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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

Mr. Charles Dent

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, February 14, 2003

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Bonjour, mes ami. Happy Valentine's Day. Before we proceed to the business of the day, I would like to take this opportunity in recognition of tomorrow being National Flag of Canada Day. All across Canada, people will be celebrating the 38th anniversary of our national flag. Along with the national anthem, the flag is the most important symbol of our country. The flag represents not only the country's land and its people, but also its values. I would like to take this moment to tell you a little bit about the history of our flag.

Some of you may remember back to the events that took place some 38 years ago. The official ceremony initiating the new Canadian flag was held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on February 15, 1965 with the Governor General Georges Vanier, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and Members of the Cabinet and thousands of Canadians in attendance. The Canadian flag bearing the Union Jack and the shield of the Royal Arms of Canada was lowered and then on the stroke of noon, our new maple leaf was raised. The crowd sang the national anthem, O Canada, followed by the royal anthem of God Save the Queen. The following words were spoken on that momentous day by the Speaker of the Senate, adding further symbolic meaning to our flag. He said, and I quote: "The flag is a symbol of our nation's unity, for it, beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language, belief or opinion."

The NWT Celebrate Canada Committee and I would like to invite you to celebrate the 28th anniversary of the national flag of Canada on Saturday, that's tomorrow, February 15th, outside by the flag stand and later in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly at noon where there will be some celebrations taking place. Thank you.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENT

Minister's Statement 8-14(6): DIAND Announcement Regarding Federal Pipeline Commitment

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories commends yesterday's announcement by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to create a pipeline readiness office in Yellowknife. This is an important first step in the federal government's commitment to support the construction of a natural gas pipeline in the Northwest Territories.

DIAND announced \$10 million towards the creation of the pipeline readiness office in DIAND's NWT regional office in Yellowknife. It will enhance its capacity to deal with industry, coordinate with other government organizations and work with Northerners. It is our understanding that the pipeline readiness office will have a staff of approximately seven people when up and running.

Minister Nault also announced an additional \$6 million for northern boards that will be conducting regulatory reviews for a pipeline application. These funds will assist them in meeting their growing demands, which include increased pipeline planning, environmental assessment and regulatory reviews. In June 2002, these northern boards, along with the National Energy Board, undertook the development of a cooperation plan to coordinate the regulatory reviews of a pipeline application. It is our understanding that a secretariat will be created to provide support services to all signatories of the cooperation plan.

We were also pleased to hear Minister Nault's statement that market forces must decide when and where a pipeline is built, and that he will take that message to Washington. This has been the position of our government for some time.

Mr. Speaker, we were encouraged that the federal Minister made mention of future contributions that will be made by DIAND as well as other government agencies. These funds will assist in the development of our northern resources. To date, our government has been disappointed by the federal government's lack of financial support. We hope that the Minister's statement yesterday indicates a new willingness by the federal government to contribute its fair share. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 9-14(6): Formula-Based Funding To Community Governments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to clarify how this government determines program, community and capital funding levels.

The overwhelming majority of our funding is allocated to programs, communities and capital investments based on need, not on per capita formulas. Programs such as health care, education and housing are provided to our residents based on relative need, irrespective of what this costs on a per capita basis. Capital investments are also based on need, not per capita. Municipal funding provided through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is one of these very few

areas where population is considered in funding allocations. In this case, community entitlements are adjusted for the different costs incurred by each community in delivering municipal services to their residents.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we provide funding on a needs basis is illustrated well in the geographic tracking of expenditures report we issue each year. This report shows that the government's spending on a per capita basis varies widely among communities because relative needs are taken into account as well as each community's ability to raise their own revenues.

For example, in fiscal year 1989-99 we spent \$11,687 per capita for services to the residents of Fort Simpson, \$6,040 per capita Yellowknife, \$17,476 per capita in Lutselk'e and \$14,961 per capita in Tulita. Clearly, relative needs drive these numbers, not equal per capita allocations.

Mr. Speaker, our capital funding allocations are also based on need. For example, taking the last ten years of capital spending into account, the average capital investment by community has ranged from \$14,000 per capita in Fort Resolution, to \$6,000 per capita in Hay River, \$23,000 per capita in Tulita and \$3,000 per capita in Yellowknife. These numbers are different because we do not determine allocations on the basis of per capita entitlements, rather we use relative need.

Mr. Speaker, the per capita methodology that the federal government was proposing to use to determine the territories' share of health care funding does not resemble in any way the approach that our government uses to allocate the vast majority of our program, community and capital funding. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Pretty boisterous bunch today. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am appalled that the Wildlife Act amendments will not be coming forth in the term of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, it has been almost 10 years since the Gwich'in have signed a comprehensive land claim agreement. It has been a little over nine years since the Sahtu Dene-Metis signed a claim.

Mr. Speaker, the last time any major amendments took place in this House was in 1994, in regards to the Wildlife Act amendments, to allow for an Inuvialuit land claims comprehensive claim, to allow for the amendments to enact that legislation and their agreements. Mr. Speaker, the Minister at the time, who is now the Premier, Minister Kakfwi, presented the introduction to legislation on Bill 12, recognizing the implantations provisions in the Inuvialuit final agreement and giving effect to the western claim settlement agreement. Bill 12 was developed to consult the representation ensuring the Inuvialuit continue to clarify and carry out the provisions of the wildlife agreement.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that, at that time, the standing committee of the Legislative Assembly, which was chaired by Mr. Gargan who was the previous Speaker of the House, stated: "In review of Bill 12, An Act To Amend The Wildlife Act, this bill amends the act to recognize the provisions of Inuvialuit Final Agreement as they pertain to wildlife harvesting and management. The bill further provides the commissioner authority to develop regulations regarding implementation and recognition of existing and future land claims."

The Inuvialuit final agreement was signed in 1984, 10 years ago. In the Northwest Territories, there has been three more land claims being signed by, in particular, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu and Inuvialuit. The committee is concerned with the length of time that it takes the government to introduce legislation concerning claims groups and the land claims regions.

Further Mr. Speaker, the committee is disappointed that the government has not taken the opportunity to introduce further amendments to enact the existing land claim agreements. Mr. Speaker, many concerns have been voiced in the 10 years previous. Mr. Speaker, why is it that it takes this government that length of time to act on land claims legislation, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member's time for Members' statements has expired. He is seeking unanimous consent to conclude. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Krutko, you may conclude your statement.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, at that time, the committee recognized that it has taken over 10 years to implement the Inuvialuit land claim agreement. Yet, Mr. Speaker, today we are here again 10 years later, after the Gwich'in land claim has been settled, signed, and yet, Mr. Speaker, this government is not carrying out its obligation to implement those land claim agreements to enact legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have to commend my colleague, Mr. Dent, for taking the initiative to come forth with a private Member's bill to look at amending the wildlife agreement.

---Applause

Yet, Mr. Speaker, is that the route that we will have to take to enact legislation that this government is responsible for by way of the wildlife legislation? So, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be having questions for the Minister responsible for the Wildlife Act. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement On Petition On Affordable Housing

MR. BRADEN: Merci, Mr. Speaker. In the last few weeks, I have had the opportunity to join two Yellowknifers in running a petition to get more affordable rental housing legislation in the NWT. To date, Barry Newman, Mark Zimmer and I have collected more than 300 signatures. I will be bringing this petition into the House in early March, Mr. Speaker, so there is

still time for people to sign it and show their support for this critical need.

But you know, besides this show of support, I have been very pleased with the amount of discussion and debate that this petition has helped create in the midst of a very, very tight housing market in Yellowknife.

One of the recent commentaries was an editorial in that fine newspaper, The Yellowknifer. The paper clearly supported one of the petition's objectives, which is to urge government to help the construction of more affordable rental housing in the communities, not just in Yellowknife.

But the paper took the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker, with its hasty and mistaken conclusion that the legislation we are looking for amounts to rent controls. This is a simplistic view and it is simply wrong.

What we are seeking, Mr. Speaker, is a better way for our rentals office to be able to help landlords and tenants to iron out disputes concerning rent hikes that are too darn high and come too darn often for people to cope with.

When I was in one of the shopping malls collecting signatures, Mr. Speaker, I spoke with an elderly gentleman who has his grandchildren, who are now young adults, staying in his apartment because they can't afford to be on their own.

I spoke with a young couple about to start a family who are now paying \$1,430.00 for their three bedroom unit. Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, they were paying \$905.00.

I spoke with a woman who has been living in Yellowknife for two years but says she just doesn't feel established as a resident because she can't get a place that she is ready to call home.

Mr. Speaker, these are the messages that I am getting and I know other MLAs are getting these messages, too. I know there are better ways to deal with rental issues than our 15-year-old act and I hope our petition will help us get there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Hay River District Education Authority

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I sat in this Chamber yesterday and listened to the Honourable Joe Handley deliver an address to the people of the Northwest Territories and, on the surface, it painted a very rosy picture as to where we started from three years ago, where we are today and where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, the financial picture at a quick glance, depicts success stories on every front as to the great job we have done on spending the limited resources. Mr. Speaker, the finance Minister spoke of building partnerships, strong partnerships and all we have been able to achieve through those partnerships.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, not everyone would agree with our success stories and that all our partnerships operate in harmonious bliss.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I have on a number of occasions raised concerns about the dysfunctional partnership which exists within the South Slave District Education Council. This partnership has been referred to, Mr. Speaker, as "one born in hell" and indications are that things are not showing signs of improvement. To the contrary.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister boasted about increased spending in education of over \$46 million dollars from 1999/2000 to 2002/2003 and another \$8 million dollars added to Education Culture and Employment's budget this year to maintain this government's commitment to education.

Mr. Speaker, this represents a total budget of \$210 million dollars for 2003/2004. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Hay River DEA is forced to cut its already under funded budget by some six percent.

The Hay River DEA represents about 50 percent of students in the entire South Slave region, over 900 students. Yet, Mr. Speaker, they carry the same voting power as the smallest DEA with less than 100 students.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, February 8, Fort Resolution, Lutselk'e and Hay River Reserve outvoted Hay River and Fort Smith for the redistribution of some \$190,000. To do this on the backs of Hay River students is deplorable and totally unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I have stood in this House on many occasions and advocated for a separate district education council for Hay River to protect the interests of Hay River students and the largest student population in the South Slave. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education....

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, your time for Members' statements is up. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, I seek the colleagues' consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has always basically indicated that the district education council and the DEAs should work it out amongst themselves. Mr. Speaker, it's not working. In fact, it is broken beyond repair. As far as I and a lot of others are concerned, I demand that this Minister do something about it for the sake of our students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Northern Stars 2003 Figure Skating Competition Hosted By Inuvik

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rarely have an opportunity to stand up in this House and talk of positive things and unity, and this is one of the times I have an

opportunity. Today I would like to speak about the Inuvik Figure Skating Club's involvement in the Northern Stars 2003 figure skating program. Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik Figure Skating Club was proud to host the Northern Stars 2003 NWT Territorial Figure Skating Championships held on January 31st to February 1st. The club last hosted this event four years ago. Figure skating clubs from Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife and the Great Slave clubs, both from Yellowknife, also were represented along with the Inuvik Figure Skating Club. There were 65 skaters who competed in the Star Skate competition sanctioned by Skate Canada. Twelve NWT skaters, including one from Inuvik, will be advancing to the Star Skate finals in Whitecourt, Alberta. A fun meet was also held to provide a venue for all skaters from ages two to 24 years to show their stuff, so to speak, Mr. Speaker. All of them came away with a medal and trophy.

The skating competition went smoothly and a banquet that was to be held for the medals and trophy presentations went well. They are proud to say that the Inuvik Figure Skating Club won the best overall club trophy. This event was organized by volunteers, most of them full-time workers and many of them working at this event for the first time. Due to the last minute problem with the caterer, this group of volunteers came together to provide a truly wonderful and delicious northern-style feast. This event could not have been possible without the hard work, dedication and generosity of the club's volunteers and the generosity of our many sponsors in the Inuvik region. We wish good luck to the NWT team going to Alberta. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish my wife and family back home a happy Valentine's.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. We all do as well. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement On American Field Service Young Workers' Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on February 20th of this year, six young men and women from Yellowknife and Rae will be leaving Canada and heading to Central America where they will take part in something called the Young Workers' Program. The Young Workers' Program is a 12-month inter-culture Canada program run by the AFS. If you are wondering, Mr. Speaker, what the AFS stands for – and I know I was – it stands for the American Field Service. It originated more than 85 years ago shortly after the outbreak of the First World War. It was a group of volunteer Americans living in Paris that got it started. The work of these volunteers could be expanded across the globe during the Second World War, and today it's a fine cultural exchange program based on the idea, Mr. Speaker, that understanding and appreciating the different cultures of the world could help us avoid conflict. More than 290,000 youth have now taken part in cultural exchanges with this program and this year, Mr. Speaker, the number is about 10,000 students of young adults and teachers who will be participating. Three of our youth are heading to Panama and three to Honduras where they will be working in fields such as ecotourism and carpentry for six months, all the while, Mr. Speaker, being immersed in a new language, culture and way of life. Following the six months away, they will return to Canada, but they will share their experiences gained, along with memories, I am sure, to cherish for a lifetime. These young

men and women have been working towards their exchange since last November learning new languages, orientations and, yes, Mr. Speaker, inevitably fundraising for their trip. In closing, I wish to recognize these young men and women and wish them every success as they embark on this new experience, Mr. Speaker. They are Tiffinnea Roberts, Stuart Wray, Melissa Gutland, Merv Templeton, Mary-Alison Lyman and Amy Zoe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Review Of Income Support Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, we create bills or acts that will better the lives of all Northerners. Within the government, these acts are turned into policies, which each department follows. Mr. Speaker, although these acts and policies are created with the best of intentions, it is not until they are in actual practice that we discover some of the kinks in them and then they need to be reviewed.

Income support is an area where I see a need to address government policies to adapt to individual circumstances. In December, I had a constituent who was in Yellowknife for medical reasons for her children. Because she was in the city longer than she expected, she wanted to have her income cheque forwarded from her community. Under the current policy, cheques have to be picked up in person. Options such as sending the cheque to Yellowknife and having an income support worker here to act as a contact were not explored. The reason this option was not examined was it was impossible to contact anyone with any authority to deal with the matter. Decision-makers were not available, either by phone or in person to deal with this situation. When I did manage to talk to someone in the department, I was told that she was given direction not to talk to me.

Mr. Speaker, this was just a simple matter. The department created a system where only the people at the top can make decisions. These people have a tremendous workload. Would we not be better off empowering all our workers by giving them some authority to make decisions when no one else is available? I am sure we could create a more effective system and policies which allow for individual cases to be considered.

Student financial assistance is another area where flexibility is needed and policies to address individual circumstances.

Finally, impact benefit agreements and their clawback by income support is an ongoing issue that needs a solution. Mr. Speaker, as legislators, we create acts and by connection, policies for all Northerners. We are elected to serve all Northerners. We can best do our job by creating policies that allow for individual circumstances to be taken into account and by allowing government workers to use their common sense to make decisions when unusual cases occur. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe we fully appreciate that this is the last budget session of this Assembly and it is also important to note that this is one of the last crucial legislative sessions as well. The logistics would dictate that any major new law that wants to see the light of the day should be introduced in this session, and the one that I wish to see very much and want to speak in support of today is the law governing waste reduction and recovery in the Territories. Mr. Speaker, from what I know, the law as it is envisioned by the government, if it comes to light, will provide the necessary authority and infrastructure capacity to jump start the fledgling recycling programs in our cities and communities. Mr. Speaker, one of the things I noticed each time I went south for schooling is the way in which everyone in the south, or most of them, separate their waste into bottles, cans, papers, et cetera. It's really a way of their life, and one of the things I always noticed when I returned to the North is we just don't do that up here as much as we should. Mr. Speaker, we should be ashamed of this state of affairs in this area. It is true that each resident of the Territories must do their part and they could do more, but I do believe that this level of government must take a leadership role and take a principled action. We need to demonstrate by legislative action that this government is truly committed to taking care of our environment. Mr. Speaker, such a law would require and encourage everyone to do their part, whether they be consumers, retailers, manufacturers, distributors, governments or NGOs and more importantly, this is truly a win/win situation for everyone. Our people will feel better for doing it. It won't cost the government a lot of money because it will be cost neutral except for the start-up cost and it would create jobs in an environmentally friendly way and it will save our environment. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe this is too late for the government to do the right thing and I really urge the government to reprioritize and make room in what is a crowded legislative agenda to put this back on and do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Valentine's Day Greetings To Wife And Family

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, as we carry out the business of this House, it is important to keep in mind our constituents and families back home. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to pass on Valentine's Day greetings to my wife Betty and my family back home and thank them for their continued support while I am away from home. Special Valentine's greetings to my granddaughter Kelsey.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Nahendeh Constituency Tour

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to send Valentine's Day greetings to my wife and my family and Members of this House and also, members of my constituency. I also want to talk about November 1st to the 9th, Mr. Speaker. We had a rare opportunity to tour my constituency at length and I did a lot of driving, Mr. Speaker. I drove from here all the way to Fort Simpson. I wanted to say that the highway is in pretty good shape.

---Applause

I also had the opportunity to drive to Fort Liard and visit the people there for a day or so. Also I drove into Nahanni Butte where they are building their access road and carried on to Trout Lake on their winter road. It took five hours to drive there, but it's a pretty decent road. I was in Jean Marie River on Saturday on the 8th. Throughout this whole tour, Mr. Speaker, people appreciate the work that we do as a government. There are some areas where they have concerns. There is lots of work that we still have to do as a government in working with our communities that we hear everyday. Building lots, for example, is a concern in our communities. I guess it's an example of what's happening in the North with the population in the communities. Our communities are growing and there's a high demand for new building lots. So there is a lot of activity going on in our communities and we have to continue to work close with the leaders in our communities to try to make a better place for people in the North to live. I think that's what we are doing in this House, Mr. Speaker, trying to do the best we can. Of course, you have some areas where people have a difference of opinion on certain things, but I think there is still a spirit of cooperation in this House to carry on with the work for the people of the Northwest Territories. This was expressed to me by my constituents in my travels. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the Gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize in the Gallery the board members of the NWT Association of Community Living: Blake Lyons, city of Yellowknife; Councillor Tom Melnyk, town of Norman Wells; Deputy Mayor Clarence Wood of Inuvik; Mayor Gary Bristow of Holman; Mayor Tom Wilson of Fort Simpson; Mayor Winnie Cadieux of Enterprise; and, Yvette Gonzalez, chief executive officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Welcome to the visitors. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the Gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some residents from Weledeh who are with us today. These are our pages from Weledeh. I will name them: Lorraine Westman; Megan Welsh; Laura Radicchi; Trevor Betsina; Samuel Gardiner; Curtis Beaulieu; Chelsea Goulet; and, Gordie Liske. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to the pages. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the Gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although my esteemed colleague from Nunakput already recognized him, I would still like to recognize Clarence Wood, deputy mayor of Inuvik. Welcome.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Any further recognitions of visitors in the Gallery? The honourable Member for Hay River South.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to Members' statements. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to item 3, Members' statements. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mrs. Groenewegen.

REVERT TO ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Northern Love Story

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of Valentine's Day and on the topic of romance, I would like to share a story, a love story that recently unfolded here in the North. The story starts with a beautiful young woman attending the Living Word Bible Institute in Swan River, Manitoba, in the 1950s. She meets the brother of a friend who ends up attending the same college. They fall in love. She finishes college one year ahead of him. They part company, leaving their plans flexible.

It's 1960 and she answered the call to go to Fort Resolution in the NWT to help Gordon and Ruth Bailey pastor a small church there. She never hears from her college sweetheart and it seems that they lose track of each other, which is understandable, considering that in those days, there were no telephones and mail delivery is just every few weeks in Fort Resolution. After three years in Resolution, she moves on to Hay River where she divides her time between a small church in Fort Resolution and Fort Providence. She then spends the next three-and-a-half years in Cambridge Bay and resigns herself to the fact that her friend has moved on with his life and so she must also.

In 1968, she again pastors in Fort Resolution until taking up what would be her longest commitment to any church, which is in Fort Smith in 1974. Mr. Speaker, I met Eva Nichol almost 30 years ago on subsequent trips to Smith and while dating my own husband Rick. It was no doubt that Eva Nichol never gave up on the idea of getting married. She observed many budding romances, married and counselled many young couples but as the years passed, I was amazed by her optimism. She kept very busy with her work in Smith, even though I know it was sometimes tough when she didn't have a lot of help and she was alone. She started a college there. She called it the Sub-Arctic Leadership Training and it fulfilled her vision of training indigenous Northerners to be spiritual leaders, pastors and councillors to their own people. She was a very convincing and persuasive woman and she got work crews and finances and in 1994, she built a college in Fort Smith.

So I was always kind of humoured by her assertions that she would get married someday because the years were going by. Because Eva was single all those years, she had much time to spend with others and she spent many nights on the phone with people and pastors from around the world praying with them and supporting them. Who knows if she would have been able to fulfill her dream for the Lord if she had chosen the love of a man over the love of the Lord?

A year ago this month, her old flame, Gary Ziehl, lost his wife to illness and not wanting to be alone, his thoughts returned to his college sweetheart. So out of the blue, Eva Nichol got a phone call which turned to be many more phone calls. Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to seek unanimous consent to continue with the conclusion of this happy story.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mrs. Groenewegen, you may continue.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, this turned into many more phone calls. He found out that she still did love him and on December 17th in Alberta they got married. Subsequently on January 11th, I had the privilege, along with Mr. Miltenberger, of attending a wedding reception for the Reverends Gary and Eva Zeal. Forty-two-years after parting company to commit her life to ministry in the North and at the age of 64, I saw a radiant and beautiful timeless bride in a white gown step into the Roaring Rapids Hall. At the reception held in her honour, people from many communities celebrated with Eva. Her new husband, also a Minister, and Eva are both teaching at the college in Smith until May and I hope by then, he'll discover what kept Eva in the North all these years and they will choose to live here, of course, happily ever after. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: A beautiful, beautiful story, Mrs. Groenewegen. Thank you. With that, Happy Valentine's Day to all the special people in our lives, especially to my wife Elaine. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the Gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It's with regard to a Member's statement regarding the Wildlife Act and enacting aboriginal land claim rights by way of land claim agreements, where we have wildlife harvesting and management sections in those land claim agreements. Mr. Speaker, the whole purpose of legislation is to recognize and implement provisions of different land claim agreements, but also to recognize the enactment of those powers that flow from those land claim agreements, so that we can carry out those responsibilities that have been negotiated in those land claim agreements. Mr. Speaker, it's been over ten years since the Gwich'in have signed and also federally legislated them into effect. Two years after that, the Sahtu Dene-Metis claim was also settled. Mr. Speaker, the last

time any real amendments to the Wildlife Act have taken effect to recognize land claim agreements was in 1994. That's almost ten years ago. So, Mr. Speaker, why is it that it's taken this government so long to enact these legislative agreements?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we know we have obligations in trying to have good legislation, mainly in the Wildlife Act. This is a very lengthy, complicated process that takes into consideration provisions in different land claims. You have the Inuvialuit final agreement, you have the Gwich'in Final Agreement, the Sahtu Dene-Metis Final Agreement, and now the Tlicho Agreement is going to be finalized in August. There is another component that needs to be considered, as well; that's all other residents in the Northwest Territories. We have considered different regions that are in the process of negotiations. As a government, we have to look at the whole picture and try to include everybody in the process. Mr. Speaker, in the summer of 1999, a process was started by this government to amend and put into legislation a new Wildlife Act and a Species at Risk Act. So it's been four years now we have been working on it, and I understand that the last Wildlife Act that came into existence took them seven years to do that. So this is the fourth year we have been working on it. We have been working very hard to try to push it through. The Member asked why. Well, RWED continues to work with representatives of all the different land claims organizations to try to integrate these very important wildlife harvesting and management provisions of their land claims agreements into draft wildlife legislation. There are some groups that are willing to move ahead, but we have to make sure that everybody is included in this. This is where the consultation is at at this point in time. What we trying to do in the life of this government is to table draft legislation in June. That's what we are aiming for. Although we don't have full legislation, this is what the schedule seems to be in the reality of the work that we are doing. That's what is allowing this to happen. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my statement, the Nunavut Wildlife Act, which was enacted in 1994, was compiled as a land claim obligation. Would similar legislation be coming forth for the Gwich'in and Sahtu land claim agreements similar to those that were enacted by the Inuvialuit Final Agreement?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to compare the Nunavut final agreement with all the different final agreements in the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Sahtu. The Nunavut Final Land Claims Agreement was one

comprehensive claim. So it's one big package. It was less complicated to do that at that time for them than it is for us in the valley. You have the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Tlicho and you are going to have the Akaitcho and the Deh Cho. They all have their own distinct provisions of their own final agreements. So it's difficult to lump that together and compare it to Nunavut. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a copy of the Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement. A large portion of this agreement is the wildlife chapter. The Sahtu agreement has similar provisions and the Sahtu and the Gwich'in agreements are similar. So why is it that, time and time again, you stated in this House and also in committees that this legislation was going to be introduced and enacted during the term of this Legislature. That statement was made, yet you can't live up to that obligation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I did say that. I also said I was going to consult with the claimant groups. As a government, we can move ahead and introduce legislation at the pace that we would like to. However, if you are going to consult, and then if a partnership with different aboriginal groups is not ready to move ahead, do you move ahead anyways? I don't think so. We said we were going to work in partnership. Yes, my intention was to table and introduce legislation in the life of this government. I had made those commitments. However, I have to work at the pace of the claimant groups. If they are not prepared to move as quickly as we are, then we cannot go ahead and introduce legislation. So consultation is very important. As the Member indicated, there are provisions in the claims, the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, and the Sahtu Dene-Metis. We have to honour that. If they are not prepared to move as quickly as you are, then we cannot move ahead until they are ready. That is where the problem is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko

Supplementary To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, myself, I have always pushed the notion that we implement our responsibilities which we have been given by land claim agreements, signatures to those agreements. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have done it by the Inuvialuit agreement by passing Bill 12. I would like to ask the Minister, will you pass similar legislation to enact the Gwich'in land claim wildlife provisions so that we can have a bill come forth dealing with the Gwich'in comprehensive land claim obligations?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 14-14(6): Wildlife Act Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, our plan here is to do what we said we were going to do, consult. Currently, we are continuing to work with representatives of different land claim organizations. As the government, we have provided funding to the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit and Sahtu to be involved in the consultation process with legal help to look at the draft legislation as we move forward. So there is work going on. We didn't just put it aside. Currently, there is work going on. There are meetings and consultations going back and forth. That is the process we have entered into and we will stay in this process because this is a very complicated and complex piece of legislation that cannot be pushed through without everybody that has major concerns through their claims provisions being left out. We have to include everybody. So at this point in time, although as a government we could move ahead and introduce legislation, we cannot do that. We have to wait for partners from the land claims organizations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 15-14(6): Location Of Federal Pipeline Readiness Office

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. From his Minister's statement today regarding the DIAND announcement on the federal pipeline commitment, Mr. Speaker, it's good to hear that the federal government is finally starting to come to the table with some resources. One serious concern that I have is, in fact, they seem to have already selected where that DIAND office will go to, and it seems to be selected as Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, it's been a concern from many Members of this House about the growth that the capital has, and it seems to feed on itself. It seems once again that this is occurring here. I'd like to know from the Minister if he's had any discussions with the Minister of DIAND on where that office location should go. Mr. Speaker, I believe, and a number of Members in this House believe, an office like this should be set up where the activity is. Seeing that the pipeline discussion talk started out of the Mackenzie Delta, I'd like to know if the Minister has had any discussions with the Minister of DIAND on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 15-14(6): Location Of Federal Pipeline Readiness Office

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were discussions with Minister Nault, the federal Minister of DIAND, over two years ago. During that time, as well, I understand that we're talking about the Premier and the Premier had this discussion with Nault at that time and the Premier had indicated that if there's going to be a pipeline office, it should not be in Yellowknife, it should be identified for possible locations of Hay River, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells or Inuvik. The decision to put this office in Yellowknife was Minister Nault's decision, but we did have input and it's up to him to make that decision, I guess. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 15-14(6): Location Of Federal Pipeline Readiness Office

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that, as we continue to talk with the Ministers of the federal government, that we pursue the fact that the whole North would like to develop together and not become one central location. I'd like to know if the Minister would contact the Minister of DIAND to see if there's any opportunity to look at locations other than the one that's been voted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 15-14(6): Location Of Federal Pipeline Readiness Office

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has been in contact with Minister Nault, I think as recently as December, to emphasize the point that if there's going to be expansion of that office, that it should be considered outside of Yellowknife where the route of the pipeline is going to be. Yes, we will relay the message to the Minister that there is concern about it, and that he should reconsider whatever the decision is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify something that came out of my Member's statement. My question, by the way, is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I want to make it clear to my colleagues that I am not against more funding going to smaller communities in the North when it comes to education. As a matter of fact, quite the contrary. I am in full support of more dollars going to all education bodies. But I think that my point is that the kids in Hay River going to school are just as important as any kids going to school anywhere else, and I don't want to see any funding decreases in order for other kids to get more funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he's aware of what took place in the meeting last Saturday, February 8th, with the DEA in Fort Smith and what the outcome of the voting was on that \$190,000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that there was a question of how to distribute \$190,000 in funding. Apparently the funding was put towards funding of some positions in a number of communities, but I don't have a lot of the details at hand, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of where the money they were voting on is coming from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure of how the money was allocated, but it was DEC money, Mr. Speaker, from the district education council funding.

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

Supplementary To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the biggest thorns in the side of the Hay River DEA, for example, is the size, and it makes it very hard to have good communications, is the growth at headquarters. Is the Minister aware of the growth at headquarter level in the South Slave District Education Council over the past 15 years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I was briefed on this about a year and a half ago or a year ago. I tried to keep track of it but, as all DECs, I don't keep track of each particular one. With eight jurisdictions in the Territories, I don't watch the growth of each one, Mr. Speaker, in terms of detail. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would request that the Minister get that information and if he could forward it on to me I would appreciate it. Mr. Speaker, it's not a new issue with the Minister that the Hay River DEA has been requesting that the Minister do something to correct the situation in the South Slave. Will the Minister reopen negotiations with the Hay River DEA on their situation within the South Slave Divisional Education Council? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 16-14(6): Hay River District Education Authority

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue was brought to my attention two and a half years ago. I dealt with it on the basis of getting the group together to look at the issues, and after that we issued a report and the

DEC initiated a five-part policy on governance board development initiatives. That seemed to be working out fairly well for a period of time. That may have further questions on it.

Mr. Speaker, I was a bit concerned about the Member stating that there had been a five percent reduction in the budget of Hay River. We continue to fund our DECs with extra money every year, and I don't understand what makes up that five percent reduction; whether it's a reduction because of numbers of students, or enrolment is going down, or for whatever reason. I would certainly like to know more about that.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, on the issue of governance, I've dealt with this before and I've stated before, and I dealt with the two Members from Hay River as well as the DEA, in terms of pointing out that in order to set up a different governance system it does cost probably in the neighbourhood of half a million dollars to do that. Again, I would like to discuss that with them, but I haven't had feedback as to what the reception is on the part of Hay River with regard to addressing that issue of the extra half million dollars. Certainly as a government, I have to be very concerned about setting up another governance system and when it doesn't go into the hands of the students, Mr. Speaker. So, yes, I would like to talk to the DEA, but on a basis, as I said before, of where is this money going to come from. Also I need to assure you that I don't mind having discussions with the DEA, however, there has to be respect for the process as well. My responsibilities also lie with the DEC as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions, the honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 17-14(6): Impact Benefit Agreements And Income Support

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Over the past few years, an ongoing debate has occurred over whether or not the money from income support clients that they receive from impact benefit agreements should be clawed back. I raised that issue during the October sitting of the House, and the Minister wrote me and stated that this issue would be examined, and that he would be prepared to report progress on or before the February 2003 session. I'd like to ask the Minister if he does have an answer for me today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 17-14(3): Impact Benefit Agreements And Income Support

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we have done a tremendous amount of work on this. It appears that there are implications that we do need to take into consideration to ensure that we do this appropriately, and I will be bringing forward a document to Cabinet for some discussion and consideration. I expect that to be within the next two to three weeks, certainly during this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 17-14(3): Impact Benefit Agreements And Income Support

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to ask the Minister, going back to 2001, the impact benefit agreement clawbacks amounted to \$290,000, and this was from only 260 people. These people were clawed back individually \$1,115 each, and this is a big amount of money. I'm just wondering if the Minister or his department looked at what became of these people after the date that they clawed back. Were these people coming back and appealing? Were there a lot of appeals? I would like to ask the Minister. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 17-14(3): Impact Benefit Agreements And Income Support

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did set up an independent appeal board to take into consideration individuals who wish to appeal decisions made by staff in regard to income support questions. I'm familiar with one case, I believe of a decision with respect to the impact benefit agreements, and that's the only case I'm aware of, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 17-14(3): Impact Benefit Agreements And Income Support

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Upon traveling to my three communities last week, I came across an elder who asked me why the Department of Education, Culture and Employment would send an employee flying around the communities taking information in and then telling them we're not going to help you this month so there's no use bothering. Why are they spending so much money to fly people around if they know there are no income support clients in those communities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 17-14(3): Impact Benefit Agreements And Income Support

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with the issue that the Member is speaking of. I'll certainly find out and be able to report back to him. Thank you.

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

Question 18-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of RWED and it's in regards to possible legislation for waste reduction and recovery. Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that there's a lot of interest about this outside of the House and I believe there's a lot of support inside of the House, but there seems to be some misinformation about what we are doing or not doing with regards to this. I'm wondering if

the Minister could publicly state as to where he is at, or this government is at, with this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 18-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the waste reduction and recovery legislation it is something that has a lot of support. As the Department of RWED we've done some work on this and it's just a matter of timing and if we have the resources to get the work done to introduce legislation. I just wanted to tell the Member that I'm happy to announce that we are planning to introduce legislation by June on this legislation. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Supplementary To Question 18-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister and the government for making that commitment. I am though not entirely worry free because I am aware, as well as everyone else here, that we have a major traffic jam going on in our legislative agenda and it does require lawyers to write these bills. I wonder if the Minister could commit to hire contract services if necessary to make sure there are enough lawyers to write the law so that we could debate it and pass it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 18-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I work with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, and we're looking at all the different options, not only on this legislation but the other ones that are there. I think the options of hiring independent drafters is on the drawing board and we're going to pursue that as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure exactly who to direct this question to, I suppose either the Minister of Health and Social Services or the Minister responsible for Youth. Maybe it's best put to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I know that alcohol and drug treatment is a priority for this government. I'd like to ask the Minister about alcohol and drug treatment for youth. Would the Minister list for the House the youth treatment facilities in the Northwest Territories, and tell the House how many youth are currently receiving alcohol and drug treatment in each of these facilities? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we currently have two child welfare facilities that are operational, in addition to a number of group homes. We don't have any specifically oriented to alcohol and drug addictions treatment, per se. The issue of addictions tends to be one of a number of problems. What currently happens is, if there is a significant need, then we make arrangements with southern facilities to deal with the issues presented by the particular youth. So at this point, Mr. Speaker, that's the arrangement that we have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So just to be clear, unless a youth is taken away from their family or taken into custody, then they really can't receive any treatment in the Northwest Territories, is that right?

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

Further Return To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of options available under the act that deals with children, and a number of arrangements that can be made that don't necessarily require to have the child taken into custody, but it can be an agreement with the parents. So there are a number of options to provide services when they're deemed to be required. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand from talking to alcohol and drug practitioners, that it's oftentimes very important to have the family involved in treatment where it relates to youth. So if we're shipping youth to southern facilities, what are we doing with the families?

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

Further Return To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the issue of dealing with the child or the youth and their family as a unit and not singling out the youth or the child as the problem, is a key point and principle. It's something that we try to engage in when we deal with children and their families. We will make

every reasonable effort to in fact involve the families in these particular cases. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

MR. BELL: Well, unless every reasonable effort means giving them the phone number of the facility in the south, I'm not sure that that's going to do us much good, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has a new alcohol and drug strategy. Surely the Minister plans to build a youth treatment facility somewhere in the North, and has the dollars for that in the strategy. Is that the case?

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

Further Return To Question 19-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment For Youth

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The short answer to my colleague's very leading question is no.

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

Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Allen in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, the corporation's affordable housing strategy tells us that it has an objective over the next five years to see between 750 and 800 homes constructed across the NWT. The Budget Address that we heard yesterday afternoon by Mr. Handley talks in some detail about community development, including the corporation's objective of investing in some specific communities. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask where are these units going to be built, in what specific communities? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to acknowledge, yes, there will be several new initiatives undertaken with the NWT Housing Corporation in communities like Lutselk'e, Fort Liard, and Fort Good Hope. Three of the six that we identified are under-housed, and we'll continue to work with all communities across the Northwest Territories to address their key housing issues. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the needs of smaller communities, off-road communities, are well known and need to be addressed. But we know that certainly

Yellowknife, Inuvik and more recently Hay River and Fort Smith are starting to bulge at the seams. What programs, Mr. Speaker, can the corporation bring in that will help make a difference in those communities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to announce I did a press release yesterday announcing that we would help the private developers reduce their risk from 25 down to 15 percent on commercial units, and down to 10 percent on private home ownership, as well as reducing the interest from 1.5 percent down to half a percent to help new developers facilitate more rapid growth in terms of meeting those housing needs in those communities that can well afford it. So that's one of the many strategies we will be implementing over the next several months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, that is a very welcome announcement. I know that people in the private sector have been looking for this kind of thing. I'm wondering if the Minister could give a bit more detail. How does this particular differ from previous programs of the Housing Corporation? Just how is it going to help make a difference out there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the philosophy behind the shift in the policy is to help the private developers fill up the gaps which we can't under our existing home ownership programs. It will allow the developers to bring in different methodology in the delivery system, and hopefully that will allow the developers to leverage bridge financing faster so we can put the housing in much faster and we can deliver to the growing demand, and also service the needs of those communities that need it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, good news. Is this new program immediately available to the developer's market? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 20-14(6): Housing Construction In NWT Communities

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing it's just a policy shift within the NWT Housing Corporation, yes, it is immediate. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. The honourable Member for the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. He stated earlier that his view is that we have to have inclusion where everyone is on board. Yet, Mr. Speaker, in 1994, it's clear from the statement that I read from the committee that it had been 10 years since the Inuvialuit agreement was signed. "The Northwest Territories have seen three more land claims agreements signed in that period for the Gwich'in, the Sahtu and Nunavut. The committee is concerned with the length of time that it has taken for this government to expedite legislation concerning claimant groups."

I'd like to ask the Minister why is it that now we're using a different practice, where in 1994 this government passed Inuvialuit land claims legislation to enact the wildlife agreement, yet at that time there were three land claims agreements in place. Why is it that now we're having to have everybody included in making that decision?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand where the honourable Member is coming from with regard to comparing what happened back in 1994 to now. It's a different government. What I want to tell the Member is that we are working on it and, even though it's not as fast as the Member would like it to go, there is still work being done on it. I think it's very crucial that the different claimant groups are consulted, and that they're working with us on this whole initiative, and that it's important that everybody in the North who is involved in the wildlife provisions are covered. This is the reason why it's not happening as fast as the honourable Member wishes it to be. So what happened in 1994 and now, is a similar type of process in that we have to move through the House and through consultations. Perhaps this time around the consultation is longer and more intense. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all I'm asking for is can this government enact the Gwich'in comprehensive claim obligations under the wildlife provisions, similar to those that were enacted in 1994 with the Inuvialuit with regard to their obligations under their land claim agreement?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, our legislation covers the whole territory. Although there are claim groups that have provisions within their own claimant group that we have obligations to, we also have obligations to the other claimant groups that are out there. The work that we're doing with representatives of the Gwich'in and the Sahtu Dene, Metis and Inuvialuit is that there is agreement there on a process on how we're going to work together. Up to this point in time, I haven't heard from the Gwich'in Tribal Council to break their part of it out of this whole process and proceed alone. I think there's agreement now with our process that everybody is on board and that we're proceeding together. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to not enacting this enabling legislation, it has put a real hindrance on the whole development of the Northwest Territories. Without having this legislation passed, the Gwich'in wildlife boards and the Sahtu wildlife boards cannot carry out their obligations. We have wildlife officers that cannot carry out obligations that they have under the land claim agreements because they don't have that legislative responsibility. So I'd like to ask the Minister if this legislation is important to the development of the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Minister, since you mentioned you were going to introduce something in June, can we introduce legislation in the September sitting?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the best we can do is try to introduce draft legislation. Like I indicated earlier, there are some mechanisms and resources in the consultation process that we have set up with the different claimant groups represented now, that we have to see whether it's possible to do that. At this point in time I have to say no, I don't think it's possible. I think by tabling draft legislation, that also we're going to have an opportunity for people in the North to see what is really on the drawing board to be included in a new Wildlife Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not too sure what the process is here, but I would like to ask the Minister, as a private Member bringing forth legislation to make amendments to this Wildlife Act, is that what it's going to

take for this government to move on this legislation? Will you support a private Member coming forth, amending the legislation and having your department support that initiative, so we can move on this legislation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 21-14(6): Legislative Compliance With Land Claim Agreements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot advise the honourable Member on that. I think I have to take the position that the government has taken. We are working on new wildlife legislation and there is a process we have agreed upon with our partners the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in and the Sahtu. The Dogribs have also started to get involved in this whole process. So there is a partnership deal on how to proceed with the process. At this point, we have to stick with what the game plan is and what we agreed to on the process. Thank you.

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

Question 22-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the excitement and surprise following the announcement by the Minister of RWED that he and the government will pursue and go through with the new law governing waste reduction and recovery, I couldn't come up with the questions I needed to ask. One of them is, is the Minister, in committing to introduce this legislation in June, is he also committing to making the resources available for the start-up cost? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 22-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've discussed it as Cabinet and FMB and, if the legislation is passed, there is agreement there to find the resources to implement it following passage of legislation.

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

Supplementary To Question 22-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that. In looking at the workload of the Minister, he has a lot to contend with. I just want to be as certain as I can, that the Minister himself is very committed to following through and that it's not another commitment that he wishes to get done but he may not be able to get done. Could I get his personal commitment that he will do all that he can to introduce it and make sure that the resources are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 22-14(6): Waste Reduction And Recovery Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have Cabinet agreement and support to proceed with the drafting of it in whatever way we can find to do it. As well, the resources will be there once the legislation is passed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to Budget Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 16: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 4: An Act To Amend The Consumer Protection Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 17, 2003, I will move that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Motor Vehicles Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 17, 2003, I will move that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 16, notices of motions for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 6: Electoral Boundaries Commission Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 17, 2003, I will move that Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 16, notices of motions for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 17, 2003, I will move that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 16, notices of motions for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Elections Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 17, 2002, I will move that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 16, notices of motions for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 3 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 4, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004, be read for the second time. This bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make operations expenditures and capital investment expenditures for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 3 has had second reading and accordingly the bill stands referred to Committee of the Whole. Item 19, second reading of bills. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 12, reports of standing and special committees.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Dent.

**REVERT TO ITEM 12: REPORTS OF STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Committee Report 3-14(6): Standing Committee On
Accountability and Oversight Report On The Review Of
The Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates**

MR. DENT: The standing committees of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories met from January 13th to January 24th, 2003 to review the 2003-2004 draft main estimates for each of the departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

As part of the wrap-up process, the standing committees on Governance and Economic Development and Social Programs brought issues that were considered to be of broad interest to all Members to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for review.

This report will comment on both the general issues brought to the standing committee for review as well as issues that arose during the committee's review of the Department of the Executive's Draft Main Estimates.

Corporate Capital Planning (CCP) Process

Regular Members continue to have concerns about the government's new Corporate Capital Planning (CCP) process introduced during the review of the 2002-2005 business plans. The long-standing practice of this government was to rank capital projects in a five-year infrastructure acquisition plan by department. Government departments were asked to prepare essential lists of necessary infrastructure projects within their respective departments, and priorities were assigned based on need within the departmental capital budget.

Rather than operating from individual department infrastructure budgets, the CCP process has one capital target with all projects from all departments competing for the single pot of available funding. This competition or evaluation process is based upon a primary rating criterion which ranks capital projects in the following order: protection of people, protection of assets, protection of the environment, financial investment considerations, and program needs or requirements. Each project is then considered by secondary criteria founded on the following factors: scale of impact, severity of impact if the project is not completed, urgency of the project and the ability to mitigate. All government capital projects are subject to this new funding approach.

A Capital Review Committee, comprised of deputy ministers, determines which projects should be presented in the capital plan based upon this model. In our report on the review of the 2002 - 2003 Main Estimates, the committee stated:

Committee members concurred with comments made by the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development in its review of the 2002-2005 draft business plans that this new capital planning process "may leave communities and regular Members without effective input" and furthermore, that "these criteria, especially the protection of people, may lead to projects from larger centres being placed before the needs of smaller communities."

The standing committees remain concerned about the lack of effective input from regular Members and community leaders.

In considering the new capital planning process on a broad level, committee members observed the process may have a variety of inherent flaws including:

1. The process of ranking projects by priority, which is led by the protection of people and protection of assets, unfairly penalises less developed and populated communities. Public sector spending is often the exclusive economic driver in our smallest communities. A more responsive approach that recognizes the social benefits of capital spending in small communities should be adopted.
2. Many Members are concerned that because of the current structure of the CCP, a number of capital projects in large communities have continued to receive funding at the expense of capital investment in smaller communities.
3. Although final accountability for management of the public purse ultimately rests with Ministers, the membership of the Capital Review Committee is comprised in its entirety of deputy ministers. With this approach, Ministers may never know about all of the projects proposed, or which ones were "dropped" from consideration.
4. Regional representation on the Capital Review Committee is non-existent. All of the deputy ministers are Yellowknife-based and may not be as intimately aware of regional needs.

In response to concerns raised during the standing committee's review of the 2003-2006 business plans, the Premier made a commitment to consult with Members and thoroughly review the CCP process. The Standing Committee on

Accountability and Oversight reminded the Premier that the regular Members should be consulted on any proposed changes to the CCP prior to the introduction of the 2003-2004 Main Estimates in February, 2003. This would have ensured that input from regular Members was incorporated into the final capital expenditure process prior to the finalization of the 2003-2004 Main Estimates. Despite reservations expressed by Members and concerns raised by standing committees, the government has pressed forward with the corporate capital planning process for assigning priorities to the projects presented in the 2003 -2004 Main Estimates.

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs were surprised to see that several significant capital projects, which do not appear to be consistent with the needs identified in the 20-year plan or in prior years' Main Estimates, appear in the 2003 -2004 Main Estimates. Members were not given clear reasons - other than the application of the new process - as to why the government has approved one project over another.

For example, Members are unclear as to why there have been significant changes both in scope and in the start date of the Fort Smith Health Centre project. In addition Members pointed out that although student housing replacement and upgrading was identified in the 2002 - 2003 Main Estimates, it was identified as a territorial initiative. In the new main estimates, however, the student housing budget has both doubled to over \$5 million and is concentrated in Fort Smith. Members have not seen enough detail of the ranking process to agree the government is justified in placing the need for student accommodations in Fort Smith above the pressing need in Inuvik and Yellowknife. Finally, Members of the Social Programs committee expressed their concern that a new \$10

million dollar correctional facility for women is being proposed when the government has failed to provide information to the committee outlining the inadequacy of the current facility.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight discussed the capital projects in question and noted the further information provided to committees did not convince Members that the current priority assigned to these capital projects was justified. The standing committee forwarded a letter to Minister Handley explaining their concerns about these projects and recommended their removal until such time as the government had fully justified their inclusion to the regular Members.

The government responded to the standing committee in a letter of February 7, 2003. Unfortunately, it would appear that the government plans to continue with its initial plans despite the misgivings of the Committee. The government provided no further information that convinces regular Members that due process is being followed. The first criterion for the decision on capital projects is that of the protection of people. The committee has yet to be convinced that the significant increases in capital projects for Fort Smith meets that test.

The government pointed out that much of the resources allocated for these projects are actually future years' spending and will therefore remain a part of the capital plan for the next government to review.

The committee recognizes that future years' spending is beyond the control of this Assembly, however, the committee is also aware that once projects are placed on a long-term plan it becomes more difficult to remove or change them. Projects become institutionalized, money is spent developing master plans and architectural renderings and communities expect that the projects they see will be coming in the years laid out. Given the timing of the election this year, the next Assembly may not have time to review the draft main Estimates in the same detail we have had this year. It is too late to remove these projects from the main estimates now, but committee members remain concerned that the government has not been able to justify them staying in the plan.

Members hope to ensure that the new standing committees for the 15th Assembly are aware of this committee's concerns. Returning regular Members will raise these issues as soon as possible in the new Assembly, and hopefully will either receive proper justification for including the projects as priorities, or vote them out of the estimates in favour of more urgently-needed projects.

Main Street Paving For Non-Taxed-Based Communities

In March 2002, during the review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates for MACA, the Committee of the Whole adopted a motion that called upon the Ministers of MACA and Transportation to develop a program to pave the main streets within non-tax based municipalities having a population greater than 500 residents and located on the Northwest Territories highway system.

Based on the above criteria, the government advised the Members in separate correspondence that the following communities would be eligible for the paving of their main streets: Fort Resolution, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Fort McPherson and Rae-Edzo.

During the review of the department's draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates, the department provided the Members with a preliminary implementation schedule for the main street paving program for non-taxed based communities.

However, committee members noted with concern that Tuktoyaktuk, an ineligible community in the Minister's own riding, is proposed to receive \$1.25 million for the chipsealing of its main street over the next five fiscal years. The Governance and Economic Development committee noted that for the total amount of \$800,000 being spent in 2003-2004, Tuktoyaktuk will be receiving \$600,000 or 75 percent of the funding. Although Tuktoyaktuk has a population of 979, it is not on the NWT highway system.

The GED committee brought this item to all regular Members for consideration. The AOC committee included this issue in their letter of concern about capital projects. Once again, the committee felt that the Minister had failed to provide adequate information to justify this significant shift in policy.

In the response to AOC of February 7, 2003, the government indicated that the Financial Management Board Secretariat had decided to extend the program to communities not on the highway system. The government further stated that since the Department of Transportation's gravel crusher is going to be in the area over the summer of 2003 anyway, that it was merely good financial sense to go ahead with paving for Tuktoyaktuk.

Several Members questioned this logic. One Member pointed out that there would also be gravel crushed in the community of Lutselk'e over the summer of 2003. When he asked if this community could be brought in under the program, he was told by the Minister that the hamlet did not meet the criteria. Another Member mentioned that gravel is rather permanent and could easily be stockpiled until the road is paved some time in the future.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight continues to maintain that the paving of main streets in the NWT should not be ranked on the basis of convenience. Since the government claims to follow the corporate capital planning process, one would expect its criteria to impact the ranking decisions in this program as well. As the first criteria for the CCP is the protection of people, the decision regarding a community's timeline for paving should be based on concerns about people's health in the community due to large concentrations of dust. Until the Minister can clearly show that the community of Tuktoyaktuk is significantly more at risk than any other NWT community, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight would suggest that the department revise their current schedule for main street paving.

Proposed Revenue Initiatives

In bringing forward the draft main estimates to committee in January, the government proposed a number of revenue initiatives to reduce and better manage the forecasted cash deficit for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. On Friday, January 17, 2003, the government gave a full briefing to regular Members on the proposed revenue initiatives.

Committee members were concerned about the impact of the proposed revenue initiatives upon the already high cost of living in the Northwest Territories.

Proposed revenue increases on tobacco and liquor are forecast to raise respectively \$2.5 million; and \$1 million for a total of \$3.5 million for the government in 2003-2004 and a subsequent \$3.5 million for 2004-2005.

While committee members understand that raising "sin" taxes may help decrease their use, they know this is a double-edged sword. Tobacco and liquor price increases impact addicted individuals and their families hardest. Those addicted are often in low or fixed income families -- who would be affected the most. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reiterated its concerns to the Minister in a letter that stated "a majority of committee members will support the proposed increases to tobacco and liquor taxes."

Proposed Increase To Administration Fee Surcharge

Department Of Public Works And Services

The standing committee is aware that, while the majority of communities in the NWT provide their own water and sewer services, there are currently four communities that rely on the Department of PWS to deliver that service. These communities have signed agreements with the department which bind them to accept the department's maintenance services on the necessary infrastructure.

During the review of the government's 2002-2003 main estimates the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development took issue with the fact that the four communities are currently being charged an additional nine percent administration fee. This fee is over and above the amount being paid to the Department for other work done on a community's behalf.

The committee was aware that the majority of the money spent by the community on services is ultimately recovered from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Therefore the committee did not feel that it was appropriate for the Department of PWS to unilaterally impose a charge which will ultimately come from another GNWT Department. Members suggested that this issue be considered by the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight so that all regular Members could have input.

The AOC committee considered the matter and made the following recommendation in its report on the 2002-2003 Main Estimates: "The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the Financial Management Board Secretariat reconsider the surcharge of nine percent on services performed on behalf of community governments."

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development reviewed the department's 2003-2006 business plans in September of 2002. At that time the Minister announced that there would be an increase in the administration fee from nine percent to 16 percent effective immediately. Justifying the increase, the Minister stated that he had been directed by the Financial Management Board to obtain full cost recovery for all services provided to the communities.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development once again pointed out that it did not support even a nine percent administration fee levied on work done by the department for communities and would certainly not support an increase of this fee to 16 percent. Furthermore, the

committee expressed concern that a large increase in the middle of the fiscal year would be an undue hardship on small communities that had not factored such an increase into their budgets. The Minister agreed to delay the implementation of the increase to April 1, 2003. The GED committee recommended that this issue be reviewed by the AOC.

Regular Members were subsequently informed that other GNWT departments are currently charging considerably less in administrative cost recoveries. For example, Nunavut is charged a 6.5 percent administration fee for work done on their behalf by the GNWT. Members failed to understand why we would charge a higher fee to NWT residents than is charged for services delivered to non-residents. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight suggests the government use a consistent method for determining administrative costs. Then, if fees are to be recovered, they can, and should, be levied fairly.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight sees water and sewer as an essential service and would like to see all municipalities obtain full control over the delivery of these services. The committee urges the Government of the Northwest Territories and the mayors of the concerned communities to fully co-operate in preparing for the take-over by agreeing on a timeline for the gradual transfer of water and sewer services. We suggest that a period of three to five years should be adequate. However, any transfer of these vital services must include adequate resources and training to the affected communities. To encourage the departments to move quickly to devolve responsibility, the committee suggested the removal of all administration charges.

In response, the government stated it had reviewed the proposed charge and has instructed the department to withdraw the planned increase to the fee. However, the government also said that the fee will remain at the current nine percent charge until a thorough review has taken place.

In order to encourage the department to work proactively to achieve this transfer of responsibility, the committee makes the following recommendation: The committee strongly recommends that no water and sewer services administration fees be charged by Public Works and Services until the complete transfer of such services to all communities is concluded.

Evergreening – Desktop Computer Replacement Program

During the review of the 2003-2006 business plans, the standing committee took note that the GNWT appears to have adopted a three-year replacement schedule for desktop computers called Evergreening. The GNWT stated that, for desktop and presumably laptop computers, the government has concluded that a three-year replacement cycle is the best balance between functionality and cost.

The standing committee reviewed this program and decided that, while some computers involved in technical work such as graphics or mapping may need to be replaced frequently, other computers that are used simply for word processing may not. The standing committee recommended in their report on the business plans that the government review this program and extend the three-year replacement schedule wherever possible.

The standing committee was informed that all decisions regarding computer policy are now under the direction of the new chief information officer within the Financial Management Board Secretariat. In their reply to the committee, the government stated that it will review the program but still regards the three-year replacement schedule as a necessary expense.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on our report on the review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Committee Report 3-14(6) be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-14(6)...I have to wait to read that. I am sorry, I've gotten ahead of myself.

Motion To Move Committee Report 3-14(6) Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I would like to move that the report be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? No quorum. It's been brought to the Speaker's attention that we do not have a quorum. Mr. Clerk, would you ring the bell, please?

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We now have a quorum. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 3-14(6) has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that we've dealt with the motion, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 3-14(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93 and have Committee Report 3-14(6) advanced. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Therefore, Committee Report 3-14(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Committee Report 4-14(6): Standing Committee On Governance and Economic Development Report On The Review Of The Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on the work of the Standing Committee of Governance and Economic Development and report on the review of the 2003-2004 Main Estimates.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, GED, met from January 13 to January 24, 2003 to review the 2003-2004 Draft Main Estimates. The GED envelope includes the following departments, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Finance, Public Works and Services, PWS, Municipal and Community Affairs, MACA, Transportation, and Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, RWED.

Corporate Capital Planning Process

The government's corporate capital planning process, or CCP, continues to be a leading concern of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development. The CCP has one capital target with all department projects competing for the available funding. This competition or evaluation process is based upon a primary rating criterion. The criterion prioritizes capital expenditures in the following order, protection of people, protection of assets, protection of the environment, financial investment considerations and program needs or requirements. Each project is then evaluated by a secondary criterion founded on the following factors: scale of impact, severity of impact if the project is not completed, urgency of the project and the ability to mitigate. All the government's capital projects are subject to this funding approach. The evaluation process is done by the Capital Review Committee, which is entirely comprised of deputy ministers.

In their consideration of the CCP, committee members continued to have the following concerns:

1. The prioritization process, which is led by the protection of people and protection of assets, unfairly penalizes less developed and less populated communities. Public sector spending is often the exclusive economic driver in the majority of small communities. A more responsive approach that incorporates a fairer distribution of capital spending for small communities should be adopted.
2. Cost overruns in a number of large projects have impacted upon timelines and funding for other projects.
3. The membership of the Capital Review Committee is comprised in its entirety of deputy ministers. Committee members concluded that the new process moved the decision-making power to the deputy ministers rather than the Ministers, who are elected to represent the interests of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

At the conclusion of the standing committees' review of the 2003-2006 business plans, the Premier made a commitment to review the CCP that would incorporate concerns of the regular Members. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reminded the Premier that the regular Members should be consulted on any proposed changes to the CCP prior to the introduction of the 2003-2004 Main Estimates in February, 2003. This would ensure input from regular Members is incorporated into the final capital expenditure process prior to the finalization of the government's forthcoming budget. As of the February 5, 2003, the standing committees have not received any correspondence from the Premier's office on this matter.

Proposed Revenue Initiatives

The government recently proposed a number of revenue initiatives to reduce and better manage its forecasted cash deficit for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. The government proposed:

1. An increase of \$6.80 per carton of cigarettes, effective April 1, 2003, and
2. A 10 percent increase in liquor markups, effective April 1, 2003.

These proposed revenue increases are forecast to raise respectively \$2.5 million and \$1 million for a total of \$3.5 million for the government in 2003-2004 and a similar amount for 2004-2005.

Committee members were concerned about the significant impact of the proposed revenue initiatives upon the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. Accordingly, the committee referred the matter to AOC for further discussion by all regular Members. Detailed comments by members of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development are summarized in its review of the Department of Finance, proposed revenue initiatives, found later in this report.

A number of Members noted that tobacco and liquor consumption is not discretionary, but rather an addiction. Low or fixed income families would be affected the most. The proposed revenue initiatives may result in additional social costs for the government.

Department of Public Works and Services

Proposed Increase to Administration Fee Surcharge

The standing committee is aware that while the majority of communities in the NWT provide their own water and sewer services there are currently four communities that rely on PWS to deliver that service. These communities have signed agreements with the department, which bind them to accept the department's maintenance services on the necessary infrastructure.

During the review of the government's 2002-2003 main estimates, the standing committee spent a considerable amount of time exploring this issue. Members discussed the limiting nature of the current contracts and had encouraged the Minister to draft new agreements in consultation with the communities. The Minister agreed and stated that new agreements would be signed with the affected communities over the summer of 2002.

At the same time the standing committee took issue with the fact that the four communities are currently being charged an additional nine percent administration fee over and above the amount being paid to the department for work done on the community's behalf. The committee is aware that the majority of the money spent by the community on services is ultimately recovered from MACA. Therefore, the committee does not feel that it is appropriate for PWS to unilaterally impose a charge which will ultimately come from another GNWT department.

The standing committee felt that any administration fee would in effect be charged back to another GNWT department and therefore defeats the purpose of decreasing costs to the GNWT. Members suggested that this issue be referred to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight so that all Members could have input.

The AOC Committee considered the matter and made the following recommendation in its Report on the 2002-2003 Main Estimates: The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the Financial Management Board Secretariat reconsider the surcharge of nine percent on services performed on behalf of community governments.

During the business plan review for 2003-2006, the committee asked if any communities had signed new draft agreements with the department over the summer. The Minister stated that no community had signed a new agreement. However, a planned increase of the administration fee to 16 percent was going ahead for implementation effective immediately. Justifying the increase, the Minister stated that he had been directed by the Financial Management Board to obtain full cost recovery for all services provided to the communities.

The committee once again pointed out that it did not support even a nine percent administration fee levied on work done by the department for communities and would certainly not support an increase of this fee to 16 percent. Furthermore, the committee expressed concern that a large increase in the middle of the fiscal year would cause undue hardship on small communities that had not factored such an increase into their budgets. The Minister agreed to delay the implementation of the increase to April 1, 2003.

The committee is at a loss to explain how the department can arbitrarily decide to increase administration fees in the absence of newly signed agreements from the communities.

Finally, committee members are aware that other GNWT departments are currently charging considerably less in administrative cost recoveries and in some activities, are charging no administrative fee at all. For example, Nunavut is charged only a 6.5 percent administration fee for work done on their behalf by the GNWT. The Department of RWED has a mutual agreement with fire suppression forces in other provinces and territories to charge no administration fee for any services provided to another jurisdiction. Clearly there is a large discrepancy throughout the GNWT as to the charge of administration fees by departments.

Furthermore, the members of the committee would like to suggest to the government that water is an essential service and should be a cost to the government without an expected 100 percent recovery of costs from the communities. Members also suggested that there be a cap on the costs of water/sewer maintenance fees or charges.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has once again referred this item for comment by all regular Members at the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Evergreening – Desktop Computer Replacement Program

The next issue the committee dealt with, Mr. Speaker, is Evergreening, desktop computer replacement program. During the review of the 2003-2006 business plans, the standing committee took note that the GNWT appears to have adopted a three-year replacement schedule for desktop computers called Evergreening. The GNWT stated that for desktop and presumably laptop computers, the government has concluded that a three-year replacement cycle is the best balance between functionality and cost.

The standing committee reviewed this program and decided that, while some computers involved in technical work such as graphics or mapping may need to be replaced frequently, other computers that are used simply for word processing may not. The standing committee recommended in their report on the business plans that the government review this program and extend the three-year replacement schedule wherever possible.

The standing committee was informed that all decisions regarding computer policy are now under the direction of the new chief information officer within FMBS. In their reply to the committee, the government stated that it will review the program but still regards the three-year replacement schedule as a necessary expense. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommends the government extend the current three-year replacement cycle for desktop computers wherever possible.

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

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

The standing committee has referred this item to the Accountability and Oversight committee for consideration by all regular Members. Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates.

Motion To Move Committee Report 4-14(6) Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Committee Report 4-14(6) be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. We have a motion and the motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Committee Report 4-14(6) has been received and will be moved into Committee of the Whole. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 4-14(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and advance Committee Report 4-14(6). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Therefore, Committee Report 4-14(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today.

Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife south, Mr. Bell.

Committee Report 5-14(6): Standing Committee On Social Programs Report On The Review Of The Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met from January 13 to January 24, 2003 to review the draft main estimates. The Social Programs envelope includes the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The committee, in our discussions with the Ministers, raised a number of issues. These discussions resulted in the committee making some specific recommendations. The issues and recommendations will be discussed in detail under the individual departments.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is very concerned with the capital allocation process. Several large infrastructure projects, which have appeared during this business planning cycle, are causing Members to question the validity of the current methodology in determining how the GNWT's limited funding for capital projects are allocated.

The Social Programs committee relayed these concerns to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, who in turn, wrote a letter requesting that the funding for the renovation to the Fort Smith Health Centre, the construction and renovation of student housing for Aurora College and the construction of a new Territorial Women's Correctional Centre be deleted from the infrastructure acquisition plan until such time as their inclusion could be justified to the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

In the response to the letter from the Accountability and Oversight committee the Minister of Finance declined to remove the projects from the infrastructure acquisition plan. The Minister argued that as these projects were for future years, the decision would ultimately rest with the 15th Assembly

and that the committee's concerns could be dealt with over the next business planning cycle.

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs are very disappointed the government's response ignores the committee's valid concerns. The committee believes that because the infrastructure acquisition plan is included as part of the main estimates, residents of the NWT think the projects and funding for future years have received due diligence from the committee process. This is not the case for future year infrastructure projects.

The danger in allowing these projects to stay in the infrastructure allocation plan is the tendency of the funding numbers to become institutionalized. For example, the government proposes to replace the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre at a cost of just over \$10 million. At this time, even the department agrees with the committee that the functionality and the cost estimates of the proposed facility must be reviewed.

The committee fears leaving the \$10 million in the infrastructure allocation plan will mean any planning process will use that number as the end target.

Because of time constraints and other issues surrounding the transition to the next Assembly there may not be sufficient time for the next Standing Committee on Social Programs to fully examine these capital projects. The Standing Committee on Social Programs will therefore be recommending to its successor that the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre, the student housing for the Aurora College Campus and the renovation of the Fort Smith Health Centre be removed from the infrastructure acquisition plan until such time as the respective department's can justify the need for these projects.

Motion To Move Committee Report 5-14(6) Into Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. BELL: Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on our report of the draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Committee Report 5-14(6) be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Therefore, Committee Report 5-14(6) will be received and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 5-14(6) moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and advance

Committee Report 5-14(6) into Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Therefore, Committee Report 5-14(6) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any further reports of standing and special committees? If not, we will go to item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have Bill 3, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6). I would like to ask what the wish is of the committee. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee consider Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will take a short break and come back and begin with Bill 3.

---SHORT RECESS

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Before the recess, we agreed to deal with Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004. Any general comments with regard to Bill 3? General comments? What is the wish of the committee?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (MR. KRUTKO): Detail. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Health And Social Services

CHAIRMAN (MR. KRUTKO): We are dealing with the Department of Health and Social Services, page 6-2. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he has any opening remarks.

Minister's Opening Remarks

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today, I am pleased to present the 2003-2004 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. These main estimates total \$226.182 million and represent an approximate 13 percent increase in O and M expenditures compared to last year's main estimates. Of this amount, 73 percent or \$163 million is provided to the seven health and social services authorities and a further \$19 million is paid to out-of-territories health care providers.

Mr. Chairman, during the meetings with standing committee and in the Legislature last fall, we spoke about the human

resource and financial pressures on our health and social services system. All Members of this Legislature talked about the importance of having a stable system that can provide services when they are needed.

I am pleased to say that considerable progress has been made in the last few months to address these pressures. Since the last session, I have released two human resource plans: a retention and recruitment plan for allied professionals, nurses and social workers; and, an interim health profession plan for physicians, midwives and the nursing profession. Together, these inject \$9 million in new, ongoing funding to our system. These plans:

- Begin to alleviate workload issues in the nursing and physician professions by introducing 42 new positions;
- Facilitate the development of two new professions, nurse practitioners and midwives, in the NWT system;
- Focus work on identifying appropriate types and numbers of professionals required to effectively provide services in various NWT settings;
- Enhance professional development opportunities for our health and social workers;
- Streamline hiring processes for hard-to-recruit positions;
- Examine issues of compensation in the nursing and allied health care professions; and
- Improve the level of educational support for students in the health and social fields.

In addition to these developments, Mr. Chairman, the NWT Medical Association has indicated its support for a new contract for general practitioners.

Mr. Chairman, together, these human resource developments represent significant moves to stabilize and strengthen our workforce. I should note that such change would be next to impossible to develop over the same time frame in another province. But this is precisely the kind of opportunity for change that I spoke about to the Legislative Assembly a mere five months ago. We are small enough to identify innovative solutions to issues and quickly act on them. I believe, Mr. Chairman, these investments will create a work environment that will retain our current professionals and attract others.

The Romanow report presents strong arguments for an increase in federal funding in the health sector. The report has created an opportunity for the Government of the Northwest Territories to pursue discussions with the federal government on funding that will meet our unique health needs and service delivery challenges.

As Members know, these discussions are still underway so there is no guarantee of what funding might come to the NWT. However, we remain optimistic that the federal government will recognize the service delivery challenges and funding needs of Canada's territories. I will work with our Premier and my colleagues to maintain the national recognition of northern health care issues we have achieved in the last two weeks in order to successfully conclude a funding arrangement with the federal government.

We must continue to do the work necessary to demonstrate what resources our system truly needs to provide high quality health and social services throughout the territories. This includes completing two tasks in the HSS system action plan, developing an integrated service delivery model for the NWT

and completing a comprehensive human resource plan for the system. These two initiatives, slated for completion in the next six months, will help us define more precisely our resource requirements for a made-in-the-NWT health care system that matches need with service.

Mr. Chairman, these main estimates also include new funding for the government's response to the Social Agenda. This complements the funding being spent across the government to improve the health care of our residents.

Of course, Members are well aware of the work related to the health and social services system action plan. Over the next few months, we expect to complete half of the 45 action plan commitments. This includes:

- Distributing a self-care handbook and core services information to all NWT households;
- Establishing a common approach to sharing expertise and specialized services within the system through collaborative service networks;
- Implementing a standardized orientation for staff and board trustees;
- Developing a common performance measurement and reporting system; and, developing a five-year plan that addresses health and social impacts relating to economic development.

Each of these accomplishments adds to the capacity of our system to provide high quality care, where and when it is needed.

Mr. Chairman, these activities are only highlights of some of the work being done by the department and authorities. The review of our main estimates provides an opportunity to discuss more of our work. I look forward to discussing our activities and answering the committee's questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (MR. KRUTKO): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, I would like to ask the committee responsible for reviewing the department under consideration if they have any comments. Mr. Braden.

Standing Committee On Social Programs Comments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on January 20, 2003, to discuss the 2003-2004 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. The standing committee notes a \$13.064 million increase in the budget were the figures presented during the business plan review in September. There is a \$426,000 increase in the amortization estimates, a \$957,000 increase for the implementation of the Social Agenda action plan; a negative \$440,000 reduction for cancelled transfer of Hay River Health and Social Services Board contract; a negative \$226,000 transfer of payroll benefit administration for the Fort Smith and Deh Cho boards to the FMBS; \$738,000 to deal with recruitment and retention issues; \$1.409 million for the implementation of the mental health, addictions and family violence strategy; and finally, Mr. Chairman, \$8.259 million for the implementation of interim health professional plan.

Members of the committee were pleased the interim health professional plan contained funding to hire one midwife each for Fort Smith and Hay River. This will allow expectant mothers

without any medical complications to give birth in their home communities.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is concerned with how the capital allocation process determines which facility will be built or renovated in advance of other projects. One of the criteria deputy ministers use in deciding capital allocations is the protection of existing government assets, Mr. Chairman. This means the government will spend money to make sure existing facilities will achieve the maximum operational life. In the case of major facilities such as schools and hospitals, the cost of these renovations can run into the millions of dollars. Such is the case with the health centre in Fort Smith. Members of the standing committee were first made aware of the perceived need to renovate the health centre during a discussion of the 2002-03 draft main estimates. The renovations and the proposed figure of \$10 million first appeared in the capital acquisition plan in September of 2002.

Committee members noted the roof of the Fort Smith Health Centre was renovated this year at a cost of \$272,000. The committee is having trouble justifying the half-life renovation of a facility when there are communities that do not even have a community health centre or resident nurses, Mr. Chairman. The bigger question is how the capital allocation plan addresses the issue of needed new infrastructure in the communities with the need to protect the government's investment in existing infrastructure. As one Member asked, are we, meaning the Department of Health and Social Services, in the business of protecting people's lives or protecting government assets?

Until such time as the department can provide justification for the midlife renovation of the Fort Smith Health Centre in advance of needed health infrastructure in the communities, the standing committee recommends the proposed funding be removed from the capital allocation plan. This recommendation was passed on to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and conveyed by a letter to the Minister of Finance for a response. A response from the Minister indicates the department is planning to complete the master development plan in 2003-2004 to determine program requirements and required facility functionality. The government went on to say it prefers to leave the project in the five-year capital acquisition plan subject to the outcome of the master development plan for the Fort Smith Health Centre. Members of the committee are concerned with this approach, believing there may be a tendency for the program requirements to end up matching the available capital funds.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the standing committee shared the Minister's disappointment over the response to the request for proposals issued on providing a health information toll-free service and agreed that proposed costs were significantly higher than anticipated. The committee could understand the Minister's reluctance to go back to the trough, as it were, for increased funding, given the significant investment of over \$13 million the government has made in health care since the review of the business plan.

However, members of the standing committee would be even more disappointed if the government would have let the idea of a toll-free line to provide health information to NWT residents die because there are insufficient funds at this time. It is hoped that funding may become available through the increase in federal funding for health care.

Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Social Programs remains committed to expanding telehealth availability in the NWT. Information provided by the department subsequent to the discussions of the draft main estimates indicate the program is on track and is providing benefit to the medical community and their patients.

Members took note of the current registration process underway for NWT health care cards, Mr. Chairman. With the attempt to match residents with addresses, it should be possible for the Department of Health and Social Services to eliminate much of the health care card abuse that anecdotal evidence suggests is happening. Members of the standing committee and likely the residents of the NWT would be interested in having the Minister communicate the results of the registration process once they are available.

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs are aware of the serious increase in the number of child apprehensions, particularly in Yellowknife and Inuvik and have commented on this disturbing trend in past reports. The department, up until this year, has done a good job of implementing recommendations contained in the Child Welfare League of Canada report on the state of the child protection service in the NWT. Members were very disappointed that funding for the last 11 child protection workers recommended by the Child Welfare League was not contained in this year's budget. This was despite Members' understanding that the implementation of the recommendations was a three-year process and would remain a priority in the department.

The standing committee's understanding of the Child Welfare League report also had a recommendation leading to the effective supervision of any new child protection worker hired as a result of the report. Members are concerned that failure to hire the additional 11 child protection workers has also impacted on the number of supervisors and the quality of support available to newly hired child protection workers.

There are some who will argue that the reason there have been more apprehensions over the last few years is that by implementing the Child Welfare League recommendations we have hired more child protection workers. More workers translates into more apprehensions. Or, it may be a case of there being not enough supervisors overseeing the work of the child protection workers and the workers are choosing to apprehend in situations that may not require such drastic measures but which are outside of their experience.

The committee does not believe the issues are that simple. The protection of a child is the focus of the child protection worker. If a child is in an unsafe living environment, the worker has a duty and responsibility to remove the child from the situation that gives rise to their potential concerns. What has been missing from this discussion, Mr. Chairman, is the realization that many of the problems that families are experiencing that give rise to protection concerns and children being apprehended are not that easy to correct, given the lack of services and support available to residents.

The committee will use the example of parents with an alcohol dependency in one of our smaller communities who have had their children apprehended. Before a child protection worker will allow these parents to regain custody of their children, they would have to show they no longer drink irresponsibly. The problem with this is there are no services available in our

smaller communities to help the parents recover. There is only one residential treatment program in the NWT, and even if treatment were successful, there is a lack of follow-up and support programs available in the person's home community. If you can't access the services, if you cannot get better, you cannot regain custody of your children. The committee is sure there are people who have given up any attempts to regain custody of their children, because the challenge of regaining sobriety or dealing with issues surrounding residential school abuse has proved too onerous. The committee is of the opinion there is a need to adjust the current child protection system to address the problems that are at the root of the need for apprehensions.

The need for prevention will always be present. Any apprehensions of children in danger are a necessary part of the equation. However, Mr. Chairman, the committee believes that the other side of the coin is the need to support the family in crisis. There must be programs and services in place that help families that want to be together and stay that way. The new Addictions, Mental Health and Family Violence Strategy may help address some of the issues, but it cannot be used by the department to abrogate its responsibility to provide support to families in need.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee is pleased with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation's commitment to work with the Department of Health and Social Services to determine the best utilization of the Samba K'e Healing Centre, including the possibility of using it as a territorial treatment centre for youth.

Mr. Chairman, members of the standing committee had expressed reservations with the department's plans to spend \$3.3 million in renovating the current Territorial Treatment Centre in Yellowknife, in light of an existing suitable facility being available.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the committee's report.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Dave Murray, the deputy minister of Health and Social Services; and Mr. Warren St. Germaine, the director of financial services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Member is moving a motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

We will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will again come to order. May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole? The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004, and Committee Report 5-14(6), and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder to the motion? The honourable Member for Frame Lake seconds the motion. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, may we have the orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings for Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at 10:30 of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

Orders of the day for Monday, February 17, 2003:

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

12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
 - Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004
 - CR 3-14(6), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - CR 4-14(6), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - CR 5-14(6), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 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 this House stands adjourned to Monday, February 17, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

