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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 16, 2005****Members Present**

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 81-15(3): Kyoto Protocol**

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise that the Kyoto Protocol comes into effect internationally today.

---Applause

As Members are aware, the Kyoto Protocol falls under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It establishes targets for developed nations to start curbing their greenhouse gas emissions.

Canada's target is to reduce emissions to six percent below 1990 levels, starting in 2008. Currently there is no Kyoto target for the Northwest Territories or any other provincial or territorial jurisdiction. The Canadian target is for national emissions only.

Mr. Speaker, this government supports actions to reduce emissions and plan for climate change adaptation because we know, firsthand, that climate change is a concern to residents of the Northwest Territories. We are experiencing many of the changes described in the recent Arctic Council Impact Assessment on Climate Change, changes the Arctic council believes will accelerate as greenhouse gases accumulate in the atmosphere.

These changes are already impacting the people of the Northwest Territories. We are already seeing increased costs for constructing and maintaining infrastructure, roads and buildings because of changes in our permafrost regimes. We are also beginning to experience greater unpredictability in our weather here in Northern Canada.

In 2001, RWED led efforts to develop a NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy. Mr. Speaker, despite our limited resources, this government, the Arctic Energy Alliance and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation have undertaken many initiatives to improve energy efficiency and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Northwest Territories. Some key actions include:

- promoting public awareness and understanding;
- increasing energy efficiency in public facilities;
- assisting communities in developing progressive energy plans; and

- promoting renewable energy, including an expanded role for hydroelectricity in the NWT.

In addition, the department is currently reviewing the NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy with climate change stakeholders in order to ensure adequate focus on climate change adaptation.

Mr. Speaker, I hope these actions will make us, as a government and as individuals, think and act more responsibly about our current levels of use of fossil fuels. As we continue to address the high cost of energy in the NWT, we will need to ensure that other sources of energy are seriously considered, such as hydroelectricity and renewable energy sources, and that we all do our part to use energy wisely.

The Government of Canada has issued a challenge to every Canadian to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by one tonne per year per person. I encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly and every resident of the NWT to take the one-tonne challenge. Fewer emissions will help protect our climate and contribute to cleaner air and healthier communities for all of us. Seriously consider using less energy, reducing waste and conserving water in your daily life. Mr. Speaker, you'll be surprised at how quickly you can meet the one-tonne challenge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Minister's Statement 82-15(3): Mackenzie Regional Youth Conference

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to share information with Members about the eighth annual Mackenzie Regional Youth Conference.

---Applause

This event is taking place over the next three days in my home community of Fort Providence, and I am happy to say that I will be travelling there this evening to greet the youth and to open the conference.

I am also pleased that Mr. Kevin Menicoche, Member for Nahendeh, and Mr. Robert Hawkins, Member for Yellowknife Centre, will be able to join me for the opening ceremonies, as well.

---Applause

Over the past number of years, the conference has continued to grow and to become more and more popular with the youth. This year, the youth will be hosted by the

students and staff at the Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School in Fort Providence.

It is exciting that all regions of the Northwest Territories will be represented at the conference. At this time, we understand that youth from Fort McPherson, Deline, Wha Ti, Detah, Ndilo, Jean Marie River, Wrigley, Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson, Hay River Reserve, Kakisa and, of course, Fort Providence will be attending.

The theme that they have chosen for the conference is Following Our Dreams. I think this theme is very appropriate, as it encourages youth to use their imagination, set goals and take action on their dreams to become stronger, more independent and successful northerners.

One of the practices that organizers have followed is to provide sessions to the youth, based on what they want. They have listened to what the youth say in previous evaluations, which is why the youth continue to want to come back. This year, the sessions will include: a hockey clinic, a sports camp, driver's education, break dancing, First Aid, workplace safety, woodworking, drama, art, cosmetology and disc jockeying.

By working with the school system, organizers have been able to ensure that youth can earn career and technology studies credits by taking some of these sessions.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that life in the North is changing rapidly. We also know that today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. I believe that conferences such as the Mackenzie Regional Youth Conference are valuable learning events. They foster friendships and inspire youth to dream. They help to build the skills youth will need to be our future leaders.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is proud to have supported this conference. Through our Youth Contributions Program, we have provided \$12,500 to support the school in Fort Providence to provide meals and other logistical support. An additional \$7,400 has been given to various groups to support travel for youth delegates from several communities. As well, staff from Municipal and Community Affairs' Deh Cho regional office have been very involved in helping to make this event come together.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize the organizers, facilitators, chaperones and volunteers who have invested many hours in preparing for this gathering. Without their contribution, the youth would not be able to enjoy such a wonderful event as the Mackenzie Regional Youth Conference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Socioeconomic Agreement For the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker...(English not provided).

Mr. Speaker, the pipeline is very important to my region and I wish to speak about it today. Unfortunately, the

federal government still isn't listening to the Deh Cho when they say they want a meaningful role in the pipeline's environmental assessment. So it is my hope that this time the GNWT is able and willing to create a socioeconomic agreement with some teeth.

I have always maintained that I fear that history will repeat itself. The pipeline from Norman Wells created the majority of short-term jobs in Fort Simpson. Economic boom was there, but for the prepared and the wise, Mr. Speaker. As well, this time around, the oil and gas companies still aren't giving us any indication that they would be even remotely interested in enhancing our infrastructure. Furthermore, our businesses do not see how there is going to be any advantages to them from this pipeline. My communities are overwhelmed by the amount of information associated with the pipeline that is just being thrown at them, Mr. Speaker. We don't have the lawyers or the staff to review and act upon all of this information. Then there are the environmental concerns. The Canadian Arctic Resource Committee released a report in January that said the pipeline could threaten nesting birds, the boreal forest, the muskeg, and the bear and caribou populations. The report also criticized industry for not providing enough information about all of these adverse effects, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the pipeline is not just threatening business and the environment; it is threatening, as well, a culture, a people and a way of life. We need a socioeconomic agreement that is going to mitigate the effects of the pipeline and guarantee substantial long-term benefits for the Deh Cho region. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Capacity For Maximizing Economic Benefits

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has historically provided funding to third-party organizations such as municipalities and band councils to hire a person to pursue economic opportunities on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, some larger communities like Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and Inuvik have secured such an arrangement. The need for this type of support has particularly come to light at this time in view of the impacts and opportunities from resource development. Hay River is a major surface transportation hub in the Northwest Territories, located at the origin of the Mackenzie River barging system and at the end of the railway and major highways in Alberta. As such, things like the Mackenzie gas project are expected to have significant impacts on the town and its citizens. There would be greatly increased road, rail and barge traffic activity. The town wants to ensure that there are no adverse effects and that maximum economic benefits are realized. The town believes it is well positioned to compete in an open, fair and transparent basis for economic opportunities resulting from resource development. On behalf of its residents, the town also has an interest in ensuring the potential environmental socioeconomic and cultural impacts of development are properly addressed and monitored.

Hay River currently has one economic development officer working for RWED. This position also services the Hay River Reserve and Enterprise. The primary function of this position relates to acting as an agent for BBC and the Development Corporation in assisting clients with proposal development, contributions and debt financing for business start-ups. Another RWED employee in Hay River has been primarily assigned to be an oil and gas advisor for the entire Fort Smith region.

While we greatly appreciate this support to the economic endeavours in the community and the region, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the Town of Hay River administration does not have the capacity to deal specifically with economic opportunities in numerous sectors.

Hay River has traditionally had a fairly diversified economy, and many sectors, I believe, could flourish with a locally-focussed economic development officer. This would allow existing and emerging economic opportunities to be capitalized on. We would envision this position being staffed and overseen by the local town council and funded through direct contributions similar to those in 15 other communities.

As a government, I believe we need to do what we can to ensure a viable, sustainable and supported economy in all regions and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Kyoto Protocol

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been seven years in the making, but today, as the Minister of RWED indicated in his opening statement, the world has the Kyoto Protocol at its doorstep. Mr. Speaker, this is a significant piece of work. I think we should reflect here in this Assembly that it is entirely consistent with one of the main fundamental goals and values that the Assembly has set for itself; not only this 15th Assembly, but the previous ones, Mr. Speaker, have all valued the environment very highly.

Depending on who you listen to, Canada is going to fare very well or very poorly because of Kyoto. It is amazing the diversity of opinion on what this is going to do. But, you know, we should look, Mr. Speaker, at at least one startling statistic out of the organization of economic cooperation in developing countries. There are 32 in that list. Canada ranks fourth highest in the production of greenhouse gases. That amounts to 16.7 tonnes per person, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt that there is increasing climatic change and instability in the world today. There is no doubt in my mind that I and everyone here and around the...there are some 6.5 billion people in the world who are a major cause of it. Whatever actions are taken will not quickly turn the ship around. So it leaves us to see what we can do about it.

The Minister has already indicated two of the things that, here in the NWT, I believe are quite significant. One is our own internal efforts with the work of the Arctic Energy Alliance, which was created about six years ago to help coordinate and bring together the work of primary energy

producers and users. The other one is the initiative, Mr. Speaker, to harness and put to work the vast hydro potential that the Northwest Territories has, not only for us, but for everyone in our neighbourhood. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On The Sport Of Dog Mushing

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use my Member's statement today to talk about one of the great industries in my riding of Kam Lake. That industry, Mr. Speaker, is dog mushing. I am very proud to say that the riding of Kam Lake is home to the largest population, and, arguably, the best population, of sled dogs in our territory. It is also home to a number of constituents who are dog mushers. Many of my constituents are known around the globe as world-class dog mushers. Just recently, Mr. Grant Beck and his team competed in the inaugural La Grande Odyssey in France. This race was a gruelling 1,000-mile race which began in France and took the mushers to Switzerland and Italy over some very mountainous and treacherous terrain. As if the elements weren't enough, Mr. Beck fell ill with 300 miles remaining. Through sheer determination and heart, Mr. Beck fought on and finished a very respectable third place in this race against a very strong field.

---Applause

I would like to congratulate Grant Beck on his fine finish and for being such a first-class ambassador for the Northwest Territories.

Another constituent of mine, Mr. Sam Perrino, is competing in the Yukon Quest which challenges mushers and dogs with 1,000 miles of trail through some of the most spectacular and dangerous geography in North America. The trail follows old mail routes, gold rush trails, and other Klondike air transportation routes. The race trail demands phenomenal endurance on the part of all the dogs and the mushers. Whiteout conditions, temperatures in the minus 50s, fierce winds and summits are some of the obstacles to success. At this very point in the race, Mr. Perrino is in fifth place and running an incredible race. The Yukon Quest is one of the premier events in the world for dog mushers. I would like to encourage all Members of this House and interested persons to follow Mr. Perrino and his team as they try their best to win the Yukon Quest. The web site is www.yukonquest.org. Good luck, Sam. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Locating Industry, Tourism And Investment Offices In Inuvik

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Inuvik is still disappointed the government has not decided to put the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office in our town where the leaders of Inuvik believe it

should be. It is a decision I still hope the government will reconsider at some time.

Today, I would like to discuss moving the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's minerals, oil and gas office out of Yellowknife and into Inuvik.

---Applause

I have every faith that my community would do a great job of managing that office for the people of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, at some point in time, this government is going to have to establish some of the responsibility for oil and gas and administration where there actually is a pipeline. Inuvik is the hub of the gas and oil industry of the NWT. We have shown unprecedented initiative by hosting the Inuvik petroleum show which attracts people from across North America. We have an on-land gas production field. We have the pipeline and gathering systems near Inuvik. We have the office space, and we have the staff accommodation. Finally, if the pipeline construction goes ahead, we will have a 1,300-person camp within 20 kilometres of Inuvik. All we do need, Mr. Speaker, is for the government to recognize the reality of where all the gas and natural anchor fields are going to be.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important matter to my community. I'd like to encourage the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to continue his discussions with the mayor of Inuvik on the transfer of minerals, oils and gas office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Beaufort-Delta Regional Council Office Funding

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well said, Mr. McLeod. My Member's statement today is with regard to the Beaufort-Delta Regional Council office in Inuvik. I won't speak on their resolution today, but I would like to bring to the attention of the responsible Minister the importance of funding the Beaufort-Delta Regional Council office in Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, discussions have been held with regard to the office of BDRC and whether a decision should be made to fund a full-time coordinator. The information I've received and read to date is the requirement, as identified by the BDRC, for a full-time coordinator. They see this position as essential, Mr. Speaker, in order for the BDRC office to operate. This government needs to fund the coordinator position as a full-time employee.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my opening statement, there are a number of resolutions that came out of the BRDC meeting in November 2004. As the Member for Nunakput, I'll be raising these issues with the different Ministers during this sitting to make sure they pursue the implementation of the resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For Expansion Of Medical Clinics

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to speak in support of the creation of a full-day, every-day-during-the-week drop-in clinic in Yellowknife staffed by nurse practitioners, doctors and other health care professionals, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that a local doctor in Yellowknife had already started this last year or a couple of years back at the Centre for Northern Families with great success. I believe it is time for the government to support expanding this.

Mr. Speaker, just last week I received a call from a constituent with young children with special medical needs who had to wait for three hours at the emergency unit when she missed her doctor's appointment by three minutes. The same mother also had to deal with her daughter who developed white spots in her mouth. She couldn't get an appointment for a whole week and when she called Telehealth, she got really good information about a medication that she could use. Excited, she went over to the drugstore and then found out she needed a prescription to get this medication, a very simple one, which sent her back to the doctor's office or have her line up at the emergency for another three years. Three hours.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, certainly I believe that there is a better way to look after the needs of mothers and their children that lessens the demand on the doctors we have and lessen the line-up at the doctor's office, as well as putting less pressure on the emergency unit. I know yesterday the Minister had indicated that he is looking at setting up a health clinic, re-profiling the emergency unit, as well as the possibility of consolidating the clinics. My concern though, Mr. Speaker, is that all this must be going on in his head because we're not hearing of any public discussions. We don't have a board at Stanton. I think it's time that the Minister tells us what he has in plan. Obviously he has lots in the works. The demands are there. I want to know if he's talking to the professionals to get their buy-in. I will be pursuing questions during question period with the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Leadership Programs For Sahtu Youth

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the population of the youth in the Sahtu, according to the 2003 statistics, indicate that Colville Lake has 20 percent, Fort Good Hope has 30 percent, Norman Wells has 16 percent, Tulita has 30 percent, and Deline has 29 percent. That's a high population of youth in our region, Mr. Speaker. The future of the NWT depends on the ability of our youth to eventually move into leadership roles. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow and we, as the leaders of today, will hopefully be the elders of tomorrow.

The youth will be the ones to carry out the important initiatives that we put in place today.

The youth can be difficult at times, Mr. Speaker. It is easy for young people with a lot of potential to get into trouble. I believe it is the responsibility of this government to do all it can within its power to foster healthy leadership characteristics amongst our people. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate this government in supporting initiatives for the youth. As the Minister of MACA indicated, there is a conference in Fort Providence. However, Mr. Speaker, over a year ago the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment made a commitment in this House to work formally with the Minister of Youth, Minister of Health and Social Services and Minister of MACA on a plan to stimulate community-level activities aimed at youth in communities. Mr. Speaker, I'm still waiting for that plan to unfold within this government here.

Mr. Speaker, the communities are looking forward to after-school programs for our youth that would guide them to leadership roles, keep them healthy and give them some healthy choices in their lives. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, there are no questions about the value of putting resources into youth programs. We can either put government money into programs for youth that support them to make productive life choices or we put the money at the other end, like in youth justice programs, to deal with kids after they've gotten into trouble. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On GNWT Affirmative Action Policy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a concern. There has been talk of many back-room discussions by this government and residents of the NWT for as long as it has existed. Mr. Speaker, the affirmative action policy itself and the issues surrounding the affirmative action policy that this government implemented nearly 20 years ago have gone full circle and then some. I feel it has to be addressed by our government about its merit today.

The affirmative action policy as it stands today carries very little weight in this government's recruiting practices or in the recruiting practices of our northern industry, for that matter. Mr. Speaker, I'm not advocating for tighter measures and practices to ensure this policy is strictly adhered to by our hiring committees, but I do want to emphasize the need for a full review of this old policy by this government so we can put many issues surrounding the merit and intent of this policy to rest.

Although the initial intent of the affirmative action policy has contributed to a more meaningful representation by this government for the residents of the Northwest Territories since being implemented in 1986, it seems to have reached the end of its useful life and it's now starting to become counterproductive in nature to the original intent. Mr. Speaker, I think it is time to re-evaluate where we're going with our goal of equal public service representation and look at more innovative measures of fairness and equality in our hiring processes to ensure our

residents that we can treat everybody with respect and dignity when being considered for employment by this government. Colour, sex, race or place of birth cannot be the determining factors in which careers to pursue in our public service by our residents. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is the direction many northerners are headed toward because of this outdated hiring policy if it is left as is.

Therefore, we as a government have to act and develop a plan to address the policy and a directive which is not unreasonable and sends a message to our youth, who many will soon become casualties of this policy while others who are deemed as disadvantaged will be left with feelings of apathy towards career opportunities put before them.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, for the kids' sake let's take some positive action and reassess this affirmative action policy so we can all learn of better ways in which to work with each other and make more meaningful, productive choices which, in turn, will make better role models for our children to follow. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Support For The Tourism Industry

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I want to talk about my support for the tourism industry. Mr. Speaker, the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories is by far the largest renewable resource that we have going on up here. Mr. Speaker, tourists bring new dollars to the Northwest Territories that employ our good people. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is full of a vast array of natural, unique features and cultural attractions that truly draw people from around the world. Unfortunately, the tourism industry is very competitive and we have a lot of people working very hard to steal those potential tourists away from us.

Mr. Speaker, \$44 million in 2002 was the amount of tourism industry dollars being spent in the Northwest Territories last year. The tourism season is year round. We have winter and spring aurora viewing for tourists to come here from as far away as Japan, and we have rubber tire traffic that rolls up in summertime for fishing, hunting and viewing our natural landscapes.

Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned that we have the world knocking on our door and, unfortunately, we've rolled up the welcome mat when it comes to our investment in the participation at the Japanese Expo this year. Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years, our Japanese tourists coming to view one item, the aurora, have spent so much money and it's grown substantially, we are saying no to them with a meagre investment in the upcoming Expo.

Mr. Speaker, we've spent millions as a government in Spain, but where are the Spanish tourists? They're not coming. We have Japanese tourists coming every day all winter long and they're coming in huge numbers, so where is our return on their investment? Mr. Speaker, last year the Japanese spent \$16 million in the Northwest Territories, and there are countless government documents that cite that. Where is our commitment?

This raises two questions and two problems at this time. What are we doing to compete when we have Fairbanks, Alaska, offering direct flights; we have the Yukon saying they can offer just as good a product, as well as Norway and who knows where else demanding for these tourists to go there. Mr. Speaker, the second problem that arises is where is our true commitment to the people that come from Japan to see our aurora.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will have appropriate questions at the appropriate time for the Minister in charge of this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 3, Members' statements. Colleagues, before I go on, I would like to draw the Members' attention to the gallery. We have a guest from the Office of the Auditor General for Canada with us.

---Applause

They are Nelson Mayrand, Chris Polselli, Andrew Ross, Chauna Hanson, Stefanie King and Donna-Lee Shaw.

---Applause

Welcome to the Legislative Assembly and to the North. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the president of the NWT Status of Women Council, Ms. Gerri Sharpe-Staples, who's in the gallery with her son Josh.

---Applause

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome the auditors to our Assembly and I hope that they will stay for my oral question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent of mine and the president of the NWT Status of Women Council, Gerri Sharpe-Staples, and her son Josh. Welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell. In my Member's statement today, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the unmistakable fact that there will be some resource development taking place in the Territories in the next while. On the verge of such unprecedented development, all communities and regions, I'm sure, want to capitalize as much as they can and realize as much benefit as they can.

Mr. Speaker, this government, through the Minister's department, has made contributions directly to communities and development corporations. Actually, 16 transfers take place on an annual basis for a total of \$1.067 million. My question to the Minister today is how does Hay River take advantage of this program and this opportunity, as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I would like to say that I agree with the Member that there is a need for us to be ready in communities for economic development and the opportunities that will come our way from major developments. I think one of the signals that we're moving in that direction is the upcoming split of RWED and our need to be more focused on program delivery and more focused on our clients.

In terms of EDL funding, we handle this in a different manner in various different communities. Some communities do get contribution funding for the position of EDO. Some have chosen to have an RWED employee handle that responsibility. In Hay River there are a couple of RWED employees who are focused on business development, one more so toward petroleum advice and the Member spoke of that in her Member's statement. There isn't a position specific to EDO, so it's handled a little differently in Hay River.

There's also a Community Futures organization that's situated in Hay River and I think that's largely because of the amount of industrial development and the need that Hay River has. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had indicated that we certainly do appreciate the RWED presence in Hay River. I do believe though that we need an economic development officer with a specific focus on Hay River and the various sectors which exist there now. We have not had such a position for quite some time now. I don't know if I should assume that the Minister is saying there are RWED positions there and that Hay River should not be qualified for this additional funding, but I would ask the Minister if in the other larger

communities, such as Inuvik, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Norman Wells, are there not also economic development officers working for RWED in those communities but they also receive direct transfer for an EDO for their community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have all of that detailed information in front of me, but I wouldn't want the Member to take my response in a negative fashion. I think we've had this discussion with committee a number of times, but around the adequacy of our economic development funding in communities. There has been some suggestion that the amount of money that we provide for EDO services in communities doesn't go far enough toward hiring people with the necessary skills to fulfill this role. I think it's something we need to review. I'd like to do it on an NWT-wide basis and I'd like to do it with the communities. I know that Hay River is not the only community with these concerns.

As I've said before, to answer the question to Inuvik, to Yellowknife, to communities like Norman Wells, they handle it in different ways. I know Norman Wells just recently, off the top of my head, has chosen to have an RWED employee deliver the services as opposed to sign a further contribution arrangement. There are options. I think we need to sit down with committee and go through those options for all communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate that response from the Minister and I do appreciate the Minister's attendance in Hay River very recently to meet with the mayor and council on economic issues and various other sectors of economic activity in Hay River. However, Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence and although a review would be a good idea to examine how RWED provides this third-party funding for EDOs would be a great idea which I would support. Time is of the essence. Hay River needs an economic development officer soon and I would like to ask the Minister if he would entertain a proposal from the Town of Hay River for EDO funding to assist the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would agree that we are pressed for time. I know the concerns of the community. I want to ensure, as we talk about how to best resource that community and others, that an EDO position specifically focused would be the most valuable use of resources. We've had some discussion about potentially MACA's involvement with communities and some of the needs in both tax-based and non-tax-based. I think we need to move very quickly. I'm not talking about a long, drawn-out review. We need to

look at our funding levels and the availability of that fund to all communities. I want to ensure, though, that we best target these dollars. If there's a better use for the funding in Hay River and it would be better put toward the community for them to use in other areas, I'd like to review those options. So certainly there is no closed door in this and we'd be willing to entertain any proposal. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is definitely a community empowerment aspect to this transfer of funding, which does grant the communities or the corporations some latitude of discretion in terms of prioritizing what their initiatives should be, and I respect that and I understand that. This is money that would flow to the municipal government of Hay River. They would then be in a position to expend their energies where they think it would be most beneficial to the economy of Hay River. So again, I would ask at this time would the Minister entertain a proposal from Hay River for such a position? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 392-15(3): Economic Development Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. I would agree, that's the model. This is about community empowerment. We make contributions to communities; they agree to provide these types of services. Different communities handle it in different ways; pay their economic development officers different amounts of money. It really is up to the community. We certainly would entertain a proposal. I would indicate that we don't have this money planned in the budget for the upcoming year, but we'd be more than willing to sit down and speak with the community about the best use of any future additional monies. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my statement today I'd like to ask some questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services about his plans for various options in the city of Yellowknife to better cater to and address some of the concerns that have already been expressed: a shortage of nurses and doctors. I know he's implemented some nurse practitioners; but, talking to them, they feel that they are really filling in the roles of doctors that they are not really meant to do and they are getting behind schedule. People with children know how much medical attention they need on an urgent basis that may not be emergent in nature, especially with the popular calls to Telehealth, which I think is being received really well. But at the end of those phone calls, parents are usually asked to take their children to either the drugstore or to see a doctor, and our emergency unit is overloaded and understaffed. It is most often physically

not able to take all the people that are there and unless your cases are a complete emergency, you could be asked to wait for hours. So I was excited to hear the Minister saying yesterday that he's looking at alternatives. The only thing is, this is the first I've heard of that and I think there's room for consultation. I'd like to know what he plans to do and what his plans are for consultation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these plans have at least been alluded to, if not directly referenced, in some of our discussions with the Member and with various meetings with the Social Programs committee. They indicated, as well, we're working on a major review of all the health care centres, a way of classifying them, benchmarking requirements to improve the system, the coordination of medical travel, the emergency ward issue, the clinic issue, the need to get the review done so that we can proceed with the master development planning for Stanton, as well as Hay River and Fort Smith. So we've been working now for some nine months on a lot of this work, and it's at the stage where we're just finalizing it to be taken to Cabinet for review and from there we will be coming to committee. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions to the Minister are not in any way related to my role as a member or chair of the Social Programs committee. I'm asking very specific questions about what the Minister has planned for the city of Yellowknife. We have heard of the master plan, for example, for Stanton, but the public has not been given any information on that. It's my understanding that it's still in the process of being put together. So could I just ask the Minister a simple question about exactly what he has planned for the city of Yellowknife and what the time frame of that might be? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have, as I indicated yesterday in the House, a number of things on the books for Yellowknife and I'll start with Stanton. There's about a \$16 million mid-life renovation and upgrade to the facility that will help us deal with some of the emergency issues and some of the congestion and layout problems that are there, as well as look at the better use of some of the resources that are there with the surplus of acute care beds. I indicated yesterday, as well, that we are looking at the possibility of the integration of clinic services in the downtown core so that, in fact, we can be more coordinated, administratively effective and to give the clinic the capacity to do some basic things that they now

can't do that have to be referred to Stanton; simple things like doing X-rays. We are planning on moving ahead with midwifery, we're planning on moving ahead with nurse practitioners. We've come up with, as I indicated earlier, some benchmarks for what's the appropriate mix of doctors and midwives, by population and community size. So we have a number of fairly significant initiatives underway. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's answers on all of the detailed information, but I'd like to just get more specific information from the Minister. Could I ask the Minister whether there is a plan within this upcoming fiscal cycle to open a drop-in health clinic in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in this business plan but, as I indicated as well in some earlier comments to the Member and other members of committee, the federal money, which we anticipate putting to use in some of these areas or proposing that we put to use in some of these areas, has yet to be finalized. When we have that detail, we intend to take it once again to Cabinet and to committee, but the arrangements and negotiations with the federal government haven't been completed. It's anticipated they'll be completed in the next couple of months. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was so excited yesterday when I heard that the Minister had all these plans and I was hoping that I could confirm this, but it looks like this might be a little further away than I had been led to believe yesterday. Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister whether he could take it to his Cabinet colleagues to really look at setting up a drop-in clinic in Yellowknife? It has already been done by a local doctor and it has shown to be successful. I do believe it will save the government money. I don't think we need to wait for the federal government to do this. I think it's something that he can do and Yellowknife could be a good pilot point. Could I get the Minister to commit to look into getting it done within this fiscal year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 393-15(3): Addressing The Nurse And Doctor Shortage

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Member was excited, however briefly, on the many positive initiatives we have underway and if she could sustain that excitement, then

we can work together to bring them to fruition in the not-too-distant future.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we are moving to look at the improvement to the clinic services in Yellowknife and I've stated that now a number of times in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the Kyoto Protocol coming into effect today, there has been a lot of discussion in the media about how Canada is going to meet its targets producing greenhouse gas emissions. Our people are noticing changes in the environment that have happened just in our lifetime, Mr. Speaker. The NWT contributes a very small share of Canada's greenhouse gases, but with the diamond mines and the pipeline, things will change. My question to the Minister of RWED is can the Minister tell me what the GNWT's responsibilities are in helping Canada meet its Kyoto targets? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. We've felt for some time now, as I think all the rest of the provincial and territorial jurisdictions across the country, that Canada has to play a lead role in laying out and then articulating exactly how they plan to meet our Kyoto emission targets as a country. We haven't had recent specific discussions individually as jurisdictions in terms of bilateral with the federal government, but there is an expectation that the federal government will lay out a well thought out plan as to how we might meet those targets. I think it probably will mean working with Ministers of environment, Ministers of energy in tandem. In past, that vehicle of joint meetings was used to work some of this through. Those talks have broken off. Canada signed the accord at any rate, but the understanding was always that they would come back to us and we would sit down and talk about a plan for meeting those targets. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my earlier statement was the youth are going to be our leaders of tomorrow. With this important agreement that Canada has signed and our contribution to this agreement in greenhouse emissions, can the Minister tell me anything that's being done within the GNWT's infrastructure, including public housing, to reduce the greenhouse emissions over which the government has direct control? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member knows and certainly we've had this discussion with committee about some of the activities that the government has been involved in, principally through the Arctic Energy Alliance and many departments have been involved in helping to increase energy efficiency of public facilities through retrofits. We've also taken a lead role in promoting public awareness and understanding of some of these issues in trying to make sure that our own structure is up to the task and is energy efficient. I think we have more to do. This is something that we need to continue to focus and work on, especially given the high cost of electricity in many of our communities. It makes good sense for us to both focus on supply side issues -- hydro initiatives make a lot of sense - - but also demand side issues, and that's where we talk about the efficiency of our infrastructure. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Canada is the largest supplier of oil and gas, followed by Saudi Arabia. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me what the government is doing or will be doing to encourage industry and other government and private citizens to reduce the gas emissions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Really this is a global challenge and we believe that the Northwest Territories can be part of a continental energy solution for North America. The Mackenzie Valley gas project, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline use of natural gas as opposed to more carbon intense fuels I think is a step in the right direction. We need to supplant use in North America of oil and coal with natural gas wherever possible, with hydro. So if we can bring some natural gas on stream and bring that into the market in North America, we're certainly lowering, we believe, the emissions account, if you will, for North America. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Your final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the communities will be very interested especially where the route where the Mackenzie Valley would be looked at by the proponents of the pipeline. Can the Minister tell me whether any GNWT funding is available to community governments, businesses or private citizens who want to look at reducing the gas emissions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 394-15(3): Meeting The Kyoto Protocol Emission Targets

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has been involved, as I mentioned, through the Arctic Energy Alliance. We've been able to lever some federal money toward community energy plans. The one in Wha Ti comes to mind. I think there's a real potential for other communities in the valley on the pipeline route to take advantage of that location. I'm confident that we'll see through discussions that are being led now by the Power Corporation and their partnerships, some hydro initiatives come to fruition. I think that that will provide legacy infrastructure to those communities up and down the valley. We need to both from a pure economic perspective get communities off diesel, but also from an environmental perspective we can do a lot for our communities if we can give them long-lasting hydroelectric power. Thank you.

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

Question 395-15(3): GNWT Audit Bureau Reporting Model

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring up the subject of the Audit Bureau once again. Last week I spoke about the lack of staffing, but today, in recognition of our audience in the gallery and the recent comments in the news yesterday by the Auditor General of Canada, I'd like to ask a question to the Minister responsible for the FMBS. Would the Minister explain the reporting model of our Audit Bureau in the GNWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 395-15(3): GNWT Audit Bureau Reporting Model

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information at hand and I'm not very familiar with the actual reporting process. So you'll get me on this one and I'll take it as notice.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Minister has taken the question as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Premier and this is in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the hydro initiatives in the Northwest Territories. Of course, following on Canada's taking on of the Kyoto commitments, our capacity for hydro development becomes much, much more relevant and, Mr. Speaker, in the past three or four years now our government has invested heavily in communication plans and surveys to get people more familiar with hydro development in the NWT. The projects in the Taltson, in the Taltson River system in the south, and in the Bear River system of

Great Bear Lake are high on our list. I wanted to ask the Premier this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, about the negotiations and the arrangements with the First Nations, with the aboriginal people of those regions, of the Taltson and the Bear regions, which are going to be key to implementing any kind of hydro development. What is the status of our negotiations with those partners? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Negotiations continue on both of the projects. Very briefly on the Bear hydro project, there have been recent meetings and a move to create the Sahdae Energy Corporation. There's also a meeting now to finalize an MOI, memorandum of intent, between the Tulita and Deline land corporations. The Tulita Land Corporation and the NWT Energy Corporation have recently held meetings, as well, with Imperial Oil to further the discussions there, and I think they've had two meetings since the beginning of this calendar year and plan to have another one soon. So that project is moving along well.

Mr. Speaker, I can also say that on the Bear River, the partners in the Bear project have also applied for and received intervener status and are working on that front, as well. Mr. Speaker, if you can bear with me because it is a fairly long answer, but on the Taltson River, that one has continued with some work, but it has slowed down, as I told Members last fall, because one of the partners whose traditional lands the transmission line would have to cross had a deal with Regional Power. The Lutselk'e Band recently had a meeting and decided that they would support the Taltson power project over the Regional Power one and I believe are in the process of severing their relationship with Regional, but I'm not party to all the details there.

Unfortunately, there's been a change in leadership in Lutselk'e and we are now waiting for the outcome of the new election, which I think is happening, in order to advance those discussions.

With the Taltson power, we are still looking at having power go to the diamond mines, but as days go on, that becomes less and less economical and could mean substantial backing from our government if it were to move ahead. So as an alternative we are looking at southern markets, which may be possible. We are also looking at other alternatives, including using more hydropower from the Taltson ourselves. For example, in Fort Smith we have a lot of government facilities. If we were to convert them over to electrical heat as compared to diesel fuel, it might be economical. Those are the kinds of issues we're looking at as alternatives on the Taltson project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier mentioned the most important other consideration in this

whole initiative; that is making sure that we have good and viable customers, the pipeline and the diamond mines being among them. On the pipeline, the principal problem we had was convincing those folks that taking on our hydro is going to be a lot more efficient than burning up their own product to move the gas to market. Just how are we doing on this one? If there is a time crunch ahead of us, Mr. Speaker, it is on getting a commitment to be a part of that part of the pipeline deal. Just how much time do we have left? What are the hurdles before we can sign a deal with the pipeline project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned, we've had two meetings. The partners have had two meetings with Imperial Oil on this matter. Imperial acknowledges that the use of hydro for compression is technically feasible. They have questions about the economics of it. They did give the northern partners some information. In our view, there were some flaws in it. Our people in the NWT Energy Corporation and Sahdae Energy are looking at those responding and noting where the flaws are. As soon as they have completed that work, they will hold another meeting with Imperial.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have a deal yet, but we are certainly negotiating toward that. Depending on how the federal government lays out its plan in response to Kyoto targets, this could change considerably and make this a very feasible project, both economically, technically and in terms of our emissions in the Northwest Territories and probably benefit the company. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Third supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I think, with the diamond mines, one of the things that many people in the NWT regret is that we did not make it a condition of the mines being able to get started in the NWT. We did not make it a condition that, at some point, they would take hydro energy from us. We may have missed that opportunity. Would the Premier consider, Mr. Speaker, making this a condition of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline, that it will take our power? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have not, at this point, made it a condition. We are in the process of negotiating the socioeconomic agreements. We are talking with Imperial. We are not asking them to somehow subsidize our power development, but we do expect them to work with us as good business partners. We would like to deal with some of the issues first on the economics of it and the technical side and certainly encourage them at this point to look at this seriously, which they are. Up to

now, I think it is a little bit early to be able to come to a final deal with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, it has been 11 years since the last hydro development was started in the NWT. Energy markets and costs and the Kyoto deal itself really compel us to accelerate our work on this. Mr. Speaker, when does the Premier expect we will see the next hydro project started here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 396-15(3): Status Of Negotiations On Bear And Taltson Hydro Projects

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, in terms of a new project as compared to better use of the projects that we have right now, I would anticipate that it will be at least two years before we would see the construction of a new hydro project such as the one proposed on the Bear River. That would be the earliest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, I have been speaking a lot about the quality of education. Recently, the Minister was on tour with me to Fort Liard. We spoke with the community members there. They brought up a lot of issues regarding the quality of education and getting the children to school. They spoke about graduation rates. Our government probably says that we have close to the national average of 44 percent. But, if you take Yellowknife out of the equation, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at communities with very low graduation rates, up to about 20 percent. That will be a stretch, I would imagine, because, in Fort Liard alone, we had one graduate last year. That is for a community of around 600 people. I just wanted to know what plans the department has to address this concern in the smaller communities. Is the department looking at options for addressing these needs in the smaller communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department does have a small schools project underway to examine, in concert with the boards across the Territories, how we can improve schooling in the smallest communities. One thing I would like to point out is that the graduation rate over the past couple of years has, in fact, increased most in the small communities and regional

centres. It has dropped in Yellowknife. So the small communities and regional centres are showing the best improvement at the moment, but we are examining how we can continue that improvement, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister mentions a small school project initiative. It is the first I have heard about it. Perhaps, if I can ask the Minister to expand a bit on that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been a little while now since we recognized that there were challenges in the smaller schools that are more difficult to address than in larger schools. Because of that, the department has started a project to work with boards to identify how we can better support boards to deal with the problems that they face in the smaller schools and see if we can find ways to help improve the quality of education that is offered in those schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is very interesting because, about a month ago, I went to the Minister with an idea. I found a nice unique program down south that works in the smaller reserves. It is called the Sunchild E-Learning Community. I proposed to the Minister that I would like to bring up this group to explain to the communities what they are doing, because one of the things that really interested me in what they were doing, Mr. Speaker, is that they had course completion rates up to 80 percent. They have graduation rates of 80 percent. These are in very small reserves. That is something that I would like to bring up here and have our people look at it. The Minister was resistant to it; now he tells me that we have a small school project. If anything is going to fit the small school project, this is the exact type of program. I would like the Minister to have a look at this program, bring these people up, and at least have an overview of their programming and bring it up to the North, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Minister's commitment for that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The project that I am speaking about included working with the boards, because what has to happen is that the boards have to be involved. The Department of Education doesn't keep a pot of money in the centre to fund new initiatives like the one the Member is speaking about. We would have to find a willing partner among the boards to

fund that sort of process. That is what I have suggested to the Member; that he see if his region may be interested in this. Having said that, we are examining the request that the Member has forwarded to me. It is certainly something that I can bring forward to discussions with the chairs of the boards with whom I will be meeting in April. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I am astounded by government. There are real needs coming from the communities, and they are just not listening, Mr. Speaker. I just cannot believe that they keep putting things off and off when the government speaks about taking care of the needs of our communities. In fact, the principal wanted it. The mayor wants it. The principal is in favour of this proposal, and yet the government fails to do anything about it. In fact, Mr. Speaker, here in the February 10th issue of the Deh Cho Drum, the parents are there to entice their children to go to school. They have a lunch program going. In fact, they are getting corporate donations, Mr. Speaker, from Yellowknife. Even the businesses out of Yellowknife want to take care of the needs in our community, so I want our government to take care of the needs in our communities, too, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to help us explore some ways of improving our quality of education in the communities?

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 397-15(3): Graduation Rates In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do that very well with our partners in the divisional education councils. That is what I have committed to do. I have committed to examine the proposal the Member has given us in concert with those who run the education system in the Northwest Territories. We don't impose things from the centre that we don't have support for. If Members want us to start keeping money back at the centre for initiatives, we can do that. We can cut the amount of money that goes to the schools and keep some at the centre for these initiatives, but I think it is the wrong way to do it. We have a lot of examples where schools are being successful in the smaller communities. You take a look at the Tlicho region. We are seeing a lot of success in the smaller communities there with young people coming out well qualified to move on into post-secondary education. What we have committed to do is examine why we are having success in that area and try and share those successes with other people. We are prepared to take a look at initiatives like the one the Member has offered, but we have to examine that in concert with our partners and make sure we have willing partners at the education councils. Thank you.

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

Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice. It is with regard to the \$1.4 million in additional funding to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. I would like to ask the Minister today, what input or direction is this government capable of providing to the RCMP in terms of how this money is spent? Have we got any input at all, or do we just give them the money and let them call the shots in how it is spent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this money has been allocated in response to a study that the RCMP provided to this government several years ago indicating that they needed an extra 26 positions in the Northwest Territories to meet their service requirements. This is in part a fulfillment of that request. To finish off the provision of positions will require us to again increase the number of officers in next year's budget. It is the RCMP who proposed where the officers will be stationed and how they will operate the service in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the primary concerns that residents here in the Northwest Territories have are the amount of drugs that are coming illegally into our territory, mostly by the road system. I have a great deal of concern when you weigh a three-person traffic unit as opposed to getting some more money to combat the drugs that are coming into this territory. For the territory not to have any input on how that money is spent, I don't believe that should happen. I think we should tell the RCMP that we want some more resources put into combating drugs in our territory, not a three-person traffic section. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question I have for the Minister is, maybe he can shed some light on why we are getting a three-person traffic unit as opposed to more money to go in to fight drugs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suspect it is because we don't have enough money to respond to all of the requests for personnel that the RCMP have provided us. We are hoping that, in next year's budget, we will be able to improve on the numbers of RCMP officers in the Northwest Territories. I would like to remind Members though that all we are talking about with those 26 members is providing service at the level the RCMP says we need in those communities where we have members already. The RCMP won't deal with communities like Tsiigehtchic or Sachs Harbour, where we don't have members at all. There are a number of

communities in the Northwest Territories that have no service, and it would take a significant amount of money from this Legislature in order to accomplish that.

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

Supplementary To Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't suggest that the money we are spending on new positions for RCMP officers is money not well spent. It is money very well spent, Mr. Speaker. The more money this government can spend on combating crime in the territory, the better off we will be. If we need new positions in the communities, so be it. What I would like to understand, Mr. Speaker, is how...One of the new initiatives here for the \$1.4 million is to put a dog and a handler here in Yellowknife when, Mr. Speaker, we know the drugs are coming in on the highway. Why wouldn't we look at putting a dog and a handler on the ferry or at Fort Providence where the drugs are coming in? Why does a dog and handler have to be located in Yellowknife? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The RCMP have suggested that that is the best place to put it. Perhaps the Member is better qualified to know where things should be, but, in fact, that is where the RCMP say the biggest drug problem is. This dog is not just to serve Yellowknife. The dog will travel around the Northwest Territories and service all parts of the Territories as required. The RCMP have said that this is where it is needed.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 398-15(3): Additional Funding For Policing

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister was somewhat joking when he said that, but I take this quite seriously. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to know how the drugs are getting into Yellowknife. I think it is a waste of resources, actually, to put a dog and a handler here in Yellowknife when they obviously wouldn't be able to serve the highway. They should be in Fort Providence. They should be on the ferry. They should be attacking the drugs that are coming into the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a question for the Minister right now. I just wanted to make that comment. Thank you.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I received today a document put out by the Minister of Health and Social Services, by his department, signed by him with a message in the front. Mr. Speaker, this is another in a long continuum of documents which seem to be internal documents put out by this government for I don't know whose benefit; for them to share with each other, I suppose. This is called Sexually Transmitted Infections, The Naked Truth - A Strategic Directions Document. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister how many copies they published, how much it cost this government, and who is the audience. All that is contained in this document are five goals to address this problem that is primarily with the youth. I can assure you that no youth in the Northwest Territories is going to see this document. There is a logo on this thing. Somebody actually designed a logo to put on this document. I would like to ask the Minister if he would answer those questions for me. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be glad to touch briefly on the cost of sexually-transmitted infections, which run 10 to 15 times the national average. It costs this territory and many of the people, mostly the young ones between 15 and 29, a tremendous amount of money, pieces out of their lives and problems that affect us all. It is tied into HIV, hepatitis, gonorrhoea, Chlamydia, the whole gamut, Mr. Speaker, so there is a huge cost. This is part of the initiative to help deal with that tidal wave of sexually-transmitted infections.

Mr. Speaker, specifically to the costs, we spent \$735 on design. We printed 500 copies for \$1,065, and we started sending them out the middle of last week: copies to MLAs, libraries, health centres and COs, community health offices, health centres, public health, hospitals, communities, NGOs, women shelters and groups, Native Women's Association, the Status of Women, BHP, Diavik, De Beers, and NWT aboriginal organizations. The work done on this was done in a collaborative effort with Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment, the Status of Women, the Native Women's Association and the Dene Nation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a disconnect between this document, this glossy coloured document that this government has invested money on. Any amount of money invested in this that would have cost more that photocopied paper is too much money as far as I'm concerned, because the money needs to be spent on addressing the problems with the youth. I am glad that everybody has a copy of this now for

their bookshelf, but we need to look at putting the resources where the problem is. We need to look at a document that is directed to the people who are the affected audience. That is, as the Minister has indicated, the youth. What is the benefit of this over something that would have been photocopied on white paper? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course the Member is entitled to her own opinion, and if she has some constructive feedback which she would like to pass on to the coalition to tell them that they are misguided and to offer them specific suggestions, I would be very happy to take them forward on her behalf. Any expertise and opinion that she wants to bring to bear on how to combat sexually-transmitted infections, of course, would be always seriously considered, and anything that will help us turn this tide would be appreciated. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, it is unfair of the Minister to insinuate that I do not agree with the goals identified in here. The goals and the strategic work of the committee is not the issue. That is good work. What I am saying is we don't need to spend money to put it in a glossy brochure to send out to the stakeholders that are involved in this. The problem is not with the people who are receiving this document, as he listed, the problem is with the information and awareness that is available to young people about this. I would say that if you want to put out a document, put something that is targeted at the audience to whom the problem affects.

I think it is unfair of the Minister to suggest that I do not support the goals and the hard work of this coalition that went to produce this document. I think that we spend too much of our money circulating pretty documents around amongst a bunch of people who, I don't know, I guess it decorates their shelves or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister agree that any amount of money that could go directly to the problem would be better directed there and not into such a document as this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not insinuating on the Member's behalf, but I would like to point out that that

document was done and crafted and is the work of the coalition that I listed with Education, Health and Social Services, Native Women's, the Dene Nation and the Status of Women.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about prevention, we are talking about education, we are talking about awareness and that happens at many levels and not just with the actual young people themselves. We have to mobilize, coordinate, and we have taken steps to do that. We have been very frugal with this document and it is the start of what will hopefully be a successful initiative. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 399-15(3): Strategic Directions Document On Sexually-Transmitted Infections

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the artistic design of the document does not necessarily translate into results of where the problems are. That is the point that I would like to make. I think that sometimes we just have to use a little better judgment of this on these sorts of things.

I also noticed with interest the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board put out an annual report with full colour glossy paper. It is unnecessary. We have real problems, real needs, and we need real money attached to those problems and this is not where our money should be spent. I guess there is no question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I did not hear a question there. I would like to remind Members to keep there preambles short, especially on the supplementary questions. We do have a lot of Members. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask some more questions of the Minister of Health and Social Services, about the issues that I had brought up earlier in my Member's statement. I would like to ask a question on the master plan for Stanton Territorial Hospital. We know that this has been in the works for at least a couple of years. There was supposed to be a public hearing and public role out of that. Members were given notice that we would have an opportunity to look at that. We are all aware that there is no public board for Stanton Territorial Hospital and there are questions as to where would the public input be put into in this whole process that has to do not only with the physical capacity and configuration of the hospital and possible expansion, but also what sorts of programs and services are being delivered there, especially if he speaks to amalgamating and consolidating and changing the makeup of other health care facilities in the city. I would like to know what the Minister has planned to get the public input into that process. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are going to be a whole number of ways that there is going to be input for the people in Yellowknife, including through the very able and articulate representation of the Yellowknife MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, there is money in the budget. I have indicated nearly \$16 million for upgrade of Stanton. There has been work started on the master plan, there was some consultation done initially, but that work, along with the work in Hay River and in Fort Smith, was put in abeyance until we could conclude this overall facilities review that would look at the occupancies of the facilities, especially those, as directed by Cabinet, under 30 percent occupancy. Through this exercise, which I indicated is now concluded, we have come up with some benchmarks, some recommendations which we plan to move forward. Once that document is reviewed and agreed to, then the master planning processes in Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Hay River will proceed at full speed as the money to do the planning is in the budgets for this coming fiscal year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I must say you need a special translator to translate what the Minister is saying. He is really throwing in a lot of things out there. I am asking a question about a master plan for Stanton and he is going on about Fort Smith, Yellowknife and everywhere else and facilities review. I believe there is a long-term care review in there. He's been reviewing supplementary health benefits for the past three years. I don't know what else he is going to throw in there. I assure the Minister that the very able and articulate Yellowknife Members would be happy to provide him with the input if we ever got asked, and so would the people out there. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to him that he needs to do this before he puts in all this money. Could I have an opportunity to put my valuable and articulate input into this plan over the next 30 days, please? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Member, as well, that Stanton is in fact a territorial facility, so anything pertaining to Stanton will get input from the other regions and other communities, as well...

---Applause

...because it affects all the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we have put out a tremendous number of initiatives in the last couple of years in Health and Social Services and the pace continues unabated. I have indicated that we would be coming forward with a very

significant document here in the next few weeks. We will share that with committee and, of course, the Members. I would also like to comment very clearly that, yes, we will be asking for input from all the Members, but it is very clear, as the Member referred to the Yellowknife MLAs, that the Yellowknife MLAs never need to be asked to provide input on issues of concern to them and that speaks to their concern about the service to their constituents.

As the Member has indicated in this House, she is already involved, she is the chair of Social Programs and she will have full opportunity for input. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Short supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister continues to mix-up all of the factors that...

---Laughter

I don't understand. I have been here for five years and I don't fall for that trick anymore.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I am asking a very specific question and I do know that Stanton Hospital is a territorial hospital and it is without a public board. He can mask up all he wants in throwing everything else he can in that sink, but the fact is there is master planning going on without any public input. The Members sitting in the House are not the fullest extent of those who he needs to seek input from. I think that there is a role for the public out there to play, all of the stakeholders. I am asking him again, would he make this master plan available for public consultation and public discussion about the future health care of the Territories in the next week or two?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the Member. My intent clearly is not to mix her up...

---Laughter

...it's to provide basic information.

Mr. Speaker, the health authority, the board members, the senior staff of all the authorities have been fully involved in all the work that we are doing. Yes, there will be full opportunity for public involvement and consultation as this process moves forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Short supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is confused again, because it's not me...

---Laughter

...who he's mixing up. He is mixing up issues and getting confused himself.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take his answer that he will give us an opportunity for public input, only if I have something to go by. He has been promising me about a supplementary health benefits review plan for three years now, so I would like to know when I can see the master plan to put my input into and can that be done in the next two months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 400-15(3): Public Input Into Stanton Hospital Master Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we started out talking about Stanton and the master development plan and one clinic, then we have now jumped to supplementary health benefits and now we are back to the master plan and Stanton.

Mr. Speaker, let me assure the Member in this House that we, in fact, will be coming forward in due course, as is the custom and practice of a consensus government, of this government, to consult fully. Thank you.

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

Question 401-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I just have one quick question here for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation with regard to the briefing that he gave us this afternoon. We did not have an opportunity to complete the briefing. My question is more directed toward something that is past, that wouldn't be included in the briefing, should we have had the opportunity to finish the briefing. I wanted to ask the Minister, with phase two of the market housing initiative coming into play on April 1st, and with some positive foreseeable results because of the change in the design of the houses that will be going into the communities that he had listed earlier, I want to know if the Housing Corporation has had any or made any plans in the future to address the issues with the trailers that are already located in the communities. Obviously, in my communities there are eight out of nine that are vacant and have been vacant for the last year. I am just wondering if the department has any plans to redesign those to meet the demand for more affordable, smaller housing units in these communities that are already fitted with these three-bedroom units. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 401-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the units that have been allocated under phase one, presently the cost to convert them over into two-bedroom units or even into two duplexes is probably too costly to do at this time. We will probably be trying to re-lease those units, but also we are still

continuing to get professions to let us know what their needs are.

If this is the need of the community, with regard to the Member's riding, if there is a way that we can maybe move some units around or maybe move one of the units that is in one of his communities to another community which is on the waiting list, we can configure how we do these transfers. Right now it is not economically viable to try to convert the three-bedroom units that are there. If there are needs in other communities for three-bedroom units, we are more than willing to look at the cost of moving them to those communities who need them, and allow these communities to have these new one or two-bedroom units instead of the three-bedroom units that are there now. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 401-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that reply. If a community did decide that they don't need three of the four units that are currently sitting vacant, and probably will be for the next year, how can the community set up a deal with the Housing Corporation before these other 22 units come up north from a southern manufacturer and go into these communities? I wonder if the Housing Corporation has really done their homework thoroughly enough that they are sure that these duplex units are going to meet those needs and that those communities with the duplexes aren't going to be saying, well, we need the three-bedroom units, and the communities with the three-bedroom units need the duplexes. How do we work out some kind of exchange before the other 22 roll down the line? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 401-15(3): Market Housing Initiative

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are talking to a developer in Lutselk'e about the possibility of having them purchase these units. Also, again I would like to mention to the Member that if there is an interest for these other units, I know Fort Resolution was allocated more than the four units they have right now. Again it comes down to the question of identifying those tenants for those units but also ensuring that we do have buyers.

We are in the process of having discussion with the Community Development Corporation in Lutselk'e about those units and the possibility of future units for that community. We are in discussions with the community to try and find a way of getting rid of these units, but also if there are other needs out there for other types of units, we are in discussions with a developer in Lutselk'e right now.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to oral questions, item 6 on the agenda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays, we will return to item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, noting that I said earlier in my member's statement that the GNWT, or I should say the Northwest Territories, receives \$44 million of new investment tourism money each year. Noting that \$16 million is spent by the Japanese, noting that 9,000 Japanese came as tourists to the Northwest Territories, and finally in noting that \$4 million was spent in the Spanish Expo several years ago by the Department of RWED, is the Minister of RWED committed to the aurora tourism? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is committed to Expo 2005 in Japan. We see the Japanese market as very important to the Northwest Territories, to tourism. We plan a week at Expo 2005, of concentrated effort. This is a different opportunity for us than opportunities in the past, whether it was in Spain or in Vancouver where we had a presence that extended over four or five months and we did things like run restaurants. It was very expensive, there were cost overruns and many have questioned value for money in some of those approaches.

We have taken a different approach this time around. The opportunity is different, as well. This time the Canadian Pavilion is open to us at no charge, but we can sign up for a week and host events at a VIP pavilion. I would note that I don't know how many other jurisdictions have taken a whole week. Many have signed up for various days, here and there. I think we are one of the few jurisdictions who have dedicated an entire week. I think we are out in front and really leading the effort. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a very good answer by the Minister responsible but, Mr. Speaker, the Minister talked about value for money which I'm really glad to hear that on this side, because I noted earlier that we spent approximately \$4 million in the Spanish Expo, but at present we are going to one of our largest markets for the aurora and we are going to spend one-eighth of that dollar spent several years ago.

Mr. Speaker, we are competing against large organizations, but while we have a Japan oversight committee led by the Minister, we don't have an aurora

rep on this. The Minister could argue that we have somebody from the NWT Tourism Association, but they also represent the dog mushers, the fishermen, the hotels, the bed and breakfasts, they represent everybody and we are going into a very, very, very unique market. They bring in \$16 million a year; 9,000 plus people. Would the Minister at this time commit to addressing the lack of a specific aurora rep on this oversight committee? Would he address that problem and add a person from the aurora industry to this committee? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member well knows from our briefing today that not only will the Tourism Association be represented on our Ministerial oversight or steering committee, but we've committed to work with the aurora tourism industry and convene a forum so they can bring their input to bear on the process and the planning. We're also, and I think many Members have seen the advertisements in the newspapers, looking to the private sector to partner with us in hosting events. Any private sector operator who wants to come and make a pitch and talk about an event that they would like to host and customers that they would like to attract to an event at Expo is welcome to do so. That's where we see we can really lever much more money for this event other than just the government money that we can bring to bear.

So I think those two issues really, our involvement of the aurora tourism industry will be evident and we certainly think that we can get more out of this Expo than just GNWT funding. There's a real significant amount of development going on in the Northwest Territories currently and we think many of those players will be keen to invest in this Expo. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, respectfully, I think the Minister really missed the issue because he, as well as everyone there, knows in this industry that this Canadian Pavilion, one of its biggest themes, its main theme is aurora. Why wouldn't we have someone from the aurora industry on this? On this oversight committee we have someone from the diamond industry, we have someone from the arts area, we have development, we have the air transportation, yet the theme of this Expo is sharing the aurora. Why are we missing this opportunity, Mr. Speaker? Would the Minister look at this problem? Would he address it? It's a stroke of the pen to put someone's full advice all the time on this committee about the development. Would the Minister reconsider that option to get direct input, not indirect input? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will have direct input from the industry. As I said, we'll convene a forum to discuss our approach. Fully one-half of the sponsorship opportunities at this Expo, one-half of the opportunity to co-host events both in the evenings and the afternoons are being offered to the aurora tourism industry. That is the large market in Japan in terms of tourism. So when we talk about tourism, we are largely talking about aurora tourism. I expect that we'll see a lot of interest after we convene this forum from the individual aurora tourism operators in hosting events at our pavilion and look forward to that collaboration. I think that's where the real value will be. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that the Minister is largely right on what he's said; but I still say that we're missing on the capacity on this oversight committee. I mean, from the sounds of it, it's a diamond Expo. We're sending people from the diamonds area. Maybe it's an airline Expo. I'm not sure. But we should have someone from the aurora industry to offer their very specific specialized information on this.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories, in my mind, built the aurora tourism industry. The aurora tourism started off with about 30 people coming to the Northwest Territories because one guy had a dream. Now we have 9,000 people coming here, we have \$16 million being spent here of new money and here we are flogging it in their face saying we don't care about the Japanese tourism industry. We care more about diamonds over there, but heck, they could buy Canadian diamonds anywhere in Canada, but they can't see aurora anywhere in the world like they can in Yellowknife or in the Northwest Territories in places, such as Fort Smith...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins, do you have a question?

MR. HAWKINS: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister going to do to demonstrate his commitment to this issue when we are competing against Alaska direct flights, Yukon and other areas of the world on aurora industry? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've answered the question. I'm not sure how many different ways I can phrase a response to the same question. On our oversight committee, the diamond sector is represented, yes. It's going to play a very important role in this Expo, as is the tourism sector and the aboriginal business sector, northern arts and crafts sector, and transport is there because obviously there's a real benefit to the transport industry from the tourism that will be generated and also because we're interested in exploring potential sponsorship opportunities. A large part of the budget will go into transporting our equipment and

transporting our contingency to Japan. Our commitment is in the \$500,000. Our commitment is in the approach to partnership with the private sector. I really think that will be the benefit in this Expo and I think this approach is a much better one than we've taken in the past. I think we're going to get more bang for our buck and I think the Member will be impressed with the results. We'll certainly continue to work with committee to discuss our approach and I look forward to being able to convince the Member that this is, in fact, the right approach. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have to ask the Minister how he can justify having a diamond representative on this oversight committee, an arts person on this committee, as well as even a transportation person on this committee when, of course, the NWT Tourism Association would represent those. How can he justify going into those areas when the NWT Tourism Association already represents them? There's significant overlap there when he can justify that we don't need an aurora representative. How can the Minister justify that, noting one of the themes of Expo is aurora? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 402-15(3): GNWT Commitment To Aurora Tourism

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things we did when we talked about how to approach this oversight committee was to go to industry representatives and look for associations that would represent those industries. It would have been difficult for us, I would suggest to you, to go and pick one airline and decide that we were going to ask them to have a representative. Instead we went to the Northern Air Transport Association and they found us somebody from the airline. We've done likewise in tourism. We found somebody in northern arts and crafts who has sat on a number of boards and could provide some objective input. We were looking to keep commercial interest for the most part to a minimum on this oversight committee and to involve individual businesses in these forums. So that's what we're going to do with aurora tourism. It would have been difficult to pick a representative from one of the organizations in the Northwest Territories and at the risk of excluding others. So this was considered the most appropriate approach, and I assure the Member that we're interested in their input and we'll convene these forums and look forward to their very valuable input. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to attempt to get a better answer from the Minister of Health and Social Services. For the benefit of both of us, I'd like to narrow down the scope of our debate to the walk-in clinic as stated in my Member's statement. Mr.

Speaker, I know that the Minister is well aware of the pilot walk-in clinic that was implemented by a local doctor. The doctor decided doctors saw the need for this in town and he set it up himself at the Centre for Northern Families. He walks in there with his files on a weekday, a Tuesday afternoon, and he just sees patients as they come in. It has been hugely successful and I'm sure he can provide the government with a lot of good information about how this can be expanded. So I'd like to ask the Minister if the Minister or the department has taken any review of this walk-in clinic with the view of seeing it expanded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that this clinic has performed very well. I've indicated to the Member what the plans are currently for the clinics. We've invested money to upgrade the Frame Lake Family Physicians clinic and we're looking at ways to do some significant readjustment in the downtown core. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do those investments and changing of clinics include a plan for a walk-in clinic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent, along with a review of the emergency and the review of the clinics, is to come up with a more effective and efficient use of the resources we have to ease some of the burden on the emergency unit, where 40 to 50 percent of the people in emergency don't really require emergency medical care, and to better rationalize and make more efficient the current three small clinics that are scattered in the downtown area, many without any capacity to do some of the basic duties that a clinic in fact should be doing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Minister again that he and I know a lot of facts about this. You know about the shortage of doctors, occupying of the emergency unit by people who probably don't need to be there if they could get the services elsewhere, and we know the process that we go on here. But let's just forget about that. I want him to answer in a very specific way if any of the three clinics that are under review now are being considered for being turned into a walk-in clinic, for example. Can the Minister say yes or no whether any of his visions or dreams or plans for health

care service delivery in Yellowknife include a drop-in health clinic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly when we look at the issue of clinics and emergency, as I've indicated, and the clinic usage, making a clinic more accessible to people so they can relieve some of the demand on the emergency would include looking at the hours that they operate and how accessible they are to the people who require their service. That will be done through a planning process in conjunction with Stanton, the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board, the department, among others. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to have to ask the same question for the next 40 minutes. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister indicate whether his plans, whether they be with the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board or be with the Stanton board or something in his imagination, something he thinks about when he's walking at 5:00 in the morning, do any of these include a walk-in health clinic in Yellowknife in the foreseeable future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 403-16(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member and I were talking about the same thing. We're looking at how clinics are used, their hours of operation, and their accessibility to the people. There's work being done. There's going to be work done by the Stanton people, the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board folks, the department and they're going to look at all ways to make the best clinics possible, the most efficient and effective clinics possible, including the hours of operation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue my questions with the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, my next question that I hope gets answered is, does the Minister know how far ahead Expos are planned? He may not be able to speak to the Japanese Expo specifically, but I'm sure he can give a ballpark as to how far expos are planned in advance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, how many months do we have left? We have February, March, April, May, June, July. So I guess six months in advance would be my answer, at least in this case. I can't give you an indication of past Expo planning or Expo planning in other jurisdictions, but we've got six months to get it right and we certainly intend to do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister could follow that up with when he thinks the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development finally put the Japanese Expo in their long-term business plan or in the food for thought category that it's coming down the pipe one of these days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I don't know, Mr. Bell, if I heard a question there, but you may have heard one. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I guess I could say that this came to my attention a couple of months after receiving the portfolio. We sat down to discuss a number of initiatives. Upon learning of it, I had some discussions with the Tourism Association of the Northwest Territories, talked about their interest in being involved. In fact, initially approached them to see if they'd be interested in heading up our effort, but admittedly they don't have the kind of resources that we do in the department so we were best suited to take the lead and draw on their expertise in terms of marketing. So that's the approach that we've taken. I'm guessing that we've been discussing this for a year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that direct answer there, Mr. Bell. Mr. Speaker, if this has been on the mind or backburner of this particular Member for about a year, Mr. Speaker, and I realize that Expo planning needs to go on for multiple years ahead of time just to make sure that the logistics happen, Mr. Speaker, but speaking more specific to this Minister's experience with this Expo, knowing again that it's been about a year in the equation here, he mentioned in his last answer earlier that he wanted to avoid the problem that he alluded to, that there's no aurora association to go to for aurora input. Was he more afraid of hurting individual aurora operators' feelings that they didn't get picked? Why didn't the Minister write a letter to all three aurora members and say why don't you put forward a name so we can create an oversight committee that deals specifically with the themes of aurora? Could the Minister answer that question? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I understand the question. I believe the Member is asking for more involvement from the aurora industry on the oversight committee or issues in that vein. As I've indicated, I'm certainly going to sit down with the aurora industry. There are more than three companies. There are more than just Yellowknife companies. We're going to do that, have some discussion around how they can best provide their input. The other opportunity, I suppose, available to me is to approach the NWT association of tourism, that industry body again, and say do you have anybody who sits on your board who has direct knowledge and experience, working knowledge of the aurora industry or is currently employed by any of the aurora operators and if they do ask them if they'd like to recommend that person to sit on that board. I'm not sure if they have such a person, but I can have that discussion with them if that's what the Member would like. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 404-15(3): Planning For Expo 2005

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say good, Minister. That's the direction that I'd like to see him engage. The NWT Tourism Association is very fine by me if that works towards potentially getting a member from the aurora industry on this. I'm not going to use a question. I'll leave it at that if he's going to promise to engage. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask more questions on the viability of a walk-in health clinic in Yellowknife. I think there are strong cases to be made that will save the government money and that would ease the pressure on doctors' services and other health care professionals. It would address the needs especially of parents with young children who need medical attention on a very short notice, who don't have time to wait on a doctor's appointment waiting list for weeks and weeks. It would lessen the burden on the emergency system. We already have an example in place that the Minister could follow. I'd like to know, if the Minister hasn't done it already, if he would look into expanding the walk-in clinic service in Yellowknife that the local doctor has already undertaken. Could he look into expanding that on a full-time basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, there's work

underway in the community to look at the clinics, how to ease the burden on the emergency where half the population walk in without an appointment for a service because they can't get into the clinics currently as they're structured. So very clearly there's a significant segment of the population that needs service, but not necessarily by appointment, that don't require emergency services. It stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, they're looking at what's possible and the restructuring, that they'll be looking at that issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister advise who exactly "they" are? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as part of the broader work being done across the territory, a joint leadership council comprised of the chairs of all the authorities and myself, as the Minister, and the deputy minister have overseen the development of that report. We've been working with the board chairs as well as the CEOs of the authorities and senior departmental staff. In Yellowknife, the work is being coordinated between Stanton folks; the CEO, Mr. Parker; and the CEO at Yellowknife Health and Social Services, Mr. Cummings; along with the departmental people. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that very thorough and direct answer. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister advise as to when we can have a report on this issue that I'm asking about, not mixing it up with everything else, the potential for a walk-in clinic from this group? When could I expect a report on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated, there's a sequence of events that have to take place. The first key piece is to have the document that I indicated was just completed, the review of the facilities and health centres across the Northwest Territories, including Stanton and the services in Yellowknife, that will be making its way in the very near future to the Cabinet table and then from there we will be moving forward to discuss this with the Social Programs committee. Included in that document is a piece that speaks to the needs as identified in Yellowknife. Out of that will flow the work tied into the \$16 million renovation at Stanton and the work on the emergency and the other

recommendations included to try to address some of the clinic issues. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Minister what exactly he means by in the near future? Are we talking about next month? Next two months? Next three months? Next two weeks? Could he be more specific, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 405-15(3): Viability Of A Walk-in Clinic In Yellowknife

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent is to bring the document to Cabinet within the next couple of weeks, if not sooner, and then from there I will get the feedback and direction from Cabinet. Once that's received then we will be moving to work it out. This will be accompanied by a communication plan and a consultation plan. Once that's been to Cabinet we will take it forward, based on the direction provided there. So within the next two weeks this major document will be making its way to Cabinet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to continue questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services on the theme I brought up the other day, which is with regard to the shortage of patient visits per day being lost here in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, there was a press release on August 8, 2000, by this government that said that we have a new plan to address the severe doctor shortages in this city. There are also quotes here that say, "I believe we will now be in a better position to compete nationally." In other words, bring more doctors here by stabilizing their pay. Mr. Speaker, it also points out that this initiative will stabilize this, as well as it also finally says that this arrangement will be in the best interests of the physicians and the patients.

Mr. Speaker, I noted and had the agreement of the Minister yesterday that under the old system there was potential for 40 visits per day by patients to doctors and that has been whittled down to 20 patients per day for the doctor. That's a net loss of 80 visits a day, potentially, to the consumers out there, our constituents. How does the Minister conceive that we stabilized the market with an 80-visit, patient/doctor ratio a day loss? How did that help the market and how did that help the communities? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not a single item issue. This is a very complex one. But over the last couple of years, we've come to an agreement with the nursing association, we've come to a long-term Collective Agreement with the doctors. That's GPs and specialists. We've made significant in-roads into training northern nurses. We're coming up with a plan that's going to give us the capacity to add nurse practitioners and midwives to help offset and supplement the service provided to people right now that is currently provided by GPs.

So we have labour peace, we have some significant planning that is moving along, and we have waiting times, while they can definitely be shortened, are still better than the national average and we're working on it. We were investing significant capital money into Stanton and we're looking at improving the infrastructure in the clinics in Yellowknife as well. So across the board we continue to improve the service that's provided not only to the people in Yellowknife, but to the people in the communities. Where I might point out that many of them are lucky to see a nurse once a week. There are circumstances here, but we have to keep in mind, as well, that the needs are sometimes relative because there are communities where there are very limited services as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Before I continue my questioning, the Minister brought up nurse practitioner. It is my understanding that a nurse practitioner can only see one patient per hour. Again, under further scrutiny of a certain situation maybe the Minister could explain that a little further. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, if the Member is asking me to comment on wait times, I've already done that. I didn't catch the specific question other than another reference to the need to improve access. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's perfectly fine. I'll ask the question again. It is my understanding that a nurse practitioner can only see one patient per hour. If the Minister could provide clarification on that, as well as if the nurse practitioner has to be under a certain amount of scrutiny, vis-à-vis by a doctor in the area or a doctor on staff. So if the Minister could explain that before we continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. There are two questions there. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a jurisdiction we've made significant advances when it comes to nurse practitioners. In fact, I believe we're right up there with the other provinces that have invested in this area. It's a new profession. There's new legislation. There are new scopes of practice. Currently we're still working out the implementation side. Right now nurse practitioners do not have the same support services that doctors have in that they have to do a lot of their own support to themselves in terms of work with clients, getting their treatment rooms ready. We're struggling with a shortage in some places where we have nurse practitioners with adequate exam rooms. So, yes, it's limited because they have to do all that additional work. It's limiting the number of patients they can see. But we are, as well, working with the system and with the various authorities do deal with those issues so we can improve that, as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I didn't quite hear the answer that if they can only serve one patient per hour, but, that being said, I'm going to move on because I think the Minister implied that the nurse practitioners will be both the saviour and the backbone of the new system. Although it was announced four-and-a-half years ago, I certainly hope it wasn't a priority of this government at that time because it certainly doesn't appear to be at this time. Mr. Speaker, that leads me into my final question, which is, would the Minister be willing to commit and demonstrate that this initiative is a priority to his Ministry and to show in some way that we are not losing a net loss of patient visits per day by demonstrating this priority initiative? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 406-15(3): Fewer Patient Visits Per Day

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all the people that work in the field of health care are valuable and comprise the backbone of our system. They're all essential and they're all critical and I can indicate, as well, to the Member that we've invested a very significant amount of resources and time and we've come a long way in the last few years in terms of supplementing and improving the services and support to the people. Nurse practitioners are a new addition, a valuable addition and we're going to, over time, make sure that they're integrated across the system. Overall we are dealing with the issues, as I've indicated, and, in the longer term, we'll address the concerns by the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item

10, replies to budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 13: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 17: Modernization Of Benefits And Obligations Act

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act and wishes to report that Bill 17 is now ready for Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Bill 17 is now ready for Committee of the Whole. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 105-15(3): Report Of The Conflict Of Interest Commissioner Re Complaint Against Roger Allen Filed August 27, 2004

MR. SPEAKER: In accordance with section 102(2) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table a report dated October 29, 2004, by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the Northwest Territories regarding the complaint pursuant to 100(1) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act filed by the Legislative Assembly Board of Management against Roger Allen, then Member of Inuvik Twin Lakes, on August 27, 2004.

Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. By the authority given to me as Speaker, by Motion 2-15(3), I hereby resolve the House into Committee of the Whole to sit beyond the hour of adjournment until such time as committee is ready to report progress, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 16, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, as well as Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, specifically Industry, Tourism and Investment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will proceed with that after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Good afternoon everybody. Welcome back to Committee of the Whole. We're on Bill 16 and I would like to go to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development for his opening comments. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Today we are considering Bill 16, NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Act.

The proposed NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Act consolidates government business programming and allows for development of new and innovative approaches to business assistance financing.

The proposed legislation responds to business community recommendations, beginning with the Common Ground Strategy released in 2000.

The Business Program Review Committee was established by former RWED Minister Handley to follow up on recommendations of the Common Ground Strategy. In 2002, the committee made a number of recommendations to improve government business programs. The most significant recommendation was the establishment of a single agency to coordinate business programs, which has resulted in this proposed legislation.

I would like to provide you with some broader background and perspective on the proposed BDIC Act, specifically why the government needs a new business assistance corporation, and why the proposed BDIC Act meets those needs.

The Northwest Territories has enjoyed rapid economic growth over the past decade; growth that could provide the basis for a prosperous future for all the residents of the NWT. However, the reality is that the growth that we have achieved over the past decade has not been distributed evenly throughout every sector of our economy, or in every region and community in the NWT. Some sectors, like non-renewable resource extraction, have grown much faster than others. Some communities have highly-developed access to essentially business support services, others do not.

All communities and individuals in the Northwest Territories must have equitable access to financial and information resources needed to ensure that the NWT's economic growth benefits all northern residents.

We must also find ways to promote diversification of economy, to ensure that the NWT's economic growth is sustainable over the long term. We can do this by increasing expertise and providing the essential assistance that Northwest Territories businesses need to develop, expand and prosper.

The proposed BDIC Act has been designed to help meet these needs, by providing the GNWT with a more effective, efficient and flexible means to provide northern businesses with financial and other vital assistance.

The model proposed will allow for optimal regional delivery in a manner that reflects regional circumstances.

The BDIC Act was developed after intensive preparation and extensive consultation to help northern businesses

meet the challenges of a changing local, national and global economy. The BDIC Act will serve as a cornerstone of government business assistance programming in the NWT. The improved services will help to meet the goals and priorities of the government's strategic plan to develop a diversified economy that provides northerners with opportunities and choices.

I want to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development for their work in reviewing Bill 16, and I look forward to hearing Members' views on this legislation, which adds to our efforts to diversify our economy in a manner that is accessible to all residents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would now like to go to the chair of Governance and Economic Development, Mrs. Groenewegen, for your comments.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development conducted public hearings on Bill 16, Business Development Investment Corporation Act, in Yellowknife on December 2, 2004, and on February 7, 2005. The committee would like to thank the NWT Chamber of Commerce for its written submission, and Minister Bell and his staff for presenting the bill.

The new Business Development and Investment Corporation, or BDIC, created by Bill 16, will replace the existing Business Credit Corporation and NWT Development Corporation, both of which offer assistance to NWT businesses and communities through various programs.

An overriding concern for the committee was whether and how this new legislative framework will lead to real improvements in the services provided to clients. For example, Members noted that in any given region there are a number of agencies, including community teachers' groups and regional RWED offices, involved in actual delivery of business programs. These arrangements, which too often result in clients having to knock on the doors of several agencies to access programs, will not be changed by Bill 16. The Minister assured the committee that although clients may not notice immediate improvement, the new corporation will set the stage for enhanced programs and services in the future.

The one-window structure at headquarters will result in better coordination of programs and services, and it is hoped that eventually the regions will also evolve into one-window service delivery.

The new corporate structure will also create more flexibility and opportunities for the BDIC to partner with other agencies, and thereby increase the pool of money available for its programs.

The committee also noted that much of the detail that will determine the success of the new corporation will be left to regulations. This detail will include program guidelines, appeal processes, market disruption policies and definitions of terms, such as extraordinary costs and need, that have been identified as problematic in past Auditor General reports. Many of these matters are currently addressed in policy, which will have to be reviewed and converted into regulations. The Minister advised that the new board will be tasked with this review, which he hopes

can be completed within the first year of the board's mandate.

Although regulations can ordinarily be approved by government without committee input, given the significance of the regulations that will be made under this act, Members believe it is critical that we have an opportunity to review and comment on them. The committee was pleased that the Minister committed in a letter dated January 27, 2005, to involve the standing committee in new program development and substantive change to existing business program policy. Although the committee does not doubt the Minister's sincerity in making this commitment, Members would have preferred that the bill itself include consultation requirements that would bind future Ministers, as well.

The committee shares the concern of the NWT Chamber of Commerce, that taxpayers' dollars for business development and investment be used responsibly. The lack of a clear separation between the social and economic objective of the NWT Development Corporation has been a concern of the business community, the Auditor General and Members for several years.

The committee believes that Bill 16 goes some way to improve the situation by segregating the funding for the corporation's subsidiaries, which are generally considered social investments, from the loans and investment fund, which will be used to support other programs, including venture investments. The effect is that social investments will have to be funded from GNWT contributions, which will increase transparency and accountability and better ensure that public funds are being used responsibly.

The majority of the committee agrees that social investments are an important means of creating employment and income opportunities in small communities, regardless of how long it takes them to turn a profit or break even. Members were concerned that Bill 16, as originally introduced, required all investments to meet a minimum rate of return. During the clause-by-clause review of the bill, the majority of Members supported a motion which amended Bill 16 to remove the minimum rate of return requirement for investments in the corporation's subsidiaries.

Committee members had lengthy discussions with the Minister about the independence of the BDIC from government. Members noted that the Minister will have the power to issue binding directives to the board and will appoint the chief executive officer. The board's staff will be members of the public service. The committee and Minister agreed to amend the bill to disqualify GNWT public servants from being appointed to the board and to require that the Minister consult with the board before appointing its chief executive officer.

While the majority of the committee was satisfied with these amendments, some Members continue to believe the GNWT could have gone further to increase the corporation's independence and reduce costs by eliminating duplication between government and BDIC and removing the board's staff from the public service.

In its submission to the committee, the NWT Chamber of Commerce raised concerns about the potential for conflict and bias in allocating funding. While it would be impossible for legislation to completely eradicate conflict, Members were pleased to note that the conflict of interest

provisions in Bill 16 are broader than what is in the present act, and they will apply to the corporation's officers and committee members, as well as to board members and a CEO.

The committee and Minister also agreed to amend Bill 16 to require that the corporation's annual reports identify the owners and locations of businesses that receive funding. This added requirement will enhance public accountability for the BDIC's programs.

The committee supported the NWT Chamber of Commerce suggestion that there be minimum qualifications for potential directors. During the clause-by-clause review of the bill, an amendment was made to add a requirement that board members either have owned or managed a business enterprise in the NWT, or have business expertise relevant to the NWT economy. There was considerable discussion about whether the word "expertise" would be broad enough to include business-oriented people who have substantial experience and knowledge but do not necessarily have expertise in the sense of academic qualifications. For example, Members would not want a person with business knowledge gained through working with an aboriginal development corporation to be ineligible to sit on the board of the BDIC because they have never owned a business themselves and do not meet the government's criteria for business expertise. The Minister assured the committee that the word "expertise" was intended to be broad and inclusive of such people.

Members believe it is important that Bill 16 refer specifically to sustainable development and capacity building, which are important goals for this government and are a substantial part of the reason for the BDIC's existence. The committee and the Minister agreed to amend the bill to include a provision instructing the board to take these goals into consideration where appropriate.

In addition to the amendments described above, the committee and Minister agreed to an amendment to allow for sustainable development and capacity building to be defined in regulation, and to specify which business owners will be named in the BDIC's annual report.

Mr. Chair, it is clear that Bill 16 is only the beginning of the work needed to bring our business programs to the level clients expect, and to ensure cost-effective program delivery. Members will be monitoring the setup and implementation of the BDIC closely, as programs are reviewed and regulations are developed, with a view to ensuring that improvements do happen as promised.

The committee was pleased to hear that if Bill 16 is passed, the Minister intends to get this work underway as quickly as possible, and would immediately begin the process of recruiting board members.

Throughout its review of Bill 16, the committee has appreciated the Minister's forthrightness with information and willingness to consider our input, and we look forward to continuing this collaborative approach through the implementation of the new BDIC.

This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 16. Individual Members may have questions and comments as we proceed. Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 16, Business Development and Investment Corporation Act,

as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole, as amended and reprinted. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to offer the Minister the opportunity to bring in witnesses for Bill 16. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. Yes, I'll do that.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed. Please bring in the witnesses, Sergeant-at-Arms.

Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would ask now if you would please introduce your witnesses.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me today are Rebecca Veinott who is the legal counsel from Justice; and deputy minister of RWED, Peter Vician. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, Ms. Veinott and Mr. Vician, to the proceedings this afternoon. I would now like to open up the floor for general comments by Members on Bill 16. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my first chance to really look at the details of this legislation. I know the birth of this legislation happened in the last Assembly and it has taken quite a while in getting here, and I am glad to see this in front of us. I do have some questions for the Minister from the opening statement. I do appreciate that the Minister probably did not want to have all the details in his opening statement, but I must say there isn't a lot in it to go by. So I would like to know if the Minister could elaborate more on how this new legislation is supposed to address providing more equitable access to financial information resources, and how it purports to promote diversification of our economy. I understand that this legislation, first and foremost, creates one single entity, by combining what was in two entities that were in business before. Could I just get the Minister to explain, for the benefit of those who have not been part of the whole committee review process, how, in his opinion, this new setup will help with these two important issues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for the question. I think many Members, including myself, have had constituents approach us over the past number of years -- depending on the length of time you've been here -- with frustration in accessing our business programming. I think the committee comments hit this point. There has been a lot of concern around initial approaches made to one entity -- potentially RWED's business program and service delivery -- and they found that they really were more appropriately targeted at the BCC or at the Development Corporation. There seemed to be a lack of understanding, and it certainly wasn't entirely on the part of constituents approaching us, but a lack of understanding even on our part in terms of whose mandate and what mandate each of the organizations was expected to fulfill.

With that, we talked about the genesis of this, some discussion in Common Ground, the Business Program Review Committee, and a need to really move to a one-window approach to eliminate much of the duplication that was going on and try to identify and address some of the gaps in our program delivery that need to be filled. In order to be able to start to do that, we needed to make changes initially at headquarters in terms of how the organization works. Our understanding and our belief that is in time, the evolution of business programming in the regions will mean that we're moving to a one-window approach.

Currently, as the Member knows, RWED is often contracted in the regions to deliver programs on behalf of, say, the BCC. There are Community Futures organizations. We think that driving this change in headquarters will force closer collaboration and a better understanding between these various organizations. Eventually, you will see the change start to happen in the regions as regions are ready for it. Admittedly, different regions are at different stages of development at different experiences with our business programming organizations and lending institutions. This will happen at a different pace, and it will happen in a model that works best for each region.

There isn't an attempt to boilerplate here and impose structure on regions. In attempting to do this, we made this legislation more enabling. It isn't as descriptive. It allows for more flexibility. It allows for some of the partnership approaches that aren't currently available to our entities. This will mean, we think, in future that Aboriginal Business Canada can be a more effective partner with our organizations as can the federal government in some of its other entities, the Business Development Corporation. We think there is an approach to lever more money in this regard. We expect that this organization, when it's tasked with carrying out its new mandate, we will direct the organization to focus on the priorities that this government has laid out in front of it. One of those is diversification of the economy. So we expect that there will be a focus on a wide range of sectors and that this organization will seek to lend money to a wide range of businesses. I think that is what this organization will be able to do. Currently, we are a little handcuffed in that regard and not able to provide the type of programming that we would like.

I apologize for the lack of detail in the opening comments. We have spent a significant amount of time in the committee, back and forth on this bill. What you see here is the result of a real collaboration. I have to admit that there were many suggestions for input and change into our original approach from committee. I think they made sense. We've incorporated those because I think it has made for a better bill and will make for a better organization going forward. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do appreciate that this is a finished product from years of work on the part of successive Ministers as well as collaboration with committee membership, as was indicated by the committee report. I do appreciate the information in the committee report, as well. Nevertheless, this is the first opportunity for many of us on this side to be looking at

this. We are not able to get all of the information out of what we have now, so, therefore, the questions.

My next question has to do with what has been mentioned in the committee report already. That has to do with some of the detailed items that have to be left in the regulations. There are so many issues to talk about under this topic, and the committee has already mentioned the dual purpose or dual track that happens in projects like this about the social projects versus economic projects and conflict question and many other things, economic diversification, one-stop shopping for those who need business development advice or banking advice or financing advice, especially in communities. One of the things that I talked about a lot in the last Assembly has to do with what I saw with money that was available under the Business Credit Corporation or the Business Development Corporation under the new name where I saw that the...While I support a lot of money and projects going into communities where there are no business opportunities, where they do need financial resources and financial advice and business advice; rather than seeing a lot of money going there, I was seeing money being approved for businesses in Yellowknife where I thought that they should be able to go to commercial banks to get loans and so on. I think the answers that I used to always get were that the government was serving as the lender of last resort and they were charging premium interest on them. In cases where they could not get commercial lending or commercial financing, the Business Credit Corporation has to be there to provide that sort of service. I think that continues to be a point of contention, and market disruption policies especially are something that I wanted us to debate in this forum, but I am learning from the committee report that that area is one of the areas that will be left to the regulations. That causes me great concern because we know that, regardless of the best intentions of the Minister and maybe the following Ministers because we don't know what will happen to the portfolio, general understanding is general understanding. We may not get the opportunity to do that.

Recognizing that, I would like to ask the Minister what his plans are and what his intentions are in terms of dealing with things like market disruption issues and many other issues that he is well aware of because he has been listening to it. He was on this side of the House when we talked about that a lot in the last Assembly. I don't know if he could talk about the details of what he sees happening, but what is the process he's interested in engaging in, first of all? Aside from involving the committee members, how is he proposing to come up with these policies and look at the details and get all of the necessary input for the regulations? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is right; I am aware of a number of these discussions going back some years now. She's used this point as an example, but there are many other issues that have come before us and have been debated. There have been a lot of discussions around whether or not that is how we should conduct ourselves and whether or not that is how our program should be structured if, in fact, that makes sense to still be doing, if it used to make sense, or are we in this kind of business. There were many questions.

I think we had a couple of possible approaches here. We could have conducted a program and service review of the three separate entities and done that and then had some discussion around our programs and services and then tried to go out and structure a new board and have them carry out those new functions. But it was going to be very difficult to have the three separate entities conduct this program and service review and speak to gaps and overlap and who should be doing what. The approach that we decided to take -- and this wasn't without some debate at committee and there were varied opinions on this -- was to structure and create a new organization, create the board, get board members, hire the CEO and have the organization set up.

Immediately, as the board's first task, I would direct a program and service review so that we could have those very good discussions about the types of businesses that we engage in and what our priorities and mandate should be and have a look at those programs and services. As I have said, identify gaps, identify overlap.

The Member has pointed out issues around whether we are a lender of last resort and whether or not we should be lending in tax-based municipalities. I tend to believe that if somebody is accessing funding currently in one of the tax-based municipalities where chartered banks do operate and that kind of funding is available, then I think you could see that if somebody has a loan with us and are paying a premium interest, it is because they can't get banking from a chartered bank. Anybody who can get cheaper financing, I would suggest, would. That is a perfect example of the kinds of things that need to be discussed and debated.

I am expecting the new board will carry out this program and service review and come back with some recommendations, and then we will have some discussion. I have indicated to committee that they would obviously be involved in that discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. General comments, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think Ms. Lee and Mr. Bell have covered, at least in part, one of the principal concerns that I had about the way we were doing business. In hearing the Minister's opening comments and Mrs. Groenewegen's committee report, I want to get into it a little bit more. I'll briefly try to explain from my point of view where I see the difficulty. I guess, call it the accountability, Mr. Chair.

When I was sitting as a committee member in the previous Assembly and the reports of the Business Credit Corporation or the Development Corporation had come before us, I really couldn't get a handle on how I was to assess either their success or lack of it of their performance, because we were setting up clients and reporting on them on a business basis, a return on investment and number of jobs created and the contributions or investment that would go into these organizations from our lending arms. I was asked to sort of look at them in the sense of, well, we structure them as businesses and now we judge them as business. But, in reality, the majority of them were absolute failures from the point of view of being profitable, and entities that built their own equity and these kind of business measurements.

This is where the comments come in from Ms. Lee. How do we assess the value, the success and the performance of these investments that we make if, in reality, they are made for social purposes? Albeit, maybe for the very best of social purposes such as avoiding excessive income support or welfare or other kinds of subsidies. Those are good reasons. The difficulty I had was being asked to assess this performance on a business basis. What I am hoping is contained in here will be accountabilities, Mr. Chair, that will allow me as an MLA to say, yes, what we are doing is getting in there to help jumpstart profitable businesses that are really going to earn their way. Great! Give me a set of criteria that I can measure success and performance. If we are going to go into something that has a social basis, then I want another set of criteria that I can measure and see if the taxpayer is getting value for their money. Could the Minister address those areas of accountability and performance measurements? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I think the Member makes a very good point. I was on committees that tried to review the performance of the Development Corporation and the BCC, as well, and was frustrated with the same sorts of issues. In creating this organization, one of the key things that came to the forefront was the need to delineate between the various mandates of this organization. There is no doubt, and I firmly believe, that there is a social mandate. The Development Corporation currently carries it out. That mandate will exist in the BDIC. There will be different funds. There will be a venture fund that will be for investments that have to perform and that are measured by such things as return on investment. We will have discussions around economic measures like payback period. Then there will be the pool of funds available to subsidiaries that really will be looked to create economic development in communities, create employment, and will have to be tested by that. It is important for us to develop criteria around these two programs, around these two separate funds so that they can be measured and we can determine whether or not they are successful.

I think we have had some discussions with the Auditor General who has pointed out in the past when that office felt that subsidies were being exceeded. Allowable subsidies that we laid out in our programs were being exceeded for an organization. That, obviously, is very troubling. It is something that we don't want to see. It is important for us to continue to measure ourselves and to identify areas where we aren't seeing that level of success, because you can't put, as the Member has indicated, a return on investment or business case test to an organization that really has been tasked with creating employment, nor should you.

I think these dual mandates exist. It will still be a lender of last resort, which means it will take more risk than a chartered bank would, but it would still be measured by performance. We will have to clearly lay that out for this new organization. We will not get away from the social mandate. We shouldn't hide from that mandate. I think it is a very important one. But I do take the Member's point that we still need to be able to ascertain whether or not we are being successful. We can't just say, oh yes, don't look at that or don't grade that because that is a subsidiary and its only role is to create employment. There still has to be

tests. There still has to be standards. We have to make sure we are creating the most employment from money that we can with that organization. We intend to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Also contained in Mrs. Groenewegen's report was the removal from the bill of a minimum rate of return requirement for investment in the corporation's subsidiaries. Am I connecting the right dots here, that we have the subsidiaries that may be put together more for social purposes and then there are ventures that are more the sort of conventional business models? Does this mean that we have no minimum rate of return requirement for any of the investments that this new entity is going to undertake? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The answer is no. In terms of subsidiaries, and you might think of a current subsidiary would be the Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas shop. For that type of organization, we will not put a return on investment economic test to that organization. The mandate is to create employment. We will talk about the amount of employment created. It will be measured against that standard, but venture investments that we make in organizations will be put to the test and will be tested against return on investment. So the adjustment to the bill was simply to clarify that. It makes it very clear, I believe, that return on investment does come into play when we are talking about venture investments. It does not come into play when we are talking about subsidiaries. I think the Member can see that we would logically see negative returns on investment on our subsidiaries if you put that strict economic test to those organizations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. I have one more general question. I am reaching back a couple or three years to some of the experience I had, was that it seemed to me a number of entities in the portfolios of the older corporations, Mr. Chair, really had so little substantiation for them either as businesses or social entities, that it seemed that they should just be taken out of circulation. We should pull out of them completely. In the creation of this new entity, will there be, if you will, a housecleaning? Will we be making some effort to dispense with or get out of the kinds of operations that just don't have any kind of benefit, or is there going to be grandfathering going on? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. All of the subsidiaries and venture investments will come over as is at start. Then, as I have indicated, the first task of the new board is this program review. One of the things they will have to look at is our current investments and subsidiaries, if you will, our portfolio, and make some determinations. I think there are a number of reasons we could move away from investment in a subsidiary or strict investment in a venture. One of the reasons would be

that that venture is successful now and really could move out to more traditional forms of financing. I think you are going to see, with the amount of development in the North, more and more investments that are able to go on their own now, that have had the benefit of our support through their early stages, allowed them to become viable and now that the economy is really heating up, will be able to move out. We are not going to try to cling and hang on to those organizations to somehow be able to demonstrate success and report on ones that work. We see our role as moving those out into more traditional forms of financing and letting them go on their own. But on the flipside if we had subsidiaries or investments, I guess subsidiaries, more appropriately in this term, that we're putting money into but really aren't creating employment, we have to ask ourselves what we're doing and if that's effective use of taxpayer dollars. I would suggest that it's not. So we have to review that. But let me just say that we are patient, and even as a private investor or as a private entrepreneur, you can imagine a number of years and an amount of time being allotted for payback.

Quite often in new ventures there's a period of investment. There might be a significant period of investing in research and development and it can take companies a number of years before they start to break even and pay back the investment to their owners. I used Fort McPherson Tent and Canvas as an example earlier. We've been in that organization for a number of years and we've been very patient and worked with that company and we think it's brought a lot of benefit to that community, and we understand that this potentially is one of the first years now going forward that they believe the organization will be able to break even. I think it's done a great service and made us very proud, in RWED and in the Development Corporation, of that organization. Had we not been patient, had we put it to a strict economic test some number of years ago, I would suggest that we would have cancelled that program and I think it would have been a mistake. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, I just wanted to ask the Minister for some clarification on the board itself setting up the independence at government's arm's length and the appointment of the CEO and the board and get some governments who have some relationship with that board. I'm looking at the accountability and the reporting structures of the CEO. Does he have two masters or one master? Who does the CEO report to? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This concern has been raised I think under our current setup and structure. If you use the Development Corporation, for example, the CEO is appointed by the Minister and so is the board chair, and this creates some issues and some concerns around reporting relationships. That is something we sought to rectify. Committee was very insistent and strong on this point, and we came to an agreement that the most appropriate way to handle this was to have the Minister in the end finally appoint the CEO, but the board would go out and conduct the hiring exercise, conduct a competition and come to the Minister

with a short list. That's a different mechanism than we currently use now. But I think the Member will appreciate that we are voting public money to be used for the operation of this organization and, as such, I am accountable to the Legislature and to the public for the expenditure of those funds and can't give up that accountability or that responsibility. So it is important that we maintain that. But we have gone some measure, we believe, toward allowing the board to choose who the CEO will be, and think that this will improve both the culture of the new organization and the ability of the board to have more influence over their employees. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister's concern on the public funds. I guess I'm concerned about the independence of the CEO. You have a board that is going to be overlooking this new initiative here and you also have a Minister. So I guess I'm looking at some clear lines in terms of the relationship with the CEO and the board. It has already been talked about, but this is the first time I have seen this bill. So I want to get some assurance in terms of whoever the CEO is. Again, the bottom line, does he report to the board or to the Minister at the end of the day?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. If I wasn't clear in my earlier response, I just want to be clear that the CEO is an executive manager who works for the board and reports to the board. The board, of course, reports to the Minister. So that is right now the dual reporting relationships where the CEO reports directly to the Minister and to the board that is the problem and the confusion, and that's what we've sought to correct. I think we've done that with this new direct reporting relationship. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks, Mr. Minister, for the clarification. The other question I wanted to ask is what will the communities see that's different now with a new act coming into force in terms of how they do business, especially in the smaller regions? There is a lot of discussion in terms of the resource development happening down the Mackenzie Valley. New business opportunities are being looked at, people are looking at getting into small and big business, joint ventures. What would this Business Development and Investment Corporation do for the people there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I want to assure the Member that at day one, if you will, at April 1st, the changeover date, all existing programs will still be offered in the region. So people who are currently served by the BCC or RWED will now be served by BDIC, but the programs will be the same. We wanted to make sure that there was a smooth transition, that people's files weren't jeopardized and that their service was continuous and effective and we thought that this was the best way to do it. But in the

future -- and I spoke to this in my opening comments -- this new legislation, this new organization can be much more flexible. There won't be so much prescribed in legislation and we believe that as communities and as regions are ready, there will now be the ability for communities to take over much of this programming and it will happen at a pace that will be different by community and by region and will only happen when regions are ready for it. I believe that as claims are settled and self-government is a reality in regions, mechanisms will evolve and our programming has to evolve with it. The existing structure was not going to be conducive to that. So I think we'll see some changes in organizations going forward. But, as I've said, it won't be the same in every organization, it will be different, depending on the region or community's abilities and desires. But you can imagine that currently as RWED will be contracted to buy the BCC to deliver programs and services in certain regions, in future that could be a community development organization. That is one of the benefits of this new legislation that is enabling in that manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I like what the Minister said before in terms of a one-stop shopping centre for people in the regions. They have the opportunity to do their business in one location and I also wanted to allude to the makeup of the board and the allocation of funding that will be available to the public. Just distributing the funds to the different regions or initiatives that are going to come forward to the board, that there is some fair and equitable form that would not see other regions hurt or suffering in terms of not jumping at every opportunity that comes before them, that there is some money that's going to be there for the regions. I'm not too sure if the makeup of the board is going to be regionally. Again, it's the first time; however, I like what I'm hearing and I think it's a good step. I'm just waiting to see how it unfolds. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Of course, there will be regional representation on the board and so regional input will be continuous, but I agree that this has got to be equitable across regions and, currently, there is a formula for how the funds are distributed and that will be maintained in the short run going forward. I would like to see additional funds be available for business development, but I'm sure the Member can appreciate it has been difficult to go to Cabinet to talk about additional funding when, admittedly, our own delivery and mechanism was not set up to be as effective as it possibly could be. You would see money being lapsed in certain programs and areas, because there wasn't a sales job done on those programs, there wasn't an understanding that that programming money was available. So the obvious comment would be that you need to do a better job with the money that you have, and I think what we're trying to do is demonstrate that we can do that. That will make it much easier to go back and make the case, make the compelling argument for more money and economic development and then be able to roll that out in the regions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my last short question is does this Business Development and Investment Corporation support the traditional economics of the smaller communities, such as the trappers that need money in terms of assisting them with their economy in terms of the selling of the furs? I wanted to ask that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I would say without hesitation that it absolutely does because it reflects the priorities of this government, and the BDIC will be directed to deliver on the priorities of this government. One of those is to have an effective diversified economy. The Member knows how important the traditional economy is to our government and in addition there are other programs to support those activities. Those will not be lost, those will not be diminished, we're not looking to supplant those with this new organization. So I assure the Member that it will reflect the priorities of this government and it will be tasked to ensure that it does. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. General comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few comments and I know the Minister is well aware of some of the concerns that I had during the process bringing this bill forward. So I'll keep my comments fairly brief. Obviously, I'm in support of the bill as it is today. I have a few minor difficulties with portions of it. I don't agree that it goes far enough in terms of getting to the one-window service delivery model that was envisioned when this was first thought out and entered into. There's certainly a lot more that I think the department and the new BDIC, when it is formed, can do to try to ensure that we do get to that true one-window type of approach to delivery of business programs in this territory.

One of the key things for me in this was the regulations, and I know we've certainly got a commitment from the Minister that he'll try to involve the Governance and Economic Development committee as much as he can in the development of these regulations. I know they're going to come from the new board when it's put into place, but I think the earlier on in the process that the Minister involves the Regular Members who are on GED and the other Members, for that matter, in the rollout of these regulations, the better off everybody will be.

The other issue that I had quite a bit of concern with was the fact that in the new organization the employees are going to come over from the Development Corporation as public service employees and, in terms of strict transparency and accountability, I would prefer that the employees were outside the public service. But I can understand and I can appreciate the reasons that are in place today that would see them come over as members of the public service. So I voted against that clause in the bill when we went through the public hearing and looked at the bill clause by clause. I voted against that clause, but I'm not going to stand in the way of this proceeding because I think it is a step in the right direction. Most certainly it just gives us the opportunity to grow that much more. Under the current way things happen with the Development Corporation and the BCC, I don't think there's that room for growth and improvement like there is

under the new BDIC. So I certainly look forward to seeing what can happen.

I know I spoke, too, about duplication. Maybe even in the Minister's department, it will be the new ITI department and some of the overlap that the investment and economic analysis might have with positions that will be located in the BDIC. So things like that certainly have to be addressed. I understand that once the board has been chosen and the new president comes on board, some of these things can be addressed.

The way that we're going to identify the owners and locations of businesses under the new bill, Bill 16, I think is a drastic improvement over the way things have been and are today. Having that full disclosure and the transparency and accountability that comes with that, I think is a step in the right direction.

I think that's about all that I wanted to say. Again, I'm going to obviously support the bill. I know we've done a lot of work in trying to put this together to where it is today and I do look forward to it proceeding. But, again, I just wanted to make it known that if you look at the way the setup is today, we're not changing too much. Really if you look at it, we're not changing anything until the new board comes in, the new president comes in and some serious changes are made. This bill allows that to happen. So that's a good thing because the way things are right now, it isn't working the way that I would suppose it should. So thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to make those comments and I didn't really have a question to the Minister at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell, would you like to comment?

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Mr. Ramsay for his valuable input through this process. We've spent a lot of time debating these issues back and forth. We don't always agree on all the points, but I think we have the same interest and that's in seeing effective program and service delivery rolled out and delivered in regions and that's exactly what Mr. Ramsay is talking about.

I'm having to be a little more patient because I think that one of the things that I recognized early when we talked about all the kinds of changes and all the kinds of things this new organization can do, was that if you try to bundle all of those things into an organizational change there's a lot of uncertainty, it's very difficult. The most effective way I felt for us to get this accomplished was to start with changing the headquarters' organization and let the regions flow from that. The last thing we wanted was people who currently access our program or have loans or grants with one of our organizations to be concerned and not know where their services would be coming from, not know who they spoke to about their loan, not know where to go. If there was wholesale change, it had the real potential to derail a lot of businesses that are now starting to pick up steam. So we want the same things and, as I've said, this is enabling legislation and the service delivery will evolve and will improve and I think that will start with the program and service review that the board undertakes.

I'll just touch on a couple of points because Mr. Ramsay has taken the time to lay them out. I do intend to involve committee in the development of new programs. Regs

flow from those new programs and I think it's important and this is why we've had some discussion around it. I think I understand correctly that committee really wants to be involved in substantial changes or in new program development. I'm sure there are policies and organizations such as last person out the door turns off the coffee pot, and I don't think that's the kind of thing that the committee is interested in being bogged down with. We're talking about the real meat of our programs and service delivery and I appreciate that and I certainly intend to involve committee.

Some discussion around whether or not the employees were best suited in or out of the public service; I guess on balance, given the additional costs and delays that would have come from moving them outside of the public service, I chose to really advocate that the more important issue was how the CEO was selected. There's no denying that it's still government money funding this organization, and on this point I think that on balance this is the right decision, but I do appreciate that there are different points of view on this. So as I've said, the program and service review is forthcoming. I think it will allow us to lay out a lot of the issues that Mr. Ramsay has talked about, and I look forward to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for those comments. Going forward, I am trying to understand what the long-term vision is for the subsidiaries of the Development Corporation. Some of them have been subsidiaries for years and years and years, let's say. Are we going to continue to subsidize their operation forever and a day, or is there a plan to try to make them self-sustaining at some point in time? What is the plan going forward? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: That certainly is the plan: to make them self-sustaining going forward. These subsidiaries are set up to create meaningful employment in communities but, as they are able to develop capacity and go it on their own, we intend to give that little extra push to make sure that that happens. That will free up additional monies for us to invest in newer start-ups. I think that is very important for us. We don't need all our capital tied up where traditional financing could come in. Where they are unable -- even after much patience and much work on our behalf -- to create employment with the money that we are giving the organization, then we will have to reconsider whether or not our investment isn't better spent elsewhere.

We certainly will have continual reviews of these organizations. It is important that we recognize that this is public money. There has got to be transparency, there has got to be accountability, but very importantly, as well, even for these organizations -- as Mr. Braden has quite accurately pointed out -- there are going to have to be performance measurements. We are going to have to have goals and objectives and we are going to have to measure these organizations by those and report on those. I expect that that will happen and we will have good discussion with committee around the various different details of these subsidiaries. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay, thank you. General comments. Next, I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few more comments to add and questions to ask. As I sit here, I marvel at the fact that this has taken so long. The Minister's opening statement mentions that Minister Handley started this, and I'm not sure, but that takes us to the last Assembly. It has taken this many years for us to get here and just when you think it's not going to happen, there is a bill in front of you that makes it happen. We are told now that a lot of details that would make a substantive difference as to how these programs and organizations are going to run are yet to be decided, but will be by a program review that is going to be undertaken by whomever the CEO and new management is. It is just unbelievable how long it takes for any sort of major changes in government infrastructure and government structure.

We have a totally new Minister, new DM and probably by the time this program has changed, we will have a whole new group of MLAs sitting on this side. We are all into a year of this Assembly. I guess that is my point. I'm hoping the Minister will do what he can to push the program review and make some real substantive and lasting changes as quickly as possible.

I'm still not clear on what these changes mean. Mr. Ramsay stated that we aren't really changing a lot, but we are changing; we are combining these two organizations into one. The purpose of the legislation, as it is written in the preamble, is pretty broad. It says the purpose of the legislation is to establish the corporation and then the purpose of the corporation is to support the economic objectives of the GNWT by encouraging the creation of... There are three elements to that, as I see it.

The Minister indicated earlier in answering questions that he would send directives to the corporation to make sure that it's meeting the objectives of the government. I am hearing all these different things, but I'm thinking that this is going to look more like the Power Corporation, in that the CEO is going to be hired by the board, as opposed to being more like the Housing Corporation where the CEO is a government employee. If it's more like the Power Corporation -- and I may be wrong -- then how are the Minister and this Legislature going to have a say on how this organization is going to meet the objectives of the GNWT in terms of its... I think it says support the objectives of the GNWT. I don't know what that means. I would like to know what is the relationship going to be between the board and the Minister and how does the Minister envision this legislation will accommodate the direction between the Minister and the board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. There were a number of questions there and I probably won't get them all, but I appreciate that Ms. Lee can come back to the ones that I missed. I will try to hit all the points that I have noted here.

Yes, it has taken a long time to get us to where we are and I think that was because what was required in order to have brought acceptance and support for this, as is often the case, was meaningful consultation. There were a

number of rounds of consultation. Not only did the government go out and consult, but this Business Program Review Committee that was made up of people from the Development Corporation, the BCC and from RWED, went out and did extensive community consultation to understand what they felt they needed in terms of business programming and what kind of organization would best be suited to carry that out.

The other thing that was required -- and I pointed to this when we had discussions with Mr. Ramsay -- was minimal service disruption in the regions and on the ground for clients. It would have been very difficult to make wholesale changes to our programs and services and change the organization at the same time without disrupting service delivery. That was one of the principles that we wanted to assure our clients of. What this new legislation does is take a number of separate pieces of legislation and separate programs.

There is currently very prescriptive legislation around the BCC and the Development Corporation. We have programs like the BDF which will be harmonized and amalgamated under this new one piece of legislation, the programs that will flow from that. As I said earlier, this is enabling legislation. Even if there are significant changes required currently in regions, it can't happen given our BCC legislation and Development Corporation legislation. It required this legislative change and this enabling piece of legislation in order for that progression and evolution to take place in regions and in communities in terms of service delivery.

The comparison to the Power Corporation, I believe, in fact, that the Power Corporation CEO is not hired by the board but by the Minister involved. I could be wrong on that, but that was my impression. Our vision as a government, obviously, we have articulated in our strategic plan and must speak to this mandate. We talk about the need for a diversified economy, we don't want to be reliant solely on non-renewable resources development. We want to build up some of our other sectors, like tourism. We want to make sure that we have business programs that respond to individual needs on the ground and allow people to take advantage of the opportunities that they are now seeing.

That means an organization that is very flexible and very responsive. I think the Member well knows there are seemingly many different pots of money available through various federal organizations. We needed our business programming to realize that and be able to tap into some of that and to partner with some of those organizations. We are not that well set up to be able to partner with Aboriginal Business Canada, currently, but we will be under this new legislation.

We can develop programs that fit in and accommodate some of the other pots of money out there. In our challenged fiscal reality, that is something that we have to do. We can't expect our money to go very far if we are just talking about our money. We need to lever it with other sources of money. Thank you. If I have missed any of the points that the Member has touched on, she will remind me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know; I don't think it's an important point, but the Power Corporation chairperson is appointed by the government, but I thought the CEO is appointed by the board. I was just trying to see a picture of what this new board is going to look like. Am I to understand that the programs, as they exist now under two corporations, are going to be the way they are until such time as the corporation goes through their review and decides how and what programs they are going to deliver?

I can understand that we needed to do consultation for five or six years. I can understand that we needed to do some consultation to make sure that there is a buy-in, but it really is unbelievable how much consultation has gone on. We know that the business program review has done their review, but still, apparently we couldn't implement those and we are still going to be going through another review once these two corporations become one.

I can see how, as the Minister indicated earlier, that the review should be done by those who are going to implement them and who are going to deliver them, but, at the same time, there is a downside in that, in that they might be too focused on everyday delivery and the life of these programs and not be able to get that broader perspective that the Ministers or politicians and the policy objectives of the organization, such as what is the role of government in developing businesses in non-market communities versus market economy.

I want to know, is this new corporation going to be delivering programs differently. Because I really think there are different business needs and financial needs in small communities versus market economies like Yellowknife. Are they going to be able to do that? I want to know also, what is the breakdown. Is the Minister going to be able to give a breakdown on how much of their budget should go into investments and how much should go into grants and contributions that are more socially objectively oriented, as opposed to financing which is more economically focused?

I still have a lot of questions about how this new group is going to look and what is the relationship with the Minister and Cabinet with the new board. What is the overall objective of the corporation? Is it any different? Is it much different, and, if so, how different than how these two corporations operate now?

The Minister didn't have to worry about not being able to answer some of the earlier questions, because I still have a lot more. Maybe he could attempt to give me some information on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I see that, and I'm not sure I got all of those ones either, but we will keep going here and by the end of it I will hopefully have been able to have answered all of the questions.

In terms of how the money will be appropriated, the appropriation of this Assembly and how much goes into subsidiaries and how much goes into investments, those specifics will be agreed to by the Minister. The board will be directed in how that funding is to be allocated. We will have some discussion around that through the business planning process with committee and we will debate the

various merits and look at a number of factors in trying to determine what would be most effective.

The new board will be made up of, I think at this point, some current members and some new members. I am going to go out to all the Members of the Assembly and also solicit interest from the broader public. I think that we can expect, and are hopeful, that the expertise of the people on that board will be able to deliver on a very effective program and service review.

Eligibility criteria have been established in the new act. The person can be eligible for appointment if they have owned or managed a business or an enterprise in the NWT or has, in the opinion of the Minister, business expertise relevant to the economy of the Northwest Territories. I think that we are going to get some very capable and exciting people with new and good ideas to bring to the table.

Having said that, I don't want a five or six-year program service review either, and I am going to direct this. As I said, the first order of business this organization is to conduct is a program and service review in no more than a year, and be able to come back to this Assembly with our findings and our discussions around the types of programs and services that we need to be delivering, keeping in mind our strategic priorities of economic diversification.

We do need a flexible organization. It would have been very difficult to pin all of these factors down in new legislation, because as the economy changes and our priorities change and evolve, it is very important that we can adapt quickly to necessary change, and that simply isn't a reality if things are enshrined in legislation. I know the Member well knows this, so that was the necessity in having much of the detail in the policies and regulations that flow from the programs.

We will certainly work with committee members, with all Members of this House, to make sure that we have got it right and we are not going to waste a lot of time doing it. We are going to move very quickly, and I hope the Member will see that and I hope that we will be able to deliver. I am very confident that we will have a new and effective organization. It will be, because we have this enabling legislation that allows us to do some new and interesting things that we are not currently able to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Bell. General comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the areas that I have tried to get a bit of a handle on is the difference between a venture or an enterprise that belongs to this kind of an entity and those that are undertaken directly and specifically by the government, by Cabinet. One example of that, of course, would be the loan guarantees and things we have made to the secondary diamond industry.

The amount of money, it seems, may not be at all outside of the scope of what this new entity can handle. But for some reason -- again using the example of the cutting and polishing shops -- Cabinet takes responsibility and decisions are made, it seems, for political reasons.

The question that I have with this new entity here, are we going to see more ability, more direction, that any kind of business venture that the GNWT might want to entertain should be undertaken by this new corporation here? That our Cabinet or Ministers are not going to be tempted or lured into getting into some of these different kinds of ventures. What kind of separation are we going to see between this corporation and those ventures undertaken directly by government? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. One of the reasons that I think you see loan guarantees being carried out the way they are and using the diamond example, is because there isn't currently the vehicle in our business programming to enable that. We don't have the mechanism to do that at that level in the existing organization, through the existing BCC.

What I am hoping is that in this program service review that is conducted, not only will we come out with some objectives and some discussion of priorities and where we think we need to be going, but there will be the identification of gaps and overlaps, and also some suggestion as to the type of tool kit in order to be able to effectively deliver the types of programs and services in this area that a government needs to.

There is the potential that this organization will come forward and say we need to have a program that allows for loan guarantees because of the amount of economic development going on and because of the booming economy, and that needs to be handled through this entity, as opposed to Cabinet, in future. Really, I think Cabinet's ability to do this has been out of necessity, because of a lack of any other vehicle to date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So maybe I missed it in the answer then. Does this new entity have the capacity to undertake those kinds of ventures instead of Cabinet? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: This new legislation, as I have said, is flexible enough so that programs can be developed to do just that. Whether in fact that will be a recommendation of the program and service delivery review, I don't know at this point. Potentially, that review could come back and suggest there's a void here in business programs and this is something that needs to be addressed. That is fully the range and scope of this program review and those are issues that I expect it to touch on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would hope that we would be able to set this new entity up so that it can absorb those kinds of programs. We haven't had a great run of luck in the last little while. We have had difficulty with two of our diamond cutting shops, had difficulty with a major tourism venture that seemed to have

landed in Cabinet's lap. They've become subject to political accountability and, therefore, the swirl of the political world, rather than an entity like this that has a more rigid and conventional framework. I am hoping to see more of our business ventures handled under this kind of framework than in the political realm.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude with a comment more than a question. It is in very broad support of one of the parts of this bill. It's covered under clause 15 in the article programs. There is a framework there that choice for the corporation to delve into providing information and support for the public and the business community. This is something that has been sadly lacking in the Northwest Territories in the past few years. That is not, to my knowledge, an easily accessible, relevant kind of business support program for small business operators in the North, either those who want the trade of business or those who are already in it and could use some ongoing support. I think in many other jurisdictions in Canada, this kind of thing is managed by community-based colleges and perhaps even private sector training schools. Here in the Northwest Territories, we really have backed out of that. I don't know that our Aurora College network provides that sort of street level business support to small businesses.

In a previous life, Mr. Chairman, I worked for the Federal Business Development Bank on a small business training program that did exactly that. The federal agency made itself available on a walk-in basis to small businesses to provide them real hard-nosed, upfront support for their businesses. I would welcome, and I think the whole business community would welcome, a business initiative by this government to provide that kind of frontline, real practical nuts and bolts, support to small businesses. I would also like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that this kind of stuff does not need to be built from scratch. We don't have to reinvent this wheel. There are many very successful models for doing this. What we need is a delivery vehicle. I am pleased to see this corporation has the ability to do that and I would look forward to it as a priority for this corporation to undertake.

As I say, Mr. Chairman, not a question there but a suggestion and a comment. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I certainly appreciate the support around that initiative and I would agree with the Minister that that is critical. It's not just about lending organizations money. It's about helping them to develop and build their capacity in order to run successful businesses. We need to do more of this. We need, through the BDF or through RWED, regional staff and some capacity and ability to do this now. We need to continue to build on that and develop that. If you look at the partnership between our government and the federal government around business service centre delivery, there is no reason that that couldn't come under the new BDIC and be incorporated. I think this speaks to the flexibility and the breadth of this legislation to be able to tackle a wide range of issues and better respond to our priorities as a government. I think that certainly should be one and I agree with the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. General comments. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the bill, I want to ask him did the department do some consultation with the Sahtu Settlement Tribal Council in terms of the agreement and economic measures or any economic development programming that the tribal council shall be consulted? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: We are going to check that and see if we can get that level of detail as to whether or not the SSTC was directly consulted. I know there was consultation in the Sahtu in various different stages. The Business Program Review Committee went to every region of the Northwest Territories to talk about the future development of an organization to better meet their needs, but, as I indicated, people on the ground in Sahtu communities are not going to see a drastic change in the program delivery. It's going to be status quo with the ability to evolve and change now as Sahtu priorities change and as Sahtu priorities are better able to take on program and service delivery. I think that speaks to how effective this organization can be going forward. So if we were going to make major changes to some of our current or existing business programs, then we certainly would go to SSTC and consult as per the requirement and economic measures chapter. In this case, there isn't that level of individual or specific business program change. I will certainly find out.

On the Business Program Review Committee that recommended much of this change, there were a number of people. I indicated there were reps from the BCC, from Community Futures, from the Dev Corp and from RWED. Also, there were an additional two representatives added throughout that process and one of them was Danny Gaudet from Deline who had a major involvement in the work of this committee and you can see their stamp all over their legislation. That's what really has driven this legislation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I appreciate your response. Again, I am not too sure if Danny Gaudet represents the Deline negotiating team or the Sahtu Secretariat or the Sahtu Tribal Council. This is a major initiative. The economic measures chapter of our agreement says the government shall consult with the Sahtu Tribal Council. I understand what the Minister is saying, but I am trying to see that the agreement is being followed and that this is not going to come back at us sometime in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. I certainly agree with the Member that if we were making changes to the programs, we would be required to talk to SSTC because we would have to say these programs are significantly changing and that's going to affect program delivery in your region, it's going to affect your beneficiaries and the people of the Sahtu and go out for consultation. What we are doing is changing this legislation to future enable change and evolution. When that change and evolution comes, we will have to sit down with that organization. I think at this point, it's the legislative change that will

enable that future change in terms of programming. That's where that level of consultation would come in, I believe. I thank the Member. It's a very important question and an important distinction to make. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your comments. I hear a commitment to talk to the people in the Sahtu region in terms of programming. However, this is a major step, a major change, in terms of this legislation and how it's going to affect the people in the Sahtu region, especially the ones who will be impacted through the land claims. I am not against it. It's just a consultation process. The programming that's going to be affected by it and the level of consultation now needs to be in place with the land claim settlement organizations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do want to give the Member assurance that the Business Program Review Committee did conduct extensive public consultation around our business programs. That was what led to the recommendation that we create through this legislation, a single funding agency. The focus of the consultations was on business clients that did include some aboriginal development corps and then the report of that organization was distributed widely to those stakeholders and to the land claimant groups in 2002. So I believe that in every stage of this process, and it has been over the last number of years now, and in future as we change programs or we propose to change programs, I have indicated that I will sit down with the legislative committees, but it's just as important to consult land claim organizations as well because the effects will be felt if we change those programs by those individuals. So I will certainly commit to doing that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess it's a matter of different interpretations and different levels of concentration, different opinions in terms of this bill and how it's being viewed in terms of consultation by the different organizations. I am looking at the Sahtu land claims in terms of the economic measures, that we are following this chapter here under 12.13 and that people are being consulted. This bill here will have a definite impact into our economic measures chapter. It will have an impact. There is no doubt about it. Are you prepared to look at the outcome of this? That's what I am asking. I am not disagreeing with the Minister. I think it's a good bill, but I am not sure of the consultation. That's what I want to say, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I will certainly continue to consult on all matters that reflect program change. I believe we do have that obligation to do that under the economic measures chapter. Further to that, I think it just makes good business sense. We want to make sure our programs are as responsive as possible and we work with all people in the regions and obviously in the Sahtu to

make sure we come up with the most effective business organization possible. I see this legislation as the skeleton or the framework that will allow new programs to be plugged in. As we are creating those new programs, which will have an impact on the lives of Sahtu people, we will certainly talk with that organization to see how effective those programs can be and seek their advice. That's the distinction I am hoping to make, but I am not saying there hasn't been consultation; there has, with land claim organizations throughout the development of this legislation through the Business Program Review Committee. So I believe we have done that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, I think I got the comfortable assurance from the Minister that the consultation is happening. I have no more further questions on this bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't mean to belabour some of the points I am asking here, but I am afraid I still don't have a clear picture of what it is that we are creating here. On one hand, I hear the Minister saying having input into the needs of community business people in Sahtu and how the policy change is being suggested there are going to be incorporated into how these groups are running. I don't see how that's going to get done in terms of the relationships and control the Minister has with the board and corporation. I still don't know because oftentimes in all the boards that are created by the NWT statutes, once they are created the Ministers are required to have a hands-off approach, even education boards. We are told over and over again, you can't really control or have direct input into a lot of things other than by way of funding and some of the broad policy objectives. Meeting the strategic policies of government will require more input and control about that.

I still don't see how this is going to work. Maybe I am not asking the right questions or I am not listening enough. What is the transition going to look like? Will legislation just leave everything as it is now? They are going to get new letterhead, they will have a new board appointed, but all the program dollars and the categories of programs that are available within two corporations as they exist now, they are going to be the same, perhaps until a different version is presented to the House following the program review by the new CEO and new board. Is that the right way to understand that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I think maybe it's obvious to me because I am involved in trying to deal on a daily basis with these three different organizations that are all delivering different programs and services on behalf of this government and it is quite a challenge. We currently have the BCC and their board delivering certain programs and services. We have the Dev Corp, another organization, delivering sometimes the same services, sometimes different. Sometimes there is a lot of question about who would be better delivering these programs and services. We also have RWED administering business programs and services on behalf of the government. I can

assure the Member that there is some confusion and a lot of discussion around who would best be suited to delivering these and our strategic priorities are not always in lock step between these three organizations and it is difficult to keep track of that. We think it would be much easier and much more effective if we have one board, one organization in charge of all these programs, and this enabling legislation will allow for the evolution of program delivery in regions. But, as we have said, drastic changes to programs, the elimination of some programs, the elimination of subsidiaries, the changing of investments. If we were to try to undertake something like that prior to changing this organization, I would offer it would have been an overwhelming task and we wouldn't have been successful in maintaining the support for this because of the uncertainty that clients would have had around whether or not those programs would still be there for them and who they would even speak to about the change, which might be unsettling.

I think that is what you are seeing here reflected in this legislation today. I think that the future is much improved for businesspeople in communities, because I think they will be better able to understand where to get programs and services from in future. I do think that the communities and regions that really know their people best on the ground will be able to take over much of this program and service delivery in the future. That is the model. I think it is hard to look at this thing. We tend to look at it in a very short time frame. But if you were to come back I think in 10 or 15 years and look at how program and service delivery is carried out in the regions, it will be drastically different, I believe. I think that is where you will see this change in this legislation has enabled those types of improvements. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Well, see, that is the problem here because we don't know. The Minister speaks about the flexibility and the skeleton framework we are setting out here. We are not making a whole lot of changes, so I don't understand how he could say, with any level of confidence and certainty, that somehow what we are doing here is going to create or resolve this and that it is much more different, positive, and more helpful to the business industry. I don't need to know all of the details, the in and outs of this, but I really need to get a clearer picture about what this legislation provides in terms of the new organization that addresses what the drawbacks were as they exist in these two separate organizations. I don't see that right now.

Let me ask a more direct question to the Minister. What is the total budget that is being administered by the three organizations that are currently delivering business programs for the government and maybe even including some of the programs that are available in RWED? What is the manpower that we are looking at? When does this legislation come into force? How long does the Minister foresee that all of these are going to stay the same? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I am going to collect that level of detail that the Member has asked for here. The act comes into force on a day or days fixed by the order of the Commissioner, so, on passage, the legislation will come into effect. I think the Member was looking for the budget of the three existing organizations and the manpower, the

number of staff involved in delivering the programs and services currently. I can certainly provide that. I know, from dealing with frustrated clients in regions who approach us or approach the BCC about a loan and wonder why we can't do leveraged or partnered financing with another organization, maybe in the federal government, where they have seen a program that seems to fit the bill. The reason is this very prescriptive BCC legislation doesn't allow us to do that. That is, in this day and age and our fiscal reality, we need to be able to partner with other entities and with other sources of financing to make sure our money goes as far as it can. I think that is one of the things that this legislation allows. It has the flexibility to allow us to develop programs that can do those kinds of things. We don't have that right now. As I have said, we are really handcuffed by that and handcuffed to deliver the most effective programs and services to our residents without the ability to resort to partnerships, to resort to partnership funding arrangements. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: On that note, could I ask the Minister what is in the Business Credit Corporation Act right now that hinders, and what does that wording say that hinders such a leveraging activity, and how is the new act written that could help address that? Could I get the Minister to be more specific about the old wording and compare it to the new one? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. The new BDIC legislation accommodates the ability for us to develop programs that speak to partnerships. It isn't so prescriptive that we can't do that. If you look at section 18 of this new legislation, the section on agreements, it indicates and allows us to...In this section, the corporation may enter into agreements with any department or agency of the GNWT, Government of Canada, government of a province or territory, any body or person, for the provision of services or a program that are consistent with the corporation's purpose to, on behalf of, or jointly with that department, agency, government body or person. We don't have that ability with the BCC, so it is very clearly laid out here. There is no doubt in our minds that, on passage of this legislation, we are now able to do that. If we were to go into and enter into those kinds of programs, we would be doing that without the express direction or ability under the current BCC legislation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Time is up, Ms. Lee. General comments. I will give Ms. Lee another round here. Thank you, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Thank you, Members. On that last question, are there different powers and responsibilities and authorities given to the boards? Is there a new and different power given to this new board that wasn't there for the old boards, or does that legislation that the Minister just read out give them the kind of power to do the things that the government wants it to do? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. The new board has the powers and authorities that flow from this legislation. I know the Member understands that. So section 18 allows the new board to engage in programs that speak to those

types of partnership arrangements. There isn't that ability in the Development Corporation Act currently or in the BCC. The BCC, for instance, can really only lend money, as it is currently set up. So it is more to the enabling aspects of this legislation as compared to things that...There is a lack of direction in the existing legislation around these kinds of issues. If the BCC or the Development Corporation were to carry out activities, they would have been doing it without the ability under their legislation to do so. So that is what is being addressed here and clarified. That is the enabling aspect of this new piece of work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I understand that. I would like to know, in more simple terms, how is it that the Minister and the Legislature, through the Minister, how does the new legislation enable the Minister and, therefore, us to have an influence on how the money that is available to the BDIC will be spent to foster economic growth or create new development or enter into businesses? How I understand that is, I am thinking that this corporation and this board are going to work independently. The Minister is not going to be able to say I would like you to get access from Aboriginal Business Development Corporation to do this and that and whatever. Does it allow that? I want to know what the relationships are, because there is a dichotomy between trying to make it independent and, at the same time, I think that all of the Members here want to have some influence on how the public money is spent in terms of fostering and helping small businesses or arts and crafts businesses or something. I don't know what the day-to-day experience of the Minister is like on this one. Is it like running a department? As far as I am concerned, I thought that this was going to be quite an independent organization. It is not supposed to be like a department where the Minister is supposed to manage. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I think the benefit of having a board with people with business expertise is that they can provide that perspective when we are developing programs, but it is the Minister that will approve the business plan each year. That will become public. That will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly. We approve the financial appropriation every year. So there is an audited annual report each year. Really, the approval of those funds and the approval of the business plan speak to the level of involvement that the Minister and the Legislative Assembly have in how money is spent. Of course, the ability to issue directives in terms of priority areas for investment is another one. I certainly won't be involved on a day-to-day basis, approving loans or getting involved in the specific financing of various different investments. It is not something that is appropriately the job of the Minister. That is why we have this organization which will be headed up by this board. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: There are lots of examples of highly-publicized ventures that the BDIC -- and probably not so much BCC - had engaged in in the past that raised eyebrows of people here and maybe elsewhere. A couple of years ago, they did a mass mail-out on faxes, selling Christmas gifts, severely disrupting local markets. That is one thing I can think of. I wonder why you go to Fort McPherson, or

was it Tsiigehtchic? They don't have a commercial place. They might not have as many business ventures going on there, when I think public money should be spent fostering businesses in communities where there aren't any, and then I see money being spent in lots of businesses in Yellowknife I think that might not require public funding. I am trying to see how doing this new way is going to better that sort of situation. There are numerous businesses, arts and crafts businesses or small business in communities that cannot access commercial lending. I think that there should be a lot more opportunities for them to enter into. I think this is the kind of thing that this corporation or any sort of public-funded business agency should be more actively involved in. I am not getting a picture from here that that sort of situation is really going to change. It is just that we are putting one umbrella onto an entity that used to be two. I guess there are some economies of scale to be gained. I am being asked by the Minister to say, okay, we are just putting the framework here. We are marrying these two. We are going to turn them into one. We are hoping that they are going to be more efficient, but as to how they are going to do it and how they are going to better deliver government objectives or the Minister's objectives, we are just going to have to wait and see. Is that the extent of what I am being asked to do here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: It is difficult for me to generalize, because many of our programs are based on application. If applications, in fact, don't come in for those programs, we can't sort of will the money just out into the general public or general community by community. So I think that is the difficulty in me being able to respond to that. I think there are two issues here which we shouldn't confuse. Efficiency is one, and there are efficiencies and reduced administration in this new organization. I think we documented that. Effectiveness is another. That speaks to the program and service review we are going to conduct. We need to know if the kinds of things we are doing make sense or, if they once made sense, still make sense, if the government's priorities are being reflected in our program delivery, if, in fact, we are doing the kinds of things to foster and enable a diversified economy, if we are effectively working with the smallest communities to make sure they can share and partake in this booming economy. Those are all very legitimate and very good questions.

I am not suggesting to the Member that we need to take a leap of faith here. What I am suggesting is that we are going to methodically conduct this program and service review and make sure that this board reflects the priorities of this government and the priorities of this Legislature which change over time, and is flexible enough in order to accommodate those and be responsive. I think that those are two very key priorities for this new organization. Yes, much of that is to be developed. I am asking the Member and all Members in this House to work with me in ensuring that we have the most responsive and effective organization going forward. There have been a number of years of work into this, but we now have a chance, as a Legislature, to put our stamp on this new organization and make sure it reflects the priorities of this government and make sure that people in all of the communities and our smallest communities are able to take advantage of our programs and services. We will only do that with an effective program service review and effective cooperation

on the part of my department and this government with your committees. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. The preamble of the bill says the purpose of the corporation is to support the economic objectives of the Government of the Northwest Territories, by encouraging the creation and development of business enterprises. The Minister just indicated, in a small example that I have, that it is really application based. I guess these entities are going to be out there. If the people want to take advantage of it and apply for the funding, that is one thing; but, if not, what can you do? I think that is one example of a big, huge discussion that we should have.

We hear a lot in this House about how there are uneven and even level business development and economic activities happening in the Territories. Economy in Yellowknife is overheated. There are businesses springing up all of the time. There is virtually full employment in Yellowknife. I have to tell you, it really bugs me when there are millions in public money being lent out to huge corporations, that I am not going to mention. I hear day in and day out about how there are no activities happening in small communities. I want to know how we can make a difference. I think setting up an organization like this is an opportunity to do that. I am being asked to sort of jump into that. It is really taking a leap of faith, because we are just creating a skeleton structure. We are creating a board. We are creating a corporation, and we are just going to leave them to do what they are going to do. When do we, as a Legislature, have a say on how much money we are spending, are we spending \$30 million, \$40 million, \$50 million, \$60 million? How much of that is going to be going to grants and contributions to small communities? How much of that is going to lending money to Aurora Company, a \$1 million loan to Aurora Tourism Company or whoever? How much of that is going to government-funded businesses selling file folders made of buffalo hide? I think the private sector sells those things better than the public sector at Christmastime using government faxes. When do we get our opportunity to have a say in that?

I don't think that...what are other businesses? It is unbelievable the list of businesses in Yellowknife that get money from the public purse when we have so many businesses. I have to be careful. There are innovative businesses that are engaged in high tech and things where it is unproven and untried, but I don't think a retailer selling coffee or anything like businesses that are well-known and well-established, I don't think that is where the public money should be going. When do we have a discussion on that? Is it totally going to be up to the board? Maybe the Minister could tell me that this legislation has provisions there that give this new corporation direction as to what sorts of things this government is expecting to do. Or am I just here to approve this legislation and give it to the Minister and Cabinet to direct them on what they are supposed to do and just let it go at that? I don't know.

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

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. In my earlier response, I didn't want to give the suggestion that we have programs that are application-based if people don't

take advantage of those. Oh well, too bad, the money moves on to those who are able to take advantage of those.

I think, in our discussion with Member Braden, there were a number of very good points raised about our role in helping develop business capacity. I think that is a critical component of what we need to do, what we currently do but need to be doing a better job of. To suggest that people have to just wake up and smell the opportunities and take advantage of them I think is patently unfair. I think we have to work very closely with people in all our communities. I don't think we can exclude any communities, by the way. There are large companies in Yellowknife that certainly don't need our help, but there are struggling, potential, budding entrepreneurs who don't have the credit rating to go to a chartered bank. I don't think we can discriminate against them because they happen to be located in a larger centre. I think we need to use our Community Futures organizations to build up that capacity and we need to make sure we work with people to be able to take advantage of opportunities.

It would be the same thing as suggesting that communities...I'll use our new RPD program as an example; that while there are all these opportunities that are going to stem from the pipeline, communities just need to stand up, take advantage of them and go and negotiate with the producers. I don't think anybody would think that makes sense. We know we need capacity. We know we need skills in order to be able to do that, and our government is involved in helping to develop that and provide that. It's very much the same here with business programming. It's not enough to expect that the people don't need help in accessing financing. But we're trying to make it simpler, we're trying to be more supportive, and we're trying to improve our program of service delivery.

In terms of whether or not certain companies merit funding from this government or if too much funding is happening in certain regions for certain companies, a lot of that's very difficult for the public to ascertain right now because not much of this information is public. We're proposing in this new bill a new real element of transparency. That's something that the committee drove home time and time again. We need to know who's being lent money and where they're from. We don't speak to that now and we will in future. I think that will allow the very good debate around these points that we're engaging in to happen. I think that's a point that will be of some considerable discussion. I think that debate needs to take place and can take place with this new organization.

I hear what the Member is saying. I think she's making some very good points. I think there are a number of issues and it's not a simple solution to this, but I think we're moving forward with the pieces that enable us to do those kinds of things. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Does committee agree that we've concluded general comments on Bill 16?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We'll now go clause by clause. Bill 16, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act. Page 4, Bill 16, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act, interpretation, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation, clause 2. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification from the Minister, Mr. Chairman. Does any reference need to be made to the land claim agreements in terms of the legislation in terms of programming? Again, going back to chapter 12 of the economic measures chapter, it makes reference to the agreements of the settled land claims. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. I don't believe that there's the requirement to specifically identify the various different economic measures chapters that exist in current land claim provisions or potentially in future land claim provisions, but we did have this discussion with committee and I did provide, in writing, my understanding that there needed to be a level of consultation certainly with committee. I do believe that extends to land claim organizations, where we're making significant program changes. But to cite all the land claim provisions that currently exist and future ones that we might anticipate coming into force, I don't think is realistic in this piece of legislation or all of our other business programming legislation. But I would state again, where we are making those significant program changes, I do believe we are compelled to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wasn't alluding to citing all the land claim settlements and all the different chapters. I was alluding to a reference where this interpretation would somehow make a reference to the land claims that have been settled in the Northwest Territories. You can have that discussion in terms of consultations and different programs and all the different clauses. I'm not too sure if we are living up to the agreement that was negotiated between Canada and this government and the aboriginal groups of settling these land claims. So again, a question to the Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. Because those provisions stem from commitments made by the federal government and in effect become federal law, we believe that those override all these pieces of legislation and don't need to be reiterated in every single piece of NWT legislation that we have, from every territorial piece of legislation. Maybe for some further discussion of that, I'll go to Mr. Vician and he can give you a sense of some of our thinking on this matter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The provisions that arise from economic chapters in the land claim agreements are essentially legislative commitments made by the Government of Canada and passed and supported

by this Assembly as well, and are a required mandate in terms of all its programs. Therefore, this legislation that's being proposed here today, other forms of legislation and policy, as well, for example, the Business Incentive Policy, are considered to be the provisions of the land claim and are paramount over these forms of legislation. Therefore, the interpretation is that that is a governing piece of guidance overall in terms of what we're doing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, deputy minister and Minister. I know this government also was a party to the agreement here and, again, I'm not seeing where we're not making reference to the settlement agreements. I guess I'm going to take it on a leap of faith with the department here, but I'm still not comfortable enough with the answer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Clause 2, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation. To clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 6, clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 7, clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 8, clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 10. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Maybe I'll take another kick at the can here, Mr. Chairman, in terms of programs again. With regard to the programs, you talk about legislation, but you also talk about programs in the settlement agreement. Why is that not recognized or made reference to in the agreement and in the land claim settlement agreements?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We're on clause 10, Mr. Yakeleya. Was that question with regard to clause 10?

MR. YAKELEYA: Clause 10, programs. Yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 10 is employed in the public service. It has to do with...Mr. Yakeleya. Thank you. Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 9, powers, clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10, programs, clause 15. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'll just refer to that question then, Mr. Chairman. Number 10 again in reference to the land claim agreements chapter and programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Any program change proposed we will be required to consult with the land claim organizations under those economic measures chapters. That is overriding legislation that affects all of our legislation and so we're compelled to do that and we will do that in terms of program changes in this realm and in many others. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Page 10, programs, clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 11, clause 16.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 17.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 12, clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 20.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 22.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 13, clause 23.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 24.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Finance and accounting, clause 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 26.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 14, clause 27.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 28.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 15, clause 29.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 31.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 16, clause 32.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 17, clause 33.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Miscellaneous, clause 34.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 35. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, a technical kind of question here. The corporation or any subsidiary of the corporation are exempt from the payment of any tax levied by a municipal corporation. So if I had a subsidiary corporation and I had a workshop set up in the city of Yellowknife, I don't have to pay municipal taxes, property taxes, business licence fees, any of that type of stuff? What is the intent or the depth of this clause? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I'm going to have Mr. Vician provide some more detail here, but if I understood the Member's questions, that is the case. It's a government business, it wouldn't pay municipal tax. I'll have Mr. Vician provide more detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intent of this legislation respects the fact that the organization, the corporation or subsidiary, would be a government entity and, therefore, would not be paying a municipal tax. However, the matter would be resolved through the policy

with regard to the grant-in-lieu provision to municipalities that provides taxation and support for that purpose. Depending on the nature of the entity, it really depends on where you are and whether there's a tax base specifically in the municipality and whether or not there is actually an assessment and tax fee due would govern the way this clause was applied. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Satisfactory, Mr. Braden? Clause 35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 36.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 37.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 18, clause 38.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Offence, clause 39.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Regulations, clause 40.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 19, review, clause 41.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Transitional, clause 42.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 21, consequential amendments, clause 43.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 44.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Repeal, clause 45.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 46.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Commencement, clause 47.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree to Bill 16 as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that Bill 16 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I now say that Bill 16 is ready for third reading, and thank you. Thank you, Mr. Bell, and thank you, Ms. Veinott and Mr. Vician, for attending our proceedings this evening. Thank you. I think committee has two options. One we could call it an evening or we can take a break now and come back with opening comments from the Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Considering that a couple of our Members are out of the House on other duties, our numbers are a little diminished. I suggest we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Is that a motion, Mr. Braden, to report progress?

MR. BRADEN: Oh, thank you. I move, Mr. Chairman, that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour? The motion is carried. Oh, sorry. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Any opposed? One opposed. Oh, these guys do vote.

---Laughter

All those in favour, raise your hand. Six in favour. Those opposed? Seven opposed. The motion is defeated. We'll take a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Madam Chair, if we can go to the main estimates to deal with the Department of Health and Social Services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, committee is agreed. I will ask Minister Michael Miltenberger to please deliver the opening remarks for the main estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I am pleased to present the 2005-06 main estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services.

The department is requesting a total of just under \$253 million for the 2005-06 fiscal year. This is an increase of about \$4 million, or 1.6 percent, over last year's budget. In addition to this growth, there are some additional requirements that we anticipate will need to be addressed this coming year. These will be included in future supplementary appropriations if required.

I am looking forward to seeing the benefits of the funding agreed to at the First Ministers' meeting on health that concluded last fall. This funding is not included in the department's 2005-06 budget because negotiations about how the funds can be spent have not yet concluded. The territorial health access fund will provide \$150 million, over five years, for the three territories to assist with the North's

unique challenges, such as the high cost of medical travel, and to facilitate long-term health reforms. There will also be ongoing increases to the Canada health transfer and, potentially, opportunities to access the new aboriginal health fund.

We share common goals and hopes for our residents, that they can live healthy lives and do not experience alcohol and drug abuse. We support their efforts with promotion and prevention programs and we respond to their crises with treatment services. The department has accomplished many changes through the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, including ensuring that frontline and community workers are adequately paid, trained and supervised by being employees of the regional authorities. There is more to do and we intend to follow through with the strategy by keeping the focus on community-based promotion and prevention efforts to tackle these challenges.

As the Minister of Finance previously indicated, the fiscal responsibility policy will be a cornerstone of the upcoming budget and the government's new fiscal strategy. While the department always need funds to support lasting improvements to the health and social services system, we are committed to spending wisely and achieving results.

Although we are finding efficiencies in as many areas as possible, we are dealing with the rising cost of doing business. We have made investments in the workforce, salary increases for our physicians and specialists, foster care costs, medical supplies that must be purchased, and the expanding costs of our supplementary health benefits programs, including drugs and medical travel. The budget request of \$252.705 million will be distributed between five main areas of activity:

- \$31 million for program delivery support. This is the support and assistance needed throughout the system. This includes human resource services such as recruitment and training, information technology systems development and support, as well as the administration of our health insurance programs and the authorities' operations.
- \$135 million for health services programs. These services are provided at our health centres, public health clinics, doctors' offices, hospitals and some facilities in southern Canada. It includes things like public health, chronic care clinics, inpatient and outpatient care, and physician services. The cost of delivering these programs is estimated to increase from last year's costs by approximately \$3 million.
- \$18 million for supplementary health programs. This covers the additional benefits provided to eligible residents for programs like Metis health benefits, indigent health benefits, extended health benefits and medical travel. The cost of these benefit programs will increase by approximately \$2 million compared to the past year.
- \$62 million for community health programs. These programs include the provision of child and family services. This budget also supports programs that promote healthy lifestyles and community wellness, and also includes services for at-risk individuals and families.

- \$6 million for the directorate. This includes system-wide leadership and management planning policy and legislation development and administrative support for the department.

There will never be enough money for health if the only focus is on treating illnesses.

The department also has programs and services that encourage people to become healthier, to become more active, and to improve the wellbeing of their families and communities. We emphasize prevention, encouraging people to eat right and get enough exercise, to stop smoking and drinking, and to immunize children against contagious diseases.

A facilities review is underway, and a government-wide review of boards and agencies is underway. We will do operation reviews of each authority, beginning with Inuvik, to see what is working well and what needs improving.

Registered midwives start their practices this year. We are hiring northern graduates and training our staff for more advanced positions.

The toll-free health care line provides 24-hour advice to people in their homes. For all of these programs and services, the department and the authorities work collaboratively with many government and non-government partners.

Madam Chair, I welcome the opportunity to answer the questions that Members may have as you consider the 2005-06 Main Estimates for Health and Social Services. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time I'll ask Sandy Lee, the chair for the Standing Committee on Social Programs, if she would please provide her committee's review of the main estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I look forward to having the Minister answer questions that he has stated in his statement.

Introduction

Madam Chair, the Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on January 14, 2005, to discuss the draft main estimates for the department of Health and Social Services. Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$250.649 million in operations expense and \$6.875 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2005-06.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2005-2006 Draft Main Estimates.

Preface

It is important for the public to note that the new federal funding for health care announced in the fall of 2004 is not included in 2005-2006 Draft Main Estimates, and as such the committee did not have opportunity to comment on the final disposition of the funds. This is a one-time anomaly that clouded our discussion with the Minister and his officials.

The department has a handle on how much money is expected to flow from these new funding arrangements. What is not clear are the conditions the federal government will place on the usage of the new funding. Until such time as the allowed usages for the funding can be established, the department is unable to include in the main estimates funding to restore programming or pay for new initiatives.

Committee noted that some reductions, proposed delays of program implementation and facility closures that were discussed during the business plan would not be taking place.

The areas where the committee would like the department to target new or increased spending are discussed within the rest of our report.

Mental Health And Addictions Strategy

The committee was pleased the department was able secure funding to roll out the last year of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In this time of restraint, the government was able to see the need to hire the nine mental health workers and three clinical supervisors.

Committee is still concerned that the department will have difficulty in recruiting for these positions given the requirement to have either a bachelor or master's degree in social work. Alcohol abuse remains the most important issue facing many of our communities and strategies that cannot put mental health/addiction workers in the communities are of no use to them.

The abuse of drugs is becoming more and more prevalent, as increases in disposable incomes have led many northerners to make poor life choices. This is readily apparent in Yellowknife's downtown core but is also becoming a problem in smaller communities. More resources will have to be directed towards drug addictions.

The concern that there are not enough treatment facilities to meet the needs of northerners in dealing with their addictions remains. Any reprofiling of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy by using the new federal money should address the issue of facilities, in addition to staffing concerns.

Gambling is a problem for many northerners and does not seem to be adequately addressed or, at the very least, given a meaningful profile within the context of the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Beating an addiction like alcohol dependency is a laudable feat. Replacing an alcohol addiction with a gambling addiction does not put a person any further ahead.

Members will look for evidence of increased programming for gambling addicts in future business plans.

Madam Chair, I would now like to ask the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden, to continue with the report of the committee. Sorry, Madam Chair; I would like to ask the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak, to continue with the report.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Pokiak.

Professional Development Opportunities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members were concerned with the reduction to the professional development funds available for health care workers. Although it is apparent that the department did not expend the total funding available over the last two years and that this would be a logical activity to consider for cost-cutting measures, committee members have heard anecdotal evidence that one of the reasons for poor uptake was the inability of the department and the authorities to provide the short-term relief necessary for nurses to take advantage of the program.

One solution that was discussed at committee was the possibility of allowing health professionals to accrue their professional development funds for two years. More money would allow the health professionals a wider choice in training opportunities, and having some professionals attending every two years could make it easier to schedule replacement coverage.

The department has made it clear to Members that nurses' salaries in the Northwest Territories are competitive with other Canadian jurisdictions. While this is an important component of any recruitment and retention plan, it has become important to include items such as professional development opportunities, which allow nurses to upgrade their skills and interact with their peers, to ensure retention of valued employees.

The onus is on senior management at the departmental and authority level to ensure there is sufficient staff on hand to cover off those nurses who want to take advantage of relevant professional development opportunities.

Members are concerned that the use of contract nurses is contributing to the turnover of nurses in the NWT. Why would a nurse take a permanent position and pay rent and travel costs, when he or she could take a contract position and have rent and removal costs paid for?

Committee members will be tracking these issues through the next business planning cycle.

Homelessness

The committee supports the new position proposed in the main estimate to develop a long-term strategy to deal with the homelessness issue. This two-year term position is important in coordinating information and programs within the social envelope to ensure a consistent government-wide approach in working with our NGO partners to develop a new long-term strategy.

In recognition of the fact that NGOs are, and probably will be, doing most of the program delivery related to homelessness on behalf of the government, committee members expressed concerns that this new position would become a first step in the development of a bureaucracy to work on the homelessness file. Members want to see spending on programs rather than on bureaucracy.

Supplementary Health Benefit Programs

As more and more of their time is spent helping constituents access supplementary health benefits,

committee members look forward to further briefings and discussions on the redesign of this program.

The issue of third-party coverage for the small segment of our population without private health care insurance or coverage under the federal Non-Insured Health Benefits program is of concern to Members. As it stands now, the coverage available through the Supplementary Health Benefit Program is insufficient to meet basic needs in some circumstances and does not adequately deal with the use of medical escorts. These issues must be addressed in any program redesign.

Some of the complaints that MLAs have heard through constituents deal with the problems they have experienced in trying to determine the level of benefits they are entitled to. Members have heard of decisions taking up to five weeks. This is unacceptable in this time of instant communications and clearly points to the need to establish concise program eligibility guidelines for staff to follow as part of any program redesign. Program delivery staff must be sensitive and diligent in helping clients access the benefits to which they are entitled.

Members also look forward to reviewing the criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of any disease or condition under the Supplementary Health Benefit Program. How we determine and apply any such criteria can have a profound effect on the wellbeing of a family with a loved one suffering from a chronic condition or disease.

As previously stated, Members look forward to further discussions with the Minister in the spring.

Madam Chair, at this time, Mr. Braden, will complete the report.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Braden.

Medical Travel And Stanton Territorial Hospital

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To continue the standing committee's report in the area of medical travel and Stanton Territorial Hospital. Committee members are pleased that Stanton will be taking a central, coordinating role in determining which patients require primary care in Alberta. The department's own consultants have estimated that during one sample year, anywhere from 1,000 to 1,800 bed days were paid for in Alberta for patients who could have been treated at Stanton.

We are paying to staff a hospital to operate at or near capacity. It makes no sense to send patients from Inuvik directly to Edmonton, when the bed space required, specialists and level of nursing care are readily available at Stanton.

Except in the most extreme life-threatening situations, sending all patients to Stanton for advanced diagnosis and treatment makes good economic sense.

Members see a need to involve the specialists and other medical professionals to determine whether the capacity and skill set exist at Stanton Territorial Hospital to deal with referred patients' medical conditions.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Members are concerned that the issue of FASD may not have the profile within the government's business plans and main estimates that its devastating effects on the North demand.

There is good work going on in this department. It is actively involved with the Pacific Northwest Partnership in establishing best practices and centres of excellence for research. Social workers and frontline health care workers provide treatment and programs to northerners who may be suffering from the effects of FASD as part of our continuum of care.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides funding and support to the authorities to help all northerners, including those who may suffer from FASD, to get the most out of their educational opportunities. Early childhood development programs can also do a lot to mitigate the long-term consequences of FASD.

The Department of Justice has done groundbreaking work in dealing with cognitively impaired inmates.

A significant portion of our budget is spent dealing with the long-term effects of alcohol abuse as it relates to FASD, Madam Chair. Educational programs are raising awareness, and expectant mothers are much less likely to drink than they were just 20 years ago.

Members have taken this concern to their counterparts on the Accountability and Oversight committee, and there is general support for increasing the profile of FASD in the next business planning cycle.

Territorial Dementia Facility And Long-Term Care Facilities

Recent statistical population projections for the Northwest Territories have indicated a doubling in the number of seniors by the year 2018. The department has acknowledged this will mean an increase in the number of northerners requiring long-term care in facilities like the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik, or placement in a dedicated dementia facility.

The Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors, or YACCS, has done an excellent job in preparing the business case showing the need for a territorial dementia facility, as well as doing some preliminary design work. The members of the standing committee appreciate the work of these dedicated volunteers, and all other people who volunteer at long-term care facilities across the NWT, in addressing the needs of elders.

Members look forward to reviewing the results of the facility review currently underway and note that there may be an opportunity to use some of the new federal funding to address the infrastructure requirements of our long-term care program, including the building of a dedicated dementia facility in the NWT.

Respite Care

As part of any plan to deal with the issue of long-term care in the NWT, committee members see a need to develop respite programs for those caregivers who decide to look after their loved ones at home.

There is a clear need for medical and non-medical respite care. If we cannot offer respite programs, there is a significant possibility that we will end up with these people in our long-term care facilities as the caregivers burn out. For committee members it is a simple matter of pay now or pay more later.

The committee would be interested in the results of the pilot project on respite care that ended in 2004.

There is an opportunity to ramp up a respite care program in the NWT to respond to the needs of our aging population, as well as dealing with the immediate needs of other northern caregivers who may require respite relief.

In closing, Madam Chair, committee members will be looking for evidence of such an approach in the next business planning cycle.

Thank you. That completes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on this department.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, I move that committee report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion to report progress? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 16, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act; Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006; and, Committee Report 11-15(3), and would like to report that Bill 16 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The motion is in order. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 22: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 18: An Act To Amend The Territorial Court Act

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Territorial

Court Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 18 has had third reading. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, order of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the AOC committee tomorrow morning at 9:00 and again at noon.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 17th, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act
 - Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006

- Committee Report 9-15(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 10-15(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 11-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 16, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until February 17, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:11 p.m.