Clerk, operation expense, total operation expense, \$7.592 million. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, may I get a breakdown under this item? I understand the committee's expenses are under this item as well. Could I get -- if not right now perhaps later on -- a breakdown of expenditures by each committee by reasonable categories of staffing, travel, contract services, what sort of contract services? Perhaps I could be provided with the general numbers, committee by committee, what the expenditures have been.

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to suggest we provide that to the honourable Member later, but I do have the budget for 2002-2003 breakdown, if this committee will allow me to read it off. The Board of Management, for example, \$100,000; clerk's conference, \$5,000; special functions, \$15,000; Christmas function, \$5,000; CPA, \$90,000; youth parliament, \$15,000; information and privacy commissioner, \$35,000; conflict of interest, \$40,000; Accountability and Oversight, \$195,500; Governance and Economic Development, \$135,000; Social Programs, \$85,000; Rules and Procedures, \$7,000; and, Caucus, \$50,000 for a total of \$777,500. We can provide a copy later.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.



**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that info. Could I get a more detailed breakdown later on? Not included in there are special committee expenditures. Could I be provided with that, please?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Mr. Chairman, because of the detail of that, would it be possible to provide that to the honourable Member later rather than here?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee, is that acceptable?

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Chairman, I don't believe I have any other option. I can't even ask an oral question on that one. I will be satisfied to get that information later on when it's ready. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Executive summary, office of the clerk, operation expense, total operation expense, \$7.592 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

#### Office Of The Speaker

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Office of the Speaker, operation expense, total operation expense, \$143,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**AIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 1-13, expenditures on behalf of Members, operation expense, total operation expense, \$5.32 million. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I get a breakdown of what constitutes Members' pension expenditures?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, \$1.456 million.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that the yearly expenditure that the Assembly makes to the pension fund?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It does fluctuate from year to year. Some years it goes down, some years it goes up. It depends on a number of factors.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ought to know that, but I can't remember. Can I get clarification on what constitutes this expenditure? Is that money coming out of the government or is it just something we keep an account of?

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

**HON. TONY WHITFORD:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I will ask Mr. Moreside to respond to that. He's got the actual document in front of him.

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

**MR. MORESIDE:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, it's an accounting entry that's required by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants public sector accounting concept. The accounting number is PS-3250. It's to recognize a liability for pensions due to interest in the amortization of past service gains and losses.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Expenditures on behalf of Members, operation expense, total operation expense, \$5.320 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Office of the chief electoral officer, operations expense, total operations expense, \$876,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Commissioner of official languages, operation expense, total operation expense, \$501,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 1-18, information item, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 1-19, work on behalf of others, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$20,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 1-7, Legislative Assembly, department summary, operation expense, total operation expense, \$14.432 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the Department of the Legislative Assembly has concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to thank the Speaker and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out?

At this time, I believe that was the schedule the committee agreed to deal with. I would like to ask what is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I recommend we continue consideration of Bill 3 and consider it clause by clause.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

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

**Clause By Clause**

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We will continue with Bill 3. Could I get the Members to direct their attention to the grey booklet, tab 3. Clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 3. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Members will be aware, the committee passed a motion to delete some funds earlier on in our consideration of the bill. So in order to reflect the amounts that have been changed, we need to amend clause 3. For the record, Mr. Chairman, the issue was usually done by the government. This is the first time in 23 years that this sort of motion will be made by a regular Member.

**Committee Motion 11-14(6) To Amend Clause 3(2) Of Bill 3, Carried**

Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 3(2) of Bill 3 be amended by striking out "\$997,971,000" and by substituting "\$997,822,000."

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Clause 3, as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 4.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 5.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Clause 6.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Schedule, part 1, vote 1, operation expenditures, total appropriation for operation expense, \$923.991 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Part 2, vote 2, capital investment expenditures, total appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$73.980 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total appropriation, \$997.971 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

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

**Committee Motion 12-14(6) To Amend Schedule To Bill 3, Carried**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again to match the funds that we've got in the first part of the bill, now we need to change the schedule. I move, that the schedule to Bill 3 be amended to

(a) decrease by \$149,000 the appropriation amount set out in Part 2, item 17, "Education, Culture and Employment", by striking out "\$9,077,000" and by substituting "\$8,928,000";

(b) decrease by \$149,000 the amount set out in Part 2 as "TOTAL APPROPRIATION FOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT EXPENDITURES", by striking out "73,980,000" and by substituting \$73,831,000"; and

(c) decrease by \$149,000 the amount set out at the end of the schedule as "TOTAL APPROPRIATION", by striking out \$997,971,000" and by substituting \$997,822,999".

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Schedule, as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$73.831 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total appropriation, \$997.822 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 1, to the preamble.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Bill as a whole, as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that Bill 3 is ready for third reading, as amended?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Bill 3 is now ready for third reading, as amended.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Report progress, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** For the record... Excuse me, Mr. Miltenberger. I don't believe you were recorded, Mr. Miltenberger. For the record, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I move we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Would the House come back to order, please. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta.

#### ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004, Committee Report 4-14(6) and Committee Report 5-14(6), and would like to report progress with four motions being adopted and that Bill 3 is ready for third reading, as amended and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Weledeh seconds the motion.

---Applause

We have a motion on the floor. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 20, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

#### ITEM 21: ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 21, 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
17. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- 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 6-14(6), Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's 2001-2002 Annual Report
  - Committee Report 8-14(6), Report on the Review of the "Report of the Auditor General to the NWT Legislative Assembly for 2000 and 2001"
  - Committee Report 9-14(6), "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
- Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 12, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:15 p.m.