



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**3<sup>rd</sup> Session**

**Day 32**

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

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## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, February 22, 2001**

Pages 1163 – 1196

**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER .....</b>	<b>1163</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>1163</b>
57-14(3): TOWARDS LITERACY: A STRATEGY FRAMEWORK (OOTES).....	1163
58-14(3): NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS RELATIONSHIPS (ANTOINE).....	1164
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>1164</b>
BULK EXPORTS OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES WATER (BRADEN) .....	1164
MONITORING THE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE ENVIRONMENT (BELL).....	1165
CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING OF WATER WASTE HANDLERS (MILTENBERGER).....	1165
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING WATER QUALITY AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL (DELOREY) .....	1166
INTAKE SOURCE FOR THE RAE WATER TREATMENT PLANT (LAFFERTY).....	1166
MACKENZIE RIVER ICE CROSSING (MCLEOD).....	1167
CONCERNS REGARDING THE CHLORINATION OF DRINKING WATER (NITAH) .....	1167
TAKING STEPS TO PROTECT OUR WATER RESOURCES (KRUTKO) .....	1168
UPGRADES TO YELLOWKNIFE WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE (DENT) .....	1168
RECENT ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF CONSTITUENTS (LEE).....	1169
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING LITERATE (STEEN).....	1169
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY .....</b>	<b>1170</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>1170</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>1181</b>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION .....</b>	<b>1181</b>
<b>REVERT TO RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY .....</b>	<b>1181</b>
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS .....</b>	<b>1181</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE .....</b>	<b>1195</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY .....</b>	<b>1196</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2001****Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

-- Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford):** Merci, Mr. Delorey. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 57-14(3): Towards Literacy: A Strategy Framework**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I will, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, be tabling a draft document called "Towards Literacy: A Strategy Framework." Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize the importance of literacy. The Northwest Territories is on the brink of unprecedented economic development, which will bring jobs and business opportunities to Northerners. Northerners must have literacy skills if they are to take advantage of these opportunities.

Given the challenges of today's world, literacy is no longer defined as the basic ability to read and write. Instead, it is defined as an individual's ability to listen, speak, read, write, view, represent, compute and solve problems in one or more of the Northwest Territories official languages at levels of proficiency necessary to function in the family, the community and on the job.

Literacy levels in the Northwest Territories have increased substantially during the past decade. We should recognize and celebrate the commitment that has been shown by our youth, their parents, teachers and adults in improving literacy levels. We know that grade extensions in schools within our communities, program delivery by Aurora College and the work of non-governmental organizations has significantly contributed to furthering the education of many Northerners.

The draft strategy I am tabling today was developed in response to a motion presented by Regular Members and passed by the Legislative Assembly last summer. It represents this government's commitment to create a network of partnerships within the Northwest Territories to enhance existing literacy programs and establish new programs to ensure that literacy training is available in all communities of the Northwest Territories. It was developed after consultation with representatives of the non-governmental organizations, education authorities, Members of the Legislative Assembly and the general public. More than 200 people have been directly consulted. We expect further input from MLAs, the Northwest Territories Literacy Council and others before we finalize the strategy.

The draft strategy framework addresses literacy throughout life, beginning in early childhood and extending through the school, adult and senior years.

The proposed framework is broad and comprehensive -- addressing the need to expand access to literacy programs in communities, correctional facilities, for the disabled and seniors. It also suggests that we can improve some of our existing activities across government and in our education system. The draft strategy links to the proposed Early Childhood Development Action Plan in the areas of early childhood learning and family literacy.

The draft strategy establishes four long-term goals:

- Increase the number of people in the Northwest Territories who are literate;
- Increase awareness of the importance of literacy in the official languages of the Northwest Territories;
- Ensure government departments work together to increase literacy levels in the Northwest Territories; and
- Develop literacy partnerships across society.

To implement the draft strategy, we have included an expenditure of \$2.4 million in our departmental budget. These monies will help to establish and enhance community-based literacy programs. The strategy will provide funding for English and aboriginal language literacy programs and extend library services to 15 communities that are currently isolated from the service. Funding has also been put in place to develop programming for seniors and for delivery of specialized services to persons with disabilities.

The delivery of these community-based programs will be realized through active partnerships with individuals, families, communities, NGOs and governments at all levels.

Mr. Speaker, there is a direct positive link between education and employment. Not only are people with more education more likely to have full-time work, they are also more likely to continue to learn and to acquire skills. Literacy contributes directly to a higher quality of life for individuals, supporting a key goal of the Legislative Assembly's vision document Towards a Better Tomorrow: healthy, educated Northerners making responsible, personal choices for themselves and their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Minister Ootes. Déclarations de ministres. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

**Minister's Statement 58-14(3): National Aboriginal Affairs Relationships**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dwight Dorey, Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the delegation from the congress are visiting Yellowknife this week.

President Dorey's visit is a good opportunity to tell the residents of the Northwest Territories and my colleagues in this Legislature about the Government of the Northwest Territories' work with aboriginal organizations at the national level.

There are five national aboriginal organizations. In addition to the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, there are:

- The Metis National Council -- led by President Gerald Morin;
- The Native Women's Association of Canada -- led by President Darliea Dorey;
- The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada -- led by President Jose Kusugak
- and the Assembly of First Nations -- led by National Chief Matthew Coon Come.

Mr. Speaker, the premiers of the provinces and territories and the leaders of these five aboriginal organizations met in 1997 and began a process to build better working relationships. In particular, they asked the Ministers responsible for aboriginal affairs in each province and territory to develop a formal and regular process with the leaders and the responsible federal Ministers.

As a result, just over a year ago, I joined the other Ministers and the leaders in formally establishing what is called "The Ongoing Process." Through the Ongoing Process, the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers and the five leaders will meet regularly to take cooperative steps to address aboriginal issues from a national perspective.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that during the first year of the Ongoing Process, Ministers and leaders have endorsed a National Aboriginal Youth Strategy that provides guidelines for all jurisdictions and organizations to use in developing programs and policies that affect aboriginal youth. A national conference is being planned to receive and incorporate input from youth about this report.

Ministers and leaders also directed our officials to jointly draft a report and recommendations on strengthening aboriginal participation in the economy. This report is nearing completion and will be reviewed during our next meeting. It is intended that the recommendations we endorse will provide guidance to the individual governments and organizations, as well as set out some concrete actions to be taken by the Ministers and leaders jointly.

Perhaps most importantly, the Ongoing Process has resulted in a dialogue between aboriginal affairs Ministers, the five leaders and the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for social policy renewal. This aspect of our work -- referred to as the Tripartite Process -- reflects our commitment to meet the demands of the aboriginal leaders for their people to be more involved in national social policy deliberations and implementation of the Social Union Framework Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories' role in these relationships with the national aboriginal organizations is an important one. In the Northwest Territories, we are breaking new ground in terms of setting aboriginal rights and balancing the roles and responsibilities of public government and self-government. Over the year, our unique society and population have learned lessons that are valuable to pass on to our neighbours. I want to stress that we will continue to work with all parties and play an active role in this national dialogue.

In undertaking our work with the national aboriginal organizations, I have involved the affiliated Dene, Metis and Inuvialuit territorial organizations as part of the Northwest Territories team, and we will continue to do so. In addition, through our relationship with the Northwest Territories aboriginal governments in the Intergovernmental Forum process, I have the opportunity to report this work and to hear the views of the aboriginal leaders in the Northwest Territories.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the next Ongoing Process meeting of Ministers and leaders will be in Winnipeg during May and I will be able to update the Members and the public afterwards on the progress we make. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Minister Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Member's Statement on Bulk Exports of Northwest Territories Water**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From time to time, it is the role of the Members of the Legislative Assembly to focus on issues of very broad concern. They may not be topical, but they are issues we should all pay attention to. Today, my colleagues and I will be focusing on the issue of water resources in our statements and questions.

When we look around the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, we see a land that is blessed with fresh water. Ponds, lakes and tremendous rivers, which are the transportation routes, provide sustenance and are the essence of life for our people.

To give us an idea of the magnitude of our resource, Mr. Speaker, Canada has roughly ten percent of the world's fresh water supply. The Northwest Territories has roughly ten percent of that share. When you combine Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, Mr. Speaker, it is an area of approximately 11 times the size of Prince Edward Island.

Let me give you another perspective. Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes each have approximately 1200 cubic kilometres of water. That might be expressed, Mr. Speaker, as somewhat

more than a highway of water from here to I think about Regina. One kilometre broad, and one kilometre deep. That is a lot of water, Mr. Speaker, and it has not yet gone under the bridge.

A major concern of mine, Mr. Speaker, is whether large-scale water exports must occur under the terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement. By signing this agreement, some people would argue that Canada is powerless to stop water exports or diversion projects. Others note that this is not covered under NAFTA. To deal with this concern, the federal government recently introduced amendments to the International Boundaries Water Treaty Act to prohibit the bulk removal of Canadian boundary waters. This includes the Great Lakes.

Those waters will not cross the borders but, Mr. Speaker, where does that leave the water here in the Northwest Territories? Could a tanker pull up to the Mackenzie River in the Delta, fill it up with fresh water and roll out to ports around the world? Could the railway in Hay River fill tankers with pristine Great Slave Lake water and do the same thing?

Everyone in this room is well aware of the negative effects of damming the Peace River in British Columbia and the effects that has had on water levels in the South Slave, in the Great Slave Lake regions. Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that the federal government, through the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Resources Board, has control of land and water use here in the Northwest Territories. Other provinces have changed their regulations or introduced legislation to ban bulk water exports. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that this government, as far as I can tell, has no position on the bulk export of water and that the same holds true for the Mackenzie Valley Water and Land Resources Board.

We cannot allow an ecological threat to occur by allowing the bulk export of water from the Northwest Territories. I will be raising further questions on this, Mr. Speaker, as we want to pursue a better tomorrow, we have to pursue these kinds of questions today. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

#### **Member's Statement on Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to focus on water today, but from a slightly different perspective. Last Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes indicated that 22 percent of the households in his riding are dependant on hunting and trapping as a source of income and food. The same day, the Member for Tu Nedhe brought to the attention of this House a concern over the number of abnormal, deformed fish in a lake two kilometres from the community of

Lutselk'e, Stark Lake. The people will not even feed the fish to their dogs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, water is important to the people of the North in another way. The flora and fauna of our northern ecosystems are dependent upon it for survival. Many people rely upon wildlife and fish for food and as a source of livelihood. When an inland body of water becomes so contaminated, so does the flora and fauna that use the water from that system. Mr. Speaker, when we eat ducks, caribou, moose or fish, we need to be confident that the game we are consuming is safe to eat.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is in a period of development. Oil and gas has been found in the Liard area and the Mackenzie Delta is seeing a resurgence in exploration. A third diamond mine is on the horizon. A better highway system is in the making and will open new areas of the North for resource exploration, Mr. Speaker. We are also looking at the development of our hydro potential. We are hoping to become a "have" Territory.

However, Mr. Speaker, we must also be cognizant that hand in hand with exploration and development comes the increased risk of pollution of our lands, water and air. Throughout the North, there are contaminated sites caused by development. During the review of the 1997-98 Auditor General's Report, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight was informed that there are about 451 sites with potential environmental liabilities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, do not get me wrong. I am very excited about the developments that are occurring within our borders, but we must proceed cautiously so that we do not cause irreparable harm to our fragile environment.

Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the Premier's state of the union address recently and to the Finance Minister's latest budget. I heard a lot of focus on economic development. We need to extend that same effort to the protection of our sensitive ecosystem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Certification and Training of Water Waste Handlers**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as my colleague Mr. Braden indicated, we are surrounded by water in the Northwest Territories. Good water, and we tend to take it for granted. We turn on our taps at home and just assume automatically that good water is going to come out of there, that it will be there and will always be there. As we have found with Walkerton, that is not always the case and may not always be the case.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, Canada's drinking water quality guidelines set out our national standards and includes physical, chemical and biological standards. Mr. Speaker, making sure that the water is pure, clean and drinkable is not a simple task. Right now, we are overseen by the Northwest Territories Water and Waste Association and their certification program, which trains people who handle water and sewer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the hard work they have done and the level of service they provide to us in what is basically a legislative and standards vacuum on the part of governments. Mr. Speaker, there are only two jurisdictions in Canada that have mandatory certification training for those people that work with water and waste. Once again, as we have seen with Walkerton, if it is not regulated, if there are no standards, bad things can happen.

In the Northwest Territories, we have been very lucky to date, but I think it is time for the government to step up to the plate to work with the Northwest Territories Water and Waste Association to set some basic standards that this association and all of the people handling water in the Northwest Territories communities on behalf of all of us can have a legislative framework that they can work with. One that will provide the kinds of guarantees that we need as a Territory to ensure that there is never a problem like Walkerton. We cannot continue to rely on voluntary certification. We cannot continue to rely on the fact that good water is going to come out of these taps on its own. I will be asking the Minister later today about the government's plans to take this issue to the next step; to have mandatory certification for water and waste handlers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Responsibility for Ensuring Water Quality at the Community Level**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with today's theme topic, I would like to address the issue of water quality in the North. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to state that the town of Hay River has one of the top water filtration systems in the North. I would like to commend the employees of the Town of Hay River, particularly the public works department, for their vigilance in maintaining such a high standard for the residents of Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, the water at the Hay River treatment plant is monitored daily for chlorine and other contaminants. In addition, they monitor for pH levels continuously. Water samples are taken once a week and shipped to Yellowknife for testing. In addition, Mr. Speaker, routine inspections of the water treatment plant are also conducted biannually by an environmental health officer who is employed by the Hay River Community Health Board.

Mr. Speaker, the Town of Hay River has regulations in place for the safe transportation of water to individual residents through contracted services. The standards in place are very high, and I commend Keith's Water Service for their continued diligence in maintaining such high standards. Mr. Speaker, the water trucks and filling stations are sampled periodically by the owners of the water delivery company, the Town of Hay River, and the environmental health officer.

Mr. Speaker, the Town of Hay River's responsibility for water quality ends when the water is transported to the consumer. Our local environmental health department has indicated that if a homeowner thinks their water tank is contaminated or inadequately clean, the environmental health officer samples

the water and sends it out for analysis. In addition, he makes recommendations to the homeowner to minimize potential risk.

Mr. Speaker, when members of the public bring concerns about possible water contamination in their neighbourhood to the environmental health officer, he is not able to act as these are private homes and are not governed under the Public Health Act. Mr. Speaker, the only time that the environmental health officer can intervene in a complaint about water quality is in the case of landlords or rental properties. In this instance, the landlord would have to ensure that the water is safe for his tenants. Mr. Speaker, I have a concern about who is responsible for the end users in our communities.

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

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We as a government talk about taking responsibility for the residents of our Territory to ensure a decent quality of life for them. Improving our water quality, Mr. Speaker, is just one way that we can do this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Intake Source for the Rae Water Treatment Plant**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to share a concern about the water treatment plant in Rae. As I mentioned in October when we were doing our government business plans, I have a concern about the water treatment plant in Rae being replaced in the same existing area.

Currently, the plant intake is located at Marian Lake, and from the west the water flows into Marian Lake from Rae Rock, which has been an area of uranium contamination. Marian Lake is also a heavily travelled area and used for winter roads that haul fuel and other chemicals and goods. From studies done this summer by Public Works and Services and DIAND, MACA has stated that raw water in Marian Lake meets the guidelines of Canadian drinking water quality in most areas. However, I am still waiting for the results of the water quality tests at Marian River and at Russell Lake to see which site needs the least chemical treatment. If an intake were created at the site needing the least chemicals to treat the water properly, I am sure that it would benefit the long-term health of our residents.

I have discussed this issue with the previous chief and with the hamlet of Rae-Edzo, who will be holding public meetings regarding this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause



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

#### **Member's Statement on Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as today's theme is on water and water quality, I would like to make my comments about Canada's longest river and the main source of good, clean drinking water for the many people who live in the Deh Cho region. My comments today are regarding concerns about the Deh Cho.

Mr. Speaker, over the years I have watched and listened as many people have discussed how this river could be harnessed, how it could be controlled, how we can make money off it. I have also listened as many people have complained as they view this river as an obstacle to their trips south. The residents of the Deh Cho are becoming increasingly concerned about this government's ability to act as the guardian of this river. Every year we watch as the Merv Hardie ferry busts its way through the ice like an icebreaker, something it was never designed to do. All it would take is one mistake, one misjudgment, and there could be serious ecological consequences.

We are also concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the ice crossing at Fort Providence. Everyone here recalls the near disaster that occurred last year when a fuel tanker truck went through the ice bridge before it was ready. We got lucky that time, Mr. Speaker, but will we be as lucky the next time? Who can say? What would happen should a truck loaded with dangerous chemicals fall through the ice? Is there a disaster plan in place to deal with that?

We are all very concerned because downstream from the ferry and ice crossing is the water intake for the community of Fort Providence.

When the tanker truck went through the ice last winter, I questioned the Minister of Transportation on what preventive measures the department had in place to ensure that this type of incident would not occur again. I questioned the Minister on the need for an increased highway patrol presence to ensure that large trucks do not use the crossing before it was ready to handle the weight. Mr. Speaker, I have not noticed any increase in the highway patrol presence around the community of Fort Providence or the ice crossing.

I do know, Mr. Speaker, that the demands placed on the ice crossing by the needs of the mining industry has meant that the ice crossing was open to heavy traffic as soon as the ice had reached its minimum thickness for full loads. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there is a need for a permanent bridge.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear!

**MR. MCLEOD:** In the meantime, it is imperative that the Department of Transportation does everything it can to ensure that the ferry and ice crossing are run as safely and as environmentally friendly as possible. There is no room for error.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Transportation questions during question period. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Concerns Regarding the Chlorination of Drinking Water**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tu Nedhe means Great Slave Lake, a great lake. Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about chlorination of drinking water as an accepted form of purifying water in Canada.

However, there may be ways to improve upon this method. It is hard to imagine that when we drink water or go swimming in a chlorinated pool over a long period of time that we might be taking a risk. A by-product of chlorinated water, THMs or trihalomethanes, have been shown to increase the risk of bladder and rectal cancer after long-term consumption. THMs are formed when chlorine reacts with natural organic materials in water. The organic material comes from decaying vegetation, Mr. Speaker.

THMs are believed to be associated with 5,000 new cases of bladder cancer and 8,000 new cases of rectal cancer every year in the United States, Mr. Speaker. Long-term drinking and bathing in chlorinated water likely causes a 34 percent increase in bladder and colon cancer.

The risk increases with the length of exposure and the amount of disinfection by-products in the water. Kidney dialysis patients are told to take special precautions.

Some Canadian municipalities have modified their water treatment practices or are considering it to reduce THM levels. Unfortunately, removing chlorine from drinking water may not necessarily remove the THM either. However, before any changes or improvements are made, each treatment facility must be evaluated. Any new practices cannot compromise the effectiveness of disinfection.

In the Northwest Territories, the amount of chlorine in treated water delivered to people's homes is the same in all communities; it is 0.2 parts per million. Water that is not delivered varies from community to community for chlorine treatment.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we need better staff training, continuity and upgrading of water treatment plants in the Northwest Territories. We should be looking at properly installed filters for water taps. In order to protect the public, Health Canada advocates continuing the practice of disinfecting drinking water. It also supports reducing THM levels. Health Canada is working with the provinces to assist the need to reduce the THM levels. As our population grows into the next century, there will be more stress placed on our natural resources and drinking water.

It is important that we ensure that our drinking supplies continue to be safe for the public. There are a couple of things that could be done to eliminate THMs. By leaving drinking

water in the freezer or fridge overnight eliminates this, but that is not practiced too often. Using charcoal filters also helps. I think the government should look at providing these instructions to people in the Northwest Territories or set up a program to have filters put on tap waters for the bathtubs and the drinking water for the consumption and use of water in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Taking Steps to Protect our Water Resources**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, water pollution has a wide-ranging impact on our lives, the health and well-being of the people we serve and the economy of Canada. I know from the personal experience I have had dealing with my home community of Fort McPherson, the whole area of contamination is on our doorstep. Talking about THMs and also the community of Aklavik, where there is a doctor's request for a total review and testing of all residents of Aklavik to look at H. pylori, which is a carcinogen which is in the water system of that community.

Mr. Speaker, I just received a letter from the Inuvik Regional Health Board to the Department of Public Works stating that the department is not complying or has received a non-compliance order from the Department of Health with regard to the Tsiigehtchic water supply. Yet, Mr. Speaker, these toxins come through the air, flow through our water systems and also are a major cost and effect the well-being of our people.

With regard to the cancers and other diseases, many of the toxins are affecting the well-being and lives of the people that we serve. Knowingly, in most cases, it is much too late, people have already died. While Northerners are affected by the quality of our drinking water, the most important aspect is to ensure that the ineffectiveness of managing our water resources and to ensuring that we do all that we can to protect the water commodity and the resources we have.

The greatest people who are affected by this are the children and our elderly. Most of all, the effects it has on the community as a whole knowing that this has a long-term impact on the community and knowing what that is going to be.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to take more responsibility to clean our drinking water and to ensure that our water resources are protected and that we are living up to the standards and conditions that we set for ourselves, the Canadian drinking guidelines that we have. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated, this government has to do more to ensure the well-being of the people in the Northwest Territories. Yet, Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we have all seen the effects of Walkerton, the effect of THMs on the residents that I serve in Fort McPherson

and the doctor's request for tests on people in Aklavik. The other community in my riding is now having effects. We are not immune to this problem.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the federal government has announced additional funds last June, \$2.65 million for infrastructure in Canada over the next six years. With that, I would like to know exactly how much of that money is going to be going to the Government of the Northwest Territories and exactly what is this government going to do to improve our water crisis in the North. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Déclaration de député. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

#### **Member's Statement on Upgrades to Yellowknife Water and Sewer Infrastructure**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on January 12<sup>th</sup>, I went on a tour of the Yellowknife water and sewer system with a number of other MLAs. I must say I certainly noticed a lot of changes since I first took the same tour nearly 25 years ago in 1976. Mr. Speaker, given the heightened concern since Walkerton about municipal water systems, I was relieved to observe the number of checks on the water quality. I was also impressed with the concern and professionalism displayed by the system operators. Mr. Speaker, based on what I saw and heard, I am confident of the safety of the Yellowknife water system. However, Mr. Speaker, the sewer system is a somewhat different story, and not just because the perfume is considerably more offensive than the odour of chlorine on the water side.

We have observed how the system works, but I have also seen the condition of some of the sewer pipes. The old sewer pipes are made of corrugated steel, which corrodes quite badly. There are many gaping holes and in some places whole sections of pipe have corroded away. That means, Mr. Speaker, there is actually no pipe. The sewage is just flowing through the hole that the pipe used to be in. Obviously, this creates a dangerous situation and is a potential threat to public health.

Mr. Speaker, it also means that more money has to be directed towards maintenance, as the ground eventually caves in and blocks the flow of sewage. The City of Yellowknife has a plan in place and has been addressing these problems for ten years. The plan requires an average expenditure of \$3.7 million per year for the next 11 years to make the necessary upgrades to the water and sewage system.

Mr. Speaker, currently the City of Yellowknife is in a healthy fiscal position, but these expenditures place a huge burden on our residents. To date, the Government of the Northwest Territories, through MACA, has provided significant assistance. I noticed in this year's budget, or the proposed budget for 2001-2002, the City of Yellowknife has been allocated \$500,000 in infrastructure contributions from MACA to go towards sewer line replacement.

Mr. Speaker, extraordinary funding used to be like a supplementary block funding agreement. The term stretched over several years. Now applications to the fund must be made

year by year. This leads to uncertainty and causes problems with planning. Mr. Speaker, we have heard from nearly every NGO receiving funds from this government that they need to get agreements for long-term funding. Municipalities also need to see long-term agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Recent Activities on Behalf of Constituents**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to make sure that I do not get ruled out of order for talking on too many subject areas in my Member's statement today, I would like to title my statement as an "Accountability Report to my Constituents" and use this opportunity to inform them about what I have been doing on their behalf over the last 24 hours.

You will see that I am doing this because I have learned that a good many people out there watch us on TV, including my mother, and I would not want anyone to think that I do not think the topic of water is unimportant. It is just that this is my fancy way of explaining why I do not have a state-of-the-art speech written on water and arsenic that I was hoping to write.

So before I go into my account, I would like to thank the Members for bringing this important issue to the fore, especially my colleagues from Yellowknife. I would also like to state that I have raised these issues in the House previously.

Just to get to my statement, I would just like to report to my constituents that I attended a Social Programs Committee meeting where we discussed a literacy strategy with the literacy council. I hope I am not saying anything out of school here.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to drop in at the Dene Nation National Assembly for a couple of hours to listen to the debates that were going on, which I found very informative and helpful. They were making great progress while I was there and united positions seemed to be building there.

At noon today, I attended a meeting of the Special Committee on the Sunset Clause, the result of which I hope to be reporting to the House soon. Still, we have a lot of meetings going around the clock and I managed to miss a meeting at lunch time because I could not be in two places at once. I just want to make sure that my constituents do not think that I am falling asleep on my job and not caring about the water issue.

Once again, I would like to thank the Members for bringing this issue forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee, for that state of Range Lake statement. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

#### **Member's Statement on the Importance of Being Literate**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to make a statement on literacy and the need to be

able to communicate properly in any language. In days gone by, many people were not given the opportunity to learn to read and write and therefore had to make do with whatever means were available at the time to get their message across. This applied to whatever form of business you were in, be it a trapper or a trader.

Let me give you an example in story form. In the last century, 1920 to 1940, when trapping was in its full glory, you could get \$60 for a white fox and up to \$2,000 for a silver fox. There were many traders operating in the western and central Arctic, including what were known as free traders.

The free traders operated as agents for the larger companies such as The Bay and CanAlaska Trading Company. Some were full-blood Inuit, others were of mixed blood. One such aboriginal free trader operated a store with the help of a white trapper. Although the white trapper was literate, the Inuit was not. Therefore, it fell on the white trapper to place the annual sealift order for more supplies.

One year, the trapper was not available to do this, but he left instructions with the Inuit as to how to place the order. His advice was to simply copy the writing off the boxes of goods and write down the quantity needed. When the order was received by the supplier, in this case CanAlaska Trading Company, among other things ordered were:

- Four "keep lid down while playing";
- Forty-eight cases, "this side up"; and
- Twenty cases of "handle with care".

Mr. Speaker, one might well ask if the supplier was ever able to fill the order. I am told the supplier, who was based in San Francisco, was able to determine the order for the four items labelled "keep lid down while playing" were, in fact, four RCA hand-wound gramophones. This order was a sure sign that the local economy was booming, as these were high-tech electronic gadgets of the day that only the well-to-do could afford.

However, to this day...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Steen, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There being no nays. Mr. Steen, you may conclude your very interesting statement.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, to this day they are still scratching their heads and wondering what in the world our Inuit trader wanted in the 48 cases of "this side up" and the 20 cases of "handle with care." Mr. Speaker, we may try to make do, but no doubt, it pays to be literate. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. My previous comment was, because I was there, I know of what he speaks. It took me forever to learn that "klim" was milk spelt backwards. Item 3,

Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a great deal of pleasure for me to introduce a very fine group of people in the gallery today. They are year one students of the Teacher Education Program at Aurora College. I am very proud to be able to introduce them, as well as their teacher, Doreen Baptiste. Please help me welcome them.

-- Applause

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

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Tim Butler, who is a member of the Workers' Compensation Board and also with BHP Mines. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a frequent visitor to our Assembly, the president of the Union of Northern Workers, Georgina Rolt-Kaiser.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Welcome all. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to recognize Mr. Lee Selleck who is with the press corps here. I have to make sure I keep on Lee's good side in order to get some free publicity.

-- Laughter

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

#### ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement today, I am concerned that I cannot ascertain whether this government has a position on the bulk export of water. My question is for the Premier. Can he advise the Assembly if this government does indeed have a position on the bulk export of water? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is the lead on the issue of water, so all questions will be referred to him.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

##### Return to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, over the last few years, the Canadian Council of Ministers for the Environment have been working on negotiating a bulk water agreement which would prohibit the sale of bulk water. The Government of the Northwest Territories has taken the position of support to not allow bulk water export from the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering, where is this position in terms of policy or documentation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

##### Further Return to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the government does not have a written policy on bulk water. There are many other issues as well that we have a position on where we do not yet have policies or written documentation. Clearly at the Council of Ministers of Environment nationally, and meeting with our territorial and provincial colleagues to make very clear that we are not in support of exporting bulk water. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Supplementary to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to emphasize that this is an issue that is going to have a growing prominence as water and climate conditions change. I would like to ask the Minister when he would pursue developing a formal policy on the bulk export of water? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are negotiating, along with the other jurisdictions in Canada, an agreement to prohibit the export of bulk water. We know water flows across boundaries, so it is necessary to have the support of all the jurisdictions that have water within our basins. We are doing that at the Council of Ministers of Environment level. We are also doing it through the Mackenzie River Basin Trans-boundary Waters Master Agreement.

Through that agreement, we are looking at entering into bilateral agreements with the neighbouring jurisdictions. I cannot give a specific timeline of when we would have either the bilateral agreements in place or the Council of Ministers of Environment agreement in place, but it is a matter that we are continually working on. I expect that within a matter of months or probably within the next couple of years there will be much progress on this. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that we are working on that and that we are doing so with our neighbours. I would like to ask the Minister if there will be any form of public consultation or opportunity for people to have input into this very critical piece of policy. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return to Question 358-14(3): Bulk Export of Northwest Territories Water**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I think there is ongoing consultation on a number of fronts with people with regard to water quality. On the agreement we are working on with the Council of Ministers of Environment, that one has been underway for some time. We will continue as we move along with it to keep the Members apprised of progress that is being made.

With regard to the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement, there is participation from non-government, from the public, on that one as well. So there is a mechanism for consultation. Thank you.

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

**Question 359-14(3): Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for Mr. Handley, the Minister responsible for wildlife. In my Member's statement, I mentioned I am concerned over the apparent lack of a coordinated action for monitoring the effects of development on the environment, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if this government has a territory-wide plan for monitoring the effects of development on our environment? Not

one that just looks at individual pockets of development, but a complete overall view of the effect of all pockets? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Return to Question 359-14(3): Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for monitoring water quality in the Northwest Territories resides with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. It is their responsibility through the Northwest Territories Waters Act to provide for conservation, for development and utilization of waters in the Northwest Territories for monitoring what is happening as a result of development. We as a government participate in it and we certainly lobby with our views, but because it is not our area of responsibility, we do not have an overall plan, except to say that we do recognize the need to maintain the integrity of our water system, to maintain the quality of it and to ensure that development does not have negative effects.

Having said that, we do participate and we cost share in programs like the West Kitikmeot/Slave Study project, which looks at water quality in a specific region. We will continue to do that in all areas where there is development. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 359-14(3): Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand that inland waters are the responsibility of the federal government, but I am wondering if our government is ensuring that the federal government has adequate staff and resources to effectively monitor the consequences of this development.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return to Question 359-14(3): Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we certainly continue to ensure that the government understands our concerns for maintaining good quality water in the North. We participate on a number of fronts, as I mentioned the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement that we participate in. We participate in the various monitoring activities that are going on with DIAND, with DFO, with Environment. We are partners in the West Kitikmeot Slave Study project and numerous other ones. So we continually make it known to the federal government through those cooperative ventures, as well as through letters and meetings, what our views are. Our view is basically good quality water and certainly supportive of responsible development at the same time. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 359-14(3): Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly we do want what is best for Northerners. I am sure we continue to lobby the federal government to make sure that they are adequately protecting our water and wildlife, but I am wondering if this Minister has placed it high on the agenda to get the authority for water developed to this level of government. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return to Question 359-14(3): Monitoring the Effects of Development on the Environment**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, certainly the devolution of land and water is pretty key in any discussions we have with the federal government on the whole issue of devolution. Without responsibility of land and water being transferred to this government, then we really do not have any responsibility for resources and resource revenue sharing and so on. So that is pretty basic to any negotiations we have on devolution. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, water is as essential for life as the air that we breathe. Yet as we have come to realize in Walkerton, when it comes to how it is handled and who handles it, it is quite unregulated.

Mr. Speaker, the question I have to the Minister is while we have regulation and standards for child welfare workers...if you want to be a child welfare worker, you have to have a certain amount of training, a certain amount of certification. If you want to drive a truck, you have to pass a test and get certified because there are standards or a lawyer or an SAO.

Yet for those people who provide the critical service of making sure we have good, safe, clean drinking water, we rely entirely on the voluntary Northern Territories Water and Waste Association's voluntary certification program. My question for the Minister of MACA is are there any plans, given the tragedy of Walkerton, for this government to take a look at coming up and working with the Northern Territories Water and Waste Association to come up with a mandatory training package for people working in the communities who handle water and sewer? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Return to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I am pleased to provide the Member with the information that MACA does provide funding annually to the Northwest Territories Water and Waste Association. They in turn conduct

one or two operating training certification sessions a year. From the information I have, it tells me that this will be continued. Hopefully we will someday have a certification program for all waste water operators across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Supplementary to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the same information as the Minister, that yes we do have a certification program, but it is voluntary. My question to the Minister is, given how critical good, clean drinking water is to sustaining life in our communities, for all people, and given the tragedy of Walkerton, will the Minister indicate whether Municipal and Community Affairs is looking at making this not just a voluntary certification program but a requirement, a mandatory program for all people working with water and sewer? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, in conjunction with Public Works and Services, we are looking at a certification program that would require all operators in every community across the Northwest Territories to take some formal training to reduce the high risk of contamination of the water system. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Monsieur Allen. Questions supplementaire, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Supplementary to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to hear that news. I am not quite clear though, the Minister said certification. He did not indicate whether it was voluntary or mandatory. Could the Minister as well indicate what time lines we are looking at to have that certification program in place? Will it be the same as the one currently offered by the Northern Territories Water and Waste Association, but just made mandatory? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this is a coordinated effort between Public Works and Services, Health and Social Services and our department. Yes, we will undertake to ensure that perhaps in light of all the problems that have been raised across the country in terms of water quality, we will ensure that becomes a priority of our committee and to develop some type of certification program at that level. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Allen. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Supplementary to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to try to nail the Minister's feet to the floor more on this particular issue. He is pretty shifty here, he must have been a hockey player, not a skier.

**MR. SPEAKER:** What is your question, Mr. Miltenberger?

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** My question to the Minister of MACA is, could he give a time line when he anticipates that he hopes to do this laudable bill that I fully support? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 360-14(3): Certification and Training of Water and Waste Handlers**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not as shifty as he thinks I am...

-- Laughter

...but we are certainly complying with the occupational standards. In terms of the question, I am equally committed to trying to move this as fast as we can on the committee comprising members of Health and Social Services, Public Works and Services, and my department. We will move as fast as we can to make sure that in the next few weeks, or a month or so, we will be able to respond with some more concrete answers to that question. Thank you.

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

**Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of MACA as well. Could the Minister inform us as to whether there are any territorial regulations in effect that apply to every community when it comes to the installation of private home water systems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Return to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a good question, and I am sure that there are standards I am aware of, adopted through the Housing Corporation. We have standards that are required to be met for the installation of water systems. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister know if there are any repercussions that could come to local governments from individual homeowners if their water has become contaminated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of issues that are raised across various communities in the Northwest Territories with regard to the question. From what I understand, there was a report done in September 2000 that identified a number of community water supply and treatment systems that need to be addressed. I am not up to date on any further information in that respect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister inform us as to whether his department works with local governments to educate the people regarding the importance of regular cleaning of their storage tanks and water systems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do on an ongoing basis try to help them educate the residents across the Territories. In some cases, we have even committed funds to help them understand the need to improve their water quality systems in the community, as well as in the homes. We are also working jointly with Health and Social Services to ensure that the water is safe and good for drinking. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I find out, is there a set of guidelines put out by the department or by Health and Social Services or by municipal governments that deal with how to clean and how to install proper water systems? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

### **Further Return to Question 361-14(3): Installation of Home Water Systems**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, at this point I do not believe we have any guidelines, but we do have some methods by which we assist the communities to deal with specific problems on a specific basis. Thank you.

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

### **Question 362-14(3): Intake Source for the Rae Water Treatment Plant**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Roger Allen. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, I am waiting for results of the water quality tests on Russell Lake and Marian River.

Initially, I requested these tests last summer. In November, I received word from MACA that Public Works had not been able to do the tests because of either bad weather or an urgent workload. The tests will tell us which side requires the least chemicals to treat the water properly. I would like to know what criteria the department uses to decide where the water intake for a water plant will be. Is it the quality of water or the budget? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

### **Return to Question 362-14(3): Intake Source for the Rae Water Treatment Plant**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question the Member raised...we do base our decision on the quality of water and not the cost. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

### **Supplementary to Question 362-14(3): Intake Source for the Rae Water Treatment Plant**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that Northerners can be proud of in general is our access to clean water. I would like to ask the Minister if he knows who decides what chemicals are added to the water in each community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

### **Further Return to Question 362-14(3): Intake Source for the Rae Water Treatment Plant**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am no expert in that profession, and I believe it falls under some other guidelines other than what MACA...we are basically the funders of the water systems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, I have concerns regarding the ferry and ice crossings at Fort Providence, especially in light of what happened last year with the truck going through the ice. I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation what steps has he taken to ensure that this does not happen again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, M. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

### **Return to Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has the same concerns as the Member. We do not want to see this type of situation again. The department has increased the signage at the approaches to the crossing. They have also increased the lighting at the south side of the crossing, and they have improved the turnaround in case truckers take the wrong road.

At the time that the Member mentions, which seems to be a quite critical time when we first open the crossing, we increased patrols and we have also been using radar to track the truckers to ensure they stay within speed limits going across the crossing.

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

### **Supplementary to Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that those steps were taken by the Minister. I would also like to ask the Minister, I am sure that he is aware that the water intake at Fort Providence is approximately eight miles downstream from the ice bridge and six miles from the ferry crossing, what steps has Transportation taken to ensure that the water quality is up to par? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

### **Return to Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what falls under Transportation here is when we are building the approaches for the ferries, we would have to take certain measures to assure that we are not interfering with the quality of the water.

We also patrol the ice road to make sure there is no one putting waste or making spills at the crossings. We do keep the quality of the water for the community just below the ferry crossing and ice road crossings in mind, as to assure that we do not have any pollution on our routes. Thank you.



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

**Supplementary to Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, staff from the Department of Transportation have stated in the news that the ferry is in very good shape and can last another 30 or 40 years. Every year we see the ferry fall through the ice, and it is my understanding that the bottom is replaced every year due to the damage that is caused by acting as an ice breaker. My question to the Minister is how thick can the ice be so that the ferry can continue to break through it?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. You stray a little bit from water quality here to strengths of a ship's bottom, but I will allow the Minister to answer that if he chooses. Mr. McLeod, I would ask if you could just clarify that a little bit for the Chair, please.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is regarding contamination of the river due to the crossings. I would like to ask what is the maximum thickness that the Merv Hardie can plough through? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I would like to be able to respond to the Member, I will have to take that question as notice. I do not have that information.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

**Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is planning to train municipal workers who deliver water and pump sewage from our homes through a certification program. In this time of economic boom, multinational companies such as BHP, which Mr. Butler up there reminded me of, are paying higher wages than the municipalities can. Heavy equipment operators are in demand. Our water truck drivers are heavy equipment operators and they are going where the higher salary is. Mr. Speaker, it has become essential for these positions to be in the community.

What I would like to know is, would the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs be willing to fund municipalities to increase the level of pay for these workers to deliver all essential services in the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Return to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in most communities across the Northwest Territories, water and sewer is delivered and pumped out by private operators. They set their own rates. Where the municipalities themselves provide that level of service, then the municipalities are funded to pay the drivers and operators of that equipment. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is going to invest money into training through a certification program. These guys get paid \$10 per hour. BHP is willing to pay \$30 per hour. The money is being spent by the department to train people for BHP. Again I ask, would Municipal and Community Affairs look at increasing funding to municipalities so they can pay people at a competitive wage? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I can answer the question in the context of an earlier question to me in terms of certification, I would bring this forward and have it discussed further with the department to assure the Member that we are going to certify these workers through the Northern Territories Water and Waste Association, then we should have an employee payment structure attached to that as well. We will revisit that very shortly in the context of how we certify those workers. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to hear. There will be a lot of heavy equipment operators at the mine site with certification on how to deal with chlorine at water treatment plants.

The other question I have for the Minister is would the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs look at modifying water treatment plants in the Northwest Territories communities to reduce THM levels in our homes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, again in cooperation with Health and Social Services, we are continually

dealing with each community on an individual basis as those issues arise. It is an ongoing practice with MACA. As we hear back from all levels of governments, specifically municipal governments, when they raise a concern, we immediately approach them to try to rectify the problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, in the United States, between 700 and 800 cases of colon cancer have been identified due to chlorine which, if mixed with vegetation, becomes THMs. It exists, Mr. Speaker.

Will MACA commit to working with Health and Social Services to see what can be done to properly install water filters in northern homes, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

#### **Further Return to Question 364-14(3): Essential Services in Municipalities**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we indicated earlier in question period that we will work in coordination with Health and Social Services to assure that we do have safe and good quality drinking water. If that means issuing Brita filters as we have done in the past with Fort McPherson, we will deal with that on an individual basis with other communities that may need it. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Governor General, in her Speech from the Throne on January 30 of this year, made several commitments on behalf of the federal government concerning clean water. They include the following:

The federal government will:

1. Fulfill their direct responsibility for water, including the safety of the water supply on reserves and federal lands.
2. Commit to developing stronger national guidelines for water quality through enhancement of scientific research in collaboration with partners.
3. Strengthen the role of the National Water Research Institute of Canada.
4. Find improvements in municipal water and waste water systems through the federal, provincial and municipal infrastructure Canadian programs.

5. Invest in research and development, and advance the information systems enabling better land use and the protection of both surface waters and ground water supplies from the impact of industrial and agriculture operations...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Krutko, may I have a question? Mr. Krutko.

#### **Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question is to the Premier. When can we receive an update from this government's contributions to the federal government's initiatives on clean water, especially in relation to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi. The Premier can exercise his prerogative to ask any other Ministers to respond, but I have to hear it. Mr. Premier.

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the first question, I indicated for all matters dealing with questions regarding water, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is the lead Minister and will be responding to the questions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. The Chair hears a lot of questions and in this case, it was directed to the Premier. I just wanted you to instruct the Chair. In this case, it will be directed to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

#### **Return to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, through the Council of Ministers of Environment, there are efforts to deal with water issues, one of them being bulk water. Since it is very difficult to get a consensus among all jurisdictions across Canada, we have not made final agreements on that front. Since that time, during the last year, the federal government has started what they refer to as a water forum. That is a forum for all political jurisdictions to discuss various water issues. Some of them are certainly in the area that Mr. Krutko has referred to on national water guidelines and research, safety and so on. All of those are being discussed within that forum. The forum had one meeting last year. There is a second meeting scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>. The Government of the Northwest Territories will continue to participate in the water forums along with other jurisdictions. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the provinces and territories are expected to receive an additional \$2.65 billion over the next six years as part of the infrastructure Canada program. Of that, \$600 million is allocated towards the National Highway Strategy. How much money will be directed

to the Northwest Territories so that we can develop our infrastructure?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

#### **Further Return to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I do not recall the exact amount that would be allocated to the Northwest Territories under the infrastructure program. That one is separate from the transportation program, but I believe the number is somewhere between \$3 million and \$4 million over the next two years. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the healthy environment -- especially since it is an essential part of a stable economy, the quality of life for Northerners -- what efforts has this government made in the life of this Assembly so far towards strengthening laws, research efforts and other measures to ensure that the safe drinking water and the water and sewage treatment is up to date and is operational?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

#### **Further Return to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as I had indicated earlier, our responsibility in water is very limited. We do have some responsibilities that are held by our Department of Health and Social Services and some responsibilities at the municipal level by our Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. So the actions we have taken have largely been through those two departments. I think we have done some good work in communities like Fort McPherson.

The overall responsibility for our water rests largely with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, but there is also some responsibility with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Through Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, we do continue to work with those federal agencies in carrying out their responsibilities. We also are fairly active in bringing matters to their attention and urging them to get on with needed research and so on. We participate in a Northern River Basins Study Board. We are a party on the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Agreement. We are trying to work out bilateral agreements, so we have been very active in an area where we have very limited responsibility and we will continue to be active because we appreciate the importance of good quality water to our residents. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the national drinking water report card that jurisdictions were evaluated on as to whether or not they required people and agencies, what changes have been done to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water is in place by training and certifying these individuals? I would like to ask the Minister, can this government provide a copy of the certification policies and prove that our drinking water meets the standards set by the national guidelines? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

#### **Further Return to Question 365-14(3): Update on Clean Water Initiatives**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, that question is one that is certainly getting outside of my jurisdiction as Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and I have to take it as notice. It is either MACA or Health, but I am not certain. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. That question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

#### **Question 366-14(3): Municipal Funding Formulas**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, stable long-term funding arrangements are important to all agencies. As I pointed out in my statement today, the City of Yellowknife faces huge ongoing expenditures for more than ten years for water and sewer replacement. However, with the recent change in the funding formulas, the city must apply for their extraordinary sewer replacement funding under the infrastructure projects program on an annual basis. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister consider making longer term commitments under this program?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

#### **Return to Question 366-14(3): Municipal Funding Formulas**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the new government funding policy that will be considered by Cabinet in the spring commits the Minister to distribute a three-year projection on funding levels at the time the business plan is prepared by MACA. We understand this does not go nearly as far as the NWTAM wants, but again we really depend on our federal funding so we cannot make any further commitment. I have told the committees that I will be working continuously with the municipalities to see if we can give them greater certainty as to what level of funding they will be receiving. In this case, to the City of Yellowknife, it is probably a 14-month window. Thank you.

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

**Question 367-14(3): Standards for Water and Sewer Replacement**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. It is in the area of standards that are put in place when communities replace water and sewer systems. I would like to know if the Minister could inform us who sets the standards for capital replacement? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Return to Question 367-14(3): Standards for Water and Sewer Replacement**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the tax-based municipalities are expected to fully fund their own infrastructure projects, with the exception of water and sewer. From that perspective, Mr. Speaker, the department will then fund up to 50 percent of that project. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

**Supplementary to Question 367-14(3): Standards for Water and Sewer Replacement**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform us as to the standards if they are to replace that...for example, for a section of sewer or water pipe, what is the level of standard that is set and who would set that? I am more interested in who would set that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return to Question 367-14(3): Standards for Water and Sewer Replacement**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the exact technical details to that question. I will take that as notice and respond back to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Questions orales. Les députés de Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is directed to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. It is in regard to the recently announced Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative in the Premier's address to the people, whereby the government has indicated that jobs will be guaranteed for northern graduates out of nursing and teaching programs. I have been asked by a member of the public about the reasons as to why the government has been prompted to announce and come up with this sort of initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Water, water everywhere...the ancient mariner. Thank you.

With regard to the Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative, the government sees an opportunity here for its people. We need teachers. We need nurses. We need other priority occupations. We also need to create work for our Northerners. We are very proud in the case of the teachers, we are very proud of the students that we have and very proud of the graduates we have. They are ranking very high. We feel that there is an opportunity here to fill the positions with Northerners. We have a very concerted program, a very good program through the college system. Some of those people are with us today along with their instructor. We feel this will give them an opportunity.

You might say why, well, because we do need teachers on an ongoing basis. It will stop some of the turnover. Our teachers are individuals who will stay in the North. They are familiar with the northern conditions and northern situations. In some cases, they will speak aboriginal languages, so they are sensitive to the aboriginal and cultural issues that are out there.

All around, Mr. Speaker, I think this just makes common sense. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, going by the answer given by the Minister, I am assuming that I can be certain that the TEP program at Aurora College, and I believe it is a three-year program, that graduates of that program will be guaranteed employment in their chosen profession as well as the northern graduates from teaching schools south of the border. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct. The program has been extended to a three-year program. After that, we require teachers to obtain their degree from a university. That is within a five-year period. There can be extenuating circumstances under which extensions can be provided. It is our intent to ensure that there is employment created for those graduates from our system as well as graduates who are northern people from universities and other institutions in other locations. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question has to do with the level of coordination between the government and the department and the school boards who would have to do the hiring of these teachers. I am wondering if the Minister has taken any action, or will he take any action, to coordinate with the school boards so there are vacancies available for these students to get into when they graduate from the school? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, coordination is important between the five DECs and the Yellowknife school boards. We are developing the criteria now for the priority hires, that these positions will be classified. I think we will find good cooperation amongst the school boards on this front. As we know, they are continually faced with problems in addressing the issue of hiring across the country. The issue of coordination is a very important one that we are addressing.

For the Member's information, I meet on a semi-annual basis with the chairs as well as the directors of education. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some information that it may be the case that the school boards are currently hiring for positions that may not be open until two years from now. School boards may be hiring for future years that may result in situations where there may be no vacancies for those who are enrolled in our schools now who will not be graduating until two years from now.

May I receive confirmation from the Minister that he will be in touch immediately to make sure that this policy is coordinated on a multi-year basis, so there is proper planning? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 368-14(3): Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, coordination is important in this whole area. There is a priority hire policy that we will be instituting. As we stated, we are guaranteeing employment for these individuals. The graduates of our schools are the ones we are indicating that for, plus the graduates from other schools in the south. In any event, the priority is there. The boards do know about it. They are aware of this. I am sure that we will be able to work this out quite sufficiently. Thank you.

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

**Question 369-14(3): Chemical Additives in NWT Water**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Jane Groenewegen. As my colleague for Thebacha said, to lead a healthy life, one of the needs is clean, healthy water. I would like to ask the Minister, who decides which chemicals are added to the water in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Madam Groenewegen.

**Return to Question 369-14(3): Chemical Additives in NWT Water**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the only chemicals that I am aware of that are added to our water are chlorine and perhaps in some instances, fluoride. I am not aware of any other chemicals. I do not have any more detailed information in front of me for that. I know that chlorine is one of the chemicals. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

**Supplementary to Question 369-14(3): Chemical Additives in NWT Water**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are other chemicals that are added to the water in most communities other than just chlorine. I would like to ask the Minister if she knows if there are any consultations in the communities when they add new chemicals to the water supply in the smaller communities? I know they are done in the larger communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Further Return to Question 369-14(3): Chemical Additives in NWT Water**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of new chemicals being added to the water treatment. If there were new chemicals being added and if communities were not consulted on them or made aware of them, then I would agree with the Member that there should be a process to inform residents of communities what is in their drinking water. Thank you.

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

**Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I made reference to a letter I received

that is addressed to Mr. Brian Lemax, superintendent of Public Works in Inuvik. It is from the chief environmental health officer stating that there is non-compliance of the public water supply regulations in the community of Tsiigehtchic with regard to their water supply.

With regard to the concerns, it deals with the elevated colour units in the water, organisms and also states the taste and water problem that originates from the water supply, and it also talks about magnesium in the water supply. So I would like to ask the Minister, as the department responsible for public works, what does the department do to ensure that all compliances are met and are done in a short period of time? Could the Minister of Public Works state what he does when they receive these types of notices?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

#### **Return to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Public Works did receive from the environmental health officer...they were served with a paper of non-compliance. The non-compliance was relative to Public Works coming up with some kind of a study to determine why the water was coloured as it was. Public Works feels that the elevated colour is the result of organic compounds in the water. It would require an enhancement of the water treatment system to remove the organic compounds.

The funding for the changes to the water system at Tsiigehtchic would have been the responsibility of MACA. Public Works is working with MACA to respond to the order received from the environmental health officer. The community was provided with a letter, I am told, something that Public Works received from the environmental health officer and this was dated February 13<sup>th</sup>. We supplied the community with this letter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the letter, it sets a time frame of February 28<sup>th</sup>, which I believe is almost a week away. It clearly states that a detailed methodology and identification of the source and condition of the evaluated colour units, along with the substantive correction measures that will improve the water source, that the Department of Public Works develop that before February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

I would like to ask the Minister with regard to that compliance order, there is a specific date where they have to respond or do some work to ensure that they improve the problem. I would like to ask the Minister what steps is his department doing to improve the water quality for the residents of Tsiigehtchic?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

#### **Further Return to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I just responded to the Member as to what the department is doing. The department confirmed that in order to conform to the environmental health order, it would require filtering to remove the organic compounds in the water, which is causing the colouring. It would require an investment and a change in system that would be the responsibility of MACA. Public Works is working with MACA to see how we can conform to the order of the environmental health officer. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister know exactly how long it will take for his department to conclude the feasibility study to see what can be done here?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

#### **Further Return to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I do not have information as to how long it will take the department and MACA to come up with a plan as to how to address this problem. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to time frames and how long it takes this department to react to breaks in compliance, we set regulations that we want the public to follow, yet these regulations are in place to protect the public, but the government seems to be dragging its feet on this one. I would like to know, how long does it take for a government department, such as Public Works, to respond to a regulation that they have breached?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

#### **Further Return to Question 370-14(3): Compliance with Water Quality Guidelines**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to assure the Member that Public Works does take the situation seriously. Although the report I have does not suggest this is actually a critical health problem, the discolouring, it just does not meet the standards set by Canada. So in order to meet the standard, we would have to improve the filtering system. I have no idea at this time what that is, but I would be really happy to get back to the Member with that as soon as I get it from the department. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. The time allocated for oral questions has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

#### ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

##### **Tabled Document 106-14(3): Towards Literacy: A Strategy Framework for 2001 to 2005**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following draft document entitled Towards Literacy: A Strategy Framework for 2001 to 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

##### **Tabled Document 107-14(3): Letter to Superintendent of Public Works RE: Public Water Supply Regulations**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter to Mr. Brian Lemax, superintendent of Public Works in Inuvik with regard to non-compliance of public works regulations signed by the chief environmental health officer.

##### **Tabled Document 108-14(3): Letter to Tsiigehtchic SAO Re: Water Quality Testing**

I have another letter, Mr. Speaker. It is to the SAO in Tsiigehtchic with regard to water quality testing. It is a letter which is asking for a feasibility study which will take 12 months. They are looking for \$12,000 to do the study.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

#### ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION

##### **Motion 17-14(3): Referral of Tabled Document 48-14(3): Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report, 1999-2000 to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight**

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 26, 2001, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Tabled Document 48-14(3): Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report 1999-2000 be referred to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

And further, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight report its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly no later than October 31, 2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Mr. Allen.

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to revert to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

#### REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome my wife, Dodi, and my daughter, Vanessa. Dodi is a candidate for a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon whose convocation is on June 1<sup>st</sup>, so I invited her this afternoon. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From time to time, we are honoured when members of our family take some interest in what mom and dad do, and I would like to recognize my daughter, Carmen.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Welcome, Carmen, to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 19, Committee Reports 5-14(3), 6-14(3), 7-14(3), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Welcome to committee of the whole. The committee is considering Bill 19, Committee Reports 5-14(3), 6-14(3), and 7-14(3). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that the committee consider concurrently all of the items you listed, specifically to start with the detail on the Department of Health and Social Services under Bill 19, and continuing on to the Department of Transportation. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we will take a short break and resume with the Department of Health and Social Services.

-- Break

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I will call the committee to order. We are reviewing Bill 19. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if she will be bringing in any witnesses.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like to bring in witnesses.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have Ms. Penny Ballantyne, the deputy minister, and Mr. Warren St. Germaine, the director of financial and management services. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, you made some commitments yesterday of getting some information to the House after discussing it with your colleague. Have you had an opportunity to do so? Do you have that information available?

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the questions that was asked yesterday had to do with the specific uptake on the bursaries that were awarded in 2000-2001. I have that detailed information.

One of the other questions that was asked by Mr. Roland yesterday was a breakdown under program delivery details, to break the totals down into what was compensation and benefits and grants and contributions and other expenses. We have that information as well.

Mr. Chairman, you had a question with regard to the money that has been expended to date for the Aklavik Health Centre, and we also have that information. Mr. Chairman, some of this information is fairly lengthy and detailed, so I would like to know if it is the committee's wish that I should read this into the record. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee want it read into the record or do you want copies of the information? Copies? Madam Minister, is there a possibility of getting copies of those for the Members of the committee?

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will undertake to make copies of those three items and circulate them to the Members.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Should we take a break as a committee until we get copies of those commitments?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree to take a break while copies are being made for the committee?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Nay.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. We will have the information copied and circulated to Members. With that, we will move on. We are dealing with directorate, corporate services, budget summary. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like a bit further clarification on an issue I raised yesterday with the Minister and that is this administrative problem between Education, Culture and Employment and the department in terms of accessing information with regard to SFA and northern graduates to try to do the work the department is doing with recruitment and retention.

The Minister indicated that they were working cooperatively with Education to resolve this issue. I would just like to ask the Minister if she could specify more directly what she means by "cooperatively" and when do they anticipate they will have this particular issue resolved? It has been on the table for quite some time now. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The deputy minister, Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Members are aware, there is a great deal of work that is going on in support of the Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative. As part of that, there is a deputy's committee that is expediting that work. Part of what we were looking at is a collaborative event not just between Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment, but also involving corporate human resources, Executive, FMBS and all departments that would potentially be needing to contract northern graduates and finding a more efficient way to get that done.

That work has now really expanded to go beyond our two departments and include the others I just mentioned. So that work has begun just in that last few weeks. We are expecting that to be fast-tracked just in time for this year's arrival back of students. Thank you.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue, at least as it is referred to here in the information you gave us, refers back to the difficulty of accessing, in a relatively easy way, information with regard to student financial assistance of students who are in the system, when they are going to graduate and where they are. It ties into the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Has there been a way determined to resolve or work around this issue, other than trying to get everybody to sign some kind of prior consent?

I recollect, for example, when former Premier, Mr. Antoine, wanted to meet with all the students in Edmonton, he had difficulty getting a list of the students in Edmonton because of this access to information. That was the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

It always comes back to that access to information and SFA is locked away under confidentiality, even though we are all on the same side here on this issue. Could the Minister indicate if they have come up with a way or are they going to be able to target a way to resolve that particular roadblock? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Ms. Ballantyne indicated, this is something that is being looked



at within the deputy ministers' committee and it does require a written consent by the students that are involved. As to the progress of producing such a mechanism, I will let Ms. Ballantyne elaborate on that further. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** I thought the Minister indicated that the deputy was going to elaborate on how this was going to move.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The deputy minister, Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, this is an issue that is broader than just between Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment. It has now been brought to the attention of the deputy ministers' committee, corporate human resources and FMBS is now very much involved in expediting a resolution of this issue. I expect that we will be able to report some positive progress on it in the near future.

As of today though, we are still utilizing the written permission of students to either directly contact them or provide them with information on the programs. We all recognize that is not satisfactory in terms of getting information out to students though, so we do understand the issue the Member is raising. We are working on that in that broader committee. Thank you.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister also indicated in terms of the reporting systems that only Yellowknife is on PeopleSoft. I was wondering if the Minister could indicate what systems are the other boards using? What other systems? Is there a common financial system as well that is being used? I know PeopleSoft is supposed to do double duty. If only Yellowknife has it, what do the other boards use and how does it tie into headquarters? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The health and social services boards are using a variety of accounting systems. There are two basic software packages that they are using, one is referred to as ORMED and the second one is ACCPAC.

In terms of PeopleSoft, PeopleSoft is a payroll system. ORMED has its own payroll system attached to it as well, so they are using those accounting packages for the payroll. However, those accounting packages do not have human resource information, which is a feature that PeopleSoft has. These other two packages do not have that as they are purely financial accounting software systems. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So how are the health boards or the finance people who do not have them able to access the government financial systems? How is that information transmitted? One of the concerns is that if there is a problem with the flow of information back and forth and if they

are using different systems, that has always struck me as problematic for an organization like this with all those pieces. Could the Minister indicate how they do this?

I notice they have indicated that in terms of statistics on the human resources side, they are manually correlated at this point and sorted through. In fact, there are no statistics on affirmative action for nurses and social workers and physicians to be provided in the near future. They are manually collated, I understand. Could the Minister indicate if they have the same cumbersome relationship with the financial systems? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The boards have their own financial systems and produce financial reports and their annual financial statements, mostly financial reports for their own purposes, and also provide those statements to us. There is no electronic link of files or systems with the department's system. We are on a separate accounting system and simply account for contributions to boards as opposed to the detailed transactions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Mr. Cuff looks at all these issues, I do not have the terms of reference with me, but can the Minister refresh my memory, is that kind of systems review underway as well, or is it more of a governance people-oriented review? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, two of the items in the terms of reference are to establish an approved accountability framework that clearly defines roles, responsibilities and authorities, and to recommend an appropriate financing framework for the health and social services system as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A final question on the critical retention issue has to do with their affirmative action statistics, which are broken out but do not provide the information for nurses, social workers and such. However, it is indicated that they will be provided in the near future. Could the Minister indicate if she could quantify that date? What does that mean "in the near future?" Could she make any kind of a more formal, specific commitment? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that information has been requested from the boards and as soon as we receive that, we will provide it to the Member. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Madam Minister. We are under directorate, corporate services. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this area and specific to the information provided in the budget and also in the business plan some time ago under health promotion, there is a reference in the business plan, Mr. Chairman, to priority

areas identified, four of them: active living, healthy pregnancies, tobacco harm reduction and cessation and injury prevention. I agree with these as good areas to bring to the fore.

The plan goes on further to say that active living, tobacco and injury prevention have partnerships with other GNWT departments and are territorial in nature. I am wondering if the Minister could advise what other departments are seen to be partners in these initiatives? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mrs. Groenewegen.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a variety of partnerships and cooperation going on with respect to a number of these. I will try and go through them.

With the active living promotion, the department is working with Health Canada's health programs and promotions branch and Municipal and Community Affairs to fund and support two primary prevention projects. The projects will be developed and delivered by the NWT Parks and Recreation Association and the Northern Nutritionists Association. The other partner with the active living is Education, Culture and Employment and the boards as well.

On healthy pregnancies, we are partnering with the boards, NWT Baby Friendly Implementation Committee, Status of Women Council, NWT Native Women's Association, Maternal Caring Prenatal Committee, provinces of Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Nunavut and Yukon Territories.

On the tobacco harm and reduction and cessation, we are partnering with the boards, Canadian Public Health Association, NWT-Nunavut Chapter; Health Canada, health promotion and programs branch; Interdepartmental Tobacco Working Group, which is Health and Social Services; MACA; Finance; Workers' Compensation Board; Education, Culture and Employment; NGOs, example Tobacco Action Yellowknife; Department of Transportation; Liquor Licensing Board. Those are the partners.

On the injury prevention, we are partnering again with the boards, an interdepartmental injury prevention committee which is made up of Health and Social Services, MACA, Transportation, Housing Corporation, RWED, ECE. Other agencies may also join, the Workers' Compensation Board and the office of the chief coroner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a very extensive list and it is good to see the number of organizations involved. The business plan indicates that partnerships do exist. The money that is proposed here, \$916,000 under health promotion, is the department pooling these resources with those of other departments, or is \$916,000 the extent of the funds and everybody is working from this? How much more in terms of resources is potentially being put into these promotional areas? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there is federal funding as well which does go into these programs, and it comes to a total of \$2.7 million. Thank you.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have heard, in fact, just yesterday we had a briefing with the NWT Literacy Council and heard about the value of their participation as a non-government and volunteer organization in this. Could the Minister give us some sense of the extent to which NGOs and volunteer organizations are contributors to these strategies and to their implementation? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman, NGOs are very significant contributors in these areas. They not only help us with the strategizing and the laying out of the plan, but also in many cases in implementing it as well. We cannot stress enough about the value added by these organizations' input into these areas. Thank you.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One more question, and it is one that I think the Minister has heard from me in the past, and that is the extent of support that we give to NGOs, especially in the areas of commitments and contracts, or MOUs that are multi-year in nature. Can the department advise on any progress that it is making to really involve them on a longer term basis? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Madam Minister.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Braden raises a good point. We do recognize the importance of, when possible, offering multi-year funding agreements to organizations. It gives them the stability and the knowledge of what they are going to be doing. Also, it helps in their planning to know how long they are going to be funded for. I will ask Ms. Ballantyne if she has specific information to add to that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this area has been a challenge for us in the past when we have been going through reduction exercises in government, for example, to try to offer the NGO partners some stability in terms of their own budgets and planning. Certainly we are very much aware that they would all like to get to a place where we could be offering them three-year funding agreements so they would be able to keep staff, guarantee staff and they would not have to lay them off come March 31<sup>st</sup>. This has been a big concern for NGOs.

Of course, it is difficult for the department in all cases to be able to give commitments on funding for which we have not yet had approval in this House. We kind of get caught in a catch-22 where it is hard for us to make commitments two years in the future when we have not gone through our own budget process yet.

However, we have had some success with our federal partners in terms of the agreements we administer on their behalf, for

example, Brighter Futures, Building Healthy Communities programs. A lot of those monies go to support NGOs. In fact, a vast majority of that money goes straight to the NGO community. In that sense, in some of those agreements where we have demonstrated successful programs, we have been able, because we sign a multi-year agreement with the federal government, to offer multi-year agreements with some of those partners. Our goal is to try to expand that and make that more, particularly for the more stabilized and mature organizations that have a demonstrated track record of both good administration and really good quality of product. There are many of them out there. Thank you.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Ballantyne has certainly pushed all of the right buttons for me. The track record is very much something that you need to back up. Speaking for myself, I would certainly like to endorse the plans the department might bring forward to say that when they do have a proven and a good relationship with an organization, I would be among the first to endorse a multi-year agreement and continue that support through subsequent budget years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Directorate and corporate services. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This question is more in regard to monitoring and evaluation at the regions and community level responsibility, especially when it comes to collecting data and information. In the riding I represent, there has been a real increase in the number of cases of cancer and this latest case of tuberculosis.

They talk about a registry that is in place that is looking at diseases that are deemed to be of special importance. I am just wondering, how often is this information catalogued? Is there a public report that tells us the different circumstances if there is an increase in a specific area or a decrease? Is this information published?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes, there is a list of reportable diseases. They are identified under the Disease Registries Act. There was an obligation on behalf of all health professionals in the Northwest Territories to report all newly diagnosed cases of certain diseases or conditions which are specified and listed. Cancer is one of those diseases, along with STDs, tuberculosis and a number of other communicable diseases as well as other diseases.

That information is published on a quarterly basis through a publication in the department called EPI North. That receives a broad distribution to all health and social services professionals in the Northwest Territories as well as to the general public who are interested. I believe we do distribute it to MLAs as well. That is certainly available and provides a way to be able to track the trends in all of these different conditions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another area I would like some information on is do you, as part of the data collecting, evaluate where the diagnosis took place? Which hospital, by whom and what the diagnosis was?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. The answer to that question is yes, it is tracked by where the diagnosis is made. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of this tracking information, do you track the patient's visits, or frequency of where she came from, or how she got from one hospital to another hospital? I will use an example. In the case of Inuvik where several patients have been at the Inuvik Hospital, they were tested and took x-rays and what not. Only after they were either medevaced to Yellowknife or sent to Yellowknife, they are diagnosed in Yellowknife. Yet they were at a prior facility that this government is responsible for, yet the diagnosis was made somewhere and the patient is from a whole different region. Do you collect that type of data or information to evaluate exactly how the detection was done, by whom it was done and how long it took to detect that particular subject matter?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in answer to the first part of Mr. Krutko's question, if a patient were from a certain community or region and they were diagnosed in a different community or if they were diagnosed down south, the recording and reporting of that particular disease would still indicate where they originated from. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that could be the fault of us being able to monitor and also follow, by looking at the overall health care system, to see exactly if we are detecting these different diseases at the source or are we detecting it well after the fact? Time is a factor with a lot of these diseases. The sooner you catch it, the better off you are at preventing death. I am wondering if that could be a possible scenario that this government or this department puts in place, that you start monitoring the medical history of these patients.

Currently, they have gone to the different clinics or to the different regional health centres and then later on been diagnosed with a major illness. I am just wondering, is that something the department could look at implementing as part of the evaluation of the different services that are being provided? I have a real problem with that because of the different situations that have happened to date.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two parts to the answer. One of the contributing factors, positive factors to early diagnosis is creating awareness for our

constituents so they do take advantage of periodic checkups, annual tests where they would be indicated, just being aware of the kinds of things they can notice themselves and then follow up on. Mr. Chairman, if there are concerns about the diagnosis or the treatment a patient is receiving, there are means of taking those concerns to...I do not know who you take complaints to.

Mr. Chairman, as to where people could take complaints or concerns if they have questions about the care that they received, I am going to ask Ms. Ballantyne to elaborate on some of the avenues that a patient could take if they have those kinds of concerns.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are a number of different avenues that people can pursue if they have concerns about the quality of the care or the quickness of a diagnosis that they have received. It should be stated at the outset that some types of diseases are difficult to diagnosis and some types of cancers, for example, progress at varying rates. It is often hard to tell how long something has been there.

However, if there are concerns, the first place people can go is to lodge a complaint with the boards. All the boards do have complaint processes and procedures in place. There is also the opportunity to raise a concern with the chief medical health officer and ask that a concern be investigated. If there are specific concerns about specific practitioners, both the Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association and the Northwest Territories Medical Board of Inquiry also have provisions to review complaints by individuals about their treatment. So there are a number of different avenues of opportunity for people to have their specific cases reviewed if they have concerns. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the regions and communities, they are basically evaluated by the board regarding the monitoring and evaluation, the health and social services trends and then the effectiveness of programs and services. Who does the evaluation of the health boards themselves? Is it the department? How often do you do it? Is there a report that is filed every year on the evaluation of the boards?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Ms. Ballantyne.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the past, the department has really been more reactive than proactive in this area, reacting to concerns that have been raised by boards themselves may identify that they would like to have an audit done in a certain area or we have been reacting to a concern that is been brought to our attention.

Over the past couple of years, we have averaged probably less than a half dozen specific nursing audits, for example, a year in specific communities or in specific boards. We have been

asked to come in and do file audits in the child welfare area again with specific boards.

However, there really is not the capacity at the departmental level to undertake systematic, system-wide, regular clinical audits of all of the programs. We simply do not have an adequate number of professional staff resident in the department who would be able to undertake that on a regular basis.

That is not to say that there is not some level of review going on in all the boards. For example, most of the boards, particularly those that have hospitals, submit themselves to a national accreditation process which looks at a number of key features that a hospital would have to have to meet national accreditation standards. So there are other checks and balances in the system, but there certainly is a very minimal capacity within the department to provide the clinical oversight.

We have tried to remediate that by establishing the second ADM position, which is responsible for clinical programs. We hope to build in some improved capacity to be able to provide a higher level of clinical oversight to regional programming. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Ms. Ballantyne. Page 10, directorate and corporate services. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the Canada Health Act, the program criteria used has five points. One is public administration, one is comprehensiveness, universal, portable and accessible. The concern I have is the universal health care where the Minister stated in her opening comments that some programs were not being delivered because they did not have the people. They had the resources, but they were not spending in the area where it was allocated. How often is it that we do an assessment to ensure we are following those five criteria and making sure that we do meet the Canada Health Act standards?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Canada Health Act covers only those areas of medical and physician care that we call "insured services." It does not cover some major areas within our operations. For example, it would not be covering things like alcohol and drug programming, the child welfare function, health promotion, et cetera. It is a very old piece of legislation that is constantly in the news and being discussed for potential revision.

In terms of how we monitor to ensure that core programs are being delivered, we have identified this to the system reviewers as an area of weakness in our system. Our current accountability system does not require boards to report on either spending or results in core program delivery areas. That is an area where we aim to improve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Getting back to the question I asked earlier, the whole area of filing complaints and what not. I have had constituents who have hand delivered complaints to health board representatives to take directly to the board and they have also mailed it to the board. To date,

they have not received any response to their concerns. I would like to ask the Minister, if you are not being responded to by the board that is supposedly overseeing the project, where you were saying there was already a complaints section that is there, is there any other mechanism that could be used to ensure that those complaints are being heard and that they are being responded to?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if people take complaints to the health boards and do not get responses, they certainly have the option of referring those situations to me, which I can then work with the department to ensure that they get resolved. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In most cases, we as MLAs are the ones who get the notices. It seems to be that in order to get any action, you have to go directly to the Minister. Yet the Minister is limited because once the money is allocated, it is the responsibility of the health boards to administer and carry out those programs and services within their mandate. It seems like it is double jeopardy. On one hand, we can make an issue out of it in this House, but on the other hand, the health board does not have to abide by any recommendations or decisions made by ourselves as Members of this House.

There is no criteria or no mechanism that can force a board or force an issue on anybody that is not really legislated to have to come forth before a committee such as this and answer to what their responsibilities are. Is there a possibility of looking at some sort of a mechanism where there is more accountability put forth by health boards and the board of directors themselves, that they are answerable to the decisions that they make and also to the public that they represent in some sort of a public forum or public review process, such as we have here?

This is committee of the whole where we are able to put everything on the table, put their budgets out there and have them answer why it is they are running a deficit or why is it they are not administering a certain program. Is that something that could be looked at? The problem is becoming more apparent that we do not have the tools or we do not have the authority where we can have the ability to question them or how they are spending their money at this time.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the current review that is being undertaken right now is going to address that accountability framework issue. We are going to be looking at the adequacy and effectiveness of accountability relationships amongst various players in the system, including the relationship between boards and the public. In the interim, as I said, if there are concerns, it is good to bring them up and for us to be aware of them.

When we look at the accountability, it could result in things being changed in terms of how board members obtain positions on boards. Right now, they are all appointed. Perhaps we could look at a system similar to education councils where board members would be elected. That would

be one way of increasing their accountability to the public they serve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the review, is there a possibility of making amendments to the Northwest Territories Public Health Act to put these decisions or the tools in place through legislation where we do have the legislative authority or the responsibility to clearly spell out exactly what the responsibilities are of these boards, but also with regard to the public interest, realizing that they do have some protection through legislation, which I believe is not there right now? Will she be bringing forth legislation with regard to that particular issue?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, depending on the results of the recommendations that come forward and the decision on how to deal with those recommendations, there could very well be a requirement for a change in legislation. We will be looking at the legislative basis for appointment of board members. So yes, it is very conceivable that legislation will have to be amended to accommodate the recommendations that we adopt. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other area I have raised concerns about in the past is the whole area about child welfare and child protection. In most southern jurisdictions, they have advisory bodies, child advisory groups to ensure that children are made aware of their rights. Also, through different types of legislation, there are agencies there that ensure their rights are being protected or that their rights are being enhanced. Have you considered looking at the possibility of implementing such legislation to establish child advocacy groups in the Northwest Territories?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in response to the recommendations contained in the Child Welfare League review, we have begun work on looking at the merits of a child advocate for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister tell the House or give us a rough estimate when she can possibly bring something forth to this House?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Chairman, the \$1.2 million that we are presenting as part of this budget as a critical investment in the response to the Child Welfare League review, includes researching the feasibility of a Northwest Territories child advocate program. So when this is approved, then the work on that research would begin. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Directorate and corporate services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expenses, \$25,926,000. Page 6-10. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to pollution health activity, the whole responsibility of the public health or the chief medical health officer...I made reference earlier with questions to different Ministers that we have certain regulations with regard to protecting the public against the different types of contamination in our water system. As we know, there is probably more need for more people within that area of public health when it comes to pollution.

Are you looking at possibly enhancing that program to expand it because of the developments that are happening with the increase and number of developments in oil and gas, diamonds and also with the increased amount of diseases that you are seeing? There has been a real outbreak of different types of airborne diseases, flu and what not. Will they be expanding that department or giving them more resources so they can possibly do their job a lot better?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our indications are at this time that the monitoring processes and programming we have in place around things such as quality water supplies and environmental contaminants, we feel are quite adequate for what we have now. Certainly if there was an increase in certain types of activities which might have environmental impacts, we may have to look at increasing our activity in that area, but for now we feel what we have in place is sufficient. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I was looking more in the area of enforcement. You only have so many people who can ensure that when they issue these non-compliance orders, they are being fulfilled and they are making the improvements that they say they are. So that is more on the enforcement side of the responsibility of this office to ensure that these agencies or groups that are out there are living up to the compliance orders that are issued by the chief medical health officer.

I would like to know from the Minister exactly what are they doing to improve that these compliance orders are being lived up to?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a question that I would have to take and get back to the Member on. I do not have a great deal of detailed information on that particular area. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to programs and services, there seems to be a real increase in the cancer rates, especially between the ages of 45 and on. Is there anything that the department is doing to make it mandatory that x-ray tests be taken for that particular age group?

There seems to be a concern that they are diagnosing people after the fact or too late. If you do it as a continuous program

by taking these x-rays every year, you are able to possibly have a better survival rate if you are diagnosed with cancer in regard to having early detection.

I would like to ask the Minister, have you looked at the possibility of implementing such a program so that it is mandatory for people over the age of, say 45 to 60?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Chairman, there are certain types of screening tests which are indicated for certain types of diseases for people, particularly in certain age categories. The Member mentions specifically chest x-rays. Unless a patient was presenting certain types of symptoms or specifically requested their feeling for a need for a chest x-ray, I do not think that it would be something that would be done as a standard route. However, again creating an awareness about some of the precautions that people can take themselves, I think that most of the health centres have the ability to provide x-rays.

Certainly we want to encourage people to take some personal responsibility. If they feel that they have symptoms or a condition in which a chest xray is warranted, then we encourage them to speak to the physicians or nurses in their community and have that discussion with them. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I think that it is great that we have a mammogram machine here in Yellowknife. We were praising the effort for the people who raised the funds to get the mammogram machine, yet we have not been able to get as much usage, or people are on a waiting list to be able to access it. That is why I am wondering if there is a possible way of including that so we could make use of these different processes. The concern I raised earlier, if where we are seeing people who are at the health centre in Inuvik who are getting x-rays, tests and everything else, but they are not being diagnosed with cancer until practically they have to beg the doctor to send them to Yellowknife. Then once they get to Yellowknife, they do the same tests and then they are able to detect it. So there has to be something wrong with the detection system, or the system in Inuvik is obsolete and the one in Yellowknife is modernized.

What I am saying is that we have to find a mechanism to ensure that these tests that we are doing are being taken advantage of, and that people are knowing sooner than later, especially when it comes to dealing with cancers and different mammograms and what not. It is an issue that is out there and I think that it is important as a government that we do whatever we can to improve the system. As the system sits right now, there are some problems with it. We do have the technology. It is just a matter of making it mandatory.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The kind of specialized equipment that there is here in Yellowknife and certainly in hospitals down south, for the volume of patients that would use it in some of the smaller regions, it would not merit the costs. I think the Cat Scan machine here in Yellowknife probably was about \$1 million.

When the Member talks about x-rays, x-rays do not necessarily detect that much in terms of different types of cancers. Mammograms are something that the effectiveness of which is not 100 percent foolproof either. Again, it is really important that people be fairly self-aware in noticing things that might lead to early detection, such as changes in their own body.

The types of cancers that are on the rise in the Northwest Territories are things like lung cancer. Of course, that is strongly linked to the high rates of tobacco smoking. Also, some types of cancer are connected to changes in diet. However, cancers overall are not on the rise. Our statistics indicate that we are still well below national averages in most areas of cancer.

So the availability of equipment for screening probably is not something that is going to be...sorry, I want to correct something. Cancer rates in the Northwest Territories are rising, but do remain lower than the rest of Canada. However, the areas that we are seeing the rise in cancer is in lung cancer and cancer associated with the digestive system from changes in diet. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I do not know if it is just in my riding or in the Beaufort Delta region, it seems like it has increased in the last while, especially with this death in the region with a person having TB, if that is making a comeback. I think it is important that we do start to continue on with these tests. I think those types of issues come forth where people in this day and age are dying of TB.

The tests that are out there are probably a better mechanism of detecting it or waiting until you have an outbreak or have a major crisis on your hand, especially when TB is a disease that sits dormant for sometime before it will be activated. I think that there is still a fair...especially in my home community, from a lot of parents and students and family members of people that have had TB. I am wondering if that has been taken to account, because it is still there. It is a political issue.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Member for his comments and certainly awareness is the key. This is something that we need to talk about with people because there are certainly processes and means of easily detecting things like tuberculosis. We need to create the awareness around it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Directorate and corporate services, budget summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Operations expense, total operations expense, Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question, with the further information provided in the area of the Strategic Initiatives Fund, it says that grants and contributions goes to boards. All of that money is part of the formula and distributed to boards at the beginning of the year?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding goes to the boards based upon a predetermined formula. It goes out in response to applications for that funding, as opposed to paid out without any idea of what it is being used for. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So in fact although that money is identified as boards and communities, it is held at headquarters initially?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, this is an initiative that has been ongoing for a number of years. Particularly, what are these funds used for? Again, it is split between boards and communities. Maybe while responding to that, is that money advanced to boards or is it on application? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this was a question that was asked of us by the Standing Committee on Social Programs. The support that goes to boards includes direct funding for the nurse educators, plus a budget allocation for these educators to travel to the respective communities, \$315,000; the professional development fund, \$269,000; all expenses for regional representation at the recruitment and retention steering committee meetings, that is unbudgeted. It is reimbursed based on participant cost. There is also support that is provided to boards for site visits for potential candidates to come to visit communities. This would be a nurse or a social worker who might be interested but wants to come and visit a community to see what it is like first, \$75,000; support to communities, this is financial support for physicians to complete locums in different communities, \$200,000 to the boards; other support, including funding to allow RNs to attend conferences, for professional development, allocating funds for other health care professionals to complete practicums in the Northwest Territories communities, \$30,000; and \$2,046,000 to boards for recruitment and retention bonuses paid to nurses. This includes a recruitment bonus that is paid upon hiring and a retention bonus that is paid in September based on percentage of the RN service.

In addition, there are a number of joint department-board strategies, which includes recruitment information packages. There is quite a list that has been provided to the standing committee. I am sure we could make a copy available to Mr. Roland as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a lot of information. Obviously, the total of those numbers that were presented are more than what is identified in the directorate alone. I was referring specifically to the \$3.5 million. In the

section, further information provided, it shows headquarters at \$1.7 million and boards at \$1.8 million. There was some discussion or some information provided by Ms. Ballantyne as to some boards. The question I get to, is that in fact funding that is given to boards or is it held in headquarters? I heard that it was cost recovery basis. If they had somebody in there who took part in the strategy meetings, then their costs would be covered? Is that what I am understanding?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Madam Minister.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For some of the initiatives, the money is flowed to the boards. For some, it is held in the department. It is on a recovery basis on the one item, which is regional representation on the Recruitment and Retention Steering Committee meetings. The other things Ms. Ballantyne referred to is provided up front to the boards. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of the information systems, we have it as other expenses of \$2.8 million. What is that in the area of information systems? Does that have to do with the telehealth work or is that other things? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Expenditures in that area relate to a number of issues. There are communication costs related to the DCN. There is the cost of Telehealth coordinators that are involved with telehealth. There are costs related to information systems development that are used by the boards, such as the Children Family Information System. There are other operating costs relating to computer purchases that are related to systems that are being implemented in the boards. That generally captures most of the expenditures in that area. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In another area, more in the monitoring and evaluation area, it has been a number of years now since the act has come into force. We talk of plan of care committees. I would like to know if all regions and communities are now up to speed on that and if that is in place across the Territories. Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, all communities are not up to speed, as the Member says, in terms of plan of care committees. We do believe that when they are in place, they will be very useful. I think we mentioned somewhere in the last couple of days that there is a planned pilot for a plan of care committee for the Dogrib region. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In that area again, when there are a number of communities where it is implemented and they are using the plan of care model, when they do an agreement with parents who have children in need

of help or if the family situation ends up where children are pulled into care and parents sign a plan of care agreement, how is that agreement altered? Do parents need to go and get a lawyer? Or can it be done with the agreement right in the community? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Roland is speaking about two different things. One is a voluntary agreement where parents would volunteer to participate in certain activities that would speed up the return of their children or bring about some confidence that the help that they receive would make their home a safe place for their children again.

The other is the plan of care committee, which is a group of people who could come together in the community to assist and provide advice and input, and that is provided for in the legislation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am referring specifically to agreements that parents would sign as part of the course of action that would be required to have their children back in their homes. I have worked with a number of families in my community in this area to try to see what can be done to ensure that they are doing the right thing. At the same time, their rights as parents are not being infringed upon. That is why I ask in the case of parents who do sign an agreement for a plan of care for their children, it might require sometimes giving funds to the department for care of their children in another home or homes that they might identify. When they sign this agreement and they have problems and circumstances change and they would like to get a change in that, how is that done? Once they sign it, it is done, stick with it until the end or you do not get your children. Or is there a way of going back by agreement between the staff and parents to ensure again that both sides are able to follow through with what was initially planned? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Chairman, by mutual agreement, there could be changes made to a plan of care under a voluntary agreement with the parents. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Directorate and corporate services. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the whole area of testing, there were certain areas that she said, in response to her opening address, that there were some defaults or some boards not carrying out the responsibilities that they were given. She stated that one of the areas was the area of TB testing. Can the Minister state which health board is not carrying out that duty and responsibility?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated before in the House, we are just still in the midst of doing the operational reviews. We did not think it would be appropriate to mention certain boards. I had given the information in a general sense to let Members be aware that



there were deficiencies in the carrying out of certain programs and services and monitoring, but I do not think it would be appropriate to name specific boards in this area. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Just with regard to that comment, it is clear we are not receiving the service that should be arrived at in allowing patients to have the access to programs where everybody has the same opportunity to have different types of tests and different types of things done, so that they can be able to have early detection. Why is it that it is not mandatory for these different tests with regard to the different health boards?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, some information that will come out tomorrow that I will be willing to meet with Members to discuss and we will be providing copies of, is the Fanning report, which will make specific recommendations with respect to the issue with TB surveillance, screening and treatment. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another area we touched on is the area of statistics. I have some statistics with regard to the community of Aklavik with regard to people diagnosed with cancer from 1988 to 1997. According to you, there were 28 cases. Then you look at the Territory as a whole, there has been almost 1,000 cases in that same time frame. Does the Minister have the latest information, before you make the comment that there has been an increase in cancer cases in the Northwest Territories? Has this information been compiled so it could be released to either the committee or to the public?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am not sure which document the Member is referring to. Is he looking at a copy of the health status report perhaps? We do have information on statistics on cancer from 1986 to 1997, which we could...I think the information in the health status report is probably what we have already decided would be appropriate to dispose for public consumption. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** It comes from your department. It is the Government of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Health Protection Unit, Northwest Territories Registry, June 9, 1999. Out of the Northwest Territories alone, there was some 679 people diagnosed with cancer. Yet in the Inuvik region, there is almost 200. Almost one-third of those people are in the Inuvik region. In Aklavik, there was an estimated 20. This is from 1991 to 1996.

I would like to ask the Minister, in her response, it is up to the individual. I hate to be blunt, but to come right out and say to a lot of people that I have received correspondence from or talked to family members on the different deaths that occurred lately, these people have been going to the health centre time after time after time, to a point that people have to practically threaten somebody on the health board or threaten a particular

doctor to take action before they are sent to Yellowknife to be diagnosed. Yet the statistics tell us that it is a problem.

I want to ask the Minister, what is her department doing to spruce up the area of testing and ensuring the evaluation is done on patients, so that we have results so people do not have to continue to carry on? If you are sick, you are sick. You go to a health centre, you see a doctor because you feel sick. People do not go there because they want to harass the doctor or the nurse or whoever.

When people come to a point where...in the results of this TB case in my riding, I just sent a letter to the Minister yesterday from another constituent of mine where her dad passed away from stomach cancer. This guy was sitting in the hospital for four days and they wanted to send him home because they needed the bed in the hospital, so they put him in long-term care for four days and were going to send him back to Aklavik, but he had to call his daughter who was away at school and she had to call a doctor to demand that he be sent to Yellowknife. If that is the process, we have to get this department to really react to health care issues. What is this health care system coming to? I know recruitment and everything else is great, but we are spending millions of dollars to fly people around the world to look for nurses, meanwhile the system is slowly deteriorating to a point where people are not even meeting the basics of their health care.

I think it is important as a government that we seriously start doing more in analyzing the information and also being able to get more technology out there. If we can use the technology and have that information available to people so they can get earlier detection with regard to cancer and other diseases that are out there, TB or whatever, it will save us money in the long run from having people who are passed that stage of being able to be treated and having to have them pass on. I would just like to ask the Minister again, what are they doing to improve it and when are we going to see these new results published to give us the latest statement where you mentioned there is an increase?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do publish our health status report every three years. Certainly the information, as Ms. Ballantyne has indicated, on certain diseases is published quarterly, every four months, through the EPI North report. Mr. Chairman, all I can say in response to Mr. Krutko's concern that people are not being diagnosed early enough is that we are doing everything we can and we are committed to ensuring that we do have a good quality health care system in place. I think that there are probably a lot of cases as well where people do receive very good treatment, and when they do not, obviously that is the time when MLAs and myself as Minister hear about that. We are committed to addressing any shortfalls in the system that might contribute to preventable negative results. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I quit, that is it, no more.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Health and Social Services, budget summary, operations expenses, total operations expense, \$25,926,000, page 6-10. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Directorate, corporate services, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$4,871,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Health insurance programs, budget summary, operations and expenses, total operations and expenses, \$33,439,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the contributions to boards of management, health insurance services, the funding here has almost tripled in two years from the 1999-2000 actuals to what is proposed in the 2001-2002 Main Estimates. I am wondering if we could get the Minister to comment on the reason for that dramatic growth.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Dent has gone back one page. Does the committee agree that we go back to page 6-12? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, actually I am referring to page 6-15, the detail of which shows on page 6-17.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Dent, go ahead.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Contained in grants and contributions on page 6-15 is contributions to boards of management, health insurance services, and my question is, there is \$16,725,000 there right now in the 2001-2002 budget, but the amount that was expended in 1999-2000 was only \$5.8 million. There has been a growth of almost...it has almost tripled in size. I just wanted to hear from the Minister the reasons for that growth.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madam Minister.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, stabilizing physicians that operate from Yellowknife and provide services to outlying communities and provide territorial hospital services through Stanton resulted in a \$2.8 million increase. Incremental funds will be used to increase the number of physicians as well. There was a severe shortage, and this was not reflected in prior budgets. Increased costs for operating clinics due to increases related to the pay fields, which they have to be paid on now under the Public Service Act, and there were also increased administrative costs, as there is now a need to manage and coordinate four clinics, and former owners focus their services now on patient care as opposed to administration.

Also, there was over \$7 million transferred from the other expenses category to the grants and contributions category to reflect the takeover of physician clinics and the change in payment method through the boards. That should hopefully explain why that dramatic increase is showing up. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That has answered my question.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a question about medical travel and how it relates to

supplemental health. I have had a couple of concerns with constituents calling me who had to go south for testing for things like MRIs and other tests. The Department of Health covers the cost of the testing, but not the cost to these folks for all of their travel. They are required to pay a \$250 co-payment, I think it is called, also accommodation, meals, ground transportation. Sometimes people are able to stay at Larga boarding homes in Edmonton, but this is only the case if there is room.

These are people who are not covered by NIHB or the Metis health benefit, and typically do not work for a company big enough to have its own insurance plan, quite often people working for small businesses. I wonder if the Minister can talk about how these people seem to slip through the cracks and specifically wonder if she has looked at getting rid of the \$250 co-payment for travel? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am very aware of this particular group of our population that does not qualify for full coverage, either through employee insurance programs or various other types of coverage that are available to people. The co-payment affects just a certain portion of people, mostly people who are employed by the small business private sector. I have asked the department to look into the whole issue of the co-payment for medical travel. Thank you.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At first glance, it might seem that this does not affect many people in the North and it also may not be that expensive, but if you consider that the extended health benefits will cover the full costs of testing for these folks if they are in fact diagnosed with a condition which is listed under the specified disease conditions, quite often it can take a few trips and even up to a few years to correctly diagnose something.

My question is if they have a valid medical referral and we cannot do the testing here, do we really have to wait for a diagnosis in the south in Edmonton that fits this list before we are willing to cover this? Clearly it is not frivolous if they have been referred by a physician. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In a situation where an individual is referred out several times to do testing and so on, they would not qualify under the EHP program until they were diagnosed with a specified disease. However, if they are unable to afford the co-payment, there is an indigent health benefits program that they may be able to access, depending upon their financial status. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you have to be on income support in order to access or in order to not pay the co-payment? Is that the standard? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Madam Minister.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** No, to access the indigent health benefits program, you do not have to be on income support. Thank you.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for that information and urge her department if they are looking into this, then I am happy to hear that. There are more people than you would think, with the diversification of our economy, who no longer work for the territorial government and who do work for smaller businesses around the North, who are not eligible for NIHB or the Metis health benefit. I hope you will take a look at this. The \$250 co-payment might not seem onerous, but when you consider possibly no room at the boarding home at Larga and a few years to diagnose certain diseases, it can add up. I thank the Minister for looking into that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Health insurance programs, budget summary. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of physicians' programs, from the main estimates of 2000-2001, there is \$16 million to the revised mains of \$19.9 million, and \$19.8 million proposed for these. I see in the detail provided that other expenses of another \$3 million is added. What would those other expenses be used for?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is for the \$2.8 million for stabilizing physicians who operate from Yellowknife. Also, the increased administrative costs to coordinate and manage the four clinics. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Overall, that was just a reshuffling from within in that area or is that an actual growth item? Thank you.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that was a draw-down on the CHST, Canada Health and Social Transfer, trust.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How long will we be able to do that? Is that an indefinite program that we can draw down? When does it become part of the base instead of being other expenses? What is different about other expenses compared to the physicians' programs?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The residual of the CHST trust that was not drawn down in the last fiscal year was approximately one million dollars. The intent would be that would be drawn down this year, so the full impact of the incremental costs would be borne by the GNWT in 2002-2003. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is news that is good to hear, because we know we will have to do some...there will be some challenges facing the department in the next fiscal year or the year after that if we are drawing down the final portion of that and it is not an ongoing item.

Another part of the question is under physician services, why would it be classified as other expenses of \$3,072,000 in the additional information provided?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A portion of that \$2.4 million relates to fee-for-service physicians, for physicians pay who are practicing outside the Territories providing services to NWT residents receiving services outside the Territories. There is additional fee-for-service physicians still in the Northwest Territories that we pay under other expenses of approximately \$461,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Why would the \$2.4 million figure not fall under the out-of-Territories category?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The out-of-Territories is for hospital services as opposed to physician services. This item covers physician services. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a plan being put together to try to deal with the impact of no longer being able to draw down on the CHST for this additional almost \$3 million a year? Or at some point do we figure this to level out? I know when the discussion was to take over some of the clinics and bring doctors on as staff instead of fee-for-service, that the initial year there would be a bump because it would work itself out between the billings that were going on and the wages that would be paid. Is there a balance at some point where it comes together and there is a savings at the end of the day? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

**MR. ST. GERMAINE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not anticipating significant savings or cost avoidance. The \$2.8 million critical investment this year reflects what we anticipate to be an initial estimated ongoing operating cost relating to physician services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just another question. In the non-insured health benefits area, in the document right now, we are showing no funding for this year. In fact, I believe that was the discussion that was happening yesterday, that in fact we are going to extend it for a year. Can I have clarification on that? If that is the case, we are going to have to make some amendments here to show more dollars coming in, both on the revenue side and the expenditure side, correct?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Chairman, if we do decide to continue on with that, the expenditure will be offset by the revenue we will receive. We will bring that back to the House through a vote 4 appropriation. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the non-insured health benefits, is there a possibility of having that program administered by an aboriginal organization?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my knowledge right now, there has not been any interest in delivery of this program expressed by aboriginal organizations. Certainly we could understand why, because this government has had to subsidize the cost of administering it and also subsidizing it for the things it was disallowed under the program. So all I can say is that right now, I am not aware of anyone who is interested in it and the negotiations are proceeding fairly well. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Is there any idea of when these negotiations will be concluded? The reason I ask is the aboriginal groups are taking over responsibility for their own programs and services, especially with regard to wellness programs and also the federal programs that are out there. If this government does not feel that they want to manage it, instead of giving it back to the federal government, could they transfer that authority to a particular band or tribal council to administer on behalf of their own membership?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we would not be adverse to that happening. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** In regards to all the other programs that are associated with aboriginal programs that we presently administer from Ottawa, if we are going to do it for one program, why do not we just do it to all of them? Maybe we should just get out of the whole health care field and let the organization run it themselves.

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have a response for that comment. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** It was not a comment. It is a fact of life. They are taking on more responsibilities for more programs and services and this is one area where they can relate to where a

lot of dollars are spent in different areas that are presently not benefiting them. If they can somehow take on those programs and services and conduct them for themselves and carry out the programs that they feel they can administer on behalf of their membership. We talk about community empowerment. We talk about self-government. We talk about arrangements we have with this government. We have programs and services right now administered by the Status of Women with regard to different programs this government carries out. Why could not those same arrangements be made with First Nations groups with regard to the health insurance programs that this government carries out now? What is the difference?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is a certain level of involvement of aboriginal organizations in certain things such as Brighter Futures and home care program delivery. It is really important because we only have 42,000 people in the Northwest Territories that when these kinds of things are devolved, that we retain a fairly integrated service. The economies already are not there with a small population that we have, but certainly we do work with aboriginal organizations where it makes sense and where they have a desire to deliver certain programs. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the programs that are being administered today when it comes to dental care and eyeglasses, there are some limitations. When people have to get extra dental care or are looking at other programs that are there, that they need some dollars to either top up their program so they can replace their glasses where they may have broken them and have to wait for two years, it seems like a lot of people I represent because of their limits, their \$600 limit on your dental, in which you have to spend within a certain period. You are allowed eyeglasses, but it is spread out over two years. In the meantime, if these people need dental work, we cannot totally refuse them. We do have other people out there who are able to access dollars from this government through income support, which may not fall within the category of, say, a status Indian. So what is this government doing to ensure that we do not leave the residents out there having to wait for those time frames to either lapse or do it within that time frame, so that we can improve the quality of health and the health care of all residents to ensure that they are treated fairly and we are not leaving anybody out?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The limitations on the funding and the caps on the various areas are set by the federal government. We do not set those. We just administer the program within the guidelines set by the federal government. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** The concern I have is we have different health care programs or policies for different groups. Because one is a federal program or one is a Government of the Northwest

Territories program, it still deals with health. They talk about the Metis health benefits where they have an insurance policy for health care for their members. Then you have the overall programs for residents of the Northwest Territories.

Why is there such a discretion between one program and another program without trying to find ways of streamlining, so they benefit everybody? I think that is a concern of a lot of people. There is a real discretion between status versus residents as a whole. That is why I would like to know as a government, what are we doing to try to top up a lot of these programs so they are getting the service that they need?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The items that are identified for status Indians and Inuit under the non-insured health benefits are not insurance coverage which are available for other people in the Northwest Territories, except for the Metis health benefit, which was identified by this government for the Metis people. However, these are not coverages which are available to just anyone. They are specifically related to treaty status. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** That is the concern I have. With the changes to the Health Act, especially when it comes to status Indians, they have cut back to such a point that it is not really meeting the demand that is on it for the individual. People that get their eyeglasses, you have to wait for two years. If you break it, you are out of luck. Most people need their glasses. It is an essential service where you need something to do your work. If you cannot have it or you do not have the resources to purchase a new pair, you are out of luck.

The same thing with dental care. The dentist comes to our community. For \$600, you might be lucky to get one tooth filled, but you might need a lot more work than that. It is a real concern to a lot of parents with children. With the limited access to dental care, especially all these communities, you have to go in when they either schedule it or book it in a community where you can only get to see a dentist once or twice a year. If you are lucky, you get that work done in that period. With children, the dental work is a lot more than just that amount you are allocating. That is where a lot of people are having problems. I think it is important we as a government make an attempt to find programs to assist in that area or find insurance or health policies that we can assist to carry that out.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Do you have a response to those comments, Madam Minister?

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to reiterate that the limitations that are set by the federal government, the things that they cover are a federal responsibility. I have offered to the Members to bring a representative from Health Canada to discuss these items with them, if they would like to take us up on the offer to organize that for them. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We are on page 6-15, health insurance programs, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$33,439,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 6-17, health insurance programs, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$16,825,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 6-19, primary and acute care programs, budget summary. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under this, it appears that over the past two years there has been growth of approximately 20 percent in the cost of medical travel. Can we get some comment from the Minister about what is being undertaken to try and control the growth in the cost of medical travel?

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

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** There is a lot of contributing factors to the forced growth in medical travel. The aging population, the fact that people are living longer as they age, that is when they become particularly dependent on the health care system.

The staff shortages when we have the high turnover rate and the recruitment and retention problems that we have been challenged with in the last couple of years. The confidence quite often at the community-regional level is not there to diagnosis and treat patients. So there is more medical travel associated with that. They may not know the medical history or be as comfortable with the medical history of the patients. Also, the increasing airfares that is being contributed and driven by the rising costs of fuel. All of these things together are causing quite a bit of forced growth in the medical travel.

As to what we are trying to do to address that, Members are aware of our efforts and some of our results under recruitment and retention, there is not much that we can do about the cost of air travel. However, we are trying to keep these costs under control. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Madame Minister. At this time I will recognize the clock and rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of the committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

#### ITEM 21: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002 and Committee Report 7-14(3) 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. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen, who seconds the motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

**ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Speaker, meetings this evening for the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development at adjournment, tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. for the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Orders of the day for Friday, February 23, 2001:

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 (7<sup>th</sup> of 7 allotted days)
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 Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
  - Motion 16-14(3), Amendment to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly (Handley)
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002
  - Committee Report 5-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
  - Committee Report 6-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
  - Committee Report 7-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates

21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.