



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 28

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Pages 907 - 944

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 15, 2007****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. Honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 69-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements**

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise that construction of the Yellowknife passenger terminal building improvements project was recently completed.

---Applause

This project was initiated in response to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, requirement for a security system at the Yellowknife Airport to screen all checked baggage for explosive devices. This system was operational ahead of the January 1, 2006, deadline.

Along with the changes for the new security measures, the department also carried out a number of improvements to the building that will ensure that the Yellowknife Airport will continue to serve as an effective and efficient hub for northern air transportation. Some of the specific improvements included:

- construction of new air carrier offices, ticket counters and a second inbound baggage claim area;
- expansion of the north apron; and
- expansion of the departure lounge, including washrooms and provisions for food services.

Mr. Speaker, the expansion of the passenger terminal building and airside apron will enable us to handle the surge in aircraft and passenger movements now being generated by resource development in the Northwest Territories. This project will help to facilitate future changes to air services to Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the public for their ongoing patience and understanding during the construction of the Yellowknife passenger terminal building improvements. With the cooperation of all airport users, the Department of Transportation was able to keep disruptions to a minimum. I am very pleased that the work has been completed and normal operations have resumed.

In closing, I am confident that we are well positioned to meet any new air transportation challenges and that the Yellowknife Airport will continue well into the future to satisfy the travelling public needs for a safe and secure air transportation system. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations**

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to stand and speak to the plight of our non-government organizations to continually have to fight for money year after year. Mr. Speaker, we're talking a lot of first-contact groups in the communities that deal with a lot of the social issues. They're the first people that a lot of people seeking help will go to and they're usually the last in the pecking order as far as handing out money goes, and that's not fair to them, Mr. Speaker. They provide an essential service to residents and they should not have to worry every year whether they're going to get their money or not, or whether they're going to get it on time. A lot of these agencies have boards and they're being dictated as to how they're supposed to spend their money. Boards really don't have much authority over how they spend their money. The funding agency, the people that give them the money, will tell them how to spend it and that's not fair to these organizations, Mr. Speaker.

They do provide, like I said, an essential service and it's hard work. You think it's eight hours a day but, in most cases, it's not; it's 24/7. A lot of these people do their work with a lot of passion, with a good heart, and they believe strongly in what they do. To have to put these people and the NGOs through this every year is really not fair to them, Mr. Speaker.

It's time that we had a look at all the non-government organizations that run a good organization, and look at having some multi-year funding for them so they can concentrate on the work at hand, Mr. Speaker, and not have to worry about the finances.

They do provide, as I said, an essential service, a much needed service. It's a service that I think as we go further down the road here, we're going to find that more and more residents need these services a lot more. So this government, Mr. Speaker, should do our part in ensuring that all they have to worry about is providing the service to the people and not have to worry about their financing every year. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The tourism industry is a very dynamic and dramatic one around the world, and here in the NWT, Mr. Speaker, we have incredible opportunity and potential to advance this industry to diversify our economy. These days, though, this is an industry under siege, Mr. Speaker. Our aurora visitation across the NWT is down considerably, Mr. Speaker, and in some quarters sports hunting, which is a lucrative aspect, because of the concern that we have for species, including polar bear and caribou, is also under some threat.

Mr. Speaker, tourism is an industry that has a strong and sustained level of competition not only from within the industry itself, but also among governments that compete with each other through taxation, through fees, through subsidies that attract and enable tourism to thrive in their various jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, we have a serious situation before us where the federal government has signalled that it is going to, through a change in its GST legislation, now add 6 percent to the cost of tourist packages that are sold outside of Canada. This is a brand new tax for this product, Mr. Speaker, and it is one that adds absolutely no value to what a visitor from outside of Canada is going to receive here and it hurts this industry because it is going to impose a brand new 6 percent cost barrier to our attractiveness and our competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that the aurora industry, the sports hunting industry, conventions that attract people in from all over the world to the NWT is going to feel the pain from this and it is something that I know across Canada has raised a particular amount of protest and attention and we should be signalling our protest from the Northwest Territories as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On NWT Winter Games

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today a very important event is going to happen in Fort Simpson regarding the NWT Winter Games for all the students. Young people are going to be heading over there from the Northwest Territories communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have a list of representatives from the Sahtu region. There's going to be about 40 athletes with 10 chaperones. Mr. Speaker, the students who are going to be participating in these winter games in Fort Simpson look forward to it every year, and I think it's a really golden opportunity that the smaller communities down the Mackenzie Valley, Beaufort Sea, to have an opportunity to come together once a year and participate in the NWT Winter Games. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that these communities from my region certainly appreciate the effort

done by MACA and by the communities to get them going into these sports and get them through the fund-raising events and the practices and training. Communities like Nahanni Butte that doesn't have any gym, but they are participating with people from Tsiigehtchic and Colville Lake that are going there. These young students that are going there may one day be Olympic hopefuls, as some of our Members talked about. Some of our own people here in the Northwest Territories are moving up on a higher level of athletic sporting performance in the world. So this gives hope to the young ones and to the small communities, that we are looking out for them, we do care for them. The good people in Fort Simpson and around that area are going to host over 300 people over the next couple of days and they're going to be putting out their time and energy and volunteering to put a good show on for these young people that come into Fort Simpson. I think these NWT Winter Games need more support, need more money, and need to really help these young students to say, yes, we believe in them and that maybe one day they could participate at a Canada Winter Games or even Olympic trials.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say congratulations to the wonderful people that put this together, and to thank the people in Fort Simpson for hosting the NWT Winter Games this year. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For Dementia Facility In Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to our discussion about the dementia facility project yesterday, I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about where this project is at, from my point of view, for the benefit of many in our community who desperately would like to see this project happen.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to begin by saying that I feel more optimistic than ever before that if all the parties involved give their best efforts, it is very possible to see some concrete results toward having this project included in the business plan in the near future. Mr. Speaker, we know that there's no question about the need for this government to step in to address the need for long-term care programs and facilities for seniors, which will only grow in future. We also know that a designated dementia/Alzheimer's facility in Yellowknife is only one piece in the larger picture of the need to have adequate seniors' facilities and programs in all major regional centres.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MS. LEE: We know that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has repeatedly supported a dementia centre in Yellowknife and this larger objective we need to keep in mind. Mr. Speaker, we also know that the previous Minister had approved \$1 million for planning of this project, which was not completely accessible because the scope of the project had to be reprofiled.

Within a month of the new Minister of Health and Social Services taking over the portfolio, we know that he met

with the YACCS board to go over where we are with this project, and I believe it was strongly suggested that a price tag of \$20 million-plus would have difficulty finding a place in our capital infrastructure plan. But a reprofiled and rescoped project that would bring the price tag down to a reasonable level, about two-thirds of that, is something that he's willing to look at, and has instructed his staff to work with the YACCS to work together to achieve that.

In talking with people at the YACCS, Mr. Speaker, I know that they have been working diligently to make this happen. Mr. Speaker, we also know that this is a normal process of getting a capital project into the planning process. A lot of work has to go in, in putting together a capital project documentation and get through the competitive process, through the line department's budget process, and then at the Cabinet level, and then through the standing committee review process before any budget item makes it into the House for a vote. We also know that approval of no capital project is a certain thing until it's voted in the House as we're doing in this session, but the first step is to work through the business planning process and get it into the government's business plan, and I believe this project is making progress in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to complete my statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, people involved in this project, especially the staff and the board of YACCS, have been working on this for too long and too hard and I would hate to see this project not be included.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MS. LEE: They have to go through this process all over again with the next Assembly and next government who may want to do everything afresh, as any new government is entitled to do, but one that would certainly result in another long delay.

I would like to thank the Minister for the leadership he is taking on this file, and would like to call upon all the parties involved in this project to do everything they can to make it into the business plan process for this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement On Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the banks of the Hay River where it enters into Great Slave Lake by Hay River, there's about 40 million litres of fuel stored in barges, single-hulled old barges. We're not sure of their condition, we're not sure if they've been certified, inspected, but they're on the waterway that leads directly into Great Slave Lake, are on

the lake down to the Mackenzie into the Arctic Ocean. I consider this to be a significant environmental hazard and a very high-risk operation. For whatever reason, it has happened. On land it would be unequivocally denied. It would be illegal under our laws and under our regulation. In fact, on land, we've just increased the requirements for storage of fuels.

Homeowners now have to pull their tanks out of the basements; they have to be double walled. Industry has to have higher standards of storage. Yet on water, we're forced to stand helplessly by because the federal government has jurisdiction and authority but no regulation. All they can offer are suggestions in terms of the storage. Is there an emergency measures plan? Is there a spill plan? How do you respond to a spill if there is one, God forbid, and it goes under the ice and starts working its way to the lake and downriver?

The federal government is moving towards double-hulled barges, but these barges have had their use changed from barges to storage facilities. It is a circumstance that not only we struggle with, but the people in Baker Lake woke up to find the same circumstance in their community as well. When we say the federal government has responsibility, they do. But we can't count on the federal government to look after our best interests and we see this in many cases. This is a very clear case in point. This is a hazard to the waterway; it's a hazard to the community. If there's a fire, if something happens around Hay River, what is to be done? How often are the tanks dipped? We know that accidents happen because NTCL had a punctured barge that leaked fuel all the way from Tuk to Kugluktuk before it was discovered, releasing we're not sure how much fuel. So we have a circumstance here that is high risk and, in my mind, unacceptable and hopefully will not happen again. Later today I will be asking the Minister questions about the plans in terms of emergency response and monitoring. Thank you.

---Applause.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Language Programming For North Slave Correction Centre Inmates

MR. LAFFERTY: (Translation) Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. On a recent visit to the North Slave Correctional Centre, I met with inmates from Tlicho community and we discussed various programming being delivered at the centre. It was apparent that the majority of these programs did not reflect the needs of Tlicho inmates and highlighted the need for programs in the Tlicho speaking residents. In a facility like North Slave Correctional Centre, there are many challenges that inmates face on a daily basis. A challenge that they should not have to struggle with is language barriers.

Mr. Speaker, during my visit I couldn't help but notice that the centre was full-time Chipewyan speaking...(Translation ends)

...communities and we discussed various programming being delivered at the centre. It was apparent that the majority of these programs did not reflect the needs of Tlicho inmates and highlighted the need for programs aimed at Tlicho speaking residents. Mr. Speaker, in a

facility like North Slave Correctional Centre there are many challenges that inmates face on a daily basis. A challenge that they should not have to struggle with is language barriers.

Mr. Speaker, during my visit I could not help but notice that the centre has a full-time Chipewyan speaking person employed who can assist with language barriers some inmates might have. In the centre there must be at least over 20 people who speak the Tlicho language from the Tlicho communities, Mr. Speaker, yet there is no Tlicho speaking counsellor in the facility. These kinds of numbers should demand a full-time Tlicho speaking counsellor to assist with those who might have language difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, from what the inmates were sharing, they were told to be the interpreters when one is needed. Mr. Speaker, this should not be the case. An outside Tlicho speaking counsellor should be brought in to help assist unilateral inmates and that option should be made available to all Tlicho residents.

Mr. Speaker, part of the vision for correction services is the commitment that the correction services shall be the leader of facilitation of holistic healing in a progressive manner that meets the unique needs of offenders and a contribution to a safe community. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister at a later point. Thanks.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Acknowledgement Of Tu Nedhe Legislative Pages

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to acknowledge and commend the good work of two of my constituents who are working here in the House as Pages for the week of this session.

Ursula Unka, on your right, and Adreana Boucher are both Grade 8 students at Deninu Kue. They have been enjoying their stay here in the capital. I think it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that Adreana Boucher, on your left, was selected to represent Deninu Kue at the NWT Winter Games being held in Fort Simpson this weekend to play basketball, but she gave up her spot on the team in order to complete her work here at the Legislative Assembly. How nice is that?

---Applause

Adreana, who also considers herself a tomboy -- and she didn't mind me saying that -- also had no choice but to face one of her greatest personal challenges, and that is to put on a skirt and put her hair in a ponytail, along with hairpins, for the very first time, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

She felt very self-conscious and uncomfortable at first, but it has been two, three days now and this is something Adreana has come to terms with. I asked her what made her change. Her reply was only the money made me do this. I thought that was a good answer.

The type of commitment and the interest that Adreana and Ursula have made in the Legislative Assembly for

seatings is certainly commendable, not to mention very encouraging, especially for our youth in the smaller and more remote communities who do not always have the opportunity to experience something as wonderful as this. I just want to thank Ursula and Adreana for agreeing to come to Yellowknife to work as Pages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Employment, Training, Recruitment And Procurement

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to talk about the employment training and recruitment and procurement. Mr. Speaker, a joint review panel has been conducting hearings across the Northwest Territories over the past year and a half. Last week they held hearings in Yellowknife to discuss employment, training, recruitment and procurement. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to attend on one occasion to listen to what the interveners and proponents had to say. I noticed that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was one of the many interveners in attendance to discuss employment training, recruitment and procurement.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, CBC reported on the involvement of government and interveners' involvement to question the proponents on the employment training and recruitment and the procurement of the upcoming pipeline. Mr. Speaker, the chair of the JRP asked each interviewer if they had any questions for the proponents. Unfortunately, there was no response by the interveners, including the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, is this because the hearings are dragging along or is it because government has all the information that it requires to make the decisions that they can make to address all the answers for the rest of the Northwest Territories?

Mr. Speaker, employment, training, recruitment, and procurement are important issues that need to be addressed and planned to ensure that our people are ready for fulfilling these qualified jobs if the pipeline is approved. The government needs to be proactive on the JRP on any proceedings for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, in future public hearings I would expect more involvement by the government in questioning the proponents, because they represent the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Aurora Tourism Industry

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about aurora tourism here in the Northwest Territories. In the year 2000, there were over 13,000 Japanese tourists who came to the territory to view our

aurora filled night skies. The unprecedented terrorist attacks of September 11th cast a very large shadow over the entire tourism industry throughout North America. The year after the attacks, the number of Japanese visitors had been cut over half, to roughly 6000. From 2002 to 2005, our numbers showed a steady increase to just over 10,000 visitors. Preliminary numbers would suggest that the 2006 numbers will be approximately the same. What is troublesome is that it looks as though the numbers for this season are down substantially from last year.

Mr. Speaker, research would suggest that we do have some competition in the aurora viewing market. Alaska, Yukon, and northern Alberta are all showing growth in Japanese visitation. The industry needs and demands the attention of our government to take the necessary action to ensure we stay competitive.

One of the bigger challenges remains: the number of flight connections and difficulty the Japanese visitors experience in getting to the Northwest Territories. Both Whitehorse and Fairbanks have the ability to handle large, fully-loaded charter aircrafts such as the 747 and 767. This certainly gives them an advantage. Now that charters are in play, they have cut the flying time from 20 hours to seven hours to get to Fairbanks. This year seven direct charter flights of 747s will be bringing more than 2,200 Japanese visitors to Alaska. In Yellowknife, we've been talking about extending the runway to handle large charter aircraft for years, but it still remains not a reality.

In 2004, the Department of ITI spent \$250,000 on the Aurora Recovery Program, which worked to brand the Northwest Territories as the destination for aurora viewing in Japan. This money was leveraged with CTC money to put almost \$1 million into the branding effort in Japan.

Mr. Speaker, given the fact that competition is getting more noticeable and numbers are down, what is the government's plan to help this industry become more competitive? Tourism 2010 speaks of an additional \$14 million being spent in marketing of key leisure markets which includes aurora viewing. How realistic is that number? Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of ITI at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Barrier-Free Access To The Hay River Medical Clinic

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a pressing need in Hay River. We have a medical clinic which has existed, I don't know how long, but prior to my arriving in Hay River 32 years ago.

A medical clinic is a public building frequented by many residents on any given day. There are two physical problems with getting into our clinic. One is the door configuration. The door is heavy and it has no automatic door opener. Secondly, there is no barrier-free access to our clinic. This is particularly unacceptable, given that most people going to the medical clinic are unwell, injured, recovering from injuries, or elderly.

New buildings built in Hay River are required to have barrier-free access to meet the National Building Code. Buildings leased by government must be barrier-free. Older buildings have been modified, ramps have been built, door openers have been installed. Federal buildings, such as our post office, have been brought up to compliance. Private commercial building owners have invested in compliance. So ironically why would a busy medical clinic not have barrier-free, easy access?

The community has made many accommodations, the Town of Hay River, in the construction of sidewalks, curbs, ramps, and how could a building owned by this government be allowed or want to fail to respond to this issue?

Mr. Speaker, when I asked the Minister yesterday in Committee of the Whole about this issue, the response, I believe, was related to a master plan for facilities and where the Hay River clinic will ultimately be located. But, Mr. Speaker, we need action on this now. The capital plan for a new or renovated hospital is a few years out. This is 2007 and we want a medical clinic that is barrier-free for our residents and we want it now. I understand that there has been some discussion with the Hay River Health Authority about some funding to do this. It's not a huge amount of money, but I just want to stress that this is not an acceptable situation. We want it addressed right away. We cannot wait. It's unthinkable in this day and age that our government can own a building that the people in our community who have to go to a clinic cannot get in the door. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Housing Designed For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I was elected, I've had the fortunate pleasure to be able to meet many seniors and elders in their homes across the Northwest Territories. Some of these elders and disabled people live in homes built by and owned by the Housing Corporation. Some of these people are lucky enough to have their home accommodate their personal situation, but, Mr. Speaker, many out there are not. Simple things like having their hallways wide enough to navigate their mobility aids, like scooters or even wheelchairs, down their hallways, lowered counter tops, ramps and doorways that allow for easy access, sit-down tubs with access doors, are all designs that can make a difference between independent living with dignity or having to move into an assisted living situation.

The NWT Housing Corporation appears to be taking into account the needs of seniors and the disabled people in their recent designs. Mr. Speaker, evidence of that is the 8-plex barrier-free construction apartment that they're building in my riding, which is soon to be open.

The department is making great strides and they deserve significant credit for their efforts, but I see the need to go a bit further, Mr. Speaker, helping to ensure the present and future needs of our seniors and disabled residents are met through the housing designs the Housing Corporation funds and constructs. Initial spending on such design

features could save large sums of money in extended care costs and help elderly people keep their independence and pride as they live on their own.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need for formal policy, a clear declaration that outlines design factors and equipment that must be incorporated into any unit being built by or paid for by the NWT Housing Corporation aimed at our seniors and disabled persons. This would allow many more people to age in place and not have to be relocated into a health care environment.

Mr. Speaker, we need functional, practical designs based on best practices that meet the needs of our seniors and disabled people now and in the future. Mr. Speaker, I will be challenging the Minister later to help address this concern. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery today to the House to observe the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Colleagues, before I go to the next order on the Order Paper, oral questions, I want to draw Members' attention the fact that we only had time in this House yesterday for 10 oral questions. This is in spite of the fact that you have agreed to limit the number of supplementary questions from three to two. The reason for this is that the preambles to both your main and supplementary questions were excessively long, as were the answers being provided to some of the questions.

Members, I am a servant of this House and I administer the rules that you have set for yourselves in this Chamber. However, in interpreting those rules, I have to be fair to all Members.

I will once again urge each of you to limit the preamble to your main questions to one short, carefully crafted sentence. There should be no preamble to supplementary questions. The Ministers should make every effort, a greater effort in keeping their answers short and to the point. I will do my best to assist Members in respecting these rules. Thank you, Members.

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 319-15(5): Housing Designs For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement today, I believe that there needs to be a firm policy document specifically outlining the required design features that should be incorporated into the Housing Corporation units for seniors and disabled persons. So can the Minister tell us whether a firm policy document exists to guide the construction of units for seniors and disabled people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 319-15(5): Housing Designs For Seniors And Disabled Persons

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what a firm policy document is, but, yes, we do have policies with regard to facilities for seniors.

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

Supplementary To Question 319-15(5): Housing Designs For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me today what this policy is based on? Is it based on barrier-free, visibility, or what are the policy baselines? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 319-15(5): Housing Designs For Seniors And Disabled Persons

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it varies depending on the needs of the seniors. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

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Supplementary To Question 319-15(5): Housing Designs For Seniors And Disabled Persons

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister bring it forward to the House? Because it was my understanding that there was no formal policy as of a few short days ago. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 319-15(5): Housing Designs For Seniors And Disabled Persons

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly what a formal policy means, but I will bring forward a copy of the policies that we use when dealing with seniors' housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 320-15(5): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement spoke of the need for multi-year funding for NGOs. They provide an essential service. We have to let them know that we value their service. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, what can we do as an Assembly to ensure that these NGOs with proven track records can be multi-funded? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 320-15(5): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are working with the overall government direction through FMBS to look at the matter of multi-year funding with NGOs that deliver programs on our behalf. That's our first phase. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 320-15(5): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister, who has the authority to approve multi-year funding for NGOs? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 320-15(5): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should, as well, say that there are a number of multi-year funding agreements in place and each department would have that ability as it reviews the programs that are delivered and the situation that would occur when it comes to multi-year funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 320-15(5): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister commit to ensuring that an NGO like the transition home in Inuvik is multi-year funded? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 320-15(5): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will work with the appropriate authority in the area to see what can be done in that area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 321-15(5): Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for Mr. Roland in his capacity as Minister of Finance and it addresses the federal government's stated intention to impose a 6 percent GST on offshore tourism packages. Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that this depends on the passage of federal legislation. I have suggested in this House, and so has the NWT Tourism Industry and that of Canada, that this is a very damaging and a retrograde tax. Last October, the Minister told the House that certainly the tourism rebate issue is one that will be raised for sure. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the

Minister how has he raised this issue with his federal counterpart. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 321-15(5): Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of other Ministers have had meetings with their federal counterparts. Minister Bell met with Minister Bernier and was informed at that point, that would be addressed to the federal Finance department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 321-15(5): Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

MR. BRADEN: Indeed, Mr. Speaker. It is the federal Finance department that has the handle on this and that is why I am addressing the question to our Minister of Finance to see what direct action he has taken to express the NWT's concern and displeasure with this potential move.

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

Further Return To Question 321-15(5): Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we have our meetings with the federal Finance department, we raise a number of issues. Our critical areas we focus on is more on our formula financing/revenue sharing side of the equation. I haven't had opportunity to speak directly to the federal Finance Minister regarding the GST situation, but we have had our discussions through department staff around that area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 321-15(5): Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

MR. BRADEN: This is a matter of curiosity, Mr. Speaker. If the federal government does impose this retrograde tax, does the Government of the NWT stand to benefit in any shape, or the operators in the NWT stand to benefit in any way, shape or form, from this new source of tax revenue going to the federal government?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden.

Further Return To Question 321-15(5): Federal Taxes Applied To Tourism Packages

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am unaware if tourism businesses in the North would benefit from this move. This move would benefit the federal government. We are having some of our own discussions about a collective working arrangement with the federal government when it comes to taxes, and GST is one of those that we are having a bit of a wrestling match with ongoing just from a government-to-government basis as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 322-15(5): Sport Development In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of MACA in terms of the recent Canada Winter Games hockey team that held a clinic in Fort Good Hope. I wanted to ask the Minister about the type of support MACA is giving this group or this initiative in terms of continuing support of these small communities that receive a high calibre of coaching clinics.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 322-15(5): Sport Development In Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the specifics as to the Fort Good Hope hockey team. I would have to take that as notice, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 323-15(5): Amendments To WCB Policies And Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to ask questions to the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. Mr. Speaker, we have had numerous discussions about various issues about WCB, some of those long-outstanding, chronic pain cases and such. We are aware that the Minister is working on bringing new legislation forward, a part of which would discuss the jurisdictions and rules and responsibilities of WCB and the Minister, which I think will go a long way in addressing some of the long-standing issues we are dealing with. Could I ask the Minister to give us confirmation that we will be able to see this at the beginning of March? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 323-15(5): Amendments To WCB Policies And Legislation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to introducing the legislation redraft for the Workers' Compensation Act. It should be coming forward to the House the first or second week of March. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 323-15(5): Amendments To WCB Policies And Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Minister's response to the written question I had made about chronic pain policy, he indicated that there was a meeting of the Governance Council happening this week in which they will be discussing this. Could the Minister advise the

House as to where we are on that issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 323-15(5): Amendments To WCB Policies And Legislation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be tabling that information in the House I believe March 9th and will be making a statement in this House with regard to that information on what is being provided to the House and also the general public.

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

Supplementary To Question 323-15(5): Amendments To WCB Policies And Legislation

MS. LEE: Just for the record then, I believe the Minister is planning on making available the WCB's response to the Auditor General's report as well. So could the Minister indicate whether we should be expecting that as well?

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

Further Return To Question 323-15(5): Amendments To WCB Policies And Legislation

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is correct. We will also be tabling information and response to the Auditor General's report and the motion that was passed in Committee of the Whole by this Legislative Assembly to address issues that were requested also in Committee of the Whole by this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 324-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ENR with regard to the high risk storage of 40 million litres of fuel in single-hulled barges. I would like to ask the Minister whether the Department of ENR has been successful in obtaining the storage plans, the monitoring plans, the emergency response plans that were supposed to be there in relation to the storage of that fuel. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 324-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we have been working with the company to look at their plans for cleanup for spill response and we've also been working with the federal government and our own justice system to look at the legislation we have and see if there is any way we can have this concern dealt with. It is a real concern. It's something that we have voiced to the federal government, Transport Canada, and we've also heard from Environment Canada and they have concerns. It's something we have been working towards trying to clean up the legislation and regulations

around it. I think we have our first draft ready for review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 324-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister explain if this is the first draft of regulation? Is it going to be legally binding or is it just an understanding among the parties? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 324-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility, and we had to go to Justice to check this, but there is confirmation that Transport Canada has the primary jurisdiction in this area. We are looking at the first draft of the regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 324-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further clarification then, please. Are these federal regulations and we are just looking it and it's going to have to go through a long federal process? Is that what the Minister is telling us?

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

Further Return To Question 324-15(5): Storage Of Fuel On Northern Waterways

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the regulations are under the federal government. They are working with us. I don't have an exact time frame. I would have to commit to getting that. We are also working with the company, voicing our concern, and also to the people who will be receiving this fuel. There has to be a better system set up so that they can store them on land and have our own laws and rules apply rather than have them stored in these barges. It's been a practice that's been around for about 10 years or so, Mr. Speaker. There are other areas in the NWT that are being targeted and I should also mention there are also other areas in Nunavut that are being targeted for storage in this manner and it's a concern all around from all the territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 325-15(5): Language Programming For North Slave Correctional Centre Inmates

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the importance of having a Tlicho speaking counsellor at North Slave Correctional Centre, so I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Can the

Minister of Justice commit in this Assembly explore the possibility to add a Tlicho speaking counsellor to assess with Tlicho inmates at the Yellowknife North Slave Correctional Centre? Mahsi.

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

Return To Question 325-15(5): Language Programming For North Slave Correctional Centre Inmates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly go back to the department and discuss the request. As the Member pointed out in his statement, we do have an aboriginal counsellor. He does not speak the Tlicho language. We can talk about what the need is there. We do have arrangements with elders who come in periodically from all over the regions to work with inmates, but a more formalized position like this is something I would have to take back and discuss with the department. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 325-15(5): Language Programming For North Slave Correctional Centre Inmates

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on another note, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, does the Department of Justice have any type of working contract with the Tlicho Community Services Agency to deliver various healing related programs for Tlicho inmates in the Tlicho language? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 325-15(5): Language Programming For North Slave Correctional Centre Inmates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will again check on that. I am not sure if the contracted relationship is directly through the TCSA or if it's individually with an elder or if it's through the community services agency and then to various elders, but I will get the detail and get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 325-15(5): Language Programming For North Slave Correctional Centre Inmates

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final note on the Tlicho Community Services Agency, since the response will be forthcoming from the Minister, can the Minister commit to a possible partnership with the agency if there is no such agreement in place to deliver such programs for Tlicho inmates in the Tlicho language? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 325-15(5): Language Programming For North Slave Correctional Centre Inmates

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to sitting down with the Member and his leadership and discussing what the best arrangement going forward would be. I agree that if there is a need and it sounds like there is a need at the North Slave Correctional Centre to provide better programming in the Tlicho language, then I am willing to sit down and discuss that and talk about how we best do that with the leadership. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 326-15(5): Bathurst Caribou Herd Population Survey

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just going through some of the Bathurst caribou monitoring reviews that are going to be happening, I know the Bathurst caribou survey is planned for 2009. Two years from now, Mr. Speaker, when the crisis is right now and I think we just need action now today. We can't wait for two years. I want to ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, can the Minister work to get a commitment from the federal government to provide the resources required to conduct a thorough study while the iron is hot? That being right now within the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 326-15(5): Bathurst Caribou Herd Population Survey

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is referring to the Bathurst herd. We just finished our study on the Bathurst herd and the results were just provided this fall, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 326-15(5): Bathurst Caribou Herd Population Survey

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if that review has been tabled in this House, but I haven't seen it. I know there is another review that they are looking at in 2009. By the time 2009 rolls around, the Bathurst caribou will probably be put on the species at risk list. Heaven forbid if that happens because all of a sudden it will be in the federal government's management responsibility. If the federal government manages it, then we won't have as much input as we like. I want the Minister to maybe put something on the record that he will commit to move dollars into this initiative, either a supplementary appropriation or a reallocation in his department. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 326-15(5): Bathurst Caribou Herd Population Survey

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our caribou management plan, we committed to counting caribou on the basis of at least every three years. In the Member's riding, the Beverly herd is planned to be counted next year. Maybe there is some confusion that the herd in his riding is not being counted, but we are doing it next year, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 326-15(5): Bathurst Caribou Herd Population Survey

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess with the caribou crisis looming over us here today, and we have no Species at Risk Act yet, and any caribou herd that gets on the Species at Risk Act gets into the federal government's responsibility. I just want to quote what Chief Jimmy Bruneau said in the 1940s about caribou management discussions with federal officials. He said, "We don't tell you what to do with your cows down south. Don't tell us what to do with our caribou up here." I would just like to keep it that way. I just want to ask the Minister if he can provide any immediate injection of any extra dollars into wildlife management, especially caribou initiatives, here in the NWT over the next few months through a supplementary appropriation. Can he make that commitment for the residents of the NWT? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 326-15(5): Bathurst Caribou Herd Population Survey

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our action plan for this upcoming year and the following years, we've committed that we will do further surveys. The Beverly herd is scheduled to be next on the list. We've just finished the Bathurst herd, Mr. Speaker, and there are a number of actions that we would like to take. We need to get a better handle on the aboriginal harvesting. We need to work with the co-management groups. We have to do more monitoring. We would like to spend more time patrolling. We would like to spend more time looking at ways we can have no-hunting zones and all those things. So there are a number of things we have in the works, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is some interest through the International Polar Year actions and initiatives that the caribou herd would also be looked at especially in the areas of identifying all the different calving grounds and making sure we had a good handle on where they are. That will be conducted through all of North America, Mr. Speaker, over the next while once we have these things all approved, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 327-15(5): Aurora Tourism Industry

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of ITI and it goes back to my Member's Statement regarding aurora tourism and the fact that the Northwest Territories is now faced with some stiff competition from Alaska, Yukon and northern Alberta. My assertion is that the government is not doing enough

to ensure that we are looking at growing the industry here in the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Minister, according to the Tourism 2010 plan, which calls for an additional \$1.2 million in marketing -- \$400,000 from ITI a year and \$800,000 from partners -- could he give this House an update on how that marketing money is working? Are we getting the \$800,000? Are we making the investment in this industry? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 327-15(5): Aurora Tourism Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are now talking about the second year of our five-year tourism plan. There are significant dollars going towards destination marketing. Of course we use the NWT Tourism, our DMO. I think they do a very effective job and I know that in this business plan -- I don't have that in front of me -- but I know they have identified Aurora Tourism visitation as a priority. They demonstrate the amount of other partners and money that they are able to lever with their investment. I think it's something that has been working quite well. As the Member pointed out in his statement though, we have a number of challenges and there are a number of things to come to grips with of destination market spending. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 327-15(5): Aurora Tourism Industry

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the folks at Northwest Territories Tourism do an outstanding job in the marketing that they do. My trouble is are we giving them all the necessary resources to carry out the marketing that needs to take place? I know the government spent a fair bit of money on Expo 2005 in Japan. We haven't seen an increase in visitation since that event took place and I am wondering what is the department of ITI's plan to try to grow the aurora tourism industry in the Northwest Territories, or do we let the competition steal our business? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 327-15(5): Aurora Tourism Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest challenges is the Japanese tourism visitation is down right across the country. We were able to buck that trend for some time in the Northwest Territories. I think we had a very unique product. But as the Member has indicated, we are faced with some serious competition and pressure from Alaska, from northern Alberta, Yukon, Scandinavia is another big player. So we have to talk about destination market spending. We can always spend more money. I am sure NWTT can make good use of more money, but we have infrastructure investments that critically need to be made here so that we can deal with intercontinental jets being able to land here. There are a number of other issues and I would certainly be prepared to talk to committee about

some of what we are proposing to do as we move forward. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 327-15(5): Aurora Tourism Industry

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister made mention of the fact of the airport in Yellowknife, the runway extension which has been talked about for years as a key part of getting charter aircraft into the Northwest Territories. I'd like to ask the Minister, what has the communication between ITI and the Department of Transportation been on trying to get this key extension to our runway actually on the books and completed? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 327-15(5): Aurora Tourism Industry

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I asked my deputy minister a couple of months ago now to sit down with DOT. They have a runway that looked at what runway expansion would cost. It's a little outdated now; I think it needs some more work. I also wanted to know what the minimum level of investment would be required to accommodate these larger jets. So we're talking about that between the two departments. It is something I'd like to come back to the Members with.

One other point I would note, my last chance to visit with Commissioner Notti in Alaska, we agreed that there was merit in cooperation in trying to co-market or co-brand northern North America and target aurora visitation. We can collectively, I think, view Scandinavia as competitors and work together in North America to bring more guests to North America. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 328-15(5): Barrier-Free Access To Medical Clinic In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Floyd Roland, will agree with me that it is unacceptable to have a GNWT-owned medical clinic in the year 2007 that does not have barrier-free access. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if the \$156,000 earmarked for the medical clinic in the capital budget under '08-09 is intended to address that shortfall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 328-15(5): Barrier-Free Access To Medical Clinic In Hay River

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of barrier-free access has been discussed with the health authority through the CEO and the department. We've worked with them and recognize there needs to be some work done on there. We will continue to have our discussions. In fact, we think we can

move some of the money we have in the planning of the master development plan. Once we have agreement with the health and social services authority, we think we can move some of those funds that are unused and go ahead with some of the renovations in both the clinic as well as the hospital, but those discussions are ongoing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 328-15(5): Barrier-Free Access To Medical Clinic In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was my next two questions: Can he move that money forward, and is there a request before the department at this time to address the barrier-free access at the clinic and can we move some of the capital money forward? Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid if we bunch it all up with a whole lot of other things, it's going to take a little longer. I want to talk about the barrier-free access money required to fix that problem at the medical clinic. There's a request before the department now. Is that something that in an isolated way can be moved ahead and acted on right away? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 328-15(5): Barrier-Free Access To Medical Clinic In Hay River

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe we can use some of our existing funds, reprofile it towards a project, but we have to sit down with the authorities and see which ones are the highest priority. There's a number of them in the existing facility, and barrier-free access is one that we've had discussions around. So there are possibilities we can move some money around within our existing framework. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 328-15(5): Barrier-Free Access To Medical Clinic In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is why they call it question period, not answer period. Mr. Speaker, when can we expect to see the work begin on the access to the medical clinic? When? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 328-15(5): Barrier-Free Access To Medical Clinic In Hay River

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as soon as we can get an agreement with the health and social services authority on some of the work we've had discussions on, then we'll know how much money we can reallocate and that's where we're at right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 329-15(5): Energy Conservation Efforts In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask a question to the Minister of NCPC. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of NCPC: I want to ask if his department is looking at energy efficient ways that can be helpful to our people in the small communities such as the Sahtu region in terms of conserving power.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 329-15(5): Energy Conservation Efforts In Small Communities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we, along with the departments of Environment and also ITI, have been developing an energy plan to look at the possibility ourselves as government, and government departments can look at conserving energy. I think through that plan, we're hoping to come up with some ideas. We have done some things in difficult communities: residential heat in regards to using heat off the generation from the power generation that's being produced in the communities, and also we're looking at trying to use electric heat to heat that public infrastructure. So we have other ideas out there, but through the energy plan we're hoping to lay those ideas out and allow the general public to see how we're moving on some of these actions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 329-15(5): Energy Conservation Efforts In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated a plan of some sort. I'd like to ask the Minister when, within a time frame, this plan is going to come out, that we as MLAs would have some input to it, some discussions and further discussions to it, members in our communities would have some discussion, and you would then implement it on a territorial-wide basis. So I'd ask the Minister on some time frames. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 329-15(5): Energy Conservation Efforts In Small Communities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are hoping to get the report to committee I believe in the next couple of weeks. Again, it is a document which is being headed up by ITI. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 329-15(5): Energy Conservation Efforts In Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one initiative I would ask the Minister to take into consideration in terms of our small communities and having the homeowners and people who live in public units be more responsible for power, if somehow they can put a metre into their building. We know that now we're

subsidizing 700 kilowatts per month, that the people can look at these metres and be more responsible in terms of the amount of energy they're using for that month. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 329-15(5): Energy Conservation Efforts In Small Communities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been working with other groups and agencies; the Arctic Energy Alliance. We have been doing energy audits with different private residents and also looking at government buildings and infrastructure, so there is a process already in place to work with the individual residents along with the buildings in our communities, regardless if they're municipal buildings or government buildings. So we are looking at the energy consumption in a lot of these facilities, but we do have a program that allows for residents to do an energy audit on their home at the present time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Before I go on, I'm going to commend Members in the line of questioning and answers this morning.

---Applause

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. SPEAKER: We have 30 minutes and 11 questions. I think I'm going to ask the Clerk to put this in the orientation binder as to how it should and could be done. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 330-15(5): Regional WCB Office In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Compensation Board is headquartered here in Yellowknife; however, they do work in many communities and they make regular visits, for various reasons, to the communities. Are there any satellite offices outside of Yellowknife with the Workers' Compensation Board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 330-15(5): Regional WCB Office In Hay River

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do have staff in different locations, more in regards to our program staff as safety officers and whatnot in Inuvik, and also we do have a satellite office in Iqaluit which, because we are a joint board, we do have another regional office in those locations. But we do have staff in different locations such as Inuvik. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 330-15(5): Regional WCB Office In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it sounds like we have staff in Yellowknife and Inuvik. So

my question is, given the number of visits paid to Hay River by WCB staff, and I know at least on a monthly basis there's staff in Hay River, has the WCB ever considered opening a satellite office in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 330-15(5): Regional WCB Office In Hay River

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no.

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

Supplementary To Question 330-15(5): Regional WCB Office In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 10,000 people live in the South Slave and Hay River is central to those communities. Would the Minister consider putting a regional office of the WCB in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 330-15(5): Regional WCB Office In Hay River

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the best I can offer the Member is that I will bring this forward to the chair of the board, and also allow the board to have a discussion on this and see what the response is. Thank you.

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

Question 331-15(5): Funding To Support Volunteerism

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, given that we have the fortune of asking a second question today, I'd like to just ask a question to the Minister of MACA and it's in regards to the aftermath of federal funding cuts where a number of cuts were made and one big one being literacy funding, and that has been restored somewhat by this government. But one that has not been dealt with is the volunteer sector contribution. I know that the Minister is well aware of the importance of that. There is even a government program supporting the volunteer sector, NWT volunteer initiative. I'd like to know if the Minister could give us an update on what measures he's taking to help that industry out, or that component. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 331-15(5): Funding To Support Volunteerism

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we initiated a letter writing campaign and brought our intentions to the federal Minister regarding our concerns in the area of volunteerism. We have supported this whole initiative since it began. We feel it's very worthy

and we're quite concerned that the federal government has made these cuts. They have responded to us, indicating that they are not intending to restore any funding in this area so it has left us in a real difficult situation. However, we are looking at providing some money from our own resources, Mr. Speaker, and we're looking at reinstating some of the funding, not to the level that they were being funded by the federal government, but we're planning to put \$50,000 towards volunteerism in this coming year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 331-15(5): Funding To Support Volunteerism

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the letter writing campaign and I know that the people in the volunteer community and the people involved with that organization are aware of the fact that government is doing what it can. That program was taking off and it was making some difference. Could the Minister indicate whether he would try to work harder with the federal government to demonstrate to them that this is a very important component for the North and that we couldn't possibly do a lot of programs that we do without having volunteers involved? So could I ask the Minister to make a commitment to put this forward again with the federal Minister? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 331-15(5): Funding To Support Volunteerism

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's a very easy commitment to make. We recognize the value of Volunteer NWT and we have committed to working with them, and we will continue to press the federal government for additional resources and make the case that this whole initiative is very worthy, and we will continue to look for other sources to help fund this whole program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 331-15(5): Funding To Support Volunteerism

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I make a request for a harder commitment, and that is to ask the Minister if he could make an effort to look within the government budget to see if we could enhance the money that he's allocated in the amount of \$50,000? Also, I think there might be other organizations like United Way who may have some funds available. Could I ask the Minister to seek additional sources for funding, not just within the government but wherever that may be necessary, because the help of the Minister will go a long way. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 331-15(5): Funding To Support Volunteerism

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if we can work harder, but we'll continue to work as hard as we can. We have committed to put

\$50,000 towards this initiative. It has come within the ranks of our department and we continue to press the case to the federal government, and we are speaking to other agencies, other organizations, including the United Way. Hopefully this will result in a partnership arrangement or something of that sort that will help bring further resources to Volunteer NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 332-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a couple of questions to Mr. Menicoche, Minister of Transportation, and it's a follow-up to the statement that he gave the Assembly earlier today on Yellowknife passenger terminal building improvements. Mr. Speaker, the Minister advised that the system, a new baggage screening system, was, indeed, operational ahead of the January 1, 2006, deadline. I'm happy to hear that. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to quiz the Minister to see about the total budget for the project, to ask, indeed, was the entire project completed on budget and what was the final cost of the overall airport improvement project, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 332-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The total project was around \$11.2 million. I can commit to get further detail for the Member as well. There was \$4.6 million for the explosion detection system, as well as 6.6 for the improvements that would address capacity levels at the airport, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 332-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would look forward to the information of my question as to whether the project was completed on budget. There was also concerns when the project came forward, Mr. Speaker, that the cost of this was going to be passed on entirely to the travelling public and people using airport services, and I wanted to see if the Minister could advise how are those payments being scheduled, how are they being spread out and what is the impact on the people who use air services in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 332-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; typically airport improvements are gathered from the public through airport fees, but that's something that we did look at but did not consider at all. Because a lot of these improvements are because of CATSA, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, and it was based on after 9-11, the extra

security numbers, they did provide some funding to help us with the construction and improvement of our airport, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 332-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, recently there has been a bit of media attention to one aspect of this and that is the security service itself, the number of people involved in providing the screening service. I do not profess to be an expert at all on whether that's being handled adequately or not, but as the requirement for security is established and rolls out, I would like to ask the Minister is there any ongoing assessment of the costs of providing this service and is there any provision for potentially making adjustments that could be cost saving in providing this very valuable service, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 332-15(5): Yellowknife Passenger Terminal Building Improvements

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, there is always ongoing assessment of all of our services that we do provide. With this particular issue, it has been raised to my attention and we have been looking at that, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 333-15(5): Aboriginal Head Start Program Funding

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Great Hall we had the opportunity to share a celebration with the Aboriginal Head Start Program and the release of their 10-year evaluation; the only jurisdiction in Canada to do that.

---Applause

One of the concerns that was raised was that their funding had been reduced from a three-year funding guarantee to a one-year sort of interim, you're-on-notice funding from the federal government. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, who was also at this celebration, whether he is considering, if he already hasn't written to his corporate counterpart in the federal government, to make the case that this is one program that the federal government should keep their hands off of? In fact, they should continue to fund because it is such a success. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 333-15(5): Aboriginal Head Start Program Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleague across the floor, I would like to send my congratulations to Aboriginal Head Start in the Northwest Territories for 10 marvellous years of work. The evaluation has demonstrated conclusively that Aboriginal Head Start

is an important learning opportunity for young children. So I'd be pleased to, using that tool, ensure that my federal colleague is aware of the importance of continuing the funding for the program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 333-15(5): Aboriginal Head Start Program Funding

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate, given his busy schedule, how quickly he'd be able to do that? Because there's a federal budget coming and it may already have been in their books that they're going to cut like they've done in the past and if we could avoid that it would be a tremendous relief to the Aboriginal Head Start people. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 333-15(5): Aboriginal Head Start Program Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is the funding is secure through the next year. It would be for subsequent years we would be addressing this issue. But it would be my intention to move very quickly to get this on the radar screen, because we know that in our process it's about nine months from the time the Minister comes forward with a proposal until you see it in the budget. I expect the federal process is even longer. So I will do that very quickly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 334-15(5): Extension Of Airport Runways In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transportation, the honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche. I asked the Minister on the 22nd of January, the Deputy Premier and the Minister had a tour of the community of Norman Wells, of the town of Norman Wells in the Sahtu, and unfortunately we had to cut that tour short. So I want to ask the Minister, in his short time there with the aviation airline company North Wright Aviation, and also the other councillors of the Town of Norman Wells, and the early, sorry, the Norman Wells claimant group talked about the extension of the runways in the Sahtu. I would like to ask the Minister if he would provide a brief detail as to where that discussion is heading right now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 334-15(5): Extension Of Airport Runways In The Sahtu Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the Member that I believe a request for proposal has gone out and they're currently being assessed and it is to really look at all the runways and the cost estimates of the requirement to extend the runways in all our communities, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 334-15(5): Extension Of Airport Runways In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the cost estimates in the Colville Lake for 5,000 feet of runway, that's what's required for some aircraft to land in our communities. For Colville Lake it's \$12 million, according to some information provided to me by the department. Transportation Canada has given a grace of 2010 for our runways to be used and they waived these certain aircrafts. If we don't have that target met by 2010, people in the Sahtu region will be flying in caravans or smaller aircrafts. They will not be using larger aircrafts and that will cause a lot of problems for our people. I'll ask the Minister if he would look seriously into this and see if he could get some solid commitment from the federal government to do something with our government and the people in our communities.

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

Further Return To Question 334-15(5): Extension Of Airport Runways In The Sahtu Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I can commit to getting back with more information to the Member. The extension of all these highways...Sorry. The extension of the runways is a huge financial undertaking and we do have to carefully assess all the needs that are out there. As well, the study will determine exactly if it is a need that can be further extended as time goes on. But I think the main thing here, Mr. Speaker, is that the runways have been determined that they can handle the loads that they are handling and they're perceived adequate enough. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 334-15(5): Extension Of Airport Runways In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was happy to hear the Minister talk about the extension of the highways. Anyhow.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the extension of the runways. The people of the Sahtu deserve to have nice runways they can land larger aircrafts and I don't think caravans would be adequate. So I ask the Minister again, in three years the federal government will hand down a ruling. They have given us a waive. What can we ensure the people in the Sahtu and other small communities that have less than 5,000 feet of runways to land larger aircrafts? We do not like to travel in 185s all the time. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 334-15(5): Extension Of Airport Runways In The Sahtu Region

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the decision-making on a go-forward basis is, and will be in the document, the request for proposals that we put forward and DOT will work with the Northern Air Transportation Association and air carriers to

develop the planned runway extensions on a priority basis for all our communities in the NWT. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 335-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Maintenance Of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to continue with questioning the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Mr. Menicoche. I'd like to focus on the maintenance of Highway No. 3, Mr. Speaker, empowering essential services to the respected jurisdiction, the community of Behchoko-Edzo crew. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Will the Minister consider transferring the responsibility for maintaining the section of Highway No. 3 between Boundary Creek and Behchoko access from Yellowknife crew to Edzo crew? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 335-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Maintenance Of Highway No. 3

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Member raises a good question that's very important to the Tlicho people and their region in terms of their highway and the maintenance. The chief has raised this issue about converting our existing DOT workforce operations and moving them to Edzo. But I would like to say that the maintenance crews that we do have are all employed and live in Edzo at this point. So with further comments on this particular request, the department has not received any formal proposal from the Tlicho at all. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Maintenance Of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister available to meet with the chief and myself to at least discuss the rationale and the benefits of transferring the responsibility to Edzo crew? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 335-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Maintenance Of Highway No. 3

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm always open to meetings with the MLA and the chiefs of his riding to discuss all the concerns raised by members of his community. We have met previously on a number of occasions and will continue to meet at their request. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Maintenance Of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, obviously we like to expedite this process. So I would like

to find out when can this meeting occur within the life of this session? Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 335-15(5): Transfer Of Responsibility For Maintenance Of Highway No. 3

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I can give a timeline, but if the Member and the chief of his respective community would like to begin discussions on such a concept, we can do that there, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 336-15(5): Status Of Perry Building Functional Review

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few years ago the Perry Building in Inuvik was closed down because of some structural concerns. I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services, what's the status of the Perry Building right now? Is it occupied? Do they plan to occupy it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 336-15(5): Status Of Perry Building Functional Review

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are still occupying the Perry Building, but because it's unsafe and whatnot we are only using the first floor of the facility because of structural concerns. We are looking at doing a feasibility study to look at the possibility of other space that may be required, so we are doing a feasibility study now and hopefully we'll have it completed by March.

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

Supplementary To Question 336-15(5): Status Of Perry Building Functional Review

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the building is deemed unsafe, why is the first floor occupied? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 336-15(5): Status Of Perry Building Functional Review

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did have to vacate the third and second floor because of weight restrictions, but the only floor that is usable at the present time is the lower floor and that is only being used by the Department of Public Works at this time. Hopefully once we complete the feasibility study and look at the functional review of what office space is going to be needed, where we are going to have to locate people, once we complete that report, we are hoping to have a better idea of where we go with the office requirements in Inuvik.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 336-15(5): Status Of Perry Building Functional Review

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of their functional review, would the Minister speak to the WCB Minister about having WCB build their new office complex in Inuvik? We do have tenants for them. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 336-15(5): Status Of Perry Building Functional Review

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, until we complete the review and look at the possibility of what is needed and which departments are there, it is an option we can look at and I believe it's something I will bring back to the department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 337-15(5): Extension Of Yellowknife Airport Runway

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in October, I had questions for the Minister of Transportation about the Yellowknife Airport runway extension. In response to that, the Minister sent me three copies of the aeronautical market study for the Northwest Territories about the airport extension. I am not sure if he didn't think one would do; he sent me three copies. That being said, what is the strategy now in place for the airport extension from 7,500 feet to 10,000 feet? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

Return To Question 337-15(5): Extension Of Yellowknife Airport Runway

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure glad the Member read all three copies that we sent him. The strategy is we don't actually have a long-term strategy; however, we are looking at the business case, Mr. Speaker, and if there is an actual business case to accommodate such a lengthy extension to the Yellowknife Airport, then we will pursue it. I will just add, in the Yukon, because of the proximity to Alaska and other international markets, they were able to build it. That's something this government cannot pursue right now, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 337 -15(5): Extension Of Yellowknife Airport Runway

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, the Minister just took my line; if they build it, they will come. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister agree today to work on developing a strategy that will work towards building the extension to the Yellowknife Airport? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 337-15(5): Extension Of Yellowknife Airport Runway

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department is working with the Department of ITI to look at the business case of potential market opportunities associated with this. At this point, the numbers just aren't there to extend our runway and the people coming in, there just aren't enough of them. In fact, our infrastructure out there just cannot accommodate the 747s because of their height and the amount of pumping pressure that the fuel trucks will need to provide for them, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

Supplementary To Question 337 -15(5): Extension Of Yellowknife Airport Runway

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Noting I have two extra copies, I would encourage the Minister to have one of mine. I think the copy he sent me was the business case to build an extension of the runway. So I would again ask the Minister, looking at it as not a yes, but would he agree today in this House to develop a strategy so we could work on getting an extension to the Yellowknife Airport runway?

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

Further Return To Question 337 -15(5): Extension Of Yellowknife Airport Runway

HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There can and would be substantial argument for the extension of the runway and we continue to work on a strategy to look at an extension of the airport. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Oral questions. Written questions. Replies to written questions. Replies to the budget address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 12: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 92-15(5): Aurora College 2005-2006 Annual Report

Tabled Document 93-15(5): Status Of Women Council Of The NWT Annual Report 2005-2006

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two documents today. First, the document entitled Aurora College 2005-2006 Annual Report and the document entitled Status of Women Council of the NWT Annual Report 2005-2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Tabled Document 94-15(5): Package Of Letters Regarding The Elimination Of The Visitor Rebate Program

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table three letters. They are an exchange between my office and that of the Honourable Jim Flaherty, the federal Minister of Finance, regarding the tourism and GST issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 95-15(5): Statutory Declaration Of Residence For MLA, Hay River South

Tabled Document 96-15(5): Statutory Declaration Of Residence For MLA, Thebacha

Tabled Document 97-15(5): Statutory Declaration Of Residence For MLA, Tu Nedhe

Tabled Document 98-15(5): Statutory Declaration Of Residence For MLA, Sahtu

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Tabling of documents. Pursuant to section 14 of the indemnities, allowances and expenditure regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the statutory declarations of residence of the following Members of the Assembly: Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Member for Hay River South, declaration dated February 15, 2007; Mr. J. Michael Miltenberger, Member for Thebacha, declaration dated February 15, 2007; Mr. Bobby J. Villeneuve, Member for Tu Nedhe, declaration dated February 14, 2007; and, Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, declaration dated February 14, 2007.

Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Second reading of bills.

Colleagues, before I go into the next item on the order paper and move into Committee of the Whole, I want to remind Members of your rules regarding reference to persons who are unable to defend themselves in this House apply equally in Committee of the Whole as they do in formal session. In reviewing the unedited Hansard from yesterday's Committee of the whole, I was troubled to see that on at least one occasion, specific reference was made to personnel and private information regarding a health care professional in one of our small communities. It is both a rule of this Assembly and a common courtesy not to make specific reference to persons who are not Members of this House and who do not enjoy parliamentary immunity. This includes reference to Members of the public specifically by name or in such a way that there can be no mistake as to the identity of the individual involved. The parliamentary immunity that we all enjoy with in this Chamber comes with certain responsibilities. I would ask that Members respect the rights of those who do not have a direct voice in this Chamber both in formal session and in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, colleagues.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18, Bill 19 and Bill 21, Committee Reports 7-15(5), 8-15(5) and 9-15(5) with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 17: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole to order for today and ask what is the wish of the committee. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, committee wishes to consider Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008, specifically Health and Social Services and Public Works and Services. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): We will reconvene Committee of the Whole. We left off yesterday on page 6-37...I'm sorry, page 6-35. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he would like to be accompanied by his witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your staff, please?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my left is the deputy minister of the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Chuck Parker; and, to my right is Mr. Derek Elkin, director of finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Page 6-37, community health and programs, grants and contributions, contributions...General comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For clarification, what page are we on? I thought I heard you say page 6-35.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Braden. For Committee of the Whole, we are on page 6-37. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I would seek committee's concurrence to return to page 6-35, community health programs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Braden is requesting to return to page 6-35. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. We are now on page 6-35, activity summary, community health programs, operation expenditures summary, \$69,187. Mr. Braden. I'm sorry. I am going to clarify that. It's \$69.187 million.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under community health programs, the activity description here tells us that this amount of money, almost \$70 million, goes into supporting our outside health facilities and institutional care, assisted living, counselling intervention. In this area, Mr. Chairman, I am including the services that we provide and expect to improve on providing for persons with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. I wanted to ask the department or the Minister what is the level and extent of this requirement in the Northwest Territories? How many people are currently in need of assistance to deal with dementia or Alzheimer's condition, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we don't have a count or that level of detail as to how many individuals are either seeking service or requiring service besides that of individuals that are already in our existing facilities. We can work to provide some of that information, but try to get more detail from the Member as to what is wanted. Does he want a count-by-count of people who have tried to access service or are accessing service to date? Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I guess more to my point is I want to see what kind of process of frequency we have of serving our population and determining the level of need. I guess that is where I would go with my next question. In our long-term care strategy, when would be the next plan or anticipated time when we would have a survey of this kind of care requirement, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, from within the department, work was done back in 2004. The Wilkinson report, as it was called, was what we based a lot of our work on and we can provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, in terms of preparing our range of care, and I am talking on a territory-wide basis, in terms of designing and delivering care to dementia and Alzheimer's patients, what is the level of expertise or staffing that we have devoted to this very specialized type of requirement, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we have done in a number of fields, whether we work with NGOs on specific programs or deal within our existing facilities, there are a number of levels of types of quality or requirements that would be met, but I will have Mr. Parker give that information. Thank you.

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

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in terms of the long-term care, they are the resources that are dealing directly with the service, so in each of our facilities across the North there would be staff in each of the centres that would provide care for people who have Alzheimer's. In addition to that, at the departmental level, there are staff dedicated to the function of continuing care that would have this as part of their work. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, is there anything in the government's long-term plan or staffing that outlines the need or an intention to bring specialized staff into the department to help guide our level of care and the delivery of this kind of service, Mr. Chairman? We know that as our population ages, this will become a greater and greater demand on us. We know, I believe, from the information that may have been gleaned from the Wilkinson report of 2004 that there are an estimated at least 60 people just in Yellowknife who are at some stage of dealing with dementia. That is quite a number of persons and I am wondering if we are going to be bringing on somebody with a mandate to design and deliver coordinated services on a territory-wide basis, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Before we continue, can I ask the committee to keep their voices down. Mr. Braden has the floor. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as a result of the Wilkinson report, the department started putting its long-term care strategy together. Out of that, as well, there was a commitment to bring another framework on how we would proceed. That framework is in progress and is not recognized within these main estimates. What we have available in this document is continuing on with the level of service we do have existing and that's using our own nurses and staff from that end of delivering the service. The framework is in progress and will be worked on. At that point, we will have to decide, when it's completed, how we proceed and fund requirements that would come forward. That's the biggest difficulty we face. The majority of what we have here is dealing with forced growth items. We have not many new initiatives within this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, another important aspect of the community care that we deliver is the support to disabled people and one of those institutional organizations that we have long supported is the institutional service to the children through the Territorial Treatment Centre, here in Yellowknife. The TTC, the issue has been that this service is going to be relocated to Hay River and contracts and things have been established to engage that.

Mr. Chairman, my concern or my question right now is for the continuance of this service through the transition period to Hay River. I believe there was an original completion time for that of the summer or the fall of this year. Obviously that's not going to happen. Have contracts been extended? Are we going to enable this

service to continue until the Hay River facility is established, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that program will continue. The contract is in place. The contractor is aware of the plans of the department, so nothing has changed on the delivery of the service or any changes to that program. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. We are on page 6-35, comments? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Are we on 35 or 36?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): We are on page 6-35. Thank you. Activity summary, community health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$69.187 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. On page 36 and 37 coming up, under children's services, Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask the Minister about the foster care services. At the women leaders' conference over the weekend, one of the topics that came up was about the issue of having too many of our aboriginal children having to leave small communities to be placed elsewhere. We had a retired social worker there from one of the very small communities where currently there is no social worker. We also are aware of...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Right now, we are presently on page 6-35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Activity summary, community health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$69.187 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): We will now turn to page 6-36. Page 6-37, activity summary, community health programs, grants and contributions, contributions. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Okay. Thank you. On page 6-37 then, under children's services, the government provides money for foster care, residential care, protective services. As I was saying, I learned, in talking to...Obviously the issue of foster care and having to have some of our children in foster care is a big issue and I had the occasion to talk to a retired social worker from a very small community in our territory where there is no social worker right now. She used to be a foster parent for some of the children in the communities and she's been asked to foster in the community that she lives in. She brought up a couple of things. One is that in her understanding, the legislation requires or provides for an opportunity for the community leadership to get together to have a discussion about the welfare of the child or the children who are subject to

apprehension and try to find ways to find suitable families within their communities, so that there is a possibility for those children to stay within the community.

She's saying that that doesn't always happen. In fact, she is not aware of an event like that happening in a long while. I do appreciate foster parents. I think it's a very difficult job and there are a lot of parents in Yellowknife doing that, but I am sure everyone would be supportive of finding ways to keep foster children within their own communities, cultures, families and regions if at all possible. What kind of system is in place to make sure that you could ascertain that that step takes place? Could we make it so it's a very strong, almost mandatory requirement -- it should be documented almost -- that each community has a committee set up where they have to look at each situation and see?

The second thing is we need to support the families who may be in position to take these children in care.

The third thing is she is saying that the requirements to be a foster parent now has changed a lot since she was a foster parent 10 or 20 years ago. I don't know if it's a question of education or support or whatever, but I would like to know more information on that. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the area of the children's services and especially the foster care side of where we try to help families and children that are in need, within the legislation there is a plan of care committees that's in there, but the legislation itself is permissible so it's not mandatory. A concern of trying to make it mandatory is if we can't get the committee together to make decisions, then the child is in limbo even longer. So that is one of the reasons why. But we have in the past; we've made aboriginal organizations and other organizations within communities aware of the plan of care committees that can be established. Right now, we are working with organizations and families on some of the planning and training that needs to occur in that area of foster care and parenting on that side.

The issue of requirements of who could qualify as a foster parent has, indeed, over the years become much more stringent. A lot of that is around the liability issues. As any child that goes into foster care is basically a ward of the department, we have to ensure the safety side of it. So that's why you see those standards or the requirements become much more stringent. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. I don't take any issue with having stringent requirements and the need for the government to act on behalf of the children. I'm speaking about the fact that especially in small traditional communities, they're very strong families and people know who they are, too. Maybe even if they're strong families, they don't want to...I mean taking care of other children is part of the culture. I'm just wondering if there's anything more this government can do to identify those families and provide support. I'm not in any way suggesting that we don't enforce those requirements, but there's always room to work better in that regard.

Another one I want to say is that I am aware of the fact that this is an issue that's as sensitive as caribou. All our community leaders are very protective of their children and they may not want to work with...I don't know; there's jurisdiction questions and such. I just want to say, as I said about the caribou issue where a lot of what we do here is intergovernmental matters, not just wildlife but for children too. We have self-governments and we have aboriginal governments and we're a public government, and I think often we spend too much time talking about how to get intergovernmental relations working for the benefit of getting resources on diamonds or the pipeline or whatever. But I don't think our leaders of different governments are talking enough about how we could work together to find the process and to make policies or make decisions for the benefit of our children, and find ways to keep our children in the community wherever possible.

This community that this lady was from, there is no social worker now. Given that we can't even start a Social Work Program at Aurora College because of lack of interest right now, that problem is not going to go away. We have to find a way for the government to see what we can do with that. I would like to just see issues like that be on the agenda of the government's actions on the intergovernmental front, not just the big ticket items of big things that it's nice to talk about, but we try to do the big ticket items so that we can take care of the small and vital issues, too. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he could review his department's work on where we are. Identify where there is no social worker in place or, I don't know what I could ask him to do, but I would hate to see us just accepting as a fact that there are just some communities that are never going to keep their children in need and that we're just going to have a hands-off policy. I'm willing to hear the Minister talk about how we could address this. At minimum, we should have in every community where children are in danger that there's a group of people working together to see what they can do for those children before they're having to be shipped away. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there's also, I guess, a number of concerns that were raised. There's the other side of the program where individuals or communities or family members think that Health and Social Services are too involved, we're there to take the children away. That's something that I've had to deal with, as well. The fact is, we're a situation where it's not hands-off. We're involved, we're trying to do as much as we can to ensure that the safety of children is being met. There's recruitment out there for trying to get more foster families registered. Where we have communities that, for one reason or another, don't have a social worker, they have social workers travel in and help that way as well as regular communications that can be done with the regional office or the department itself.

Fostering is important. It's one of our highest priorities and we've been working on a proposal. The framework is in place of trying to address the issue of foster parents. For example, the rates of pay. Should it be standardized? What's included? Right now, there's a lot of issues that are up for one's interpretation of how a program can be applied, so we see different rates for children in care across the territory. So we're working on that piece of it and seeing what we can do, but it something that is high

on our list of priorities of how we deal with children in need and in care.

As a relationship with aboriginal organizations and aboriginal governments, it's one thing we've worked with. In fact, our last piece of legislation that we worked with, we went to great lengths to work with the aboriginal governments and organizations to ensure that the issues they were raising were being addressed, and that was one of keeping children in their own communities with their own families to the best we can. Ultimately it comes down to if we can get more people in line to step up and help out when it comes to the fostering portion. As I stated, we're working on a plan to help that along and help resource it at a better level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the subject of foster care, following up on that, when is the last time that the rates for foster care were adjusted upwards in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I believe the last time rates were adjusted was around 2001, but we'd have to confirm that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last time I talked to some foster parents here in Yellowknife, the rates were still sitting around \$24 a day for a child that did not have any special needs. Might I suggest, for the record today, that that is not enough money. When you consider how much it costs to feed a child and the cost of living in the North and everything else, I just don't think that that's adequate. I think that that goes contrary to the priority that we put on children who are in care. I think that monetary figure right there says a lot, and it doesn't say a lot of good.

I have some constituents in my riding; I'll give you a scenario. A fairly young grandmother with a grandchild, the mother of the child troubled and quite often requiring intervention on the part of the grandmother to care for the child. No remuneration available. But when it comes down to choices between staying home and a grandchild and going to their place of employment where they're gainfully employed, then they would be forced to give up their employment basically to take care of their grandchild. Now, I have a problem with extended family or grandparents not being the first line of consideration if they're appropriate. Now, we know there's been some really bad incidents that have occurred even in extended families. There have been some issues that have drawn national attention. But where the grandparents would qualify to be foster parents and would be good foster parents, I think that they should be the first choice and I don't think they should necessarily have to do it for nothing, especially in the case where the grandparent may be a single parent as well and does not have another household income to fall back on.

Right now this is how it goes: they feel that their grandchild is at risk because of activities, attention or lack of attention that the grandchild is getting. They intervene. In order to get Social Services involved, they basically have to forfeit the care of that grandchild. That's a very hard thing for a grandparent to do, to say, oh, could you please go by my grown son or daughter's house and pick up their child because they're partying and I feel my grandchild is in an unsafe and compromised position? That's a hard phone call to make. I'll tell you, when Social Services apprehends the child, that child doesn't get placed necessarily with a family member, it could be people who are complete strangers in the community and it just creates all kinds of problems. I'd like to get the Minister's response to the concept of relatives and families actually being compensated for taking care of even their grandchildren. I mean it's a much better solution than putting them with an absolute stranger. To be honest, sometimes grandparents do have to give up their livelihood in order to do that, in order to fulfil that role. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, something I've said and stood by as long as I've been a Member of the Assembly is I believe strong families lead to strong communities which lead to a strong territory, and it's families that will make a difference. When we have healthy communities, we have healthy families. We see the reverse in situations. So it's something we have to address, and we have been through this framework we're coming out with, to try and address, as mentioned, the last change in the way benefits were paid or help was given to those who were in the foster care world I guess is one thing that we're seeing and are going to work to try and address.

The particular issue of families involved, yes, we like to have families stay with family members. Ultimately that was the way it worked years ago, was when family members became in trouble, other family members took up the task. For example, when we talk about custom adoption in the North, that was an example of how families stepped up and just took over situations when the need arose.

The issue of when a call is made about the safety of a child, the act is very, very strong in that area of a child's safety. For us to step in, it requires that call of concern, then we would step in fairly strongly and try to make sure the child is, indeed, in a safe environment; if not, put them in a safe environment. We do have a plan where we do help family members, but ultimately it would still require that that child be in our care because of the liability issues once we get called. But once that process is in place where we are involved with a particular family, if there are other family members and we do have other family members who are taking care of their grandchildren, we do supply support in that area. But the child does have to be officially in our care. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't aware that the Department of Health and Social Services actually had a policy that would allow an aunt or a grandmother as an extended family member, or a sister,

to actually be remunerated at the same rate as a foster parent would be to care for a family member. I was not aware that there's a policy to that effect and that is very interesting, because I believe there is a whole generation of fairly young grandparents that are quite literally having their choices and are limited, and even some of their opportunities taken from them, by the fact that they have to get involved in raising grandchildren. It's a matter of heart and they do it because they can't see to turn the knob. On the other hand, I don't think they should be expected to do that without financial support so I'm very interested to hear that that policy exists. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do have a number of areas that they would fall into in this area and one would be called provisional foster care where there's the interim step of we first get involved, and that's working with family members, and then the extended family foster care area as well. So we do have that area set up. Right now, in fact, we have over 100 children set up in that arrangement where it's with family members, and the level of support is the same as a foster care arrangement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One last question is do you have any group homes operating in the Northwest Territories right now and, if so, in what communities are they located? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do have group homes in the Territories. I believe I'm aware of one in Inuvik and that's for younger children. As well, I believe there's one here in Yellowknife. I'd have to get the information to provide a full listing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Just I guess a comment more than a question, Mr. Chairman. Again I would suggest that if the foster care rates have not been increased in six years, that they need to be assessed and at least the rates should be going up with the rate of inflation. It's fine to say we can't get enough qualified or acceptable homes, but you really can't expect people to...It's a lot of work and if you want the children looked after well and have foster parents participating in extracurricular activities and doing all kinds of things, you need to compensate them properly. So I'd like to suggest that those rates should be reviewed as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we will take that advice and continue with that framework area and the support of the Assembly, as well, is important for that initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a quick question on community health programs. On the community services level, the emotional and social problems such as suicide which we do have a problem with here in the NWT. In the last 15 years I believe there's been about 20 suicides a year, and it seems to be not going down by any significant rate. I just want to know why in 2005 when we had almost \$2 million in that program for community services, now we're only down to \$1.3 million in that program. Why are we taking money away from something as critical as suicide prevention and intervention, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess just for the record, on the suicide rates within the Northwest Territories we have seen a decline actually in the last number of years. In 2003, there were 11; 2004, 10; 2005, five; and 2006, four. The comparison, the drop, I believe the Member is using the 2005-06 actuals of 1.932 to what we're estimating of 1.326 in that area. The reason for the reduction, I'll have Mr...I'll have to bet that information as to what the actual reason for the reduction.

But what you see is difficult to compare. When you do a comparison of 2005-06 actuals, the actual main estimates for 2005-2006 could have been lower and just because of demand, the program was higher than anticipated. That's why you would see the difference. For example, if you look in 2006-2007, our estimates were different again from, we had anticipated 1.4 and it actually expended 1.1. So we're going up to 1.3 is our estimate. But ultimately it will become on program demand and how we can meet that. So this is an estimate put in place at this time. If the demand is higher we would have to look within and see how we can meet that demand. But I will get the actual information and provide that to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I haven't got an issue with the statistics, but my presumption is the more money we do have in suicide prevention and intervention and rehabilitation and the more demand that we do have out of that program, the better. I would like to see more money put into...Obviously the more money we put in, the better results we're getting, just from the statistics that the Minister just brought forward. I would be more inclined to say, well, gee, you know, we should put just maybe even more than \$1.9 million, this year we'll put \$2.2 million and maybe the decline will be down to zero, and if the demand drops out from underneath that, then that's even better. The rationale that I use is if we have money left over in the program that's good, but if we're running short in the program, we're falling short of money available, then that creates another problem. I guess that's just my rationale and in the way I would do this, the budgeting for a program as important as suicide prevention here in the

NWT, Mr. Chairman. I guess just a comment. Maybe the Minister could comment on what the budgeting planning rationale is on that side. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there has been no reduction from the 2006-2007 Main Estimates or revised to what we're planning. There may have been some rejigging, but I will get that information. But there's been no reduction in the programming and training. For example, through the Department of Health and Social Services we fund the Northwest Territories Suicide Prevention Training Program. It's a unique northern curriculum developed by aboriginal and mental health groups. So that's one of the pieces in the NWT. We also have four aboriginal trainers who have taken the applied suicide intervention skills training and are working with us and collating a number of workshops. We're also working with Tulita for on-the-land programs for youth at high risk. As well, we have the aboriginal youth suicide prevention area that we work with. So we've not reduced any area and we'll continue to work with those areas. As I said, if we find the demand is higher than we have, we would have to look at that during the year to see if we can further support that. But we have not reduced the level of training or intervention programs that we have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess just for my information, I just want to ask the Minister on these on-the-land programs for high-risk youth, is there just a fixed trough of available dollars for the first-come-first-serve proposals that come through for that program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the funds are, work through the health authorities, so individuals in the communities and regions can work with the health authorities on specific programming to see what's available and at some point, yes, if the authority found they were over budget in that area, they would either have to reallocate from within the allotment they have or come back to us to see if we could find some additional revenues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Protective services is an area I raised with the Minister not that long ago and my concern is the return of children to parents who are well-known or have been known or suspected to have been some type of abusers of substance, that playing a role in why the children have been taken away or put into custody of some sort, or even given up in whatever the circumstances required. My questions at the

time were specific to the area of testing the parents for whether they continue substance abuse sort of lifestyle. Now, I fully believe that we need to play a role in this. I think the logic behind it is are we putting the children first? How are we doing that, and can we be tested in the sense of our logic? My belief is that we have to always exercise on the side of caution and if we're a little extra cautious in favour of the child, that speaks to why our principles are as they are. I have no doubt that protective services is mandated and puts into practice fully that position, but my area of concern raised directly with the Minister is the area of testing the parents when we consider, or when we reconsider sending them back to the families or reuniting the family. I've always been in favour of the concept. I have no concern about the objective of the mandate or returning them to the family, but it's, I guess, the underlying sense that I'm trying to describe here is I want to give the child or children the best chance that they have and not put hurdles or certainly landmines in front of them by sending them back to sort of a sorry situation. So given the fact that I've emphasized in a couple different ways my concern with this problem and the feeling that I feel very strongly that we have a role to play here, where is the Minister taking this issue? I'll note that he has had some correspondence with me on this, but where has he taken this issue and if it hasn't gone very far, would he be willing to engage his judicial folks to find out if we could do something of this nature whereas one of the requirements of returning a child or children that is back to their parents who through some fact or statement of understanding that they were some type of substance abuser that they agree to be tested to ensure the children are being returned to a safe home. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the area of testing or requiring testing is one where the courts will play a significant role and do from time to time, depending on the issue or the parent being involved. A court or judge can order that testing be required in a number of instances.

When it comes to the child protection side of the equation, when we get involved we are very involved in what occurs in the home when a child has been apprehended, removed from, a number of procedures are taking place. Social workers are put on the file and from counselling that has to be required by parents to showing that in fact they can provide the necessary level of care to the children. Having a good home environment is something that is checked on regularly. For example, it's not a matter of a child being apprehended and then being almost immediately returned home. The fact is, if it's an occurrence that has come up before and a child goes through the process, number one, they'd be put in, if it's a day care or, not a day care but a professional home or foster family, in that sense, for the immediate help and if things don't turn around, then we get further involved as going to the courts for an order of bringing the children into our care in a very formal way. Then we work with the parents on a plan of what needs to be done in that home, in that environment, and they have to be in agreement with that at the front end. If we have no cooperation in that area, then we get involved fully with the courts and that becomes very formal, and then the process is a long one to ensure again the safety of the child before the child is reintroduced back. That goes through supervised visits,

whether it's an hour or two every other day, and then graduating to a weekend, and then back into home environment, and that doesn't stop there where we become involved in the sense to make sure that environment stays safe. So we do quite a bit right now to ensure that if we're reintroducing a child back into the family situation, that it's well monitored, that parents have to show that they're in a position to take over care and responsibility of their child again in a satisfactory manner. So we are very involved in how we do this.

Should we require testing be done, should it be zero tolerance in the sense that a parent who's got their problems under control have sought the necessary counselling but have a sip of wine, should they be disallowed from having their children back? There's a lot of things that come in there and I think what we've been doing, to date, where there's an obvious issue, we have worked through the social workers and the families on coming up with an appropriate level of programming before a child can be reintroduced into that environment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm waiting for the light there, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the answer to the Minister, but the fact is I'm still confident that we've got our eye on the wrong sort of game here. It almost sounds as if it's a legal loophole that we're worried about taking a stance. I mean, this is my opinion, obviously, and I share a completely different opinion than the Minister does on this issue. That's why I keep pressing it. I see it as an incisive issue. There is urgency and clarity on this and that's why I encourage him to take it to the justice folks to see if we can do something like this. It is my understanding that the B.C. administrator in this area has the authority to require something like this. I think we should be asking ourselves, is it too much to ask?

Another principle we should be considering is anytime someone goes to court and we're there to represent the child's best interest, we should be asking for this to be put into writing if at this time we cannot do this. It certainly should be the very minimum that we should be asking.

As I've seen it and have come to see it, that is, if someone has been on meth, I mean, they can't just walk in one day and say I'm clean. I mean these are life-changing problems and they're also life-changing struggles that I think people walk away from many years and can they wipe themselves from being an addict? I don't know. Some folks will say once they've been an addict, they will always be one and they deal with it day to day. I compliment the success of people getting away from these things, but the challenges and sometimes the temptations are out there that they're difficult to resist.

But the fact is, I would like the department to explore this area to ensure that, be it a zero tolerance of anyone found using this and that's why their children were taken away, that we should explore this again. Being wrong in the context of protecting the child first and having a mistake by overburdening someone to pee in a cup to prove that they're not using drugs anymore, the fact that, you know, I could handle that type of criticism. The fact that we had said to ourselves that this child's safety is on the forefront of every decision we make and the willingness of the parent I think should be there and probably in most cases

would be there to ensure that, yes, they are going to provide them with the best opportunity before them. I guess that's why I keep coming around to the fact that I'd like to encourage the Minister to see if we can explore options like this, create contracts with people, even on the short term where they're at least, at the very least that is, a moral contract where people are allowing themselves to prove that they are clean when they get their children back and we can feel comfort at night when we go home and we wave goodbye to those kids as they're returned to their rightful family that we know that they've been given the best shot that they can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the issue of courts and requirements we place on families is one that we take quite seriously. In fact, we tie up a lot of time in the courts because of our issue with the safety of children. We also get the other side of the equation, as I have stated earlier to one of the questions made or comments made, the fact that there are some people who think that, as a department, we are too involved and we place much too many requirements on a family before they can have their children reintroduced back into the home environment. We have a very stringent process of when a child is put in our care before we would release them back into the family. I've also dealt with the other side of it where I've had family members saying and calling regarding the intervention by social workers. Ultimately it's the safety of the child that comes first and we act on that.

The issue of testing is one where, I mean, we go even, for example, and I'll use the Mackenzie Delta with all the activity up there. Companies were requiring for safety of worksite that drug testing be done. That's being challenged, and it's being challenged across the country as well. So at some point we'd be looking to a challenge. I believe with what we have in place and the work we do with partners in communities under our own legislation, we have a very stringent process of reintroducing a child back into the home. We want to ensure again the safety of the child comes first. So home visits, if we have a social worker who's in the home and they realize that the reason these children were taken away was because of an abuse situation of substances and they recognize that that has not been cleaned up, then the child will not be returned back to that home.

Now, we've had lots of occasions, and I think most would know somebody in the community that went through issues of substance abuse who had children taken away, got their act together and got cleaned up and within a matter of months were back into some sort of an involvement with ourselves as the Department of Health and Social Services. So testing can be fine and work for awhile, but shortly after that testing is done we can still have family members potentially falling back into old habits. Unfortunately there's not going to be an absolute fix to the situation.

I think we've tried to be as careful as possible in this area. We can look at what other jurisdictions have done, but I think we can establish that our system in place is one that does take the safety of the child first. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask several questions to the Minister. The first one is in light of the recent reports on CBC and with the interview with Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations on the, I don't know what types of words he used in terms of calling it a crisis or a national disgrace in terms of the number of foster in Canada. I think he quoted a number of 27,000 across Canada. Mr. Fontaine was asking some serious questions. I'd like to ask the Minister, in regards to the Northwest Territories in terms of foster care children in the Northwest Territories homes that are of aboriginal descent and that are in homes that are non-aboriginal custody, that if he has some numbers. I'm asking for some details, so I'm also prepared to wait until he can get them to me at a later date. But I want to know that statement by Mr. Fontaine, does that somehow have, on a scale of the Northwest Territories, are we in that type of a situation as he has purported in the news? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have in care, I mean the number changes, so a snapshot I guess is what we'd call it. We have approximately 646 children in care at one level or another. I don't have the breakdown of how many are aboriginal. We can work to get that information. The issue that was raised by that report or that concern is not the same issue we have in the Territories

Yes, we do have high percentage of aboriginal children in care. But the funding situation that is raised is not the same because here in the Northwest Territories, we don't get the funding as southern Canada does. It all comes in one pot and we fund everybody out of the same program. So it doesn't matter if you are an aboriginal child or a non-aboriginal child, it's all within the same program. So we have similar issues in the sense of the high count of children in care, but the funding issue for us is one of having to do some work on our rates but we don't have the exact situation that is being raised as the Member raised here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Before I begin again, can we have Members keep quiet so when the Member has a question for the Minister, we can listen to them? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the numbers are really high. There are 646 aboriginal children in foster care in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Minister has alluded to the funding issue. I guess the point is we have these young children taken away from their homes in the communities and for whatever reasons they are taken away, I am more concerned about the care of these children and how they are taken away and what kind of support and rights that the family has. Sometimes some things fall through the cracks. Families work so hard that after awhile, they give up because of the regulations or the policies. I want to know how there is a friendly system to make sure that these children come back into their homes. Sometimes families do well, really good. Any mother or father or grandparent, they really miss their children. There is no shortage of stories being told by former students of

residential schools how this has happened and the disconnect. So there are lots of things that contribute to this. So I am asking the Minister for some breakdown. I would also like to ask the Minister for costs; what it costs for each aboriginal child in a foster care home, one year, two years, three years. What does it cost us to have it? How many foster care homes are in my region? How much training have they had? I know I am asking some questions that the Minister can reply to later on and I am willing to accept that.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask one more question. If the Minister could supply some information for me on these three or four questions regarding foster care.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we will put that information together. We realize that's a fair bit of detail he's requesting. We will get it to him as soon as we can put that together. The number 646 is not all children in foster homes and it's not all aboriginal children, but a very high percentage are aboriginal children. We will get that breakdown. For example, out of that 646, 254 are actually in their homes but they are in a plan of care program where parents have had to sign agreements on what happens in their home and how things are taken care of. We are still in supervision mode in those areas. Another 25 are in provisional foster care areas where family is involved and then the extended family care, so an aunt or an uncle in that community, a grandparent. There are another 81 involved in that. So over 300 of those children are either in their own homes or with family members and where we are directly involved with monitoring and supervising what occurs in that situation. So there are a lot of children who are involved in the system, but we are still working with families and a large number of them, ensuring that we maintain that family contact. As for the rest of the information, we will provide that to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize to the Minister if I gave the wrong assumption that it was 646. I apologize. I look forward to getting some accurate numbers in the future. I did appreciate the numbers that he has given me. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister a question. Can the Minister answer this question as to how many childcare workers have their papers, their certificates, to regulate or legislate child protection services in the Northwest Territories? That again may have to wait, but I want to ask this question to the Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, our social workers, as part of our hiring policy, have to meet minimum requirements to get the job, so there has to be qualifications right from day one. On top of that, there is further training that happens within our system as we work with our staff to ensure that they have adequate training to deal with the situations they are in. As for the actual count, we will get the total number of

social workers and the minimum requirements that they be required to meet. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for providing me information later on. I am asking some fairly detailed questions and sometimes our discussions are like this. I appreciate that from the Minister. I would ask the Minister this one question, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the support for the families in the communities who are in a situation of foster care and apprehension of children, is the type of support...Are we providing, along with the Sahtu health workers in my region, adequate support? If a family is in a situation where children may not be taken by the Department of Social Services, that there is a team dispatched into that community to work with this family and do as much as they can within their limits and to help this family out, because there are extended families that dearly love to take children into their own homes but sometimes situations prevent this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we work with our authorities in the regions on the delivery of programs. The day-to-day operations, the authority, would be directly involved. If there are cases where they call for outside help of the department itself, then we would step in and provide backup support in those areas. So there is an approach used, but ultimately it's first and foremost dealt with at the authority level and if they are having difficulties and need backup support, then we would step in and provide that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next I've got Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 6-37 is an allocation for the health authorities. I take it that authority social services delivery staff, \$17 million, and this is for the health authorities to provide services in areas such as mental health and addictions, and salaries for social service delivery staff. Mr. Chairman, the Minister, in his opening remarks in the department, indicated that there was some \$425,000 earmarked to go to NGOs to help augment salary and staffing costs. Mr. Chairman, myself and many other Members have joined in the chorus to advocate that our NGOs provide a very valuable service and they need some more help in this area. What I wanted to ask, Mr. Chairman, was that \$425,000 that the Minister indicated, is this where this new money is going, or is there somewhere else in the budget that has seen this extra \$425,000, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, it does fall under this category and we are working with a number of organizations that deliver programs specifically that we're mandated to deliver and that fits back into the program that we went through as a government on establishing where the NGOs would fit and what level delivery of programs they are involved with. That's where we got involved. So we've got a number of

areas that we are working with, and have put forward forced growth on the NGO side and have got that much approval on that amount, \$425,000. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know committee was very pleased with this allocation going in and so were a number of NGOs on budget day. It seems as though we are connecting here.

Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister's answer indicated that this is a beginning. I wanted to confirm that in future budgets and business plans, are we going to be able to anticipate that there will be further allocations made to NGOs until we get to whatever point we decide is fair and reasonable and sustainable? Is this the first of what I expect or hope will be a continuation of this, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, through the third-party accountability framework that was established in our relation with NGOs and the delivery of program services, the area this fits under is a category one area where we are accepted as we put forward our request for forced growth and it was accepted by FMBS as we did our budget planning. So anything in category one, we would continue to put forward in forced growth areas, as we have had those discussion with those groups. I can't guarantee if they will always be met. That's always the issue of a government-of-the-day and how they would address the request being made, but as part of ours and as we have shown here, it is part of what is accepted as forced growth when we make our submissions. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a comment then. We certainly had positive reinforcement from those NGOs when the budget was released. So I hope that we can continue to look for more of this.

Mr. Chairman, also I think in this area, I would like to ask the Minister if they could provide some information on the general overall fiscal status, fiscal health of our health authorities. I believe we have seven health authorities in the NWT and as these things go from time to time, they have had difficulties and these are all very understandable, but I would like to see if I could get a snapshot of going into 2007-08 how are our regional health authorities doing, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we continue to work with our health authorities as we establish our budgets and we do, indeed, find from time to time a number of our health authorities struggling to meet the level of services being required and the funding associated. We've worked with the government in our budget process to try to address a number of those issues, but we will continue to work in that effort to ensure that authorities receive an adequate level of service. At

the same time, we have to establish some parameters about some of the programs we deliver because they can continue to grow at a very high rate. That's why, for example, as a department we've looked at initiatives under the integrated service delivery model where we connect how we deliver services from a community level to a regional to a territorial. So that's something we have to work with. The majority of our health boards are, in fact, in a stable fiscal position. We do have a couple of them that are struggling right now and we are working with them. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To those agencies that are perhaps struggling right now, what level of information could the Minister disclose to committee today and what options or contingencies are there to assist them through these difficulties? For instance, is this something we should anticipate in supplementary allocations? Are we due for some correction here? Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I don't need specific details about which ones are maybe facing some difficulty, but I would like to get some sense of the total deficit. What is the financial difficulty in total that the Legislative Assembly will be asked to look at? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have worked with a couple of our health boards and authorities in the area of the difficulties they have faced when it comes to funding situations. This Assembly, in the past, also dealt with that through a supplementary process. As we would find throughout the year, we would establish the budgets and the amounts that would get sent to each authority. Throughout that year if they find they've overspent or the demand in a particular area is higher, they would come to us and highlight that. We would work with them in trying to identify solutions. There are solutions from, for example, if we bring forward a request to this Assembly that there could be a matching offset in the sense that they have to find some of their deficit from within as the year is going forward. Some of it is a base review that needs to be done to see if we have adequately funded certain program levels in the past. That's ongoing. Ultimately, it comes back to this forum. If it's not identified in this budget and they are overspent, I would have to come forward in a supplementary request to address those concerns. We are, in fact, in preparation of doing that as we go forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: That will do, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to follow up from my colleague, Mr. Yakeleya, regarding social workers, particularly in terms of apprehension of children, in the Beaufort-Delta region I know the Minister indicated that they will come with outside resources to assist with child apprehensions. I am just wondering in the Beaufort-Delta exactly how many of your social workers are

qualified to go and apprehend children that are in protective need. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I stated in my earlier response, when we go through a hiring process for social workers there are different categories of a social worker, what level they are at. That would be required. If we feel in a particular area, that job description, what's required would be posted, that's what a potential employee would be ranked on. So it would vary from community to community. We do have some trouble in a number of our smaller communities of trying to find our staff and we would have to go out a number of times for staffing through HR to try to get qualified staff into the communities. Seeing from time to time there are no social workers in a community, we would send from the region into the communities on a rotational basis or a trip up a number of times to offset the workload. So that's one of the areas that we would step in.

As for the total allocation within the Beaufort-Delta, I'll have to do the same as we've done with the Sahtu is get that information and provide that to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. Having worked with Social Services before, going from one, two and three, and I finally decided to leave, Mr. Chairman, I understand the process of what's required in terms of apprehending children. Not only do you have to be a social worker, I understand where the Minister is coming from with regard to what level of social work you are, but you also have to have that certification. A small little piece of paper to be identified as a child welfare worker, which means that you have to have a certain certificate to indicate that you can walk into a house, apprehend the child if you have to and do that. So that's what I was getting at earlier.

I understand the Minister indicated that it depends on the level of the degree of social work that you're involved with, but I think it should be very clear here that in my experience anyway this is what I had to do, going from a one, two or three and then on top of that taking more courses to be able to apprehend children. There's a certain piece of paper. I'd just like to ask the Minister to make sure that that's what we're looking at. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member is correct; there is an increased level of training that would be required and we do, in this case when it comes to that level, statutory training that is required. We will get the information again, as I stated earlier, for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, committee. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one quick follow-up. The Minister indicated that if required in small communities that they'll find outside resources. Let's

assume that something happens. I'll take Sachs Harbour as an example. When you don't have the social worker in place there and then something happens there and you have to go out, how soon can outside resources be able to go to the community, if it's an emergency, to apprehend these children? How soon can that happen? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, depending on the level of severity that a call is made or the seriousness of an incident, we can be mobilized out of -- using the Sachs Harbour scenario -- out of the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority can be mobilized as soon as a plane and staff are ready to be sent up to intervene. So it can happen on fairly quick notice, but ultimately there is one where there is a delay because having to mobilize in one community and travel into Sachs Harbour, and weather permitting, of course, can play another role, as we know, in our isolated communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. POKIAK: Can the Minister indicate what's the term of severity in terms of...I guess severity means it has to be a pretty bad situation. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If child protection is called into question, we would do our normal thing. We'd work with the available authorities in the community to help do some assessment. If it's felt that we needed to step in immediately, we would work with either agencies or other family members that we may be dealing with to provide immediate safety, and then have a worker be involved through, as I stated earlier, travelling into the community. So again it's, not being a social worker myself, it will be on a case-by-case scenario as to what's happening in a community or in that family environment. If arrangements can be made with other family members, for example, in that community, that would allow for a day or two extra to be taken, or if it was a very serious incident that we would have to mobilize on a sooner basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, committee. We are on page 6-37, activity summary, community health programs, grants and contributions, contributions which is continued on to page 6-38, community health programs, grants and contributions, continued, for a total of \$52.562 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a quick question in regard to the Respite Program. It's identified under this section here. I understand that respite goes to the health and social services authorities. There's a case in Ulukhaktok where there's an elderly person that doesn't want to leave the community and right now is being watched by family members, and that client is having a very hard time to go in there and watch the elderly person. So they've asked, on occasion, to help

find money for respite. I'm just wondering how does that work, Mr. Chairman, in terms of how can this individual get money once the money is run out in terms of assistance for the elderly? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for detail on the program, I'll have Mr. Parker provide that. I'm aware that there has been work in that area of respite care, trying to enhance that level of service for smaller communities. But for the specific detail, I'll have Mr. Parker provide detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Parker.

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This service, the respite service falls under the Home Care Program and there has been enhancements to the Home Care Program. It has provided for some respite in some communities. The intention would be, over the next year, to be able to bring forward a plan where we could expand that for additional communities as needed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Parker. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. I'd just like to ask the Minister, especially in terms of Ulukhaktok, the elderly, the person there. Like I said earlier, this guy is really played out now. He was looking for assistance before. I'd like to say that the local hospital does a lot to help this family. During the day they can pretty well take care of the elderly person, but during the night the home care workers can't go there and watch all the time. So I'm just wondering, if the Minister is requested for funding availability for the family, can they find that through the region, or can they do it as emergency service? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the authority would be the contact level and the funding would flow through the authority, and however they try to structure that, that respite would be worked through the authority. If the authority found itself being swamped and not having enough revenues to cover all the bases, would then deal with us as a department. As I had stated earlier to Mr. Braden, we're working with a number of authorities in the area of trying to come up with a solution to difficulties around funding for authorities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Pokiak. Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Next I've got Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I want to ask the Minister again in terms of housing the elderly people in our region. As you know, we have some elderly people in the Aven Manor that needs 24-hour/seven-days-a-week care, however, some of these elders could be repatriated back to the Sahtu region under maybe a less 24/7 care. But they're pretty well independent. I want to ask the Minister in terms of the Sahtu looking at a regional long-term care facility. I know it's different levels and I know at one level it's pretty

expensive versus another level that's minimum. So could we ask the Minister if he would work with our Health department in the Sahtu, the Sahtu Health Board, to look at some plans in terms of putting in a long-term care facility in our region? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we, as the Department of Health and Social Services, are working with health authorities across the territory in some of the planning targets and evaluation of the services that we can provide. In fact, we are working with the Sahtu on a plan not specific just for seniors, but just for the level of service that is provided. Ultimately it will come down to the fact that can we get the additional revenue to increase or enhance the level of services that we're able to provide today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for his comments and I hope that the department is also in planning and design in terms of the business plans as it comes up again in terms of helping us with this area. But I would like to see if the planning or design of their budget. That they can look at this for at least some preliminary costing out or preliminary work that needs to make this a reality for people in our region. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I stated, we're working with authorities on level of service and evaluation of services provided in regions and we're continuing to work with Sahtu. I can't commit if in fact out of that work we can come up with a plan and put it into the business plan immediately. It goes back into the whole delivery care model we have and that's the integrated services delivery model as a government and how that fits together, and then it's a matter of how can we fund it. As long as we continue to move forward and identify the level of service and what we can provide, we'll continue to work with authorities in that way and continue to try to address it through the business planning process. But I can't say that in the next business plan cycle we'll see a senior's facility identified at that point. We have a number of hurdles to go through before we get to that stage. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do apologize for putting the Minister in this predicament, however, I guess what I was trying to get at is this issue will be on the government's agenda. I'm not too sure how that works because I'm not the Minister. I'm the MLA from the Sahtu region representing my people in this issue here, so I'm a simple man working for the people.

---Interjection

MR. YAKELEYA: I surely appreciate the support from my colleagues, Mr. Chairman, in terms of this issue.

---Laughter

That's all I'm asking the Minister, Mr. Chairman, and I'll leave it at that. I just want to make sure that this is an issue that's going to be on the radar for the department and the health board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do continue to work with the authorities on program delivery. As we continue, every budget cycle we go through, we work with authorities. You can go from both ends. One is to why authorities are overspent in areas, or if they do have a surplus. It's something we also have to have a discussion on. But mostly it's a fact around program delivery, the growth of that program delivery and what we can meet and how we can meet the needs of the communities and regions, and that all goes into the business planning process. Not all of it makes the cut, but we continue to work on an annual basis with our authorities on that level of services that we can provide in communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya, anything further?

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. My last point. Fair enough, Mr. Chairman, is the Minister's response. I'll take it as far as that. I'd like to ask one question in terms of our people in our region in terms of emergency home care designation in our regions for emergency needs that sometime happen on weeks for the little guys and little girls that need to be safe in a home. Not all the time, but we need to look at emergency home shelters. Sometimes these little ones that run around most of the evening, sleeping in different places for whatever reason. Is the department working with our health boards in terms of social services board in terms of saying Tulita, you have this designated place a home; Deline, Fort Good Hope, Colville and Norman Wells? I'll just leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the area of meeting the needs of children, for example on weekends or on an emergency basis, we work with the authorities and communities. For example, it's the category we call provisional care where on an emergency basis families can register and are registered on a list to provide care can be given a call on an evening basis or on a daily basis and asked if they would take in children for a short time. So we do have that in place and we're continually trying to expand that in all of our communities where children are in care on an emergency basis that we can find places that they can stay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, committee. We are on page 6-38, community health programs, grants and contributions, total grants and contributions, \$52.562 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We'll go to page 6-42, work performed on behalf of others and that's continued on 6-43 and 6-44 for a total of \$17.841 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question that I think arises in this area here has been the chronic situation that we've had, and I think it's with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, in the recovery of what we deem to be health benefits supplied to our people but not financed or not reimbursed in a timely fashion from Indian Affairs and Northern Development, or at least from whatever department of the federal government. I'm wondering if the Minister could give us a bit of a snapshot on how we're doing on that chronic problem.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is an area we continue to have difficulty in and having the federal government, through the Department of DIAND, fund services for aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories. The latest count we have of August is approximately \$65 million outstanding. That program that's funded for aboriginal peoples is capped at a 2 percent growth rate per year and we spend more than that. We go back and forth on it and sometimes we get a healthy cheque sent to us to cover some of it, but it continues to be lagged and a time-delayed basis. We continue to provide the level of services that is needed in the North and continue to make our issues known with both the Health Minister for Canada as well as DIAND. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Let's take a deep breath here. That's a breathtaking amount of money: \$65 million in arrears. At the risk of getting into a lot of detail here, could the Minister tell committee just how old some of this is? What's the age of this debt? How much of it is more or less current and how much of it is gathering cobwebs, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should also, for the record, state that I have contacted and written Minister Clement on this issue, raising it as well when we were at our federal/provincial/territorial Health Ministers. I used that opportunity to raise it as well; finding that other jurisdictions that deal with aboriginal peoples in the delivery of health care in their northern regions are in the same boat, very frustrated with that. This debt goes as far back as 1999, the outstanding amounts of what we've put in, what the claim was that we sent in and what they agreed to paying. For example, in '99, it was as small as \$6 million or 6.6. Then a number of years it was around three and a half, four million dollars. Lately and since '03-04 we've hit double digits in the \$12 million, 14, 15, as high as 5-6.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. This should be an area of considerable concern that the cash flowing this kind of expenditure with no certainty that we're going to be reimbursed or have a way of recovering it is, I don't see how this is sustainable, Mr. Chairman. If we've allowed \$65 million to accumulate since 1999, that's seven years. Just what is the department's approach to bringing closure to this problem? I just don't see how we can continue to do this, as difficult as it may be, if we don't have a way of recovering it. We are into serious fiscal exposure here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, it is a very serious one and growing larger by the day. We need to take care of it and one of the areas is whenever the agreement is renewed that would be, I think, undertaken and work with other jurisdictions to ensure that we get the proper growth rate applied instead of a fixed amount, or if it's going to be fixed it would be fixed more appropriately. As I stated, in discussions with other jurisdictions, they're feeling the pinch on the same side and having the fund shortfall from other revenues. The current cap that's in place is 2 percent per year, and that's just not acceptable in the growth rate we see in delivering the programs in the Northwest Territories. We are offsetting it from other revenue sources at this time, so that does become a problem and will be a drain on other revenue sources until we get this repaid. The goal is to continue to work with the Minister of DIAND as well as through the Minister of Health for the federal government; both those ministries to try and come up with a more satisfactory approach. I'm sure that all other jurisdictions would be in line with us as was in our last FPT meetings.

Of course, we can always go back on the history of this government -- I recall in the 12th Assembly there was a large disputed amount as well -- and go back and draw from some of that as to how that was settled at that point. So we've got a long history with this area with the federal government. So we're going to have to look at how we step forward on this case. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Yes, it certainly is something that I think has caught the attention of some of us here today and I want to make sure that we do continue with this at committee level. My principal concern, Mr. Chairman, is that at the rate at which this is accumulating, we will not be able to sustain this. I really think it's time, it's past time, Mr. Chairman, that we actually did resolve this. I think just writing a few letters and bringing it up at a few meetings, which as the Minister has acknowledged, as I said, in the context, this is a chronic problem. But the manner in which we're dealing with it just does not seem to be getting us anywhere, so I think we're going to have to get very, very focused on this one and do it very quickly. So I'll be noting this one and carrying it into our committee's work with the department at the earliest possible opportunity, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we definitely will work with the committee on Social Programs on this area. As I stated in my discussions with other Health Ministers about this issue, knowing that they have similar concerns, maybe not to the magnitude when you look at the percentage of outstanding commitment that we have or expenditures side, still it is an area that other Ministers across Canada were aware of and were concerned with. So I think that's another avenue that we can use in trying to have the federal government step up to the plate on this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all on this area here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Thank you, committee. We're on page 6-44, work performed on behalf of others, total \$17.841 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I'll now draw your attention back to the department summary located on page 6-7, operations expenditures summary, \$277.395 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We'll now turn our attention to page 5-7 in volume 2, infrastructure acquisition plan. I'll just give committee a second to open that book. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could get some details on what the Minister will describe as the consolidated primary care clinic in Yellowknife. If I could get some details on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that work was started quite some time ago in trying to make better use of our clinics that we have across the territory, in this case in Yellowknife. This would involve four of the primary care clinics, that being the Gibson Medical Clinic, Family Medical Clinic, Frame Lake Medical Clinic and the Great Slave Medical House, and the planning would be started as to how we can work with them and make things more efficient, work more effectively for our community. Some work has already begun on the Family Medical Clinic in that area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the intention of the department to continue to create sort of a lower, but certainly good quality standard of hospital services provided at these individual clinics, or is its intentional goal in the long term to migrate into one super clinic in the downtown and one out of the downtown? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to correct what I said earlier, we have four clinics delivering that side of the health care equation here in Yellowknife. We will be working with the three. Frame Lake Medical Clinic will still be standing on its own. But ultimately the goal is to make sure that we're making the best use of the facilities that we do have in providing primary care clinics to residents here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the further explanation to my first question, but then my second question which is still unanswered, which is are we still going to migrate to a super clinic downtown, one singular clinic, or is it the intention of the department to beef up these other little clinics downtown and keep them in their own autonomous sets to support the services at Stanton? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are going to a consolidated clinic process and update how we deliver the service. But for more detail, I'll have Mr. Parker provide that information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Parker.

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister indicated, the consolidation would include the three clinics that are downtown. Included in that clinic would be the regular services of the physicians. We would add nurse practitioners into the mix, and over the future as we also develop midwives, they would be in that clinic. The intention also would be to have some diagnostic imaging equipment available and lab services so that if there's any diagnostic work that the practitioner needs would be readily available scheduling and that service would be available for the clinician to be able to make decisions in a rapid manner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you very much, Mr. Parker. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you to both the Minister and the deputy for that detailed answer. Just one last follow-up, I think. Or I hope at this stage, I should say it that way. Is there a strategy of actual location at this time? Now, I wouldn't want to sort of create a bit of speculation in the sense of we haven't picked one, come buy our property, but is there an intention to buy property or do we have property and is it located in the downtown core or is it intended to be located somewhere else? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a location has not been selected. We are again through the planning phase looking at how we would approach this, if it would be our own facility or leased facility. That decision hasn't been made at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, committee. We are on page 5-7, infrastructure acquisition plan. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the infrastructure acquisition plan, I'd like to highlight specifically for my region. There's not even one list on here, but at the same time there was some sort of agreement a while back in October when there was a meeting with Tlicho Community Services Agency and Minister of Health and Social Services then. A commitment was made on building a plan on Behchoko health centre. So it's up to date, up to code, and also compatible and suitable to serve 2,000 people in the community of Behchoko. I realize there's a renovation that's in the works, but that's also not on this plan for future renovations, because it's still in the middle of construction that it's happening right now.

Also, Mr. Chairman, with respect to Wekweeti, which does not have a health centre facility, they have a little utility room area where they serve people. That was also discussed in October during the Tlicho Community Services Agency when they had a meeting. I think it's critical that this issue is brought forward again. The reason I'm bringing this up is we're talking about the infrastructure plan and we need to keep in mind that the promises and also there was a plan in place a while back I think that needs to be revived again. Because, as you know, Wekweeti is in desperate need of a suitable health station. Just the other day I talked about the ambulance, up-to-date ambulance vehicle in Gameti. All these issues are arising and I don't see any infrastructure listed for Tlicho region perspective.

So Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to get feedback from the Minister on what his plans are from October's...I found out it was a productive meeting they had and I was hoping to see some results out of the meeting and I was hoping to see some on this infrastructure plan, but I see none. So I'll leave it at that for now. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the area from time to time when we have repair programs that need to be put in place or renovations, we would deal through it through some of the small capital items that would be their repairs or what we would call, if you look on this page, shortfall territorial of 1.5 million. That is the area we would tap into from time to time depending on what needs to be done and the volume of that work. This is spread out through the territory and that's where we would look to using those funds.

Now, these funds aren't specifically all for what the Member's discussed. This again, as I stated, would be a fund that we would use across the territory with health authorities. Specifically for Wekweeti, that facility would have to fall into the normal capital plan process and we, as a department, would have to highlight it as one of our priorities and then it would go through the whole system of all departments and seeing what's available for the capital funding situation. I'd have to get some background on exactly what occurred there in that work plan and would be happy to sit down with the Member to discuss that work plan once I get some information on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'll certainly be more than happy to work with that. At the same time, the department should have some sort of documents on the previous meeting that we had. It's important documents that should be laid out, that should not be ignored. There were arrangements and agreements that were made at that time. I thought for a fact that it's been almost six months, going on to six months, and it's still, as the Minister indicated, by the sounds of it he hasn't seen those documents. So what I'd like to share or see from the Minister is follow-up on those plans and arrangements that were made. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when I have the information on the meetings that occurred, again, I'd be happy to sit down with the Member and go through what was looked at, at that point, and the commitments that may have been made. As well, I must say, as we have with other authorities, when facility discussions come up and request for renovation, we would work with the authority in the region on the particular facility and how it worked in the master plan and once we came up with an agreement, it would then be forwarded for how we would be able to fund the project. Otherwise we would have to work on the basis of what I said earlier when we look at our territorial shortfall and seeing what emergencies were out there and we needed to cover on a short basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Lafferty. Next on the list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The observation I'm making is similar to my colleague in terms of the capital expenditures. When you look at the centres on the total of the capital expenditures, there's dollars that are in the millions, and when you look at the smaller communities, the dollars are in the thousands. For whatever reason, not being here for the last session, but how this thing gets moved over, so I want to know from the Minister in terms of that the smaller communities are being overlooked by some of these other needs that seem to be more pressing in the larger centres that have these services already and where we are, like Colville Lake just asking to have the health professions stay longer in the community. Then they may use the excuse that there's not proper equipment or supplies or that to work with. So it seems like it's an observation and I hope it changes somewhat in the future in terms of bringing up our standards of health care in the smaller communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we're always challenged in trying to meet the demands that are out there and when it comes to infrastructure what facilities are highlighted for renovation or replacement. That is always going to be the issue. What we do have laid out is a department, and each department is...For example, departments use a 20-year needs assessment and they look at all their facilities, the age of the facilities, when the last work was done, when a

major retrofit was done, and that would fall into how we would come up with the selection of what's being made, as well as our work with the authorities as to agreement on what is required. What we find ourselves, every time we come to a facility in a region or community, when we put forward a plan to say, well, now this project is coming up for replacement, we sit down with the authority to work out what actually needs to be done. More times than not we find ourselves on the end where we're trying to limit the growth because each authority, when it has an opportunity for a new facility, wants to do more on that facility and expands its programs and services as well as the footprint of the facility, and we quickly find out that we don't have the money for it and sometimes end up delaying projects.

But in this case, we are challenged to meet that and the majority of what you see here is, in fact, replacing existing facilities we have and trying to enhance what we're able to deliver. But we continue to try to work with authorities. When we come up with the master development plan, as we call it for the authority and once we have that, we can look at how we can try to fund what's being brought forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Previously I heard the deputy minister speak about a vision of the consolidated clinic and I thought he was talking about something for our region in the Sahtu region in terms of this consolidated clinic. However, it's going to be done in Yellowknife, as the plans are under way. I think that's something similar to what our region is asking for in terms of the service we can have here. There's no fault to Fort Smith, Hay River, or even to Stanton here. The service is territorial for all people of the Northwest Territories. I know Hay River serves a lot of clients outside of the community also, that they need to upgrade their service. I am asking in communities of my region that they bring up some of the standards. I know there is a fight for dollars. The assessments and infrastructure and how much do you spend? Do you spend on the building or on the programs and services? It's a real tough balance. I think all boards have to deal with that. We don't have these services, we will continue using these larger centres and then they are going to ask for more because there are more people from outside communities that are asking for these services that they can't get in the communities or regions. I am making a comment to the Minister just to ask for some consideration. I know he's working hard with the boards on this one here and dollars are always tight. I just want to make that comment. I will keep it to that comment. I just want the Minister to respond to let me know that they heard me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: For the record, Mr. Chairman, I did hear and continue to listen to Members around the table when they address their concerns for communities and regions. We will continue to work with health authorities in trying to best be able to meet the needs that are being put on the table. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, on this page we see some substantial fiscal commitments made in a couple of areas. One of them is at the Stanton Territorial Hospital. Over the three years, and even further for Stanton, is a \$27.5 million allocation. This is long expected, Mr. Chairman. As the building, I believe, is now some 25 years old, extensive mechanical and internal retrofits for buildings at the stage of life that Stanton is. We know that there has also been considerable discussion about some potentially fairly major changes in the layout and the allocation of space and clinics and patient care/patient beds. So I am pleased to see this on the books, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering about the Stanton master plan. This has been the overall coordinated approach to planning and budgeting, this very large, very worthwhile exercise. I wanted to ask the Minister if he could advise the committee of the status of the master plan and input or access that the public may have to it, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the master plan was initiated back in 2003 and we continue to work on that, and that guides the amount of work and the type of work that we are doing as we proceed forward. For the actual details of where it's at, I will have Mr. Parker give that information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Parker.

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the master development plan for Stanton, as with other facilities in the Northwest Territories, we started down the road of a master development plan and as we got into it, we found that in all situations with our health facilities, we had situations where there was less than filled capacity in each of the centres. The work that was done to bring that into line was through the integrated service delivery model on a review of all of our facilities to make sure that we got the right sized facilities. That work has been done. The plan now is for this new group that the Member talked about yesterday, the subcommittee of the JLC that is working on and focussed on...(inaudible)...and we will take this up as our first order of priority, that there will be a public element of their work related to that. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also on this page is a line item described as federal funding, long-term reform workspace shortfall. It's rather cryptic here, Mr. Chairman, but it describes \$1.5 million allocation this year or in years passed and another \$1.5 million for the next two years, a total of \$5 million for what area is described here as a workspace shortfall. I am wondering if the Minister could provide some detail on this item.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the money that we are drawing down is from the federal government and is highlighted there as \$1.5 million per year up until 2009-10 and it's meant to address work that Public Works will be doing in authority offices for front-line locations, and deals with, for example, the additional positions we've had with social workers, child

protection workers, mental health and homecare workers in that area and rehab as well. That's where the money would be used, in those areas with the different health authorities in these areas. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So these are the clinics and offices and storefront facilities. It's a \$5 million allocation over three years or more. Just how widespread is this? Are constituents seeing this put to use in a number of communities or just what is the extent of this federal contribution, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this would be used throughout the territory and addressing workspace shortages. So whether it's an office space or clinical area, that work is being done with the additional staff. What we find in the normal GNWT's capital planning process, this sort of space falls low in the ranking and doesn't normally get addressed. We have added a substantial amount of front-line staff that we are finding were working not in adequate spaces. So this is meant to address that. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: One more follow-up, then. As we see this is booked for the coming two fiscal years, Mr. Chairman, with a little bit left in 2009-10, what about after that? Are we anticipating that we are going to be picking up the tab for the extra office space? I say it's sustainability, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This money is a capital portion. On the O and M side as we increase space, we would have to come up with our own and the federal program ends at the end of 2009-10. If we were to continue on this program, we would have to try to find additional money from within our own revenue sources.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, one other item that has some impact in my constituency here in Yellowknife is the Rockhill Apartment Building, which is leased to the YWCA and provides very much needed housing for families, transitional housing and also, I believe, some emergency housing. It's a really important part of the front-line services that the Y provides here in Yellowknife. I believe the lease for this expires in 2008. So we have about a year remaining to negotiate and also, Mr. Chairman, to look at what up-fits would be required in this building, it's an aging building. So I wanted to see in the capital plan where the Department of Health is going with the Rockhill Apartment Building and the YWCA's continued use of it. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we work with the departments of Education, Culture and Employment, the Housing Corporation, as well as Public Works and Services around the issue of the Rockhill Apartment Building. This year we've identified in our budgets \$236,000, and that's on page 5 of 9, and that's meant to address the very immediate needs that we find with a place and that's the drainage areas. For example, a number of the doors need to be repaired. So on that end of the work that will be done. We'll continue to work with the other departments with going forward on this facility as well. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister give committee some idea at this time, is it the government's intention to extend this lease with the YWCA on a long-term sustainable basis, and of course along with that, to come in with the retrofits and the improvements that this building merits, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, working with the other departments, we've gave indication we're looking to extend the lease for another 10-year cycle. As for long-term retrofits, that's something that would have to make it into the capital plan as every other project would have to. There has been a technical service evaluation done and that would guide the future pieces that would need to be done. So that's in the works, but again, it would have to, as every other capital program that we add to the plan, it would have to make it through the cutting pile. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions under the electronic medical records and we're looking at, I think the total item here is \$5.7 million. We've spent some money before and I just wanted to start off by saying that I believe in the capacity and resources of technology to help us, especially for us in the North where we have people scattered in distant places and where having good information in the right place at the right time could help not only to keep the cost of delivering health programs, but also allow us to deliver hopefully a better program for our people. When the telehealth idea came out, not Tele-Care but telehealth where electronic devices could be used for diagnosis in remote places, I jumped on that bandwagon quite quickly because I could see the potential and possibility for that project as well, and I'm glad to see that it's still moving forward.

But I think with this records program, I've been advised, I think previously when I asked questions to the Minister, that the federal government once again may not be going with us on this one. I see that in the budget item for next year there is no money allocated, but in the following two years we're seeing some money there. So could I ask the Minister as to exactly what we are doing with this project? What have we done so far with \$1.1 million in terms of what it's doing in our health care delivery model, not just step by step of what was done, but how does that apply to what we are doing and what do we foresee to be doing with the allocation in future years? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member is asking a fair bit of detail and I'll pass this one on to Mr. Parker so that he can give a more accurate account of how things have flowed and where the money has gone. This one, in fact, is one of our better working relationships with the federal government, by the way. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Parker.

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the electronic medical record, the starting point for this was at the Great Slave Clinic here in Yellowknife. One of our clinicians in the community was very proactive in bringing this forward, and also in the Hay River Health Centre, in the clinic in Hay River. Two years ago we implemented an electronic health record. As the Member indicated, it does provide an electronic method of collecting all of the information related to a patient into one location in the clinicians' computer so they have access to recent lab reports, charts, all the history of charts, all the visits with the physician, visits to another practitioner, to a rehab office. All of that information is readily available to the physician or the nurse practitioner, whoever is drawing the information. That is a project that we're underway with Canada Health Infoway. This one where they've agreed to work with us to cover a large portion of the cost.

The plan is, and right now I should point out that just very recently the group decided to go on a broader basis with our support, with the department's support, to broaden this out to the rest of the Territories. So there's been a call for proposals. I don't know if Members have seen this recently and there's a review process going on now to select a system that would be the base system that would be used across the territory. The intention would be to not just do it in the two locations that are currently there, but in all clinics. In fact, the eye clinic is one of the next ones on the list to be taken on next, then also across the rest of the territory in other physician clinics and on to the health centres would be the approach. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. I think there's no question that we need to connect this to all the communities for all practices for everybody, because not only the remoteness of our locations of where the people are located and where the professionals are located, with a lot of people not having family doctors and we're using locum doctors, I mean these health care providers come and go, but the person or the patient who is getting all sorts of care from different people it just makes sense if we could have all the information in one place where all the professionals could access them provided that they are secure and confidentiality and that security could be protected. I mean there's no question about this project. My question, though is, is the dollar amount allocated here for the next three years, would that be sufficient to get to where we need to get to? Like you say, three years down the road what will we have achieved in terms of acceptability, and I understand that Infoway and I went to the presentation when the Alberta people were up here explaining the project and I understand that they have a better system than anywhere in Canada, but the federal government has

not shown interest in funding that further. So Health Canada Infoway is one body, but we will need continued funding from the federal government to keep moving. So I have two questions there. I need to know that the Minister keeps this on the agenda with his federal counterparts to make sure that the money is placed there to finish the project. Thank you.

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

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just with respect to Canada Health Infoway, they are an important partner. In these projects, they have agreed to carry 100 percent of the eligible costs and we would have to carry the ineligible costs. Canada Health Infoway is funded by the federal government and the Minister has been advocating, along with all the colleagues across the country, in that their capitalization is ending very soon. So all the provinces and territories are pressing the federal government to continue on funding Canada Health Infoway. We think they are a very good partner. They are very helpful in this particular area, as was pointed out yesterday. We were having some struggles on the telehealth front, but in this particular area, they have been very helpful. So we do need them to carry on funding Canada Health Infoway which, in turn, will help us carry out the balance of our plan. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: There was another part of that question which is where will we get to? When we are done with the money allocated here, what kind of services will be available to our residents? Thank you.

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

MR. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The full plan, as the Member indicated, would have full access for all practitioners in all facilities across the Territories. So that's the intention of the full plan. That's the way it's structured and that's our intention. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I have Mr. Pokiak next.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier I listened to an explanation by the deputy minister regarding the primary care clinic in Yellowknife with regard to the upgrades and stuff. I listened also to what Mr. Lafferty and Mr. Yakeleya were saying with regard to much needed upgrades to their health centres in Behchoko and Colville. The Minister also indicated that under the federal funding long-term reformed workspace shortfall that they may get some funding out of that additional upgrades for some of these clinics. I don't know how much work is required in terms of keeping...I understand they have the Great Slave health clinic for Frame Lake. I don't know what the other two are, but I think there are four of them in Yellowknife here. Then we are talking about one primary care clinic in Yellowknife, which Mr. Hawkins brought up earlier. I don't know if it's

possible, but I would like to make a suggestion to the Minister at this present time, Mr. Chairman, that with the \$1 million identified for the primary care clinic in Yellowknife, maybe he could consider using that money to address some of the health centres in the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the budget as presented has gone through quite a process to get to the point where it's at, and at this point to move money to another project we'd have to establish that project first and bring it through to the system unless we find some sources of funding to deal with the emergency level areas that need to be fixed and at that point we would find it again through a supplementary process when we come to that point.

Again, through our integrated service delivery model and our work with authorities and our needs assessment when we look at our facilities, the age of facilities and when work was done on that, that helps us in how we proceed and do some of the work that's required. So at this point, the \$1 million identified in that facility is not able to be moved. It's gone through the process, highlighted here. As I made commitment to Mr. Yakeleya and Mr. Lafferty about the process, we've worked with the authorities in coming up with the planning that's needed and renovations and repairs. We will continue to work with communities in trying to address the shortfall. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's the answer I expected anyway, but I thought I would throw that to the Minister for consideration. Thank you for the information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Thank you, committee. We are on page 5-7, infrastructure acquisition plan, Health and Social Services, health services programs, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$9.873 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total activity, \$9.873 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Go now to 5-9, infrastructure acquisition plan, community health programs, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$236,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total activity, \$236,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total department, \$10.109 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I would now like to see if committee agrees that the consideration of the

Department of Health and Social Services estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. I would like to thank you, committee. Thank you, Mr. Elkin, Mr. Parker and Mr. Minister for being with us this afternoon. Mahsi.

Thank you, committee. I would now like to ask if the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services would like to provide his opening comments on his department's estimates?

Before we go there, I will go to Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. At this time, I move that we report progress. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 18: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 20: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, February 16, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.:

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

12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Write-off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Bill 19, An Act to Amend the Archives Act
 - Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008
 - Committee Report 7-15(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 8-15(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 9-15(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2007-2008 Pre-Budget Review Process
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 16, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 15:49.