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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 23, 2006****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 78-15(4): Mental Health And Addictions Services Interim Report**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2001, on the instruction of Cabinet, the Department of Health and Social Services contracted Chalmers and Associates Consulting Ltd. to conduct an evaluation of community-based addictions and mobile treatment programs. The 2002 report titled "State of Emergency - A Report on the Delivery of Addictions Services in the NWT" provided 48 recommendations and it was determined that mental health and addictions services should be built from the community level up.

Since that time, we have implemented many changes and made significant investments in our services. Given our undertakings after the first report, it was determined that an interim review of the progress was necessary, to ensure that we were still on the right path.

Mr. Speaker, this follow-up report titled "Stay the Course - and Together We Can Secure the Foundation that Has Been Built" was recently completed and is available on the Health and Social Services web site, along with a summary report and supplemental reports. "Stay the Course" includes 37 recommendations to further support and build on steps taken in response to the original report.

Some of the steps taken since the 2002 report "State of Emergency" include the creation of 77 new positions at the community and regional levels, comprised of three categories: clinical supervisors, mental health and addictions counsellors and community wellness workers.

We also initiated a Community Wellness Worker Training Program with Keyano College. There have been 20 graduates from this program to date. Investments like these are key to building a strong and effective system of community-based addiction services. By investing in education and training, we are working towards building a qualified northern workforce.

Overall, the interim report card was a good one. It highlights that we are developing effective programs and strategies aimed at the prevention and reduction of addictions and the promotion of healthy living and healthy choices for residents of the NWT. By working with the

primary community care teams, we are empowering individuals, families and communities to address mental health and addiction issues. It also identifies areas for further development including the need to improve communication with all stakeholders, and to continue to build on strengths already in place at the community level, and to be flexible in transition planning.

The department is currently reviewing all 37 of the recommendations and will be preparing a response to the report, with an action plan, by the end of this fiscal year. We are committed to working with communities, NGOs and health care providers to improve our mental health and addiction services for all of our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Minister's Statement 79-15(4): Mackenzie Valley Winter Road Operations Improvements

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on the important progress the Department of Transportation has made in improving the Sahtu winter road system. In preparing for the possible construction of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline...

---Applause

...in no other part of the Northwest Territories does the Department of Transportation face a greater challenge to accommodating the safe interaction of individual/personal traffic and commercial/industrial truck traffic. Last season, the Sahtu communities expressed their concerns about the increase in industrial traffic on the winter road system and the impact it could have on the traveling safety of the general public. The Department of Transportation took steps to address them.

First of all, the department acknowledged that the road was not well signed to advise drivers of adverse conditions and difficult sections of road. A three-year program is now underway, which started last year, to install adequate traffic signage along the road. The department has also reduced the speed limit along this route to 50 km per hour.

At many critical sites, the department has worked with its contractors to improve the road's physical grade and alignment. The department will continue, year by year, to bring the right-of-way up to a better traveling standard and continue installing permanent bridges over stream crossings.

With the close involvement and cooperation of the municipality of Norman Wells, the department built a bypass around the community to move heavy truck traffic away from local streets. A similar bypass is proposed in Tulita.

The department also worked closely with industry to limit the impact of industry traffic on the general public. During the height of the last season, the department conducted highway patrols to ensure industry's compliance with trucking regulations generally and particularly in regard to the movement of oversized loads.

The department has also made improvement to the winter road from a management perspective. The Department of Transportation is using partnership opportunities with industry to more efficiently and effectively operate the winter road.

The Department of Transportation spends approximately \$1.1 million each year on the annual construction and maintenance of the Mackenzie Valley winter road. Industry has reported they have spent up to \$5 million each season to improve sections of the roadway to the point where they can safely and effectively move their rigs to support their exploration activities.

The Department of Industry, with Husky Energy acting as the industry "lead," explored numerous partnership opportunities and road management models that could be applied to improve planning and promote operational efficiencies of the annual Mackenzie Valley winter road operation.

Through this cooperative approach, the department developed a financial agreement that would provide a mechanism for industry to pay for the additional costs of providing an enhanced construction and maintenance program to better meet industry's special needs. Through this partnership arrangement, the department can maintain management control over the operation of the winter road system and delivery on industry's needs utilizing winter road contractors at no additional cost to the GNWT.

The Department of Transportation has made significant improvements to the winter road system and tried to remedy the traffic safety concerns that the Sahtu communities had raised. Over the next several years, the department will continue to work on improving the Sahtu winter roads. These improvements will meet the demands of greater traffic and the public's expectations that they can travel the road more safely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Minister's Statement 80-15(4): Premier Absent From The House

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House that the Honourable Joe Handley will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to meet with Prime Minister Harper and attend the Post-Secondary Education and Skills Summit in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I will be speaking to the theme of services to the communities in the area of social programs, Mr. Speaker.

A little over a week ago, I raised the plight, Mr. Speaker, of non-government organizations with regard to difficulties they are having in staffing, wage disparities and the need for multi-year sustainable and predictable agreements with our government. I tabled some correspondence from the president of the YWCA, Mr. Speaker, which detailed a pending staffing crisis that this very necessary organization faces. The majority of non-government organizations are in the social program areas. Examples are the Y, Mr. Speaker, the Literacy Council, the NWT Association of Persons with Disabilities, the Centre for Northern Families, to name a few. They are all delivering essential and much needed programs, many of them on behalf of this government. I believe, Mr. Speaker, we get exceptional value and great quality from these organizations, many of them, all of them, really governed by volunteer boards who work because they believe in this and for the benefit of the communities. They also raise a lot of funding on their own.

Mr. Speaker, the survey at the YWCA showed that, against the market value of other work done in 2004, their frontline workers are at least \$10,000 a year, or about \$5 an hour, behind market value.

Mr. Speaker, we need to look at how we treat our NGOs in relation to what we do, in fact, in our own government. We have just completed a very successful collective bargaining agreement with our own staff. We continue to allow these increments. We are going to be passing some major increments for our own staff, but, Mr. Speaker, where is our consideration of the non-government organizations and the very valuable service that they and their staff put into our communities? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak today about addiction and how I believe that the Government of the Northwest Territories is not making the best use of resources, both financially and with its physical infrastructure, to address the ever-increasing demands our residents are facing when it comes to addiction.

I will start with facility utilization. For example, Arctic Tern Female Young Offender unit in Inuvik. In the past two years, it has had anywhere from one to six young

offenders. It has 22 staff, Mr. Speaker, and costs this government \$2.1 million to operate on an annual basis. Is this the best use of our resources when Inuvik is in desperate need of a treatment centre?

Of course, there is the infamous Sombe Ke Healing Centre on the Detah road. I have questioned the Minister numerous times in this House and here we are today, two years later, Mr. Speaker. Nothing has changed. The building still sits empty. The Housing Corporation continues to pay the mortgage. Someone is paying the utilities and the cost of a caretaker, but still, Mr. Speaker, no action being taken on what this building could and should be used for.

Having a facility like Sombe Ke at your disposal and not using it while the public is demanding treatment centres should be a cause of great embarrassment for this government. However, they just keep paying the bills, paying only lip service to those demanding action. The government does not even listen, Mr. Speaker, to Regular Members of this House when it comes to treatment centres. We passed a motion in October of 2004 in this House calling on government for action. We wasted our breath and the motion fell on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker.

Here we are again today demanding action from this government. Underutilized hospitals in Fort Smith and Hay River are being renovated over the next four to five years at a cost of roughly \$27 million. Is there anybody questioning whether or not we can incorporate space for addictions treatment in these renovations?

Last year, I tabled a petition signed by 98 inmates from North Slave Correctional Centre calling on the government to reopen treatment centres. Often a common denominator to crime is drug and alcohol addiction. We have to be proactive, Mr. Speaker, and try to give people every available resource to fight the demons of addiction.

Mr. Speaker, my feeling is we are failing our people and we cannot allow this to continue to happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Facilities

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk today in relation to the theme day that we are having on addictions. The thing I would like to talk about is the repatriation of youth requiring residential addictions treatment in the South.

Mr. Speaker, the latest information we have is that the Department of Health and Social Services children's services division is spending roughly \$4 million a year on southern placements. Many of these children are sent south for addictions treatment in concurrence with other specialized mental health treatment. The reason they are sent south, Mr. Speaker, is that the capacity to offer residential treatment programs does not exist in the Northwest Territories at this time. We are spending \$4 million of our government's money in the South. No

northern businesses benefit other than the airlines who fly our kids back and forth. There are many forfeited benefits when we send our youth south. Besides the obvious economic benefits of spending program money in the North, we are missing out on an opportunity to expand our professional community. The more professional services we can offer in the NWT, the more likely it is that families will stay here.

Mr. Speaker, when we send our young people south for treatment, we are sending them away from their families and support network. A lot of these families will not be able to visit their loved ones in these southern provincial facilities. A youth addictions treatment facility in the North would at least allow for more involvement by the family in the treatment protocol through either direct involvement or through our telehealth facilities.

So we are at a crossroads, Mr. Speaker. Do we continue to send our young people south for addictions treatment, or do we take bold steps to develop specialized residential addictions and mental health treatment programs here in the North? I believe that wherever a relatively strong case can be made for delivering a service in the NWT at roughly the same cost as sending patients south, we should be doing everything in our power to hire the necessary mental health professionals to develop and run a northern program.

Mr. Speaker, \$4 million a year would go a long way toward paying for the necessary capital infrastructure, professional staff, operations and maintenance for such a facility. This is the point where we are in residential youth addictions programs, Mr. Speaker. I strongly encourage the Department of Health and Social Services to just studying the issue and get on with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On On-The-Land Addictions Treatment Programs

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the North, we have had to deal with addictions for many years, from glue sniffing to the crack cocaine epidemic today. Harder drugs, I am told, are starting to find their way into the hands of our residents.

Mr. Speaker, the single biggest problem today, and has been for a long time, is the abuse of alcohol. It bothers me, Mr. Speaker, to see young men that I went to school with, and I played hockey with, asking people for a toonie for a cup of coffee, and we know what they are going to buy. I have known people, Mr. Speaker, from my youth who have overcome their dependence on alcohol, turned their lives around, and today are doing well for themselves. I have the utmost respect and admiration for what they have accomplished with their lives.

When people, Mr. Speaker, make the decision to defeat their demons, we must have the capacity to assist them. I know the last thing the Minister wants to hear is we need more facilities. I agree. We don't need more big, fancy buildings. But what we should provide is a simple, on-the-land camp whose primary goal would be to help those in

need. It will remove them from town and temptations. It can also assist those who want to overcome other addictions.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that once we have these people on the land, they will begin to beat their addictions and hopefully get a new start on life. Mr. Speaker, when residents decide they need help and want to overcome their addictions, let's give them that opportunity to heal close to home and not have to send them south. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Reopening Residential Treatment Centres

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my contribution to our theme day on addictions, I would like to talk about the need for treatment centres in Inuvik and Yellowknife. A recently released second Chalmers report is pretty emphatic in stating, and I quote, "It is ill advised to construct or consider a plan for additional treatment centres at this time, given the history of closing three centres in the 1990s, a small population of the NWT and a difficulty in securing clinical and addictions expertise."

The same report, Mr. Speaker, went on to say that because they had only six weeks to consult and write the report, they were unable to evaluate all programs and could not, in some cases, provide definitive recommendations. I urge the Minister to give more merit to the second statement rather than the first and concentrate on what the real issue should be, which is the need to prepare for the social impacts associated with development of the Mackenzie gas project.

Mr. Speaker, during our pre-budget consultations, we heard from NGOs and local residents on the need for regional residential treatment centres. With the potential of the pipeline project beginning construction in 2008-09 and the need for more exploration in the Beaufort-Delta, many communities along the proposed route expect negative social impacts.

No matter what the oil and gas companies do, there will be employees that abuse drugs and alcohol. Just in the last four years, Mr. Speaker, the increased size from the drilling activity in the Beaufort-Delta and the extra employment income in the region has also meant an increase in the abuse of alcohol and drugs. I know this is true because I live there and I see it on a regular basis.

Many more types of illegal drugs are readily available in the Delta than just four short years ago.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents aren't stupid. They look around and see the problems that their family members, friends and neighbours are having with substance abuse right now and really start to worry. They think about the impacts and conflict of the pipeline. Residents want to have necessary treatments and programs in place before the construction of the pipeline. They want regional treatment centres, Mr. Speaker. I am asking consent to complete my statement. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They want regional treatment centres. As a government, we probably cannot afford treatment centres in all five regions, but we should at least reopen the ones in Inuvik and Yellowknife.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish the government to reopen the residential treatment centre in Inuvik. If they are looking for a place to house such a program, I suggest they consider the Arctic Tern Female Young Offender Facility which is severely underutilized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Decentralizing Addictions Services And Facilities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on February 14th, my introduction for my Member's statement on crystal meth was "let's get prepared," meaning that this government must look at increasing funding and awareness to shelters and addiction services.

There is something I did not ask the government for then, Mr. Speaker. That is for this government to have a heart. Studies have shown that youth or women who need safe shelters need them during odd hours, oftentimes in the middle of the night when a spouse is physically abusive, and there is a 75 percent chance, as well, that the children are also being abused. Judging from our poor track record, this government has a long way to go.

Women and youth are staying in abusive relationships because there is no housing or critical services available. In other words, they have nowhere else to go. When youth or women have the courage to leave a violent or abusive relationship, they must have a place to go where they can be safe to be provided the necessities such as food, shelter and professional assistance as medical treatment or counselling. Currently, this is not possible in many regions and communities.

My next introduction is, in every community this government cannot continue to approach communities' problems in a centralized way. Accessibility is becoming a luxury with more and more programs. Post-traumatic stress disorder is experienced, as well, Mr. Speaker. This occurs as a result of violence over time. This disorder often leads to substance abuse. As previously expressed, looking at the lack of homeless shelters, safe houses, counsellors, adequate detox facilities, especially in the regions and with the current level of addictions, there is a clear indication much more is needed. Study after study, meeting after meeting have shown that, as our economy gets better, such as the spin-offs from potential pipeline and mining projects, so too will our hard drug addictions.

We are losing our youth and other residents because they don't feel safe in our communities. This growing

centralization trend must be addressed by this government for shelters and adequate addiction services and facilities in every community. Once again, Mr. Speaker, this government must have a heart.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk again about the Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy this government is initiating in the coming months.

The Minister stated yesterday that this government, and I quote, "had a clear plan laid out for the coming months." Well, Mr. Speaker, this plan may be clear to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, but it certainly is very unclear to northerners and to other Members of this House of what this plan will develop into.

I am not sure where this caribou forever strategy came from, but I can tell you where it is going. That is in the opposite direction of what hunters, trappers, harvesters and traditional knowledge tells us.

Mr. Speaker, the Regular Members of this House were not even aware of these interim measures until we read them in the paper just like everyone else. We are not sure where this money to carry out this plan is coming from. I don't see it in the budget. I don't see it in the supplementary appropriation coming before this House. I don't see the federal government, other jurisdictions, management boards pounding at our door to give us money to carry out these initiatives, but we are suddenly surging forward on a five-year \$15 million strategy which does not have the consent of Members of this House, outfitters, hunters and trappers, and northerners in general.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to see the Minister follow his own advice and have his Department of Environment and Natural Resources apply the precautionary principal when there are serious concerns in environment or natural resources and ensure management decisions air on the side of caution, because this sudden move by his department to implement some major changes to wildlife management, without due diligence and proper consultation on all fronts, is an error and to throw caution to the wind could have disastrous results on our wildlife, on northerners and, most importantly, on a way of life.

So, Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue on with a caribou fever mentality. We need to put more thought into this management plan that all northerners will want to work with and wildlife will truly benefit from. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Medical Escort And Travel Policies

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement will be on medical travel. When people travel down south, whether it is to Yellowknife or to Edmonton, I want to talk about these concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the travelling for treatment is becoming a stumbling block in the communities. Mr. Speaker, Tlicho people face problems when they have to access our health care system in Yellowknife or Edmonton. These problems are compounded by the changes to the medical travel escort program that occurred just prior to division, and also compounded by difficulties in accessing translation services in Yellowknife and especially in Edmonton, Mr. Speaker.

Medical facilities can be intimidating for anyone, especially coming from a small community like Gameti or Wekweeti, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the present medical travel program, the medical escort program, or even the translation services available in Edmonton meets the needs of the northern people, especially the Tlicho people. Our elders are being sent by themselves to Yellowknife for medical treatment and appointments, Mr. Speaker. The boarding home does a good job, Mr. Speaker, but it is not the same as having a family member with you that speaks the English language.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. LAFFERTY: We need to look at the medical travel escort policy again. We need to make sure it is meeting the needs of the northerners like many of the Tlicho elders.

I also have concerns about the provision of the medical escort policy, Mr. Speaker, that demands escorts stay with the patient until they are ready to return home. Just as an example, where an individual went along with a patient, a nephew, the nephew was operated on, was recovering from the surgery. At the same time, the escort had to stay with this individual until the patient had to return home. Mr. Speaker, that parent had 10 kids at home and the husband was working at the BHP mine. She was needed at home but couldn't return home until the patient had to come home. So I would have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Healing From A Northern Perspective

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on the need for the radical thinking by the Department of Health and Social Services on treating our people in terms of the addiction of alcohol and cocaine.

Mr. Speaker, early in my life as a young man, I was told by an elder to go out on the land if you want to do any type of healing, or any type of recovery, or just to look at life. I didn't understand what this elder was talking about.

His name is Fred Andrew. He has passed away. He told me this. Not until after awhile, Mr. Speaker, that I went on the land did I really realize what he was saying and the wisdom of his words.

Mr. Speaker, our people are from the land. My auntie said that. If you know the land, you know our people. If you know our life, you know our land. Again, it goes back to our land being a wonderful opportunity. It doesn't cost us very much. It is here. We are from the land. We learn good values. I have seen, as the honourable Mr. McLeod has said, he has seen people in the communities who have gone to the land. You can see the changes that they have taken overnight with them. They are just wonderful people. Something happens when they come back into the community. They change back into another personality, Mr. Speaker. You see the life on the land, taking people who have a life. It sparkles in their eyes, especially young kids.

Mr. Speaker, as MLAs and as Members around this House, we deal with alcohol in our communities. Even today, I had to deal with that issue. It hurts when you view it very closely with members in your community or your region. You see lots of people who get very sick and who die because of the alcohol.

Mr. Speaker, I say that to this government, this Minister and this Cabinet, look at the simple solution. We don't always have to follow one method. There are people out there who know how to deal with this. There are elders, professors, trained people who already know this field. They know our people. There are young kids who are out there asking for help. There are families asking for help. There are young children who cannot speak today who are asking for help. We have to do something radical and different. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this government has a heart, as the MLA from Nahendeh has said. Thank you very much.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Addictions Treatment And Healing With A Family Focus

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak in support of the theme today and speak specifically to the importance of focussing on family network for long-lasting healing and sobriety.

Mr. Speaker, the people who are at the front line of this complicated field have been telling me for years that we need to make sure that we have a spectrum of treatment and aftercare services in our communities. I support that assertion, Mr. Speaker. The family and supportive network is a key thing in making sure that those who have made the important and difficult choices toward sobriety can stay sober and productive for the rest of their lives.

All people with addiction, whether it is of nicotine, alcohol or hard drugs, eventually come to the realization that becoming free from addiction for life requires changing their environment completely. They may have to change jobs, friends and sometimes even family members who are harmful to their quest for sobriety. It is a lifelong journey of choices and decisions that permeate every

aspect of their life and relationships. For many suffering from addiction of all social strata in all walks of life in big and small communities, this is where the biggest challenge comes from. Because for those with severe alcohol and drug problems, their path of destruction and healing could take them to running into a criminal justice system, treatment centres, AAs or the Crack Busters Program and many other programs that deal with addiction treatment directly.

But at the end of the day, they have to learn to cope and live with all of the pain, suffering and aftermath of what lead to their addiction in the first place, and the consequences of their destructive action and behaviour during their addiction. For many, they do not, Mr. Speaker, have a healthy and supportive home and families to go to. I am happy to tell you that there is a group of prominent citizens and frontline workers who are working very hard right now to fill that gap in Yellowknife. There will be a new transition home for men in the city.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to pre-empt the unveiling of this exciting adventure, but I will leave it to the organizers to do that. For the time being, I would like to strongly encourage this government to support this endeavour. I know that the Housing Corporation and the Homelessness Coalition have already provided...

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

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that the NWT Housing Corporation and the Homelessness Coalition have already provided financial support for this. I urge the Minister of Social Services to do the same. Once again, I want to state that I do believe strongly that this will go a long way in filling the gap and the spectrum of services we must have to combat this highly complex and challenging problem we face together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Reopening Residential Treatment Centres

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, my statement today is about the pressing need for treatment centres in the NWT. In October of 2004, Regular Members passed a motion on the need to establish treatment centres to address the devastating effects of drugs and alcohol in the NWT.

The motion spoke of the need to establish a centre in the NWT dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol, treatment centres specifically for youth, and asked the government to reopen residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, it has been nearly a year-and-a-half since that motion was passed. I do not see any significant action by this government. The Department of Health and

Social Services has finally released the much awaited interim report of the mental health and addiction services in the NWT, better known as the Chalmers Report. The title of this report is Stay the Course. Those are not reassuring words, Mr. Speaker, for those who feel that this government is off course in handling addictions treatment.

Mr. Speaker, residential treatment programs in Inuvik were discontinued in 1997 and in Yellowknife in 1999. Both Yellowknife and Inuvik are major entry points for drugs and the activities that flow with them. What I had hoped to see in this Chalmers Report was an indication that this decision would be reconsidered and that there would be support to reopen these treatment centres, as I have said before. Reopening does not mean building new infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. It means using the existing resources we have established in those buildings. It just requires political resolve.

In reviewing the Chalmers Report, I was dismayed at the suggestion that, yet, more study was needed with respect to residential treatment options in the NWT. When will this government wake up and listen to what the people of the North are asking for? Residential treatment centres in the North. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, it seems that, yet again, this government doesn't get it. The people have spoken; however, the status quo is defended and defined by yet another report. It seems to me that this government spends more time responding and defending consultant reports than hearing the views of people who sent us here in office.

It doesn't seem to be right, Mr. Speaker. It truly seems out of touch. This battle, as I see it, requires a versatile approach and cooperation between all branches between the government and the community. This is a disease we can work on together to solve.

One of the most important elements this government can do is to ensure that these proper facilities exist for proper assistance. Mr. Speaker, at this time, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement? Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, we all pay for this problem, some of us directly where it destroys your home, your life, it hurts your family, and all of us indirectly with the community and the problems that the drug trade brings to our locality. We are all aware of the social impacts that await our territory in the coming years that possibly, maybe, the pipeline will be bringing. We have already seen the effects fall onto our street. It is vital that we begin to properly prepare for what is going to take place and effectively deal with this problem that exists right in front of our eyes.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I see it as quite simple. If we don't start dealing with these problems now, we will certainly catch up with these people later when we are dealing with them through a treatment program in their jail cells. I don't think that is fair to wait until something terrible happens, if it does happen. So, Mr. Speaker, we have the chance and opportunity to act responsibly before anything negative happens. Mr. Speaker, I will have

questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. Reports of standing and special committees. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize my daughter Diedra Villeneuve up in the gallery, and her friend Roberta Sanderson.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to introduce a constituent of mine, Mr. Bill Burles. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: It's okay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Phil Mercredi, my former CA that is in the audience. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize my constituents, Barry Sanderson's daughter Roberta in the gallery, and her friend Diedra. It is nice to see some young people in the gallery. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't expecting to see him, but I'm pleased to see Mr. Byrne Richards. He's the leader of the Crack Busters Program and he's also a member of the team that's working to set up a transition home for men. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a young gentleman in the gallery: Mr. Simon. He's originally from Fort McPherson and now lives here in Yellowknife. Welcome.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery today. Welcome to the proceedings of the House. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings; it's always nice to have an audience. Oral questions. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, in regards to, Mr. Speaker, the situation that happened with a family in Colville Lake. As we learned today, the doctors and social workers in Edmonton are discussing some very sensitive issues and critical issues regarding this event, it's regarding a baby. Mr. Speaker, the parents in Colville Lake contacted the nurse in Fort Good Hope, who recently said, over the telephone, don't worry, the baby is just teething, nothing to worry about. Twelve hours later, Mr. Speaker, the baby is in serious trouble, and in this latest venture was finally asked to get the doctor to do a medevac situation. This is a tragic situation that everybody would like to avoid. In Colville Lake there's no resident nurse. The people have access to the same level of health care in the Northwest Territories that is non-existent. My question to the Minister of Health and Social Services: It is obvious that the health care system in this case has failed. Can the Minister inform the House whether he will institute a public inquiry at the earliest opportunity to examine the circumstances of this case and offer recommendations that will ensure that this does not happen again? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are aware of this circumstance and this situation. I have met with the Member and we've engaged and are making sure from all aspects that this case is being dealt with. Yes, we are going to backtrack and review what happened and ensure that once the welfare of the patient involved, which is the first priority, is addressed, that we can take the steps necessary to learn whatever lessons there are to be learned from this circumstance. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in situations like Colville Lake, it took 12 hours for the

medical service to get that little baby, who is six months old, medevaced to Edmonton. In this note right here, the baby is not improving; it's in a critical situation. Again, I would ask the Minister in terms of part of the overview I'm asking that the health care system, that the people in Colville Lake, can the Minister tell this Assembly whether or what type of consequences there will be to the employees, such as the nurse who may have some form of incompetency as a nurse to deal with this type of situation? We're in desperate trouble here, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask what the Minister intends to do about it. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've indicated that I'm aware of this circumstance; I've met with the Member; we've met with the deputy minister. We've been in contact with Stanton and with the hospital down south. We're making sure first that the patient gets the best care possible and then we're going to look at what happened; and once that is clear, we will work back and see what lessons there are to be learned. This is a serious situation and we're treating it seriously. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister says this is a serious situation. This is a tragic situation with health care. Look at the lady who was in a cab here, what happened to her and this is a tragic situation. It points to the dangers of our health care system that poses every day for those people who don't have the type of services they have in larger centres in the health care system. Can the Minister inform this Assembly whether he is now considering investigating, investing in the small communities, as opposed to spending tens of millions of dollars in larger centres in other health care facilities in our larger centres? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of course, on a daily basis the health and social services system works as it's supposed to. There are those unfortunate circumstances where things may not always work, for whatever reason, the way they're supposed to and we check those and we consider those all very seriously. Mr. Speaker, we have just been before the House for our budget that's almost \$260 million, and we spend millions of dollars in every community trying to make sure that there is a good level of service for all northern residents, and we're going to continue to do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I definitely would like to see these million dollars go into basic services like Colville Lake where they need the nurses and doctors and health care, rather than the large centres where they're asking for extra supplies for their hospitals. This is where we get into some serious debates. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is very famous for measuring responses by conducting studies and improving the health care system in small, incremental steps. The fact of the case calls for larger steps and bold actions. Can the Minister provide the timeline for when he's able to present to the people of Colville Lake and this Assembly a plan that will provide concrete actions that will ensure this type of situation never happens ever again in any type of small communities in the Northwest Territories? Thank you

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

Further Return To Question 450-15(4): Medical Services For Small Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're going to work with the Sahtu Health and Social Services Board, we're going to look at this circumstance and we want to make sure that health care is delivered to all residents to the best of our ability at all times; it doesn't matter if it's a large community or a small community and that's our focus. Mr. Speaker, we've made, I think, rather dramatic improvements to the health care centre and not just small, incremental progress. We've added 77 new positions for addictions and mental health; we've added dozens of nurses; doctors' positions, we've added midwives and nurse practitioners. We've invested hundreds of millions of dollars since 1999 trying to beef up the health and social services system, as well as other social programs. So incremental, I don't think so. Measured and careful, yes. But we've made substantive investments and we're going to continue to do that. Thank you.

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

Question 451-15(4): Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger. It used to be the practice of our government, I understand, Mr. Speaker, that salary increments that were negotiated for our own employees were routinely passed on to the non-government organizations and boards and agencies that we did business with, but I'm told that this has not been the case for a number of years now. Mr. Speaker, we are losing valuable ground in terms of being competitive and fair with workers in the social service agencies employed by the NGOs. Mr. Speaker, our own budget before us right now contains, by my math, some \$8.5 million in new appropriations related to higher wages in our new collective bargaining agreement, yet the YWCA, which I

think is representative of a number of organizations, Mr. Speaker, delivers nine programs for our government 24 hours a day, seven days a week in, I think, some of the most challenging and demanding social service regimes. Mr. Speaker, in a letter that they wrote to Mr. Miltenberger, and this was tabled, they make two basic requests. The first of them was for an immediate short-term remedy whereby we could adjust our salaries by the same percentage increases as were given to the GNWT and the local health authority staff over this and the next several years. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister be able to help the YWCA and deliver this request, a short-term remedy, to adjust their salaries by the same level that we adjusted ours? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 451-15(4): Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of parity for NGOs is a cross-government issue. It's one that's been on the agenda for many years. I don't recollect when the time was that there was automatic increases given. It must have been in another century because it's not clear in my present memory when that was. We have put out a third-party accountability as a government that lays out some of the processes to categorize NGOs and services that we get through non-government organizations that would help guide us in our assessment, a ballpark figure that we've looked at that if we were going to give automatic government raises the same as government to all the NGOs, we're looking at \$100 million that we'd have to add to our budget. So it comes down to an issue of resources. No one denies the value of the service that's provided. We do have capacity for multi-year contracts, which we're going to move on. The broader issue government-wide of what do we do and how do we compensate NGOs in the type of services they provide has yet to be finalized. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 451-15(4): Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, yes, those are all great answers certainly demonstrating fair practice by a Minister, but they are very bureaucratic answers as well, and in the face of such a long-standing problem, the issue has been well known, but considered far too long and now we have organizations like the Y that are I think some of them on the verge of collapse and we're going to be in serious trouble without their services.

Mr. Speaker, the second suggestion that the YWCA makes, is that an assessment of the skill sets required by NGOs and the negotiation of a fair percentage of GNWT wages be incorporated in these pay scales. Mr. Speaker, not all of these workers want to work for government. Some of them are very pleased to be able to put themselves with NGOs, but there needs to be some accounting and some measured consistency in the services that they do and the rate at which they're paid.

Can the Minister look at the negotiation of a fair percentage of GNWT wages for NGOs?

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

Further Return To Question 451-15(4): Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I could refer, once again, to the third-party accountability framework that the government has pulled together. There are categories of NGOs and the way that they're categorized and rated. At the top category, there are three main ones, but the one where there are entitlement to forced growth are those programs that if they weren't delivered by an NGO, we would have to deliver them ourselves with our own staff. We've started to categorize and bring into that category all those areas where NGOs provide those type of services. We are working on that. It's a work in progress. There has been some recognition of that. So that's a commitment that we made and that's a process that we're engaged in. The Members have seen the third-party accountability and we're working on that on an ongoing basis. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 451-15(4): Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, one other area of hope in terms of our relationship with NGOs is a process that this Minister is also in charge of, and that is following up on the commitment of this Assembly. We all agreed in the beginning of the 15th Assembly that we wanted to review our relationships and especially our governance relationships with boards and agencies. There are dozens of them that are mandated and that we do business with. Can we expect, Mr. Speaker, that this process may help to address some of the disparities that we now experience between what we expect of our NGOs and what we reward them for? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 451-15(4): Support For Non-Government Organizations And Frontline Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The work done on boards and agencies was a collaborative effort between Cabinet and AOC and we had the chair of Social Programs and the chair of GED working with myself to provide oversight to the staff. There was a significant amount of good work done; there was some recommendations made that work is there. That work of our joint committee has been concluded. It's now part of the government agenda and is going to be looked at and will be dependent mainly on the availability of resources at this point, but there is good work there and I agree with the Member, it will help inform this discussion on how we move forward in the funding to NGOs and other groups that work for us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I spoke about the troubles that the Tlicho speakers have with translation services and the medical travel and escort policies that are currently in place. As a colleague of mine, the Sahtu Member, he pointed out the need for better services at the local level, the medical services in the communities. So I would like to ask a question to the Minister, if he can tell me, what are the conditions that determines whether a person requires a medical escort to go to either Yellowknife or Edmonton? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of who decides whether a medical escort is needed and when, is decided by the medical practitioners involved in handling of the individual cases and they make the call and based on that call, it's decided whether an escort is needed or not. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell this Assembly what the policy is on allowing medical escorts to return home prior to the patient being returned home? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, that would depend on the type of the escort and the reason why the patient was going down. If it was for an extended period of time, there would be arrangements made where the role of the escort was no longer required. If it was an emergency, intense kind of situation where there was going to be a short turnaround time, then it would once again be looked at differently. So once again, it would depend. It's not a blanket, black and white circumstance, as far as I am aware. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As I highlighted in my Member's statement about the parent that had to leave their 10 kids behind to travel with a nephew to get

surgery, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to find out if the department is willing, on a case-by-case basis, where if it's a critical situation, it's fully understood that the interpreter services should be with the patient, but at the same time where it's not a critical situation, where this individual needed to return home but she wasn't allowed. So I'm just wondering if the department is willing to allow a case-by-case basis on those circumstances. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are and we do it on a regular ongoing basis. There are always concerns brought forward to us or that we're made aware of that may not fit within the strict interpretation of a particular policy and we are a small jurisdiction. We are responsive, we do have a heart and we make every effort to be as accommodating as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Minister has a heart in this area...

---Applause

...because it's a real need in the small communities especially where we require health services, even enhanced health services, compared to the bigger centres. Mr. Speaker, my final question is, can the Minister tell us whether the department is considering looking at the medical travel and escort policy to make sure it addresses the needs of those who do not speak English and require extra assistance? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 452-15(4): Medical Travel And Escort Policies

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're always looking at ways to improve our service. We work with the authorities. Through this House we get feedback and we get concerns raised and suggestions given to us, recommendations provided. We look at that very seriously and we're looking at this one, as well. Medical travel is a very sensitive issue; it's a very big one in terms of our budget. So, yes, and I look forward to working with the chair of the Tlicho Community Services Board as he sits at the table with the rest of us through the Joint Leadership Council to look at issues such as these as we plan for the good service for all northerners. Thank you.

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

Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today get back to my Member's statement in regard to the utilization of facilities and how the government is going about the addiction treatment for our residents given our current state of affairs. I'd like to start off my questions, first of all, with a question about the Sombe Ke Healing Centre located here in Yellowknife. I'd like to ask the Minister what is the current disposition of that facility and what has happened to the facility in the last 16 months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the Sombe Ke facility, we have put departments on notice that the facility is out there and if anyone is interested in acquiring it, again, Mr. Speaker, we are carrying a mortgage on that facility and there is an O and M cost associated with it. We have been doing some work with the YK Dene First Nation in regards to the people in Detah, the Detah language group who has been using a couple of the facilities for their language program. We have been in discussions with them, but again, Mr. Speaker, we also have been in discussion with Bosco Homes out of Edmonton in regards to their child delivery programs. Again, those discussions are still ongoing. We haven't had a final decision on that, and again, we have been talking to the YK Dene First Nation about their interest. Again, they are looking at some proposals. We still haven't heard back in regards to proposals they're putting forward to the federal government. So we have been having discussions with different groups, but right now the only group that has been using those facilities is the language group out of Detah.

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

Supplementary To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister of the Housing Corporation for answering that question. Like I said earlier, I think it's an embarrassment that the government has a facility like Sombe Ke sitting empty, sitting idle and not taking advantage of it. The next question I'd like to ask is in the proposed \$54 million -- and this is a great sum of money that's being spent in the next four or five years on renovating hospitals here in the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, Hay River Fort Smith -- can the Minister advise us whether or not space will be incorporated into the renovations at these facilities to address addictions treatment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I don't know if that is within the mandate of the Housing Corporation, but, Mr. Krutko.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that information would be better given by the Minister of Health and Social Services.

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

Further Return To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another indication of the government being flexible to accommodate some good questions from the Members.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we're looking very carefully at the renovations and the much needed renovations to Stanton, Hay River and Fort Smith, the same way that we've looked at the renovations to the various health centres and the construction of the Inuvik hospital. These are valuable resources, but, no, they're not being considered as having wings built on or space allocated for treatment centres in those facilities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that's something that should happen. I think that should be incorporated and when you're spending \$54 million and addictions are as big a problem here as they are, I think that's short-sighted. The next question I'd have, and I thank the Cabinet for their flexibility on this, and this question is for whoever wants to answer it, has the Department of Health and Social Services had any discussions with the Department of Justice to possibly co-habitat or take over the Arctic Tern facility in Inuvik to better address the addiction needs that are prevalent in Inuvik?

AN HON. MEMBER: Good question.

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

Further Return To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, firstly, we'd be very happy, as a department, to give full briefings to all the Members opposite, or Member Ramsay, on what's happening with the three hospitals that are being currently renovated, and we can demonstrate very clearly that all the space in there is going to be put to absolutely critical and good use. Not to take away from the issue of treatment centres, but the fact is, we are planning very carefully for all those facilities. In regards to the question of have there been discussions between Health and Justice of alternate use of Arctic Tern, no, there hasn't.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when you're spending over \$2 million to house, you know, it's been as low as one to six is the latest number I've heard, in a facility in Inuvik, it would only stand to reason that you'd start to question that expenditure of public funds and try to address needs that are more pressing. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if the discussions haven't taken place as of yet, when will they take place so that we can better spend what little money we have and start earmarking some money to addictions where it's needed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 453-15(4): Underused And Unused Addictions Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we spend millions of dollars on addictions and it ties into a whole host of other program areas that we already deliver, as well. We're going to continue to work on that. Justice has their clear plan that they laid out in their business plan speaking to those issues for the facilities that they are in charge of, and should there be a need for us to have those discussions, we will definitely have those. Thank you

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

Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was going to say...(inaudible)...Mr. Speaker, I think that means thank you in honour of the visitors in the gallery.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services and I'd like to just follow up on my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, I have in front of me a CBC report on Wednesday, February 8th, where there was a meeting in Inuvik of the people concerned about their community drug issues and they had invited Sally Ann and Crack Busters Program leaders to be there to speak. We're well aware of the problems we have in Yellowknife. My colleague from the Sahtu just told me recently that, in fact, they thought they had a drug dealer in their community and they just put him on the plane and sent him out of town. So this problem is prevalent everywhere and I think what I see is that there are a lot of NGOs and community groups that are doing real good work, whether it be Sally Ann, Tree of Peace, there's AA and Al-Anon that are running full tilt, Crack Busters Program, we have a transition home and the government has spent millions of extra dollars on mental health and wellness workers. But what I see lacking is something that we could do more by the government to tie this together and let it be known to the community about what's available and where to go for resources. Could I ask the Minister what his department is doing to make sure that this is happening? Thank you

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

Return To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the Member to provide me with her suggestions in terms of how she thinks we could better communicate and let people know what work is being done across the system. But we have communication plans; we have authorities at work; we have boards at work; we have committees; we have NGOs; we have social workers on the ground; we have management staff on the ground working on a day-to-day basis in all the communities. There are coalitions in Yellowknife, for example. So if the Member has some suggestions how we can improve on that, I'm very interested in hearing those. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if there's something written on my forehead, but a lot of Ministers are asking me to do their job.

---Laughter

I have to tell you I'm not interested in the Health and Social Services portfolio, with all due respect. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you I do have a suggestion, and, in fact, I just thought of this. I think we need a 1-800 NWT drug phone line and I think in that phone line, and a web site just on drugs because we have such serious, severe drug problems and we do have services. We have detox centres, we have lots of services. The sense I'm getting from the community is that they know this is coming, crystal meth, crack cocaine, and alcohol, not to mention...They just don't know what to do and there's a lot being done. So would the Minister look into possibly setting up 1-800 NWT drug line where resources could be available and where people could tap into? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll thank the Member for that suggestion and it's a relief to know that she doesn't want my job. The Member raises a good suggestion and we will consider that. We'll also look at are there other ways that we could possibly expand the capacity of some of the 1-800 numbers that we currently have, be it the health line or other helplines that are there. But the Member has raised a good suggestion and we will consider it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to emphasize the seriousness of that suggestion because when you travel through Alberta or any other places, but Alberta is our close example, everybody knows what AADAC is, I think. I mean, I went to school there in college. AADAC, people with any kind of questions about drug programs, drug problems, anything, would call there. I don't think we have that here and I think the helpline is very successful, and I think we should somehow link that with a web site. For all the community people, for all that we do, the government and the federal government and all the NGOs, we don't have something that is looking at linking it together and making resources known. So I'd like to ask the Minister not to just look at the phone lines, but also look at launching a campaign similar to anti-smoking campaigns that he's been doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to emphasize the seriousness of my answer and the commitment that I made that we will look into the Member's suggestions, and we will do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

MS. LEE: Only two? I thought there were three supplements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I just put some timeline on this and have the Minister report back to us about the feasibility that he'll do it and how this can be done and how he proposes to do it. I'm not looking for mega studies. I'm not looking for mega money expenditure things, but I think it's about organizing and presenting what's already there. So could I get the Minister to get back to us by June session? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 454-15(4): Access To Addictions Resources

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of briefings scheduled that we're waiting for Social Programs to be able to schedule us into their busy calendars and I would hope that we could have some initial discussions when that time comes, and we'll add it to our list. We could have some initial discussions so we don't necessarily have to wait until June to get a sense of what we think may be possible and maybe to get a bit more feedback from the Member and other members of Social Programs in the forum where we can have that kind of give and take discussion. Thank you.

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

Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to my Member's statement made earlier today, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, after looking through the Chalmers Report it seems quite clear to me that this government's position on reopening dedicated residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik has not changed. So, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the wishes of the people of the Northwest Territories that want these facilities open versus the consultants that say no, why does the Minister continue to refuse to open these two facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a difference of opinion on this particular subject and I think it's not a consultant versus the will of the people of the Northwest Territories. There are many people in the Northwest Territories that the consultants talked to, that I talked to, that I've worked with, that say that the track we're on, that we charted out three years ago, is the correct one; that we should in fact stay the course and invest in communities. That's where the solution lies to the problems: close to the families where the problems lie. There's a body of school of thought that says let's just build them some facilities and let's just focus on that particular piece and that will make the world a better place. There is a difference of opinion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The last time I checked, the citizens of the Northwest Territories are my boss and they've been telling me that this is an important matter and they'd like to see this issue dealt with. But as I see it, some of the outpatient treatments that we seem to keep looking at, as opposed to the residential treatments, may have been popular, but the Chalmers Report warns against applying generalizations to rule versus isolated areas, such as the NWT. I quote, "cost-effectiveness yet to be proven." Yet, successful numbers are there, Mr. Speaker. So for the sake of those people who could benefit from a residential treatment, would the Minister reconsider opening those dedicated treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, northerners that require residential treatment that can't be provided in Nats'ejee K'eh, we make arrangements, as a routine matter of course, to access facilities down south that have that capacity. The

numbers, in my opinion, do not warrant the construction of a number of new facilities and I think Dr. Chalmers' caution should be looked at carefully. That report should be reviewed carefully; then we should have an informed discussion. But it was based on lots of work that she has done in the past and consultation with dozens of people, and I think it should not be dismissed out of hand. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean, we keep running in circles with this issue. I mean, it seems to be all that matters is this third-party accountability opinion. Mr. Speaker, the opinion of the public, that I'm aware of, is that residential treatment is what they want. Now, residential care may not be the only answer out there, that's a fact, but clearly it's one approach that has worked in a number of cases. So the people of the Northwest Territories, I can tell you, are asking for this. During the election campaign two-and-a-half years ago that's what I heard. This House passed the motion in October 2004 on this side of the House that all said we want a residential care treatment centre opened in Yellowknife and Inuvik. Five months ago, during our pre-budget consultation throughout the Northwest Territories, the people again came with this message and said we want these centres open. So when making this decision, when making decisions to spend public money on alcohol and treatment centres, why does the Minister not take this into account? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't involved in the Member's campaign where he got all this grassroots feedback, but I can tell him very clearly in this House that we made a major commitment to communities, and we've worked with communities and we've responded to what the communities indicated to us was a pressing need. The State of Emergency outlined some very fundamental problems with the addictions and mental health services in the Northwest Territories. We took major steps to address those and to build on community strengths the same way we're putting in nurses and nurse practitioners. We want to put in public health units and rehab teams out into the communities and into the regions because that's where the issues are, that's where the problems are, and that's where the solutions are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm frustrated because it appears yet again we're not dealing with the issue at hand and the lack of ability to connect the dots. We have a need, a want, and we have results. It's not a big lie, Mr. Speaker. The citizens have asked for our

government to respond by taking this message to the government. We're taking this message. Mr. Speaker, what does this Minister need? Does he need a petition signed by 100 people, 1,000 people, 5,000 people to come forward here to say we want a treatment centre in Yellowknife and Inuvik? What does this Minister need for a signal that this is a need that our people want? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 455-15(4): Reopening Of Residential Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an ideal world where money was not an object, we could build all the schools, all the health centres, all the housing we needed. We don't have that capacity. We have a spectrum of services for addictions and mental health that includes lots of resources on the ground at the community level, plus we have access to our northern residential treatment centres, plus we have access down south like we do with other health issues for other specialized treatment services. We do have treatment services available. Thank you.

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

Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the issue of our theme today on addictions, I think everybody would agree that one fix does not fit all situations and that we are better served by a variety of options when it comes to dealing with addictions. Certainly, community services, counselling, community-based and driven solutions may work in some instances; however, I do believe that in some cases residential-type treatment is called for.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister specifically about youth and about the \$4 million that this government spends to send northern youth to southern placements. My information indicates that this \$40 million is expended for the care of approximately 50 youth who are sent south. So it's not new money. I'm asking for it to be reprofiled money. I think \$4 million could put a residential treatment facility for addictions for youth on the ground, operating in the Northwest Territories. It could certainly accommodate up to 50 youth. It brings the treatment and the whole issue of this priority closer to the people.

These youth are sent south to all these different facilities, out of sight, out of mind, sign the cheque. It's easy to write a cheque for \$4 million, Mr. Speaker. I think that would go a long ways towards a northern facility for our youth and I'd like to ask for the Minister's commitment on that. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must apologize. I missed the last part of the Member's comment or question because there was lots of table thumping and cheering about her intent of her question. Could I just ask the Member just to repeat the last part of the question, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen, could you repeat the last part of that question?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Maybe I'll just rephrase it because maybe it wasn't that good. Would the Minister consider reprofiling the \$4 million, currently being spent on southern placement for youth, to develop a residential youth treatment centre in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a good suggestion and an outstanding issue and, in fact, I believe it did come up during the review of Health and Social Services' budget. But we are currently working on a proposal with Bosco Homes to look at repatriating, as the Member has suggested, some of those services to the North. We have to keep in mind that they're not...All the children that are out there, many of them have unique circumstances. You can't sort of just lump them all together and think we can move them all back en masse. We have to look at this carefully. But we are looking at that. We recognize that some of the services we believe, as well, could be provided in the North and we hope to have some progress on that here in the next few weeks. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've been talking about this for a long time. This is not a new concept. This is not a new theory. It's easy to say, well, you know, the circumstances, the issues these youth are dealing with are unique. Listen, we could name them on two hands what the issues are, I mean, that are leading to addictions. I mean, you know, they may be unique, but there's probably only, like, about 10 contributing issues to some of these things. I'm sorry to say, but it's not unexpected some of the outcomes, after what some of these youth have been through and some of the problems that they face. It's not rocket science. It's not hard to figure out. You need professional people; you need professional help; and you need good facilities. I don't know why we can't do that without studying this any further. I'm not a professional in this area; I may not know much about it; but it's pretty obvious to me what the solution is and I'd like the Minister's commitment to not just say, well, you know, specialized services for specialized problems, unique problems. I want the money brought home. You know, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I know I have to wind this up. There's \$4 million. I would ask the Minister, would he consider a proposal from four different regions for \$1 million to start treating

youth in residential facilities? I think it could be done. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Further Return To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We always are open to considering proposals, but we are going to continue with the plan that we've put into place working on the repatriation that I've just previously mentioned, working with Yellowknife Health and Social Services and Bosco Homes to look at their current children down south and youth down south and which ones that we think, looking at all their circumstances...and it's not just addictions, many of them have concurrent disorders or presenting problems and some very unique behavioural challenges on an individual basis. So we are looking at that, but we are always open to looking at proposals. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay, so just so we have this clear and on the record, if you got a proposal from a group of people who could come up with a professional approved accredited service to treat youth, say in the Beaufort-Delta region, and they asked for \$1 million a year for a number of years to be funded, would this government give that serious consideration? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're looking at, as the Member raised herself, the issue of re-profiling existing resources and if that proposal is tied into that fundamental understanding, of course we're interested. TTC was initially built because it was going to pick up the slack so we wouldn't have to send children south. That was what initially lead to Trailcross in Fort Smith being set up as well. Those facilities, in fact, in turn, got filled, and children with even greater needs and more complex issues came to light. But, yes, we're prepared to look at proposals. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Places like TTC and Trailcross are proof positive that we have the capacity to deal with our youth in the North. We don't need to ship them south at \$4 million a year and I would ask the Minister to examine models of that nature to bring our youth home. Would he do that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 456-15(4): Repatriation Of Southern Youth Addictions Treatment Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is also to the Minister responsible for the health of northerners and also responsible for the health of our caribou herds.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the seven immediate actions that were laid out that are going to be carried out in the next six months by this government I think are quite cumbersome for a lot of northerners and are going to be too costly for both the government and northerners who do harvesting and hunting of caribou. I wanted to just mention to the Minister, you know, if he talks about one of the key components of the whole strategy is to engage our partners in developing this strategy and I want to just mention to the Minister that in one of his news releases, he said they're going to need more consultation with hunters is definitely necessary in order for this thing to work. So I wanted to ask the Minister, you know, why can't we engage these hunters and trappers and get their views on this whole strategy and how we can look at some different immediate actions that would actually work for northerners, harvesters, hunters and trappers and outfitters? You just talked about the international fur prices have gone up recently and the number of wolves has really skyrocketed out on the barren-lands. Instead of throwing seven rules out there for northerners to follow, why can't we just take a step-by-step approach into implementing this whole strategy and do it one step at a time? Say we'll do increasing caribou, decreasing caribou tags from five to three and maybe increasing wolf tags from one to three and see how that works out. Would the Minister consider doing something like that instead of throwing out a whole bunch of rules for hunters and trappers to follow? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This process has been underway since shortly after last April. We've been working with the co-management boards up and down the valley, with the Inuvialuit, with the Gwich'in, the Sahtu. We met with the Tlicho chiefs. We've met with the Northwest Territories Metis Nation. We've met with the Yellowknives. We've met with the barren-land outfitters. We've been talking about the numbers.

If you look at the interim measures, there's been some clear steps that have been agreed to in the short term. Some of the co-management boards have come forward, especially from the North, with their own recommended courses of action that they have decided in their wisdom that they want to move on and that we've agreed with. So we've made some decisions. We also have a broader strategy that's going to allow us to move ahead over the next four or five years. The first step is to take the steps that I've laid out and we want to follow through on that.

There's also a big meeting come up here the start of next week that's going to bring together folks that tie into the Bathurst committee. We've brought in, as well, some other people that didn't sit on that committee the last time to look at issues surrounding the Bathurst herd, and we are going to redo the numbers this spring and summer with the census count. So we do have a plan and we think it makes sense and we've consulted extensively. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the key word in this is consultation. I know I've been getting a lot of feedback from a lot of hunters and trappers saying that they've never even heard of this strategy. I haven't heard of it and I don't think any of the Members of this House have even seen it mentioned in the business plans or anything, last year or the year before. So I'm not sure where the Minister has been engaging in all this consultation process with all these management boards and everything like that. Just to get back to the question, I want to ask the Minister, can the Minister go through the Internet and get a polling of what the people in the NWT actually think that this strategy is going to do? Maybe develop some ideas into how we can better implement some steps to helping the declining numbers of caribou and having a forum where hunters and trappers can actually have direct input into this whole strategy, because I think a lot of hunters and trappers are being excluded out of the consultation process because they're either out on the land doing hunting and trapping. If we move out on a public education campaign...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I think I'll allow the Minister to answer. There were about three questions there already.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Okay.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a briefing was offered to GED. We also gave the package out as soon as we came out of Cabinet, so the Members had it, in fact, three days or so before it was made public. We are going to continue to work with the co-management boards, as well as other stakeholders. I would just suggest that if you looked at this nine pages of the interim plan, there's extensive detail that lists the chronology and all the work that's been done, and I think it does constitute good, and fair, and full

consultation at this point and we're going to continue with that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the immediate actions that the government is looking at is developing a major public education campaign. I think this should be a high priority and one of these immediate actions, because I think when people start to realize and know that the numbers of the caribou are actually declining and where they are declining in and for what reasons, hunters and trappers will take it upon themselves to restrict their harvesting limits and they won't be shooting five caribou. Non-resident or resident hunters won't be taking the limits that they're allowed to take because people have respect for the resource that's been available for hundreds of years, and they just won't be going out there and shooting all the caribou because if they know what the numbers are like, then I'm sure hunters and trappers and northerners in general will take it upon themselves to make sure that there are some restrictions on it. So will the Minister consider going out on a full-blown education campaign to let everybody know where we stand exactly? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Member that a public education piece is very important and that's why we laid it out as one of our first items that we want to move on and we are going to do that. I appreciate the Member's comments and I'd look forward to any advice he wants to give in terms of how to best educate the public, the children and the hunters and public at large. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another point on the immediate actions that has been developed here over the next six months is one where everybody's allowed to harvest bulls only. That I don't think is going to work, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if the Minister read the paper a couple months ago where an elder specifically stated why it's not good to hunt the bulls only. This is probably one of the big reasons why the caribou are actually in decline, is because all the old, experienced, big bulls are being shot. Because we have young bulls that are inexperienced and don't know where to go, they're leading the herd into areas where there's no food, where there's high predation, and everything is just working against them. So I don't know, I don't see how the hunting bulls only is going to help the caribou herds' declining numbers. Could the Minister maybe scratch that one off the immediate action list...

---Applause

...and make sure that there is a public campaign that shows people what the differences are between the bulls, and the females, and the yearlings, and the young bulls and stuff? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Miltenberger. Order.

Further Return To Question 457-15(4): Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There was a lot of bull in that question.

---Laughter

---Interjection

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Member. The value of that plan, of that particular issue, is the concern of protecting the cows and the calves to allow the cows to be able to bring the calves to maturity. Most of the resident hunters and the sport hunters do bulls only anyway as a matter of course. This is not a restriction at this point on subsistence harvesting.

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

Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the March 10th edition of the Inuvik Drum, the Minister was quoted as saying "...when we demonstrate we have the facilities that would be fully used and we don't need any southern resources, then I'll be happy to move on with this project..." I want to know how we can demonstrate that these facilities will be fully used when we don't even have them?

---Applause

If we had the facilities there guaranteed, Mr. Speaker, they would be used. I'd like to ask the Minister what he based his comments on. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take the concerns of the Members of this House very seriously and I do recollect the motion they made in the House very clearly, and one of the reasons that I asked Dr. Chalmers be brought back in is that we charted out a course of action based on a report from 2001 called A State of Emergency that was very, very critical of the current state of affairs back then. Looking at the work that she did, the extensive consultation up and down the valley, with all the communities, with all the user groups and stakeholders, we chose a course of action. Two years out, three years out there was some concern or question being raised about let's forget about community wellness workers, let's start building facilities. I asked Dr. Chalmers to come back and give us a check, an interim

check, to see where we are, where we're headed, and is it the right way? Are we doing the right things? I asked her to look at Nats'ejee K'eh, the community services and the requirement for treatment facilities, and she did that. She gave me her best advice; advice that we took from her back in 2001. She gave us her further advice based on what she's seen and the work that we've done and the investments we've made. That's why we've done what we've done and that's what I've based my decision on. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure Dr. Chalmers is fully qualified to write reports. But when you have the Gwich'in Tribal Council wellness manager and the chair of the Inuvik Interagency both disagreeing with the Minister's comments, and they live there, and they know what's needed in Inuvik, and somebody comes in and writes up a report saying we don't need this, I think we've got it backwards, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to know from the Minister, who decides if a treatment centre should be built in the Beaufort-Delta, and I hope it's not Dr. Chalmers. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Chalmers has extensive experience up in the Beaufort-Delta, has worked in Tl'oondih and McPherson and throughout that whole area. But at the end of the day, she is just a consultant and she does her report, and she did the work we asked her to do. Now it's up to myself, as Minister of the department, the authorities, this House, to make plans and to plan for the provision of this service, which we've done and continue to do.

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

Supplementary To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Chalmers worked in those communities, but she hasn't lived in those communities most of her life. So the people there, again I say, they know what they need in the Beaufort-Delta. Speaking to experienced social workers and their opinion is that Beaufort-Delta needs a residential treatment centre. They also said that they need a family program on the land. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he consults with his frontline workers, people in these communities who have lived there their whole life, that know what's needed in their communities? I'd like to ask the Minister if his department, not some consultant, his department consults with these people. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons we have, and the value of boards and authorities, is that there are community representatives from communities that sit at the table and represent their communities. As well, there's work done in the communities. I travel periodically through the communities and get feedback on a number of issues. This is one of them. So, yes, we value that feedback. A lot of this comes down to there may be a difference in philosophy about what's the best course of action and the focus right now on community development versus facilities, but the also very basic fundamental issue, as you've heard the Minister of Finance raise, is that we have far more needs than we have resources and we have to make choices. In this particular case, we chose to focus our resources that we do have on the development of community wellness workers, mental health workers and clinical supervisors at the community level. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. But boards and agencies are not frontline workers and they push a lot of government paper. I want to ask the Minister if he would commit to consulting with the frontline people, not boards and agencies, that are on the ground to see if they need a residential treatment centre? I believe the answer he will get is yes. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 458-15(4): Determining Need For Addictions Treatment Centres

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't consider the community representatives from the communities on any board that I work with in the authorities as just paper pushers. They are people that have jobs that work and live in their communities and are, for the most part, very knowledgeable about the needs in their communities. So I value their feedback and direction. But I take the Member's point. We are always very interested and we do take a lot of feedback and require a lot of feedback and benefit from the feedback of the frontline workers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Time for oral questions has expired. Written questions. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 32-15(4): Medical Travel Ground Transportation

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

- 1) What protection do health care clients have when traveling in cabs on medical travel?

- 2) How are contract service providers such as cab drivers or companies trained in the fundamentals of picking up and taking clients to their destinations?
- 3) Will the department institute a policy that makes it mandatory for every elder over the age of 60 years to have an escort?
- 4) Will the department consider extending the Vital Abel Boarding Home hours of transportation services, instead of relying on a cab company?
- 5) Will the Minister responsible provide an explanation of high risk, moderate risk, low risk, non-emergent and non-urgent patient categories?
- 6) What assurance do communities have that their health care assessments will be respected and seriously considered by health care authorities?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 9: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 26-15(4): Diamond Certification Revenue

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of a return to Written Question 26-15(4) asked by Mr. Braden on February 10, 2006, to the Honourable Floyd Roland, chairman of the Financial Management Board, regarding diamond certification revenue.

The Government of the Northwest Territories offers a Diamond Certification Program to participating Northwest Territories diamond manufacturers. This is managed by a third party, Gemprint Corporation, who charges factories \$15 per certification. GNWT, in turn, charges Gemprint \$6 per stone. The GNWT charges factories \$15 for reprints of certificates, on an as-needed basis. In exchange for this fee, the GNWT has undertaken to provide a diamond manufacturing, monitoring, certification and marketing program. The certification fees are paid into a special purpose fund from which monitoring, certification and marketing disbursements are made. Special purpose funds are authorized pursuant to section 20 of the Financial Administration Act and in accordance with directive 807 of the Financial Administration Manual. As the disbursements are from an approved special purpose fund, they do not require the establishment of an appropriation.

The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment's predecessor requested Financial Management Board approval for the establishment of a special purpose fund in 1999 and this approval was granted. As a result, the treatment of diamond certification fees as a special purpose fund is in accordance with the Financial Administration Act

Pursuant to Financial Administration Manual directive 807, special purpose funds are to be disclosed as information items in the annual main estimates and public accounts. In reviewing past accounting treatment of diamond certification fees, it has been determined that there were some inconsistencies in how revenues and expenses were recorded. Up until the 2004-05 fiscal year, diamond

certification fees were recorded as revenue, and disbursements were charged as expenditures to a voted appropriation. Although this not how special purpose funds are normally accounted for, it is acceptable practice as full disclosure is achieved. In 2004-05, the department intended to move to a normal special purpose fund accounting, but did not complete the full conversion and ended up netting the revenues and expenditures. For the 2005-06 fiscal year, the conversion to normal special purpose fund accounting will be completed and the operations of the fund disclosed in the public accounts as required.

There are a number of approved special purpose funds from which disbursements are made without an appropriation. For example, all projects on behalf of third parties -- vote 4/5 -- constitute special purpose funds. There are also internal chargeback arrangements and authorized revolving funds from which disbursements are made without appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 95-14(4): Aurora College Annual Report 2004-2005

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Aurora College 2004-2005 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Tabled Document 96-15(4): NWT Liquor Commission And NWT Liquor Licensing Board 2004-2005 Annual Report

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Liquor Commission and NWT Liquor Licensing Board 2004-2005 Annual Report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Tabled Document 97-15(4): Use Of Electronic Devices Such As Laptops In Committee Of The Whole

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to table a letter written by myself to all Members of the Legislative Assembly dated February 23rd, which is today. The subject title of this letter is use of electronic devices such as laptops in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 15-15(4): Treatment Of Addictions

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 2, 2006, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that this Assembly reaffirms its motion of October 29, 2004, requesting that the government establish a centre dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol, establish an addictions treatment centre specifically for youth and reopen residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Motions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of earlier today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with dealing with the motion you gave notice of earlier today, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 15-15(4): Treatment Of Addictions, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

WHEREAS this Legislative Assembly passed a motion on October 29, 2004, that this government establish a centre dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol, establish an addictions treatment centre specifically for youth and reopen residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik;

AND WHEREAS the government has not since established or reopened any treatment centres or identified any definite plans to do so;

AND WHEREAS many individuals, families and communities in the Northwest Territories continue to suffer from addictions;

AND WHEREAS during its pre-budget consultations, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight heard requests from several communities for culturally appropriate treatment options closer to home and family support particularly for youth;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that this Assembly reaffirms its motion of October 29, 2004, requesting that the government establish a centre dedicated to treating addictions to drugs other than alcohol, establish an addictions treatment centre specifically for youth and reopen residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is 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? To the motion. Somebody called question. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me quite an honour to read this motion into the record. The fact is that it is time that this government stand up and realize that the citizens of our Northwest Territories truly want these services. These services are basic. As we have said earlier, on a number of occasions, addiction treatment comes in various ways. But I think one of the serious delivery models that we can use as an effective tool to heal some of these citizens is through the treatment centre process. Our youth are falling through the cracks, Mr. Speaker, and the bottom line is we need something that focuses at our youth to help them with their problems. I said last week in my Member's statement, although the fact is that we have youth out there where parents are losing control, they need the ability to send them somewhere for treatment.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am going to allow the rest of my Members of this side of the House to comment. I just wanted to introduce it simply on the basis that this side of the government is yet again saying act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, as seconder of this motion, am happy to put it forward again, in particular to reaffirm what we asked for about a year ago. At that time, I believe we had the government's concurrence and support to look at our lack of facilities and the availability to help our people reaching out and wanting treatment. Since then, Mr. Speaker, the government has come out with a report called, *Staying the Course*. It is not only a report, Mr. Speaker; I now believe it is a statement of an action that the government is doing, and that is staying the course. They are not reaching out. They are not looking at any new initiatives in this whole area of treatment. It is something very basic to all our regions and communities.

We always talk about strengthening our people. The people are our resources and backbone. They are very important to our economy and yet, here we are not providing opportunity for them to reach out because addiction not only affects one person, it affects families and whole communities, Mr. Speaker. We have to have the availability for that person to go out and get the treatment they seek.

I just want to say, at this point, that throughout my life, as well, I have had addiction problems. Through facilities and availability of counselling and resources that were there, and people bending over backwards to help me, and that is what we have to continue to do for our people. We have to bend over backwards and provide the resources and facilities for our people in order that they can provide for us as we are providing for them.

Just with that, I will close, Mr. Speaker. I will, of course, be certainly supporting this motion. I look forward to it passing. I look forward to government having a heart and listening to us and, once again, taking the cotton balls out of their ears and put it in their mouth and listen to what this side has to say. Mahsi cho.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, too, in support of this motion for treatment of addictions in the NWT. I know there are many Members in this House who have been affected by addictions. We all know someone, either family, a relative or an acquaintance, that has been affected by addictions of some sort. I think everybody realizes what we are dealing with here. I know that the problem is not getting any better. It is getting worse. It is starting to really snowball. I want this government to realize that, before it actually gets too big for this government to handle, we have to really address the issue proactively, and that being by establishing treatment centres where people can readily access and they don't have to apply for government funding or any programs, fill out applications to be sent south and all the other work that goes into sending somebody south for addictions treatment.

Therefore, I am fully supportive of a motion of this nature for the very fact that it is only going to make things better. It is definitely not going to be any worse for wear for the government or for northerners in general. I want to see some fruition to the motion of this nature come about within the next year or so. I am sure it is doable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, stand to speak in favour of the motion. There are some aspects of it, though, that I would like to discuss briefly, Mr. Speaker. It concerns the suggestions or the demands that are outlined here for treatment centres that we have had very mixed success with in the Northwest Territories. For a number of reasons, various buildings and kinds of infrastructure that have been established have not been able to survive the tests and rigors of time, governance, funding and politics. I do not want to see this kind of thing repeated, Mr. Speaker.

A prime example of a very embarrassing failure for a lot of people and everyone concerned was the Sombe Ke facility just outside of Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, which continued to sit empty but cost our government hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in mortgage and maintenance costs while we try to figure out what to do with it.

The literal demand within the motion, Mr. Speaker, from my point of view, is one that I would like to enlarge and expand to suggest that we not only need centres which can be recognized as places for people to go that can be nurtured into centres of excellence, care, attention and learning, but that these will be the centres by which

programs, services, support and outreach will be and can be delivered to our communities.

This is very much where the suggestions that are made in the Chalmers Report are what, I believe, will truly deliver the kinds of things that people who suffer from addictions need. It is not a bricks and mortar building that you can potentially walk into, sign yourself into for a few days or a few weeks and walk out of and everything is going to be okay. Perhaps those will be and certainly can be part of a continuum of care. But, Mr. Speaker, I really believe that the foundations for success must be far advanced of whether or not we have a building for somebody to walk into or a building for somebody to work out of. It needs to start in our schools, communities, our leadership and our government's levels to convince people that they can do something other than give into the power of an addiction that, if and when that happens, there is a way for them to get off that path and then a way to support them over what may be a lifetime of trying to deal with an addiction.

Mr. Speaker, where the motion talks about centres, I would like to be able to say that this can be looked at in a much broader area. We have, I think, the Minister has pointed out, since the last Chalmers Report on this, we have something like 77 wellness workers and counsellors employed around the territory. Achieving results from this is not done overnight. Where this workforce is in place, do we know what they have been able to do? Have we set the kind of bars, standards and thresholds by which to measure change and impact? Can we learn more about this and design our programs in a better way?

My colleague Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Speaker, has very eloquently and forcibly argued for redirecting the money that we now put into southern placements for return of these people to the North. I am 100 percent in favour of this, Mr. Speaker. I have toured some of the facilities in which our residents are housed, institutionalized at least in some places in Alberta. I know they are in other places in Canada. I would dearly love to have them back here on our own soil.

Mr. Speaker, this does not mean that what we need to do is go out and build more places and more institutions by which we simply transfer them. How can we enable them to go back at least into their own regions if not their own communities? We can't do that without the people, the programs, the sustainability, and the commitment by our government to enable this to happen.

Earlier today, I spoke about how far behind we are with non-government organizations and their ability to keep pace with pay and benefits that are offered through our own government, Mr. Speaker, and our own health and social services authorities. This is the kind of thing that will enable us to do the kind of things that are expected of us: to manage and treat addictions and help people turn that corner.

While I speak in favour of this motion, it is in the spirit that it is not taken so literally to say, well, let's just build a few more buildings and put signs on them that say addictions treatment and it will then be able to say, gosh, look at the wonderful job we've done. The job is going to be much more complex. It will take a lot more attention and more innovation than merely creating some more centres for this. It will take a much more progressive and inclusive attitude of different options.

I will close, Mr. Speaker, by asking again, or saying again, that if we can get ways by which we can measure our success, change and performance that are easily understood and then translated into actions, that will help us, as well, to grapple with this huge problem in our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, am going to support the motion that is in front of us today. I guess this time I hope somebody is paying attention to the motion. Obviously, the motion that was passed by this House back in October 2004 fell on deaf ears, as I mentioned. This one is just reiterating our belief that something else has to be done. I have heard a number of my colleagues talk about the Chalmers Report and the fact of staying the course, but, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if we stay the course that we are on, we will end up in the ditch. I believe that. I think our residents are demanding that we take action, that we do something.

I spoke today in my Member's statement and in my questions about the possibility of reprofiling some of our existing facilities perhaps to better utilize them so that we can tackle addiction problems. I know, having grown up here in Yellowknife, we had the Northern Addictions Services here until 1999. I was quite a bit younger at the time. I think the circumstances surrounding the closure of the Northern Addictions Services centred around not a lack of clients for the service, but a lack of money and a lack of management or whatever that happened there. There are other reasons aside from clientele that that facility shut down. That is what I am hearing from people. We need to have something like Northern Addictions Services reopened here in Yellowknife. We have to do more with what we have, Mr. Speaker.

I think this motion speaks to that somewhat. The Minister hopefully is paying attention, but it doesn't look like it. Members of this House take motions that we present to the government quite seriously. We don't like to just have lip service. The government goes off and contracts out reports that come back. We want a chance to debate findings of that report. We want a chance to stand up for our constituents, for the people who put us here, who we represent and tell them that we want residential treatment programs in some of our communities.

Again, Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister can read Hansard to hear or read what I have said. Again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do support the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to speak in favour of the motion. I think that we have pressing addiction problems in the Northwest Territories. All of our social indicators would bear that out. I think that the problem is growing. I think it requires our immediate attention. It is not going to go away by itself. It is only going to get worse. We have an obligation to those people who need our help. It is a frustrating and sometimes discouraging matter, but we cannot throw our hands up. We have to come up with creative new ideas and energy to direct toward this problem.

I don't like the title of the Chalmers Report, Stay the Course. It seems like we spent \$90,000 on a report to tell us what a good job we were doing and, in fact, our statistics would indicate otherwise. I think we need to come up with some new ways. I think that community support and aftercare is a wonderful thing, but also, at certain times in people's lives, when they have the strength to do so, sometimes people need to take time out and focus and deal with issues that have been unresolved and are, quite often, the very things that lead them to have problems with addiction. So I do hope that we can reprofile facilities and dollars.

I am not suggesting that we, on this side of the House, should stand up and make irresponsible demands knowing full well that the government does not have the financial resources to meet those. I just think we need to take what we do have and use it in a way that does bring concrete results.

I really liked what the department did with respect to the smoking campaign, how we profiled people that we know and recognize in our communities to public service announcements and advertisements in the print media which held them up as role models because they quit smoking. I think we need to tell a lot more stories about people who have overcome addictions and are living healthy lives today. We need to applaud them and use them as an example of what can be achieved when people get the kind of help that they truly need.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion that is in front of us has been highlighted and a lot of discussion took place over it during our pre-budget consultation in communities. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, when I toured the Tlicho communities the first part of February, this was a huge issue in the communities. They want to see a treatment centre in the North. They are asking why the Yellowknife treatment centre closed down and the need to have one reopened or even one in the community, the region. Just highlighting that and just increasing addictions, as Mrs. Groenewegen mentioned, it is increasing in the North, especially in the isolated communities. It clearly shows that there is a need for a treatment centre here in the North and in the communities to serve in the communities.

We see a lot of funding going south to send people over the years, even from the communities to Palm Acres or Weatherby or wherever it may be for treatment services. They come back. Really there is no follow-up program afterwards in the communities. This will provide more services in the North all through the communities. That should be taken into consideration that we need to do more in the communities.

That has been clearly identified when we tour the communities. Even having a reopening of these residential treatment centres in Yellowknife and Inuvik that is both in the North and also working along with the communities because even in the regions, we are talking on the Tlicho region, the Monfwi riding, where they are requesting a treatment centre because there is none in the Yellowknife area which is closest to the Tlicho

communities. If there is one opening up in Yellowknife, then they can work with the centre here to deliver on-the-land programs or even aftercare programs that are badly needed in the communities, Mr. Speaker. Just a need to invest here in the North is highly critical, especially taking into consideration the home-grown communities that we face. We represent them. I would just like to highlight that.

I do support this motion with a thought in mind that there is a lot of work to be done on this as well where they need to work with the communities. We represent the isolated communities. Isolated communities have a huge impact, especially in the area of Mr. Pokiak's riding and my riding where there is no access road, all-weather road, only a winter road at times. There are more problems in those communities. I think we need to clearly identify those communities and the community members that are from those areas and to deliver, let's say, treatment centres and then the aftercare program is essential in the communities. If we can work with agencies in the communities, organizations in the communities because even though we have a treatment centre in Yellowknife or Inuvik, that's just a one-stop area where there needs to be an aftercare program, also. It's really important that we need to follow up on that, and I'm looking forward to a treatment centre being established either in Yellowknife or even I would like to see in a region. So I'm just thinking ahead where we have to have long-term plans as well where we, as a new Tlicho Government, are very interested in pursuing in that area. So this is one step in the right direction and there will be more initiatives to take place. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am going to support the motion put forward mainly because Tuk is so close to Inuvik and we do have an ice road that goes back and forth. It's 180 kilometres and it's very close, and also the airlines that travel. A lot of people might think that Sachs Harbour and Holman and Paulatuk are a long ways from reaching the drugs, but they do get drugs that fly in, also. So in my travels, when I went to my riding in Nunakput early in January, you know, people were telling me, even in Sachs, the young people are into the drugs. Where do they get it from? It's the dealers that come from the South.

I know this, too, from the fact because in Tuktoyaktuk the RCMP know who the drug dealers are, but they can't do anything with them unless they are actually caught doing the selling of it and we've got to stop that now. Our young people are important to us. They're the ones who are going to be sitting here down the road as we go on, and I hope that we can respect their wishes that they live in a safe lifestyle.

Just in closing, Mr. Speaker, like I say, I'm in support of the motion. The Minister indicated that he has a heart. He's got to listen to what this side is saying. Open up or reopen those facilities in Inuvik and Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion. The honourable Member from Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak to this motion and I want to state that my support for this motion is very conditional and I'd like to explain why. I think we should be aware that there are lots of experts and frontline workers out there who do not always like it when the only message coming out of this Assembly is that we need to have a treatment centre, and I'm not saying that a treatment centre is not important, but we have to put this into perspective because it can't be about just to symbolize that we need to do something or we need to build a building or something like that. So I support this idea for a treatment centre if it's about using facilities that are there, or the physical building that we could make better use of. But, as I stated in my Member's statement, I'd like to just state that whatever we do with the residential treatment program we have to do that with very clear understanding that that is just a small cause in a whole wheel of continuum of treatment services and care and aftercare program that we must have.

I'd like to see this government, it has to move along with strengthening and supporting a lot of programs that are already there. Mr. Speaker, I've already stated that Hay River has Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre; we have the Salvation Army in Yellowknife, which is going to be expanded I believe; a women's centre address a lot of concerns with women with addiction and with lots of other issues; Tree of Peace has programs; Crack Busters has a great program and it's run by very committed people and there's lots of committed clients that spend a lot of their days and nights and they're committed to the program to address their addiction to Crack Busters. AA and Al-Anon are very strong in this community. At all hours of the day and night, those programs are available and that's totally volunteer based. For years the frontline workers in our community asked for the detox centre of the Stanton hospital to be moved out of there and to be set separately, and I don't know if that is what some of the Member's here are alluding to and I think we need to have a detox centre for sure, but I just need to state that residential treatment program is just one aspect of it and it can't be the most dominant aspect either because sometimes people need to go away to another place and sometimes people want to go away out of the community and there's a lot of specialized people that are necessary to house and run these residential treatment programs. So I want to speak in favour of the motion, conditional to these issues that must be made aware.

Mr. Speaker, what we have to remember, and I said this in my Member's statement and anybody who is familiar with addiction issues knows that the people with addiction problems have to learn to live with that addiction for all of their life, in all aspects of their life, and I want to state that I come from a family with a lot of addiction growing up. It's not just a local problem in Yellowknife; it's a problem in different parts of the world where I grew up and I am surrounded in my personal life by people who have faced this head on and I know lots of strong survivors of addiction issues and they will all tell you that it's a challenge and struggle every day, and going to a treatment centre and getting dry for two weeks or six weeks or eight weeks is just one aspect of that. We need to support them in how they'll deal with jobs, socializing, just getting out there and just living with all of the ups and downs of life that we all need to deal with every single day.

So as I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, I would like to really encourage this government to use the technology available to coalesce, and refine, and strengthen what we have there and let the people know what we have. For all that we do, and the millions of dollars that we spend, and all the work that the NGOs and frontline workers do, people from all across the territory should be able to call and say I want to know what crack is about, what is this crystal meth about, there's a drug dealer in my town and they should be able to call the RCMP without the fear of repercussion, for example. There should be a 1-800 line. I think the helpline experiment has worked really well. It has served especially those families with young kids who have all sorts of issues every day they need to ask about. I think we should have something like that for the drug problem. We have these mental health and wellness workers in every community. Do people know? They should be able to go to that line and ask who do I talk to in my community about drug issues and where should I go to get treatment. What is the government doing? Even in my position as an MLA, it is not always clear who in the government is working on this area.

So I just want to stress again that it is a good thing for us to pass a motion to say treatment centre, treatment centre, treatment centre, and what are we doing with this building and that building and that is an important thing. But I think we should be very mindful of the fact that this is not a simple problem, obviously, and it's not a problem that can be addressed by one or two things. I do believe that there's a lot being done by the government, and there's a lot being done by NGOs and there are lots being done by just regular citizens who've had enough. You know, the COPS Program is one thing. There's just a lot being done and I think we could just do better, and government could take the leadership role in coalescing that, packaging that, and letting everybody know what's going on, and I look forward to working with the Minister and government in that regard. Thank you, Ms. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the motion before us is very sensitive to the people in the communities. It's very sensitive, emotional, close to home for some of them and some of them may be saying it's about time that, again, we, as Members, push forward a motion like this to give some direction to the Department of Health and Social Services and the government. I did have some feedback from the last motion that we supported on this side and people said yes, it's about time and we got some positive feedback and comments to our last motion, and they were hoping that they would see some shift in the direction of how we take care of our people who are suffering from cocaine, heroin or alcohol or any type of forms of addictions that they may have and that there may be some real results coming out from that motion. However, that still needs to be seen. So this second motion, it looks at the issue of some legal issues in terms of individual rights versus the community rights and the certain laws that now children tell us, well, you can't tell us what to do and some people in the communities say, well, you can't tell us what to do, and it gets into some sticky issues in terms of the legalities of the abuse of alcohol or any other forms of addiction.

Mr. Speaker, it also gets into the issue of the economics. My understanding that the territorial government is going to pull in millions of dollars on revenue on the sales of spirits, liquor and other alcohol. So we talk about the economics of how do we fund a treatment centre or existing building or program. So we're getting to that type of an issue of the economics and per cost per client in the centre. So all these type of issues that we get into the economics and do we look at it from a business point of view. Mr. Speaker, the political will is on this side to look at treatment centres or a new shift in the direction of staying the course by Dr. Chalmers in terms of her recommendations and her findings in the Northwest Territories and how do we deal with the addiction issue and other issues that tag along with it. So there is some political shift on this direction to move into new directions and I'm not too sure how this motion will be taken by the ministry and the department and the government.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about the social impacts and again it's something that's close, sometimes it's painful, sometimes it's frustrating. We know the costs as we're going through our budget process; we know the costs of not taking care of issues such as the addiction to crack, alcohol, gambling or any other kind of addiction that we have in our communities. We know the social costs and we keep bringing it up and it's no wonder on this government, under the Social Programs committee, has the highest percentage of the whole territorial budget. It's just phenomenal now the amount of money we put to social issues. I mean, for 42,000 people we have a budget of \$1 billion. Surely we could do some good with this, but it seems like we're just putting on solutions that don't seem to be getting us anywhere. So I really want to remind the Minister that we need to make some changes and I look forward to any type of suggestions.

Mr. Speaker, the 2002 alcohol and drug survey reported that 78 percent of people 15 years and older in the Northwest Territories have experimented with alcohol. That's 2002. I'd really like to see the survey report on 2006 in terms of what age limit, what's the percentage of young people who are experimenting with alcohol. If you talk to any person who worked in the addiction field of the addiction use of alcohol or crack cocaine, they will tell you how easy it is for the young person who is not fully developed as a mature person, how easy they can get hooked on the types of drugs that are flowing now into our communities and how easy it's accessible to those young people. They're very innovative in terms of getting alcohol or drugs. That's the society and culture we're going to be faced with in the next couple years.

So I wanted to say that it said in the 2002 survey that Yellowknife has a greater density of alcohol use in the communities, our large centre here. So this is why I support that we continue to work on such programs in large centres as Yellowknife, opening up the existing facility that's sitting out here at Detah, at the facility here, open up some facilities in Yellowknife, but also looking at that Inuvik one as a good possibility of opening up there for people in the Delta. You know, it's people first, Mr. Speaker, and also in Nats'ejee K'eh in Hay River, continue supporting those. We need to make those centres valuable and worthwhile and change some of the programming that hasn't been working. Maybe change some of the ways that we do programming. It's astonishing that in 2002 there's a survey report that 56.5 percent of people responded that in the small

communities that they drink more than five drinks when they sit down. They go on binges, they go crazy. Then we get into other issues of children and family.

So, Mr. Speaker, these studies, these reports have really shown that we do need these programs in these larger centres. We need some home-based programs in these smaller communities. Even in the report of Mrs. Chalmers, she reported on page 14 of the small communities that more importantly the aboriginal input, it says here, Mr. Speaker, areas for developing and strengthening, aboriginal input, monitoring and involving in every step. Approximately one-half of the Northwest Territories residents are of aboriginal ancestry. Many of the most challenging problems are related to providing service in aboriginal communities, collaborate and get involvement of the aboriginal communities in designing the building and monitoring ongoing program development is of critical importance to this motion here.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to say that I hope that this motion creates some innovation solutions at the department level, at the Minister's level, in terms of looking at ways that we could promote and have a legacy in the Northwest Territories of having healthy people in our communities. Create that legacy because we sure aren't doing it right now.

Mr. Speaker, I saw on one TV program in the United States where high school students where they had high school programming curriculum that was involving alcohol and drug issues. Actually that program that was shown a couple years ago where this school was doing a sobriety high. The only way they got into or stayed in that program was that they maintained their sobriety. Students were graduating from Grade 12 were in sobriety. They used it and they went to their classes. If they were having a hard time, they would go into a special program where they would have their 12-step meetings. Families would be involved in creating their life in a healthy manner. Why can't we do that in the Northwest Territories? We leave a lot of issues to the teachers and sometimes these young teachers they're not quick to handle some of these issues. We'll leave it to social services; we'll leave it to the mental health; we'll leave it to the RCMP; we'll leave it to the nursing station, or we'll leave it to the parents. You know, we cut up the issue so much that students say sit down, now get away, after the third one I'll get away because these workers are so overworked. They're dedicated, I know they work hard, I know there are good people working in communities, but it doesn't seem that we're working together. Let's create a department-wide initiative. Why don't you do a pilot project called sobriety high? These kids are 15 now. I understand there's some of them 12 and 13 years old drinking in our communities. Families, it's part of their culture.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to look at that in saying that families are the key to helping with this issue right across the board. We should have something within government that supports families, employment and families who are going out. If there is an issue of alcohol, cocaine, drugs or whatever, that they have some priority in terms of helping them. Put it under one roof, a one-stop shop.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will support this motion. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will be supporting this motion. Growing up in Inuvik in the early '70s, we saw a lot of alcohol abuse going on. Everybody here probably has seen it at some point in their lives. Now we see some of these people who were abusing alcohol decide to seek treatment and they have done well for themselves, really well. I said before, I have the utmost respect for them.

On the other hand, we see other people who didn't know when to quit and most of them are no longer with us. That's sad. We send people to Poundmaker's or to the one in Hay River, and part of their teaching there is on the spirituality side of it, which might be good to them but it's not good and doesn't apply to the people in the Beaufort-Delta, just like ours wouldn't apply to them.

That's why you speak to a lot of experienced frontline workers up in the Beaufort-Delta and they know we need a treatment centre there in the Beaufort-Delta with a strong, strong family program, an on-the-land component of it. Sometimes we look across the floor here and you think we are asking you for buildings, just put up buildings. We are not asking you for buildings. We are asking you to build options for these people who want to get some help.

---Applause

One of these things is these people come back from these treatment centres, as Mr. Lafferty spoke to, and there is no follow-up. You bring them back into Inuvik or one of the Beaufort-Delta communities, they come back from Poundmaker's, you fly them down every so often for follow-up, I don't think so. If they have a residential treatment centre where if they feel like they may be slipping and they need to go and get a little extra push in the right direction, they have a place to go. That alone would make a difference and I know there are a lot of people up there who believe strongly in this, and they have said so publicly.

The government has programs on prevention and most of us in here will agree that a lot of it is personal choice and prevention is a big part of it. The government has some good programs on prevention. I know prevention is a high priority to them, but sometimes prevention doesn't always work.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if these people decide that they need to get some help, then the option has to be there for them to go and seek help close to their region instead of having to send them somewhere where there are strangers there, you send them down to the city, they go back into the small community after being in the city and they may have learned some new stuff.

So that's why we all, on this side, push for regional treatment centres and don't look as us asking you for money to build buildings. As I said before, some of these people want help, they need help and they want it closer to home, more in tune with their beliefs and their spirituality. So I am supporting this motion. I think it's a good one and hopefully, Mr. Speaker, next year we won't be coming back with the same motion.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seeing that this is a critical area for us as Members of the Assembly and government to deal with, when you look at our budgets and what we try to do and try to put in place, it is critical. We have been listening to Members regarding the motion that is out there. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, it will come down to a partnership, in a sense. As individuals, we all have to make the right decisions. As a government, we have to give them the tools, as Members have been saying. Seeing that this motion is directing us in a certain way here regarding the treatment facilities, as a Cabinet we will be abstaining from the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. The Chair will allow the Member who moved the motion some closing remarks before we go to vote. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very quickly, we had 10 great statements from this side of the House and I personally applaud every one of them because they were all decent, as ever.

---Laughter

Now this is the eleventh. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a story. I had a friend who was addicted to drugs. He decided he thought he could fly and he jumped off a bridge. It's a sad story. Addiction to drugs was the tragedy.

I had another friend, as I was growing up, who thought he could swim. I never saw him swim a day in his life. The day he decided to swim was it.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you another story again about a friend who drank a lot when he was a youth. He decided he should drive with a bunch of people in the truck. I can tell you one of the people that was with him in the truck, and it wasn't me, is now blowing through a tube, Mr. Speaker, and can't walk on their own.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you another story by saying some brothers were drinking and had an argument and shot their sister. The sister isn't around.

Mr. Speaker, how many times do we have to raise this flag in saying we need attention to this matter? This is a serious matter and I appreciate the Minister of Finance saying they are listening very carefully. That is very touching.

It troubles me because I remember a lot of these stories when I was a kid growing up in Fort Simpson and I remember them here in Yellowknife when I came to school to live at Akaitcho Hall. I am sure all Members on this side of the House can tell you stories. Actually, it's really bothering me, now that I am thinking about it.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, status quo has become the norm and I think we need to end the cycle. It's a troubling issue when I think of those people right now, and there were more. The crisis is out there. I don't need to finish this. The crisis is out there. The fact is we are asking this side of the House, can we do something. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Chair will call a vote to the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Motions. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18, Committee Reports 5, 6 and 7, and by the authority given the Speaker by Motion 9-15(4), Committee of the Whole may sit beyond the hour of adjournment until it's ready to report, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. I would ask what is the wish of the committee? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee would like to deal with the Department of Finance, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): The Department of Finance. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will do that, but we are going to take a short break first. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Welcome back, committee. At this time, I would like to ask Minister Roland if he would like to deliver his opening remarks for the Department of Finance, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the Department of Finance's main estimates for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

The Department of Finance, through its responsibilities of generation and management of our cash and borrowing activities, plays an important role in ensuring the government is able to deliver its programs and to make informed decisions.

The department's mandate has changed with the reorganization of the Government of the Northwest Territories' central agencies. The responsibility of the Bureau of Statistics has been transferred to the Department of Executive, and the Department of Finance's mandate to provide a macroeconomic policy analysis and advice has been clarified and strengthened.

The department's focus in 2006-07 will be on the major fiscal and economic issues highlighted in my budget address:

- ensuring that the new formula financing arrangements reflect the needs of the NWT;
- changing the \$300 million federal borrowing limit to one that reflects our government's ability to finance debt;

- working toward the conclusion so resource revenue sharing arrangements that provide a fair net fiscal benefit to the NWT; and

- developing a macroeconomic policy framework for the Northwest Territories.

Other ongoing initiatives that continue to be a priority include:

- participation in the analysis, information gathering and preparation related to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline;
- finally, a key outcome for the department is the development of amendments to the Liquor Act for consideration by this Assembly.

For 2006-07, the Department of Finance has identified a total expenditure budget of \$7.953 billion, or 14.3 percent, or \$994,000 more than the 2005-2006 Main Estimates amount. The net increase is composed of:

- \$491,000 to implement the department's macroeconomic policy responsibilities;
- \$117,000 for projected insurance cost increases;
- \$145,000 to help ensure that the department's tax collection function has the capacity to cope with the increased volume of tax activity resulting from our growing economy;
- \$375,000 to fund Collective Agreement, TSE and WCB premium increases; and
- a reduction of \$80,000 to reflect the sunset of the Liquor Act review in 2005-2006.

As I mentioned earlier, it is my intention to proceed with a broad inclusive process to develop a macroeconomic policy for the NWT over the next year. We will research and analyze the big picture policy options available to us. The resulting economic blueprint and policy direction will allow us to make effective investments and adopt positions and provisions that will maximize our opportunities and influence the direction and expansion of our economy and resulting government revenues. The funding proposed will provide the resources needed to implement this initiative.

The GNWT has seen large increases in its insurance costs over the last few years, although recent market reports indicate the rates are starting to decline in 2005. Last year's hurricane season will have some impact on the Canadian insurance property market and the department is focussing an increase in property insurance premiums. Forecasting, I'm sorry, the department is forecasting an increase in property insurance premiums. The liability insurance market is stabilizing and rates are expected to remain largely unchanged in 2006-2007.

The growth in the NWT economy over the past five years is having a significant impact on the workload on the department with respect to tax collection. The department is proposing an increase of \$145,000, beginning in 2006-2007, to fund the cost of two additional tax collection and compliance positions. The financial resources allocated to tax collection will protect our existing tax base and generate additional revenues to the government.

The department received one-time funding in 2005-2006 to undertake a review of the Liquor Act. This initiative has recently been completed and a report has been provided to Members and to the public. I look forward to working with Members to bring forward amendments to the Liquor Act that will make the act more responsive to the needs of our residents.

The Department of Finance, as the lead revenue department of government, accounts for over 89 percent of total GNWT revenues forecast for 2006-2007. The main estimates include a forecast of departmental revenues for 2006-2007 of \$984.119 million. This includes a formula financing grant of \$752 million. Because the report of the Expert Panel on Equalization and Territorial Formula Financing will not be available before spring, the 2006-2007 grant will be fixed in federal legislation. This means that the GNWT will bear 100 percent of the risk of tax and revenue changes during the year.

The department's main estimates do not identify any increased borrowing cost for 2006-2007, but our medium-term fiscal outlook does forecast significant increases for 2007-08 and beyond, as the GNWT is required to repay almost \$300 million by the end of 2006-2007 for the 2002-2003 overpayment of corporate income tax.

The forecast, of course, is also dependent on our revenues and our spending decisions for both operations and capital over the next few years. That concludes my opening remarks and I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Roland. At this time, I would ask Mr. Menicoche if he would please bring the committee on Accountability and Oversight's remarks on the Department of Finance. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Members of the Accountability and Oversight committee had an opportunity to meet with the Minister of Finance on September 28, 2005, to review the draft business plan for the Department of Finance.

Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget for the department since the committee reviewed the draft business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$7.953 million in operations expense in fiscal year 2006-2007.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates and budget-planning cycle.

Borrowing Limit And The Fiscal Responsibility Policy

The borrowing limit for the GNWT is arbitrarily set at \$300 million by Order-in-Council of the federal Cabinet. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight notes with concern that the current fiscal framework projects that the GNWT will exceed the arbitrarily imposed borrowing limit, often referred to as the 'debt wall,' in late 2007-2008.

During the last business planning cycle, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight supported the

Finance Minister's initiative to establish a fiscal responsibility policy to replace the arbitrary debt limit. Since that time, the GNWT's fiscal situation has taken a turn for the worse, making the need to establish the fiscal responsibility policy all the more urgent.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight continues to offer strong support for the government's efforts to advance the fiscal responsibility policy with the federal government. The committee believes it is a positive step to move away from the arbitrarily established debt limit, and to establish a borrowing limit that recognizes the GNWT's capacity to finance debt. Not only is this consistent with practices in other jurisdictions, but moreover, it places responsibility on the GNWT to be accountable for its own debt management.

Formula Financing

During the review, the committee noted the federal government has extended the interim approach to formula financing for another fiscal year while it waits for the delayed report from the expert panel. The Finance Minister advised the committee of the government's intention to increase efforts to move the GNWT's position forward, especially on the key issue of resource revenue sharing. The committee sees the change in government in Ottawa and the Council of the Federation report on Fiscal Imbalance as opportunities to raise the profile of GNWT.

The standing committee strongly supports the Finance Minister to be aggressive in his lobbying efforts. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I would like to ask Minister Roland if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses to the witness table.

Minister Roland, for the record, could you please introduce your delegation? Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Madam Chair, joining me today is the deputy minister of Finance, Ms. Margaret Melhorn; and, the director of finance and administration, Mr. Mel Enge.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will now ask the committee if you have general comments on the Department of Finance. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the Minister of Finance, I welcome him this afternoon to the proceedings and welcome to your staff, as well. I am going to sound a bit like a broken record again this afternoon, but it's something I feel like I am obligated to say because when you see something happening that you don't think should be happening, you had better say something, and now is my time to say it and I am going to say it again.

The addition of the staff positions in the macroeconomic policy area within the Department of Finance is, in my mind, something that's just been dreamt up to replace the Bureau of Statistics, which happens to no longer be within the Department of Finance's mandate and has switched over to the Department of Executive. I think the macroeconomic policy unit is just to fill that void. I will certainly have a number of questions as we go through detail and I will try to keep these strictly to comments.

It would seem to me that given the economic history of the Northwest Territories with the pipeline from Norman Wells, the boom we had in the Beau-Del in the '80s, the fact that the Northwest Territories produces 14 percent of the world's total production of diamonds, for a government to admit in the year 2006 that it doesn't have a macroeconomic policy, or any type of direction, or nobody was doing this work before, I find that completely unbelievable that the government could admit to something like that, an oversight like that.

Obviously somebody in this government, of the 4600-odd workforce that we have, has been doing work in this area. I mentioned it to the Minister of ITI that was before us today, they have an investment in economic analysis division within his department. If you are looking at something like this, like an economic policy division, to me it just doesn't belong in the Department of Finance. Absolutely not. I think the Department of Finance should concentrate on what it does best and that's the numbers. I don't think it should concentrate on policy, especially economic policy. I think that belongs somewhere else. I don't know how much more I can plainly say that. I think the department has its hands full trying to wrestle with the federal government on trying to get a better arrangement.

The way things have gone here lately -- and I have said this before today and I will say it again today -- it's no way to govern a territory. How we just limp from month to month and year to year on the scenarios that play themselves out here is beyond me. It's so hard to believe that we even manage to exist, given what we are up against. The fact that we need some fiscal surety from Ottawa remains something that's very elusive.

I would like to think that we are close to getting some kind of resolution to this in Ottawa. The Finance Minister was with us at a public meeting earlier today when we talked about the lowering of the corporate tax rate from 14 percent to 11.5 percent. If you start looking at the whole scenario around this, the reason why the Government of the Northwest Territories thought it was forced into making a decision on lowering that tax rate from 14 percent to 12 percent just to appease the federal government, forced into a corner, and now here we are, two years later, lowering it back from 14 percent to 11.5 percent to try to save what tax filers haven't left the Northwest Territories, so if they do file their taxes here we can at least maintain some revenue streams. It's hard for me to believe that we just sit back and let this type of thing happen.

I said it earlier in the public meeting today, we just take it. We're forced to accept that that's the reality that the Northwest Territories is faced with. It doesn't seem to me that we stand up. Somewhere if somebody put me in a corner and made me make a decision where I lost \$30 million and that's just the start, \$30 million, it could be 60, it could be 80, it could be \$100 million that that decision that the Government of the Northwest Territories was forced into two years ago comes back to cripple us for

another \$100 million. If somebody forces a decision like that on me, I'm going to take them to court. I'm going to challenge them and I'm going to do everything in my power to show somebody, say something that, listen, this isn't our fault, it's your problem, you made us make the decision, you fix it, and I haven't heard our government stand up and say these things to Ottawa. Stop taking advantage of us, give us what we need.

I know the report from AOC says, and I want the Finance Minister to know this, he has my support, 100 percent of my support, stand up, be aggressive, go after these guys and I think they've done us wrong on forcing us on that decision two years ago, and I think the federal government should have to pay us back once we can quantify. We might not ever be able to quantify what it's going to cost us, but we should go back after them for that money. It was no fault of ours, Madam Chair. So, again, I just want to say for the Finance Minister that he be aggressive, go after them and you'll have my full support. I know he's doing his best and it's a tough position to be in, Madam Chair, but I think we have to get tougher and we have to get more aggressive. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to offer some comments on the Department of Finance, as well as I guess the budget address too on the issue, and I'd like to speak about the new positions being put into Finance. I've mentioned those positions on a number of other occasions and I happen to think that this is not such a bad idea. I don't know exactly what relationships this section will have with the work that the ITI is doing, but I'm of the opinion that any government should have an economic think tank. We should be aware of what's going on in the macroeconomic picture, and certainly in our jurisdiction there's a lot going on and it's funny because we have a dichotomy of constantly arguing with the federal government about what share we are not getting and the fact that we don't have a resource revenue sharing agreement and devolution negotiation and such, but at the same time we, in some corners of our territory, seem to be awash in cash, or at least it seems like that, or maybe because we didn't have this kind of situation before where we have \$500 million of SIFF money, even though it's not coming to the GNWT, but it is money that's going into communities where communities are needing to talk about what to do with this and with all of the cross-jurisdiction. I'm sure the communities want to maximize the opportunities with this money, but not fund things that are the jurisdiction of the GNWT or Canada. That in itself could be a challenge because we are so intermeshed and then we've had community transfer money, I mean community transfer from MACA, the gas tax money and the infrastructure money. I mean, it's hard for us to keep track of all the impacts on that just in numbers.

But in our visits to communities during pre-budget session, elders have come to me and said, you know, we have to get ready for what's going to happen to our community with the residential money. I mean, sometimes we need to deal with the impacts of money coming in and we have a different economy in the North that government plays still such an important role in terms of how the money is infused into our economy. I think Yellowknife and some of the major centres have a market economy and there's a lot of private investment happening, but in many communities, government and

public money is still the major purse string and it is a good thing to understand how all these relate to each other. Now, how do we maximize the benefits out of that end? I don't know exactly. Maybe the Minister will have a chance to speak further when we get to the specific sections about exactly what the Minister has in mind in terms of what he thinks this section could do, and what the new economists in this section are going to be studying. I'm going to have some assignments for them, as well. So in that respect, I do support that.

The second thing that I want to briefly mention is I think some of the things that this section should do and that I've been told that when I ask questions about it when we were reviewing ITI or Housing, even that the Finance department has taken over analyzing impact of Novel, or, sorry, I wasn't supposed to mention that name, ABCD Company, a new housing concept, and I want to speak that just in terms as an economic project. Five hundred million dollars under socio-economic impact money is a huge infusion of money. That's \$500 million. That's half of our budget. It may not be enough, but it is a big, big chunk of money.

Residential students' healing money, if that does come through with this new government, that could be in the hundreds of millions and that is an infusion of money into our economy. Expenditure of \$500 million for the new housing concept, or even all the money that's going to come in with the pipeline, seven to nine billion dollars, all the labour force that's going to come. I do believe there's got to be an engine in there, in government somewhere, to study what the impact of that might be and how do you best engineer, and how do you best make public policy decisions in that regard, and the better information we have, the better public decisions we're going to make. So in that regard, I do support that.

So I'm going to reserve specific questions under this area when we hit those relevant sections. So for now, those are my general comments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Next I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, an overriding event or aspect of our fiscal future is going to come before us we're told sometime this spring when the report of the panel, this expert panel on taxation and equalization, is going to deliver its verdict on how things are managed across the country. If I understand the process here, there is kind of a side table or a side panel that has been set up to look at the special circumstance of the Territories.

Madam Chair, we're at such a crossroads with our fiscal potential. Right now, as the Minister has indicated, three-quarters, almost exactly three-quarters of the billion dollars in revenue that we're expected to glean in the coming fiscal year comes directly from Canada. The opportunity that we're looking for is to, of course, gain more royalties, but also to restructure the way in which Ottawa finances the Northwest Territories and make it, I think, a more modern and progressive system and one that doesn't have so many sort of penalties or consequences built into it. It is especially something that I hope we can achieve, Madam Chair, with the fiscal responsibility policy. I've been a supporter of that since day one, as a way in which we can much more responsibly and I think realistically manage our own affairs, and disengage ourselves from this ancient

colonialist approach of setting this \$300 million borrowing limit on us, regardless of the needs, or the strength, or the ability of our economy to finance debt and call our own tune.

So I guess a perspective that I have here, and I'd be interested in whether the Minister cares to comment on it now or at some point in our detail, is that we're in a holding pattern right now. There's nothing we can do to really impact the kind of help we'd like to see from Ottawa, or the kind of adjustments we'd like to make. We're locked down until this panel comes into play. I guess what I'd appreciate hearing from the Minister is some sense of the program, or his expectations of how are we going to deal with this panel's recommendations once they're delivered both to us and, of course, to Ottawa. Should we anticipate that we're going to have a chance to debate, or appeal, or negotiate anything that may be in these recommendations? Are we going to have any choice or any say at all in what goes on? Are we going to be kept in limbo again for months and months and months and months until some kind of decision is made? Some forecasting, if the Minister has any sense of what we can anticipate, how is the process going to go once this panel delivers our fate and delivers our future? That's it, Madam Chair. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Any further general comments? No further general comments. Then we will proceed with the detail and I would as Members please if they would turn to page 3-10, information item, revenue summary. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 3-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$1.515 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 3-14, 15, information item, directorate, active positions. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 3-17, activity summary, treasury, operations expenditure summary, \$5.225 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 3-20 and 3-21, information item, treasury, active positions. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. In this section, I may be wrong on this, I'd like to know more about what these economists, those new PYs that we are approving are going to be expected to do in their jobs. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this area where we show an indication of the positions going up, it's in the area of the taxation and the collection. The fiscal policy section would deal with the macroeconomic policy work that needs to be done.

This area here is just to ensure with all the activities going on -- and the file is growing as there is more activity in the North -- we need the ability to ensure people are paying their taxes in the North. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Aren't we on page 3-22?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We are on page 3-20 and 3-21. Thank you. Information item, treasury, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 3-23, activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.213 million. Mr. Braden, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. To follow through on my general comment to the state of affairs that we might anticipate after this panel delivers its views on our funding mechanisms, does the Minister have any forecasts or anything that he could advise us on to the process, I guess? You know, it will be one thing to see what they have to say about us, but the next thing is then what do we do, and that's where I'd like to see if the Minister could offer any information or any insight, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as the Member stated, the expert panel report has been delayed and we're waiting for the new federal Finance Minister to receive the report. At that point, we expect that there will be some engagement between federal Finance, the territorial Finance Ministers and provincial Finance Ministers on the sections of the report that pertain to their jurisdictions. As well, there is a confederation of, the Council of the Federation Panel that was established as well by the Premiers, and they had their work around fiscal policy and responsibilities, as well. Their report will be coming out in the near future. We expect to be using both the reports. We're hoping that Finance Canada will use the expert panel's report. There's some question as to how that will be dealt with as it was started under a previous government. We're hoping that they will use that report along with what we will use, the COF panel report, and start our negotiations from those reports. Hopefully they will identify our concerns, as both the panels travelled to the North and heard our concerns. I think that we'll get some favourable mention in those reports about the North, and it will be from those bases that we will begin our discussions with federal Finance about the need to change how formula financing works in the Territories. So it will all come down to the new Finance Minister for the federal government and how and when he accepts that report, and then the work between the jurisdictions from that point on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does the Minister feel or understand that we'll be able to count on the delivery of this report on time or as promised, and then a reasonably quick turnaround for its recommendations? One of the larger frustrations of this job has been to try to absorb and keep track of and keep pace with the various fluctuations in our financial situation, Madam Chair. The Minister and his staff, I think, have done a good job over the few years that I've been in this Assembly, of trying to keep us apprised of what's going on. But our situation can fluctuate so quickly from sort of comfort and some wiggle room to one where our backs are against the wall, we're painted into a corner, most often not for reasons that are within our control. So the volatility just makes it a very frustrating environment in which to do some planning or some really strategic thinking. So I would hope, and I'm sure along with the Minister and everybody else around here, that when this report is delivered that it gets a reasonably quick turnaround, because the environment that we're operating in now just doesn't lend itself to good governance. I don't feel that I can really deliver on the expectation and the mandate that I have as an MLA when we're so boxed in by the rules that are set by our fiscal masters outside of Ottawa. Perhaps more of a comment and expression of frustration and expectation. If the Minister has anything to add to it, that's great; but otherwise, I think I put my message on record now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess we share something in common, and that's the frustration of dealing with a system that can fluctuate quite rapidly and from one extreme to another. To be able to announce one start of a budget cycle that we will actually have a fairly healthy surplus to help with our capital program side of the program, and then as we come into later on in the year to say, well, we are now looking at a deficit situation is not something I think Finance Ministers look forward to making those types of announcements. It is going to take work and we're going to have to push and work aggressively in getting the new Finance Minister and his department to make some decisions, to look at the report, and respond and work with jurisdictions. I say that more from looking at our own picture, and we look at the environment we have to operate in.

We have, just over a year before we start to run into some real problems because of the repayment on the corporate tax situation that occurred in 2002-2003 and when we make that repayment, that changes our landscape drastically. We're going to need some decisions in the very near future that lie within the authority of the federal government. At minimum, we need to remove the borrowing limit that was placed upon us. As well, how that ties into our formula financing situation and ultimately have a settlement on a fair deal for resource revenue sharing for all northerners. It is frustrating. That is why my tone has changed as well in how I think we need to proceed forward and get our message down to Ottawa, and be using all avenues possible to get other jurisdictions to work with us and support us, and we have had their support in the past. I'm sure that that table they will continue to give us a helping hand when it comes to delivering the message. A lot of it, as I see, will come down to the fact that since, in the past anyway, we've built our business case around their formula situation and have

not had much success for one reason or another, ultimately it's going to come down to the fact that we need the rest of Canadians, we need the academics of Canada to look at our situation and either agree with the business case we've put forward and help us send that message. So we've got to get down to work and, as I see it as Finance Minister, after we pass this budget, we're probably going to be looking for a window of one year to start getting some decisions made by the federal government. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden. Are you done? Okay. Thank you. Next on the list I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. If the Minister could provide some information, I believe it's reflected on this page or very close I'm sure, as to what headway we've made on dealing with the \$300 million debt wall. The areas I'm looking for some detail on is what type of movement we've had on this problem. What support do we have with working towards a solution? I've heard the Minister's solutions and I like them very much, but the problem is we can come up with all the best solutions and all the best policies on how to deal with this problem. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, it's the Government of Canada that has the final say on this. So what movement have we had on this? Have we sent a letter to Finance Canada or the appropriate office? Have we got a response? Has the Minister solicited support from other Finance Ministers or had our Premier seek other Premier support? Have we got anything in writing from anyone? Let's start with that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the borrowing limit that is placed upon us, the \$300 million cap, is by Order-in-Council. So it would take an Order-in-Council to remove it as well. That's, I guess, the one positive thing about it. It's not a matter of running some legislation through Parliament.

What we have done to date is presented our proposal to the past Minister of Finance and we received some correspondence requiring some further information. We were preparing to deliver that when the election was called. So we've got the information together and we're prepared to meet with the new federal Minister in this regard. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Was there any type of response from our federal counterparts as in their support of this, they just want to see our plan to map this out, or is there any indication on which way they're going to fall on this matter? Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I would have to reserve that until I have an opportunity to meet with the new Finance Minister to see where he would come from on this initiative of ours. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Is the Minister in a position today to tell us when he's meeting with the new Finance Minister on this matter?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have a date set out as of yet. I've had a brief discussion with Mr. Flaherty regarding what we hope to get together on, sent in correspondence with the key initiatives that we feel we need to deal with in the discussion, knowing that he's got to bring a budget forward here for the federal government. The indication is he'd like to get together with Finance Ministers prior to that happening, but we have not had a date set as of yet. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just be quickly wrapping it up, assuming on the course of the next answer, but where do we sit in perspective in the shadow of that \$300 million debt wall? Where do we sit? What is our number today in respect to the \$300 million debt wall? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our cash position is fairly healthy right now at this time. Our long-term debt that we guarantee on behalf of the Housing Corp and the Power Corporation is right now about \$145 million. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are we expected to cross that \$300 million debt wall as such? If so, when? I'd like a rough timeline on that. Obviously it's not tomorrow, from the sounds of our cash position in the debt the Minister has outlined, but is it expected in the next while that we'll be crossing that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now with the numbers we have to work with, we're targeting in the 2007-08 year where we would cross that threshold. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Probably just more of a comment. Then if the Finance Minister has said that there's an anticipation to meet with the new federal Finance Minister in the next little while, I wouldn't want to say we don't have to worry about it this week, but we obviously have to worry about it for the next budget year. So I guess I'll give the Finance Minister the respect and fairness to have a meeting and we'll see where we sit after that. Thank you, Madam Chair, no questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I'd stated before in this regard, after we pass this budget for 2006-07 and giving the information out that we will cross the threshold in 2007-08, we have about a year to operate and get some decisions made hopefully in our favour from the federal government. So we are going to have a tight time frame to work around. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I want to get back to the issue that I raised during my general comments and the issue I have raised before. I have a number of questions for the Finance Minister in regard to the macroeconomic policy division that the Department of Finance seems intent on filling the void left by the departure of the Bureau of Statistics. I just can't seem to get that concept out of my head. You lose something so you have to replace it with something. Somebody in the government woke up and realized that, geez, we might need a macroeconomic policy division. Who conducted the work in this area before somebody dreamt up this new division? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I guess if it is a dreamt up item, the dream started back in 1999. That is when work was initially done from within Finance and Executive to look at the fact that we needed to start addressing this side of the equation. As stated, and as the Member stated as well in his discussions with the Minister of ITI, other departments do have some areas, but that would be in the micro policy side or economic policy side where they're sector specific. But as a government and as laid out and when we look at other jurisdictions across the country, the macroeconomic policy is usually defined as one as a use of government spending, taxing, borrowing, regulatory and trade policies, as well as the monetary policy to influence economic variables such as employment, production and economic growth and prices. That is why it would fit in here.

Back in 1999, the Department of Finance had worked and commissioned a study to look at the macroeconomic framework in the NWT. As well, in 1999, there was work along with the then Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, commissioned a Canada West Foundation to conduct a workshop on development strategies in the NWT. So that work has been done in this area. It has been looked at. It was felt at this time, when we looked at all the things that are happening around and it was approved, we then put this in place. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Finance Minister for that, but somebody had to have been doing the work from 1999 until today. Like I mentioned, it seems so much like a coincidence that the Bureau of Statistics leaves the Department of Finance and then immediately, to replace it, comes this macroeconomic research and policy division. It really does seem to me to be a coincidence. I have been around politics for almost

10 years now. When somebody loses something, they always want to get something in return, or get something back, staff up. I can't discount the importance of something like this. I think it is important, but, to me, in a government of our size with 4,600 employees, somebody somewhere had to have been doing some work on macroeconomic policy. If they weren't, then something is definitely wrong, Madam Chair. Between the years 1999 and 2006, who was doing the work on macroeconomic policy for the Government of the Northwest Territories? Where were you getting the information from? You had to be getting it somewhere. You weren't pulling it out of thin air, so where was it coming from? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as I stated earlier, back in 1999, we started doing some of the work as fiscal policy would be where that work would originate. We would have to either contract out or get other organizations outside of government to do some work with us and it followed from there.

So in 1999, we commissioned a study, as I stated earlier, and followed some of the recommendations from the government's input/output model, and then we worked with the Department of RWED again in commissioning the Canada West Foundation to do some work with us in that area. As well, coming out of that, a lot of the issues that did come out were in areas of public policy development and opportunities and constraints that we were facing as a government, as well as telling us that we need to focus on restructuring our fiscal arrangements with Canada. The work has been done from within the Department of Finance, but we have had to go out and get the support when we undertook some larger pieces of the work. For example, in 2000, we commissioned the Canadian Energy Research Institute to study the impact of a possible Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline on the economies of the NWT. So when we needed to do that work, we had to go out and buy that support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. From what the Minister is saying, the work was getting done in house. It was being contracted out between 1999 and today. Was that work being done by staff within the Department of Finance? What work was done? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. When the work wasn't being contracted out, it was being done by our officials, yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, then I would have to again question why the department wants to rush out and spend half a million dollars developing a new macroeconomic policy division if the work has been getting done for the past seven years? It doesn't make much sense. If you have been getting it done and you have been contracting out what you need

on a go-forward basis, then why spend half a million dollars? Why add all these PYS? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as I stated and gave out a number of dates and work that was commissioned by the Department of Finance, we also have to look at, since 1999, growth of expenditures and growth overall in the Territories has gone up by 88 percent. The work we have done, for example, the work that was with the Canadian Energy Research Institute was to do with the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline. As a government, we shouldn't be doing these at a one-off situation and going out to get a contract for one project and then another project. We should have a fairly constant regime in place that would allow us to make policy decisions and fiscal decisions with that work being done on a regular basis. That is why, as it was pointed out, we have been doing it from within, and when required on the bigger projects, going out for contract. It is time now to actually go the next step and put something like this in place. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am going to have to disagree with the Finance Minister on this. I can't, in good conscience, support spending half a million dollars for work that has already been getting done. That is just my opinion on it. If some of this work needs to get done, again, I look at some of the work that has been done at ITI. Maybe a new position could be in ITI that would look at macroeconomic policy. I don't know. It is just something I just can't believe we are allowing to happen, to be honest with you, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we will definitely have to disagree on the positioning, as stated. When we look at other jurisdictions and the role of Finance and fiscal policy, macroeconomic policy would fit and does fit within Finance. When we have gone out to do the other work, we have had to pay for it, so it wasn't being done for nothing in previous years. We have had to go out and pay for it. We are at the stage in the development now as the Northwest Territories that we need to be more consistent with what our approach is, not go out on specific issues to try and come up with appropriate fiscal plan and policy that we would adopt. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there any further comments on this page? Activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.213 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. On the fiscal policy, I think I am going to skip over the questions about macroeconomic position because I think I got enough information out of that. I am going to speak to the budget writing and an element in the budget, and go right to page 5 and the conversion of workforce housing.

I don't want to repeat all of the stuff I have said here, and I think it would be much more productive for us to just be less pro and con about this project and look at it as a fiscal or economic project that we need to all pay attention to, because I know that the Minister wants to do good and he would do his due diligence to make sure that we don't leave behind any boondoggles, so I am going to help him along with that. Now that the Minister has put this idea into the budget, what are the next steps and what are the next milestones that would determine the moving along of the project if it does move along? What, if any, dollar commitments were made in that MOA or MOU? The attachment said MOA, but I understand, from talking to other Ministers, that it was an MOU. I understand that it had to do with the confidentiality of the product itself so that you are not talking about a product to other people. When I say that we should be looking at other ideas, I don't mean to take that product idea around and see if other people could do the same thing. That is never my intention of anything. I meant in just talking about looking at other options and if there are other companies that could produce something equally good or better. Unless you ask, how do you know? I think that there still should be due diligence done to see if this is, in fact, the best way to go.

I would like to know what other steps that we need to take and also, the most important thing, I have had a chance to talk to developers and builders. Actually, I have talked to about eight, nine or 10 businesses in town, people who are much more acquainted about this sort of thing. I have talked to financial people, bankers who could do calculations by the millions. For me, as soon as it goes over \$10,000 or whatever, I can't do all that math.

I think even the people who are most supportive of this proposal still have questions about the liability issue. There are people who feel that, even if all the details of that project go well as presented, we are talking about D estimate. So you have a lot more details to work out and usually moving from D estimate to A estimate, chances are that you are going to see costs changing and rising. There are lots of unknowns when you are talking about a project this massive. We have cost inflation issues, whether we are building in this project with 2006 dollars and it won't be until 2012 before this gets done. There might be some delay, for whatever reason. It could be weather issues, ice road issues. They may not be able to find the people; the freight costs might go up. There are all sorts of variables that could be beyond the control of anybody. We have seen lots of projects in Yellowknife that went way over cost overrun without any fault of anybody. I understand that the Deh Cho Bridge project... You know, the cost of stuff go up beyond control. I understand that the proposal, as it is presented, really assumes most of the liability. It gives most of the liability if something goes wrong or any unforeseen circumstances to the GNWT. I would like to know if the Minister has done risk liability analysis and how would he make sure that he is comfortable with the level of risk that we are assuming? I understand any project has risks, but there are different kinds of risks, and there are people who are trained to do fiscal risk analysis and such. There are a number of questions there that I would like the Minister to address for me. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess since this was announced or stated in the budget address, it might have some bearing to the process we are in. The MOU, first of all, does not commit us to any funding. It is one of sharing information, so there is no funding tie there. It does lock us down to the fact that we are working with the one company with a design. It started with the Housing Corporation having some preliminary meetings around this proposal, doing some investigation and it was felt, at that point, that it was worthy of some further investigation and work. Then when I became involved in looking at it from the FMBS side, not necessarily from the Finance side, was when we started to look at some of those numbers and look at the risk side of the equation. When I made the presentation in December to Members regarding this, I laid out the pros and cons about this. The risk side is there, as well. We are going to have to make sure we do our due diligence, as the Member stated, to ensure we don't get caught in a situation where we just can't afford this.

There has been a significant amount of work done, more along the lines with the Housing Corporation and the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, the CMHC, around the type of product and the compatibility of housing units in the Northwest Territories; for example, the R value of walls, the design, the conversion features, as well the types of furnaces, doing work around the communities, and the transportation. That is why we are only looking at three of the camp locations. There will be other camps, but we are looking at the locations where transportation would be more favourable for us. Indeed, more work needs to be done.

The milestones that need to be reached for this to proceed any further, one would be ultimately having the federal government continue with its support that they had given to us prior to the election. That would be critical. Without that, this project doesn't go. As well, the fact that we need to keep the savings of the final product at a target that we feel is acceptable in selling these units to citizens in the smaller communities. When we look at that and using year old numbers, of course, when you look at the square foot costs that the Housing Corporation was getting for stick-built construction versus this concept, from last year, we were looking at \$161 a square foot on traditional northern construction methods, and the Novel concept or the concept we are looking at would be at about \$100 a square foot. Of course, this still takes into the fact that CMHC needs to provide the necessary funding to make this work. Ultimately, as well, the pipeline project proceeding. There are discussions going on in the next few days about what involvement the pipeline partners would see in this process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was a surprise to some Members on this side when we saw in the public document that an MOU or MOA was signed because I don't think we were aware of it. I would like to ask the Minister if he would be talking to us in advance before...if these milestones were to meet. I don't know when this is all going to happen, but if he got an approval from the federal government...and also I think we should really ask for the federal government...We need to have the federal government coming at the front end. I think the GNWT is assuming way too much risk to assume so much liability and help CMHC...CMHC will be more prone to approve

this project having a government back them up, but I think the GNWT is assuming way too much liability even if CMHC approved this. If they go without having the federal government come at the front end with the GNWT because we are contributing less than they are. I just think it should be half and half or as much as the partnership, it is I think the federal government. If at all possible, the Minister should work to have them come in at the front end. I would like to know if the Minister would make a commitment to present the case to us as he meets the milestones, like if he gets approval with the Housing Minister, or get a fine from the producer, and getting an approval from CMHC. Before he writes it into the budget, I think that a project this big, we should have a first go at it. I would really like to know if the Minister will do an independent risk analysis of this project, a liability question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would be happy to, along with my colleague from the Housing Corporation, however we would arrange this, to provide information and meet with Members once things start to proceed and we reach different milestones. I would be happy to share that information and sit down with Members as we proceed down this path. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Could I get the Minister to commit to getting the federal government to come sit at the front end? I think he needs to negotiate harder to get the federal government come at the front end. It is not physically responsible to undertake this kind of project and this kind of liability if the people with a bigger purse than we do to say that, let them get off the hook and say, you can come in at the back end. I would like to have a strong commitment from him that he would fight for that. Secondly, I would like to know if he could get these new economists and other brainy people in the department to do some risk analysis of this massive project. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we did put the proposal out to the federal Minister on one with the up front costing of it, as well as option two being at the back end. We would not proceed down this path without a signed commitment from the federal government. At this point, initially at least their stance was that they would come into it as the units would become available. They recognize that it would also mean a higher cost to them by doing that. Ultimately, we will not proceed without a signed commitment from the federal Minister on this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have asked three times. Would he do a risk analysis and liability analysis of this project? I think any bank that would invest this much money, or any financial institution that would invest as much money as this company is about to, I think should do a proper liability risk analysis of the project and know what areas are potential risk areas and what we are doing

to minimize those risks. I do appreciate that in the paper works that we have seen on this project there is information on that, but I think, as the project moves along, I consider that a very preliminary package of information. I think that the Minister has an obligation to do a more detailed risk analysis of this project. I am sure that is being done. I am sure CMHC is doing it. I am sure the federal government, somebody there, is doing it, too. I think we should be sharing that or getting information from them if we don't have the experts. So could I at least get the Minister to make a commitment to look at the possibilities of that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in this area of the government, it would be irresponsible of us to proceed down this path without doing our risk assessment of the options that are available. As the Member stated, the initial package is preliminary and the discussions that have occurred. As we get further development and get a better fix on the numbers, we will continue to do that risk assessment and liability side of it. Ultimately, as a government, it is a big ticket item that we need buy-in from all parties and the federal government being a major player in that. Yes, we will be continuing to do a risk assessment on this process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next on the list I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just with respect to fiscal policy and I believe it was on 3-22 and get back to fiscal business here. I don't know how far the Minister has progressed along, or made any contact with the new Finance Minister. Just at the beginning of discussions about the fiscal responsibility policy, I know that we are kind of waiting for the equalization panel to make their decision. He can correct me if I am wrong, too. I think it is this spring. I don't know. Then again, it is kind of putting all their eggs into one basket, Madam Chair.

The committee kind of likes the plan that is laid out in the fiscal responsibility policy where we can repay our own. We do have the strength and the capability to repay our own debt, so removal of any debt limit. It is arbitrary, archaic, and colonial. I hope that the federal government can recognize that and give us this flexibility where we can start funding our own infrastructure needs. We can do all kinds of things, Madam Chair. It opens up a whole range of possibility for our self-determination, self-reliance and just ability to take care of all our communities and infrastructure that is in dire need of replacement, or firming up, or even new infrastructure, too, Madam Chair.

With that, maybe the Minister can tell me about how far along they have come, if they have made contact at all. I know there is a new government, but just having that initial contact there, that will go a long way. Perhaps the Minister can also tell me about some of their preliminary strategy and how he is going to approach this in the next little while, Madam Chair. With that, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The area of our borrowing limit is one of the areas that is

critical to us. We have highlighted in correspondence with the new Finance Minister, although my discussions with him were brief, informed him that we were sending him a letter down to him. The areas in the letter cover our formula financing situation, royalty revenue sharing, resource revenue sharing, and the borrowing limit is another one of the critical areas. It is probably one of the more key ones if we look at a timeline of how events unfold, unless we get swift movement from the federal government to flow further funds north or come up with a revenue sharing agreement in the near future. One of the first pieces we need to get in place is a better formula financing piece and a borrowing limit attached to it. The Member is correct; if we can change that piece of it, it does give us more flexibility in how we look and deal with ourselves here in the Northwest Territories and to tie that to the fiscal responsibility policy that we've put in place. So the discussions we've had are very preliminary. I am hoping that we are going to have a Finance Minister's meeting here in the near future before the federal budget goes out. At that point, I will have a better idea of where we stand with the new federal government.

The Member is right about the expert panel report. Everything seems to have been put on hold. Things moved at a snail's pace from that point on. That report is supposed to be delivered to the federal government in the spring. We are hoping by May or June that we will start to see the results of that and begin in earnest discussions with the federal government about some of the recommendations that may flow out of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thought the Minister had said at one point last year, or before Christmas, that the expected transfer payment will be the same for 2006-08. Would that still be at \$753 million? Would there be a major change or swing, maybe another one of those negative news items for our government? What's the best guess scenario for next fiscal year just because that equalization panel is taking so long, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. We know for the upcoming budget year of 2006-2007, that amount will be fixed in legislation and escalated by 3.5 percent. So we know that one. For 2007-08 and beyond, ultimately it will come down to what the federal government will do with this expert panel report and what changes they might be willing to incorporate in the new deals that would come down. So to speculate beyond '07-08, timelines could very well mean, depending on what recommendations or the negotiations between provinces, territories and the federal government, we could look at another year extension, but it's hard to say at this point. It really will come down to how the federal government will deal with that report when it's delivered to them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: That will be fine for now, Madam Chair. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Just with the \$491,000 for the increased capacity and the macroeconomic front of the GNWT, I am assuming we have already had some policy development in the GNWT with respect to any macroeconomic capacity. How much has the government spent so far in this area of Finance in developing a policy framework for the GNWT? What is the bill to date? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have that information at hand. If we want to look back to 1999 at some of the work that's was commissioned and what was paid for that, along with the Department of RWED in '99 when we worked with the Canada West Foundation, as well as with the Canadian Energy Research Institute on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline impacts, I don't have that information available. We can pull it together and provide that to Members, or try to. It goes back to 1999.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. If the Minister could provide that information, that would be nice. I am just assuming if we are going back to 1999, we are probably in the millions of dollars by now with the macroeconomic policy framework, or the development of it anyway. If we have done impact statements or impact reviews of the Mackenzie gas projects, probably a lot of reviews with the diamond industry, just to clarify one thing, I hope I am on the right page with the Minister, the macroeconomic policy framework, is hopefully a framework that is going to give the GNWT a better picture of how the GNWT actually fits into the whole economic profile of the NWT. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. First and foremost, the work we have done in the past has been looking at project-specific areas and the impact it would have, the economic impact it would have in the NWT. We haven't officially set in place a macroeconomic mandate or policy that says this is what we are going to follow from this point on, decision-making items, taxation and so on. That's why we want to get this in place, so we can establish our own policy around this kind of work.

The overall issues that would happen, a piece of it would be the GNWT's capacity and its impact on the North, as well as the bigger projects that happen throughout the territory. So it would be a piece of it to measure the economic impacts we have that would affect prices in the NWT, as well as our tax policy positioning. So it would measure our impact, as well as from a government end. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I am just trying to get the picture straight here. It looks like half a

million dollars is quite a big sum of money for work that, I have to agree with one of my other colleagues, should have been done or something should have transpired out of some policy skeleton or a framework should have developed by now, you would think. I realize now the government is trying to get a better picture of how the government can benefit and contribute to the whole NWT when it's dealing with different mega projects that will be happening in the NWT at the same time and how we can work in unison with all these developments that are going on at the same time. I don't want to even think or try to fathom the idea that we haven't been doing that in the past for the last 25 years that the government has been in existence, or 45 years for that matter. Somebody must have sat down in Finance and said we should look at the big picture and figured out how our taxation regime with the mines affects the Mackenzie gas project, which affects exploration and back and forth. We should have had some work done by now that actually gives a general idea of how one area affects the other area, one department works with another department and how changes in one department can affect changes in different departments.

We must have something in writing by now or some kind of a skeleton to this whole macroeconomic development policy. Is there anything that we can look at to even get the slightest idea of where the government is at with this right now before we commit another half a million dollars to it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this whole area of the macroeconomic policy unit that we want to put in place, work has been done, as I stated earlier, but a lot of it has been one off or contracting organizations to help us with that work and proceed down that path. As I stated earlier, since 1999, we've seen a growth in this area of almost 90 percent in the economy of the Northwest Territories. So I can't give you today a skeleton of a plan. What I can give you is the work that was done on different events that were coming up that allows us to focus as a government on those initiatives of what the environment would be or what it might be. So we've got those pieces. What we are saying is we can't continue to go on on that basis of going to get a piece over here, a piece over there. We need to have a solid macroeconomic policy in place that we can better coordinate the work that's ongoing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Minister for that. I look forward to seeing something anyway. I can understand that the development of this policy framework is hopefully going to put all these pieces together that he's talking about, that the work that's been done that's scattered all over wherever in closets and on shelves and in consultants' offices. So we need another half a million dollars to put all these pieces together. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've identified the amounts that we need for the unit. Let's see if I have it here. For 2006-07 ongoing, we are

looking at the area of compensation benefits of \$36,000 and other expenses, \$59,000; compensation benefits under fiscal policy...I guess those first two numbers I gave you fall under directorate and finance administration. So the \$36,000 and \$59,000 fall under directorate and finance administration, compensation and benefits and other expenses; fiscal policy, under that section, compensation benefits of \$345,000, other expenses of \$51,000. That comes up with a total of \$491,000. In 2007-08 ongoing, we see it being in the neighbourhood of \$414,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. So this \$491,000 is over and above what the government has invested already, even if we go back to '99, even '89 or '79, I think there has been a lot of investment into this area in the past. Why do we need an extra half a million dollars to do work that people are already in positions to carry out supposedly? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I stated in the past, the work that was done was either project specific, for example, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, the impacts that that would have across the territory, as well as another piece of it looking at our fiscal relationship and how that needs to be fixed with Ottawa. The work, as I stated, was a piece at a time, an activity or event that we would hear about coming up and doing some of that work. If we are going to be, as a government, ready for the development that seems will be ongoing, not just one event at a time and the growth that's happened in the economy that's happened since 1999 only lends to the fact that we need to put some adequate resources toward this to do a proper job of it. That's why we are coming forward asking for this position.

I know Mr. Ramsay has stated time and time again about the growth and the government bureaucracy and how this needs to be in other departments, but when you look across jurisdictions in Canada, it is within the Department of Finance and helps around our fiscal policy arrangements in those areas. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay.

Committee Motion 27-15(4): Recommendation To Delete \$491,000 From Department Of Finance, Fiscal Policy, Defeated

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to move that \$491,000 be deleted from Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007, under the Department of Finance operations expenditure in the fiscal policy activity. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I will wait until the motion has been circulated. Okay, I believe the motion has now been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am moving the motion to delete the \$491,000

because I don't believe I have heard any real compelling evidence from the Finance Minister as to reasons why we would have to spend \$491,000, add three PYs to the Department of Finance. Like I mentioned earlier in my opening comments, I find it very ironic that the Bureau of Statistics has just recently been reassigned to the Department of Executive and, again, I think it's not a coincidence that this macro economy research policy division is looking to be added in the Department of Finance. Therefore, I move that we delete the \$491,000 from the appropriation act. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to be speaking against the motion. As the discussion has been going, I understand this 491 is more or less allocated for the creation of another unit, a new unit to look at larger scale economic policy and situations, which is something that I think has actually been distinctly lacking from our toolbox of planning abilities, planning skills. At one time, I think there was this kind of skill hired and in place in this department, but I don't know that it has been of late, given the kinds of economies, activities that we are moving into or hope to move into; given the way the economies of the western provinces, at least the Yukon, and the NWT are going to become more and more integrated; given the mobility of our workforce, I am in favour of establishing this unit and the \$491,000 that is more or less allocated to do this. I believe this is going to be an investment that will benefit us. It's not going to be all that easy to measure or see what difference this will make. It's one of those less tangible things, but I think this is a proper thing for our government to be doing and I will not be supporting the motion, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to this motion to delete \$491,000, I am not going to be supporting this either. I have given it further consideration and fiscal policy and future growth of our Northwest Territories depends on strong advice and strong programming. It's a huge expense to increase our workforce by \$491,000, but often when you are looking at the big picture, you are looking at equalization panels, you are looking at a strategy to devolve the powers from the federal government over to us, you are also looking at resource revenue sharing arrangements. Those are the kinds of things that we want, we are asking for that. One of the ways that we can best understand is we need the proper advice and the proper consultation in order to get this done on the macroeconomic scale. With that, Madam Chair, I will be speaking against the motion. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I don't think deleting the \$491,000 is going to make much difference on our macroeconomic policy capacity building, so I can't really support the motion on that basis. I would like the government to take notice that just throwing money out there and hiring more people doesn't mean we are going to come out with all the answers. I would like to see the GNWT develop a macroeconomic policy framework that applies to the government itself, and then have a one-policy framework for the NWT. I think a lot of times a lot

of departments are just going off on a tangent and taking a lot out of their departments with it. Then we wind up with a whole government that's gone awry with respect to any large development issues that are coming our way and ones that are on our doorstep.

So with that, I also can't support a policy because I know, like my friend was just talking about, we have a lot of things coming our way and it's good to get a good, clear picture of where the government fits into the whole scheme of things and how we can make our situation better for the future. I hope this is something that is not an ongoing revolving door policy framework that is going to be developed with pieces added as we go along. I hope you get a clear understanding of where we sit in the federation and in the NWT after spending all this money. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just quickly for the record, I won't be supporting this motion. I respect the Member who put it forward and I know there may be consideration of not getting enough of an answer or satisfaction with what's being done in that area and I respect that the Member probably does have a very strong position and feeling that way. It's the unknowns at this time that cause me concern and that's not saying that the mover isn't right. I am just saying that it's the unknown cause me some concern without knowing what is going to be the impact if we do this. I think that's one of the challenges here about taking the carpet out from underneath their feet on this issue. At this time, I am not comfortable, although I respect why it's being moved. I will leave it at that. Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be voting against it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am just sitting here listening to colleagues going back and forth on this \$491,000 and creating three positions, debating that the work could still be done from within. It has been done since 1999. Then there is a new horizon on the need to focus on the expert panel. There needs to be a real, true focus. The Minister highlighted that the outcome hopefully will be this spring that the expert panel will decide on equalization and territorial formula financing. This clearly shows that although we are creating three positions, the fiscal policy, this will be a true test to see if the departments will focus on this equalization. So I, too, won't be supporting the motion after deliberation. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess I will close off debate on this motion. To me, it's more about principle than anything. I know we talk in committees all the time about the growth and the size of government and its uncontrolled growth and here we have a classic example of a department, Madam Chair, who just recently lost the Bureau of Statistics. Now in this appropriation act, is attempting to replace the loss of the Bureau of Statistics with three new positions. Once the positions are in place, they are there. You might as well etch them in stone, Madam Chair. I have always put my foot down when it

comes time, even though these positions are in Yellowknife, I just think they are not needed at this time. The work has been done in house from 1999 until today. What more evidence does anybody need to suggest that the work can continue to get done? Even if some of it has to be contracted out, Madam Chair, we don't need three new bureaucrats. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

We are on page 3-23, activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.213 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 3-24 and 25, information item, fiscal policy, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Information item, work performed on behalf of others, \$9,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Information item, liquor revolving fund, page 7-27. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 3-28 and 3-29, information item, liquor revolving fund, active positions by region and active positions by community allocation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. If Members would return back to 3-7, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$7.953 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does the committee agree that the consideration of the Department of Finance main estimates has been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? I have to do a

count. Let me just do this again. All those in favour of reporting progress, raise your hand. One, two, three, four, five. All those opposed? One, two, three, nine. The motion is defeated. What is the wish of the committee, Mr. Hawkins?

---Interjection

---Laughter

MR. HAWKINS: No, it will not be report progress. Madam Chair, obviously committee would like a break, but we would like to oversee ENR's budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee want a break?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, we will take a short break and come back and do ENR. Thank you, committee. Good work.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Good evening, committee. We are ready to resume Committee of the Whole with ENR. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is requesting a total of \$54.7 million for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, an increase of 2.6 million dollars, or five percent, for the 2005-2006 Main Estimates.

The proposed main estimates reflect the commitment this government made in establishing a new Department of Environment and Natural Resources last year to the protection and conservation of our environment and the sustainable development of natural resources. These estimates are based on the vision of a healthy environment that is capable of supporting traditional lifestyles within a modern economy.

The proposed budget for 2006-2007 is distributed across four main estimates:

- wildlife, \$12.9 million;
- forest management, \$29.1 million;
- environmental protect, \$2.7 million;
- corporate management, \$9.9 million, which also included the environmental assessment unit and the corporate services shared with Industry, Tourism and Investment.

A number of investments are being proposed in the 2006-2007 budget are as follows:

The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to play a key role in the review of development projects through environmental impact assessment processes. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources

will continue to coordinate our government's input, analysis and positions on development applications in the Northwest Territories.

Regions across the Northwest Territories are also being directly impacted by increased development. To meet this growing demand for environmental assessment and regulatory reviews, we are planning to establish environmental assessment officers in the Inuvik, Sahtu, and Deh Cho regions and another environmental analysis position at headquarters.

As well, new regional environmental protection officers are planned for the South Slave and Sahtu. This \$700,000 investment will ensure that we continue to work closely with communities and industries as development proceeds.

Best management practices are used to guide industry and regulatory agencies' actions to prevent and reduce impacts to the environment including impacts on forests and wildlife. The department is planning to invest \$150,000 to develop best environmental management practice guidelines. These guidelines will be key in identifying appropriate measures that can be routinely taken to mitigate known potential environmental impacts from development and resources used.

Climate change and its impacts are another major concern of our residents. The changes in climatic conditions in our territory are having an impact on the landscape. Residents are reporting change in the health and migration of wildlife. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources plans to establish a climate change specialist position to work with all our partners involved in climate change actions in the Northwest Territories.

The availability of "blue chip" information is critical to the department to be able to consult with partners and stakeholders and to make required decisions, from assisting in identifying the necessary actions related to caribou management in the Northwest Territories or to contribute to national issues such as forest inventories and management and Wildlife Disease Strategy.

In support of having the best information available, the department has designed a wildlife management information system to store, analyze and distribute data related to wildlife management. We are continuing our efforts to enter current and historical data in the system. This will provide an information database for decision-makers and will ease the process of making data available to the public, communities and industry. Accelerating the entry of data from the past 30 years of research studies will expand the biophysical database for assessing impacts on wildlife.

Clean sources of community drinking water and a healthy aquatic environment are universal resources for NWT residents. The department works together with multiple agencies, including other GNWT departments, to safeguard water and will continue efforts to protect community drinking water sources.

Work on new wildlife management legislation continues to be a priority for this government. Funding has been identified to finalize consultation and development of a new NWT Species at Risk Act and continue working towards a revised Wildlife Act.

I look forward to the committee's comments today and I am prepared to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, I would like to recognize Mr. Villeneuve to read the report of GED.

General Comments

MR. VILLENEUVE: The committee then met with the Minister and his officials on September 21, 2005, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources since the committee reviewed the business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$55 million in operations expense and \$3 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2006-2007.

Committee members offer the following comment on issues arising out of the review of the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates and budget planning cycle.

Keeping Communities Clean

During committee's review of Environment and Natural Resources' 2006-2009 Business Plan, we noted that our beautiful communities and wilderness are being harmed by an ever-increasing problem of illegal dumping spots that are littering the landscape. The committee is concerned with illegal dumping around our communities and thinks that some creative solutions will be required to eliminate this problem.

Recommendation

The committee on Governance and Economic Development recommended the departments of MACA and ENR to work together to draft a strategy to help communities and the surrounding areas stay clean, litter free and eliminate illegal dumping.

The government replied that MACA, through its infrastructure acquisition plan, provides funding to community governments for solid waste disposal sites and they are responsible for enacting and enforcing bylaws to regulate solid waste disposal sites. Environment and Natural Resources offers the beverage container recovery program in the attempt to reduce waste.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Bob Bailey, deputy minister of Environment and Natural Resources; and, Nancy Magrum, the director of shared services, finance and admin, for ENR and ITI.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments on the Minister's opening remarks? Not seeing any, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to Environment and Natural Resources, just a couple of things that I continue to press the Minister on with respect to wildlife management in the Fort Liard area. It's with respect to buffalo, as well. It's a concern shared by all northerners. However, this particular herd around Fort Liard/Nahanni Butte, that area, they are classified as a free-roaming herd. That's all fine and good, Mr. Chair, but the department doesn't have any management plan, per se, of how to manage that herd. It's interacting in the communities now. It's destroying people's yards and gardens and some of them, their trees are imported and planted in the gardens and the buffalo are in the communities and on the highways, of course. Much like the difficulties people are having around Yellowknife and Fort Providence. So we have the same type of thing happening down there. They are on the airport runways in Nahanni Butte and Fort Liard. Local people have been chasing them away. They are shooting rubber bullets at them, it's to a point where it's of little avail. Initially, it had worked and all the scare tactics and guns were working initially, but now they have grown quite used to it. I think they are getting itchy to go on the airstrips to get their backs scratched.

It's a real concern to the residents in those two communities. They keep asking how is the department going to manage this herd and what's the plan. I believe the Minister committed to having a plan drafted with input of the residents of Nahanni Butte and Fort Liard. Before we can go on to another Member, perhaps I can get the Minister to comment on that at the end of my opening comments.

Another thing that is of high priority as well is that recently we were in Hay River talking to the Dehcho leadership and our government responded to the land use plan that was in Hay River about two weeks ago. Our government responded to them. The land use plan is something that the Dehcho leadership wants, but for me I am not quite sure if there was a real objection by our department, or if there was more concern with the department of how you get involved in the land use planning. I think it's a tripartite agreement anyway. Again, perhaps the Minister can correct me there. I think it's the federal, territorial, First Nations development that plan. I think the concern was that our government showed up late and said we don't agree with all these things, but they should have been involved from the start is the concern.

I would like to hear a little bit more about what is our role, if anything, with respect to the land use planning in the North.

Another thing that is highlighted in the news, people talk about it probably on a daily basis, is the climate change, even this winter alone. It's in the news daily. They say

global like Greenland and Iceland. I saw a special, too, on the effects around Tuktoyaktuk and that area. Even in our House, we have other pressing matters trying to improve the lives of the people in our communities, so we don't see too much of our role in climate change, what is our role. I know a lot of the global conference that has to do with climate change, how are we participating in that? Do we have a communication strategy? The people in the communities want to know these things. How are we going to get involved and what can our communities and people do to participate in this, as well?

Another concern of major importance, I brought it up to the Minister of Health on a couple of occasions, is the bird flu. I know it's mostly a health problem, domesticated birds, but lately it's been in the news that it's in wild duck populations over in Europe. This fall they had a bit of an outbreak in northern B.C. For me, I continue to press the issue, only because it has huge impact. Like even one of the main concerns in this House today is the drastic reduction in the caribou populations. It has impacts on people back home. If you extend that to wild birds, wild ducks, that's another huge staple of our northern residents. If there's a fear that this virus is moving into wild fowl, I am not sure what the impact is.

I know in the North, one of the ways we reduce our household expenses is by depending on the wildlife for food like the caribou and the moose and the birds of the air, Mr. Chair. People look forward to the springtime. When there is going to be a fear there is a disease, a virus in the wild bird population, there again, what is our communication strategy to ensure our northern populations that they can continue to do what they are doing, maintain their way of life without fear of repercussion, or not so much fear of repercussion, but more a fear of this pandemic virus that's out there. It's making its way to North America. I am not too sure about the communication strategy. I believe that's got to be done soon because fear is a strange thing. It moves through people so quickly. It happened too about 12 years ago and it said the fish in our river system have high levels of toxins, so people never ate fish for a long time until they were certain again that perhaps that one report had gotten blown out of proportion.

Here's another situation that could get blown out of proportion unless we have some kind of communication strategy soon and get out and inform our people to the best of our knowledge with up-to-date and current information. That's all our people ask for, is to continually be heard. That's what they are saying. We want to be informed on these few issues, so I think we owe it upon ourselves to do our best, research it and get back to them and say...Well, I am not too sure what we are going to say, but the main thing, Mr. Chair, is that we have to be on top of it. It's a moving concern and I know that our northerners are gravely concerned with respect to the wild fowl.

I will end my comments there, Mr. Chair. If I could get the committee's indulgence and get the Minister to respond to the concerns I had. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Is that okay with committee? Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just briefly with regard to the bison, the Member is correct. We have committed and we intend to

follow through on our commitment to work with the communities to come up with a strategy. We are, unfortunately, pressed by operational capability right now. We have a lot of people tied up dealing with the caribou issue and other environmental issues, but we intend to follow through, over the course of the summer and fall, with the community. We recognize, as well, that there are concerns and commitments for us to have a broader bison strategy that encompasses not only the Nahanni herd, but the Mackenzie bison sanctuary as well as the animals on the other side of the river around Hook Lake and outside of the park.

So we do intend to follow through. We are very aware of the concerns in the communities and in the animals. I just request the Member's indulgence that we are going to get to it and we are working our way down the list and we intend to do that.

In regard to the Deh Cho land use plan...

---Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): There was a request from Mr. Menicoche to get a response and I asked the committee if they were okay with it.

---Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): I asked the committee members if they had any problems for a response from the Minister and he is responding. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the Deh Cho land use plan, yes, we are involved in this process with the Deh Cho, along with Indian Affairs, and we have been working with them and we did have concerns arising out of the process, which were communicated to the committee, but I will get Mr. Bailey to speak to the detail of this, with the indulgence of the chair.

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

Mr. BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been participating in the drafting of the Deh Cho land use plan. We've been doing it in a couple of different ways. First of all, we have a participant working with the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee. We've had someone working with that committee since the beginning of that committee. In addition, we've had other staff who have been providing comments and other suggestions to the committee from a departmental perspective. We communicated with the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee last September and October to express the concerns of the GNWT with respect to the Deh Cho land use plan. We continue to work with the Deh Cho Land Use Planning Committee to make sure that issues and concerns can be resolved, so that we can move towards a satisfactory land use plan for the Deh Cho. We've stated on a couple of different occasions that we are committed to a completion of a Deh Cho land use plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can you turn to page 12-10, information item, revenue summary. Page 12-12, 12-13, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$9.952 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the Minister's opening remarks, I believe there is a mention there that money has been set aside to identify consultation and development of a new NWT Species at Risk Act and continue working towards a revised Wildlife Act.

My goodness, Mr. Chairman. References to the Wildlife Act over the last few months have been getting softer and softer and softer. There used to be a sense from the department and its predecessor that bringing into play of a bill for a new Wildlife Act was imminent, but it all we see now, Mr. Chair, is we are going to put yet more money towards it and continue working towards a revised Wildlife Act. Mr. Chairman, how much money is identified in the coming year for the development of these two pieces of legislation?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just quickly before I give the figure, the commitment, since I have assumed this position as Minister, has been a two-step one where our initial and immediate focus is to accomplish, get a commitment and get a piece of legislation for a Species at Risk Act into this House in time for passage in the life of this Assembly. Once we have done that, we will have broken trail and we will be able to carry on then. The next step would be the Wildlife Act and that would be done over the life of the 16th Assembly coming up in 18 months. We have met with the involved co-management boards. We have worked out a process. We know that timelines are every tight, but there is a commitment by all parties to meet those goals, so we can have a piece of legislation. We have, I believe, \$100,000 committed for '06-07 and another 50 for '07-08, so we can carry on with consultation and preparation. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. There has been, from my understanding, a consultation program underway for the Wildlife Act for at least the last decade, Mr. Chairman. I might be off a couple of years, but we are taking about a multi-year program, which I remember allocating up to half a million dollars a year for consultation and consensus building. We are now already saying we are going to toss this one off to our successors in the 16th Assembly. I wish them luck. I guess the thing I am wondering about is why are we continuing to spend money on it at all. I just have not seen any evidence that there has been progress towards achieving agreement or shared strategies. In fact, if anything, it seems that the differences that are in place regarding wildlife, ownership, management, co-

management, co-ownership, are becoming more diverse and I don't know what \$100,000 is going to do to get us any closer. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I'm kind of musing here, but this is on the basis of so little, I guess, ability to see real progress on this thing, that I'm questioning why we're even bothering to continue to spend money on it.

So if the Minister would care to engage on that basis, I'll stop now, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the issue of wildlife legislation is a critical one and, yes, it's taken a long time. In the 10 months or nine months I've been here, I believe we've moved the yard markers here, and I'm still confident we're going to have yet a critical first piece of a species at risk legislation ready for the House to be passed before we conclude our business as an Assembly. Once that's accomplished, then we can move on to the Wildlife Act.

The main stumbling block was, as far as I'm aware, was the issue of whose hand would be on the pen and how would the drafting be done. The work that was done on the Species at Risk Act has not been really debated excessively. There's been, pretty well, consensus on the actual work. It was process issues that tied us up. There's been lots of good work done on the Wildlife Act, as well. Consultation over the years, we resolved, we believe the process issues of how the act will be drafted, the Species at Risk Act, and now we're moving to get the work done. So I'm confident, as Minister, that we're going to be able to come forward with that piece of legislation during the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Well, this is a business, Mr. Chairman, where if we don't maintain some kind of optimism, we'd all be in a lot of trouble. So let's go on that basis.

Mr. Chairman, this government, in effect, has a year left. One could argue even less than a year in which to do new things. If the Minister does not see that he's going to be able to bring something as big, and deep, and wide in scope as the Species at Risk Act into this Assembly by the May or June session, then I don't see how we're going to be able to clear it during the life of this Assembly. That's just the reality of the calendar. Does the Minister have any firm idea, or any more firm idea, of when that bill will be brought into this Assembly, Mr. Chair?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I met before Christmas with the co-management board chairs and officials, the drop-dead final date for us to be able to bring forward, have a bill in this House for third reading, is June 2007. We've worked back from that date, taking into account the holidays and all the other breaks in between. So the work plan that has been sketched out is worked back from that date. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: That will do for this page, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To 12-13, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$9.952 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-15, activity summary, corporate management, grants and contributions, contributions, total grants and contributions, \$40,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-16, 12-17, information item, corporate management, active positions, 35. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-18, 12-19, activity summary, environmental protection, operations expenditure, \$2.725 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 12-19 we are looking at some of the numbers here from various fiscal years -- last year, the current year and next year -- and there's quite a bulge, Mr. Chair, from the original prediction for expenditures. At the beginning of this current year we're about 2.3 million, they went up to about 4.4, and they're forecasted to go back down to 2.7 next year. I think the reason for this was the implementation of I believe it was the beverage container. I'm just looking for confirmation of that or an explanation, Mr. Chair, of these as I see these fairly considerable swings in estimates and revisions.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct; there was the Beverage Container Program as well as money put into the conservation programs that we help support both through our own department and, as well, through the Arctic Energy Alliance.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. The Beverage Container Program has, by most accounts, been a real hit. I say that in a positive sense, around the territory. It's something that I was a supporter of on the idea of getting something off the ground for it. I was also, Mr. Chairman, a critic of the one aspect of the implementation of this program in that there are a number of communities, as we neared the implementation date which I believe was the 1st of August, was it, or 1st of September, that did not have depots or a way by which consumers could recover their deposit fees, but yet, Mr. Chairman, we were going to go ahead and continue to charge these people. So there was an element in there of unfairness, especially in the smallest communities where because of our administrative problems we weren't going to be able to refund the money but we were going to continue taking it from people. I wanted to ask, Mr. Chairman, how have we done on establishing mechanisms, by whatever means, in every community in

the NWT so that people have a chance to recover their beverage container fee, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have 23 independently operated depots. We have four that are operating on a contractual arrangement, then we have four that we are continuing to carry as ENR as we continue to work on getting community involvement. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, are there any communities that do not have some kind of mechanism in place by which people can recover or return their containers and get their fees? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: No, Mr. Chairman. The four communities that we are involved in are the smaller communities of Colville, Sachs, Paulatuk and Holman. I won't try that right now. Holman, I apologize, Mr. Chairman. But every community has capacity to return the containers for refund.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, also in this area was, under the waste recovery and reduction act, was a provision whereby an environment fund could be established whereby the surcharges under any program, and I'm assuming this program may be one, are to be deposited into this fund. The monies are then intended to cover operational expenses for subsequent programs. Has this fund been established, Mr. Chairman, and, if so, how is the cash flow happening and what are the monies being used for, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mrs. Magrum.

MRS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, an environment fund was established and to December 31st, the expenses were approximately \$100,000. This is being offset against the fund. The 2005-06 revised budget for the environment fund is \$820,000. Under other expenses, total revised budget is \$920,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Magrum. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will come back to the Beverage Container Program for a moment. The Minister indicated that in the smallest of the communities, the ones that have been most difficult to find a contract or a service provider for this, our own officers or our own staff have set up some kind of a service here. The question here is whether or not the people in the community are actually getting any refunds. Is there cash being returned to the people in these communities? I understand there is provision whereby empties are being returned or collected, but the real concern is, is cash actually being returned to the consumers in these smallest communities, Mr. Chair?

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

MR. BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, people in communities have the opportunity to return their bottles, cans or other returnable items to ENR officials when ENR officials are in those communities. They are given a refund at that time.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some information that maybe is at some odds with that, but I would just like an opportunity to confirm it. Maybe we will come back to the Minister with that. That is all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. 12-19, activity summary, environmental protection, operations. Mr. Villeneuve.

Committee Motion 28-15(4): Recommendation That MACA And ENR Draft Stay Clean Strategies For Communities, Carried

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Environment and Natural Resources work together to draft a strategy to help communities and the surrounding areas stay clean, litter free and eliminate illegal dumping. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-19, activity summary, environmental protection, operations expenditure summary, \$2.725 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-20, 12-21, activity summary, environmental protection, grants and contributions, contributions, total grants and contributions, \$460,000. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to see the commitment continue to the Arctic Energy Alliance. I wanted to ask whether this includes a contribution from this department for membership in the core as a GNWT core member of the alliance. Does it include this membership contribution, Mr. Chair?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. Yes, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BRADEN: Could I confirm what that amount is, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Fifty thousand dollars.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is all in this area. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Page 12-21, total contributions, \$460,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$460,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-22, 12-23, information item, environmental protection, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-24, 12-25, activity summary, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$29.114 million. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I would like to ask a question on the contract services since there is a huge decrease of almost \$2.5 million. Coming from an isolated community, there is a demand for equipment whether it is fire equipment or firefighting equipment or even the vehicles in the communities. Over the summer when I was back home in one of the communities, I think it was in Gameti, I just visited the firefighters there, their own little group. They were sharing all their concerns. Before, they used to have vehicles in a community. They can transport equipment and whatnot, but they don't have that anymore. They are using all their old equipment. Some are beyond repairable. When a fire breaks out, they have to hitch a ride with a chopper. This is just not acceptable in the communities where we should have equipment ready for these firefighters because some are even volunteering.

In Gameti, there is a forest fire, and all of a sudden Whati, there was a big forest fire on a big island. They just left the fire going because there were some cutbacks in funding. They couldn't send out a crew. Our crew was ready from Gameti, Whati and Behchoko, but they were waiting for a call from Fort Smith; headquarters, I guess. That call didn't come through so they just left the fire going. That has been a huge issue in the community since the fire, since the summer, since the Tlicho annual assembly. It was raised then that this is really... We talk about the decline in caribou. This main source of food is all being burnt. Even the breeding grounds are being destroyed. Also, the migratory path is in that area, too, where it is all being destroyed and we just left it and watched it happen. I was going to raise that issue in this House, but it could still happen anyways.

I think something needs to be done in this area. I don't like to see a decrease in fire suppression because this is probably not just my community. There are other small communities that are requesting this as well. Why is there a cut in that area where it is badly needed in the communities? Whatever happens here would have to be related back to the communities. We have heard over and over that there needs to be an increase in forest fire suppression funding, if the Minister can elaborate on the contract services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if you go from the 2005-06 mains to the 2006-07 mains, the numbers are basically the same. There is \$16.771 million to \$16.653 million. The revised mains for 2005-06 were a result of supplementary appropriation under fire suppression. We have a budget that is set. When we run short or run out because of fires, then we come back to Cabinet with a supplementary appropriation, and then they cover it off. So there is no change to the base budget. It is just based on what kind of fire we have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I'm not really too satisfied with that answer because, back in 2005-06, it was \$18 million. Even 2005-06, \$16.7 million and it is still going down. So I am still concerned about that. Every time we see a supplementary, then there are a lot of heads shaking at the committee meeting. I think we really need to focus in this area. The department needs to anyways, because the Minister and his department will certainly hear from the communities on this particular issue.

Mr. Chair, I have already touched on it where a decision comes from Habatsa, they call it Fort Smith headquarters where the budget has been allocated to what they call North Slave. It is in the Monfwi district. In Monfwi, if there is a fire in the region, then there is a call that goes through Yellowknife. It goes back to Smith and it goes back to Yellowknife and then down to the community. By the time that decision comes around, the land is destroyed. I think the decision needs to be more clearly communicated. The communication dialogue should be within the region where it is not really there. A major decision is being made in headquarters. We, around this table, always talk about regional decision-making but it is always at the headquarters whether it be Yellowknife, Smith or with the headquarters. I think that delegation needs to be turned over to the regional management because we are capable. We had RWED. We still do, with a different title, though, in the communities that can easily take over that decision making. They know the areas. Those decisions can be made quickly instead of watching the lands being destroyed. It is an eye sore when you go out on the land to go out hunting and there are no trees out there. There is a story behind it. Every land you go to, there is a story why this happened. Certainly, I don't want to see that anymore. That is why I am just stressing this fire suppression. I think we really need to refocus in that area. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bailey.

MR. BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department responds to forest fires in accordance with the forest fire management policy of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Inside that policy, there are provisions for looking at different values that are at risk from forest fires. When a forest fire season comes along, decisions can be made at the regional level with respect to whether a fire should be fought or not. Once a fire has had some action taken on it, the fire can be continued to be fought if certain conditions are met. There are cases where fires won't be fought because they are not affecting values that are high enough on the scale of values at risk. Our first priority in our value system is human life and property. We are primarily concerned with the protection of communities and the property around community areas. That is where we put our emphasis. If we are busy with fires and we are having high danger ratings and threats of fires occurring, we must place our emphasis on community areas first and so, from time to time, there are fires that we cannot take direct action on on any given day during a fire season. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bailey. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Just a quick note, Mr. Chair, before my time is up. Somewhat I agree, but I disagree with the way the policy is structured where we talk about the people, the community and the property. I fully support that initiative, but at the same time there is wildlife that we have to take into consideration. We are destroying the land. We are destroying the wildlife. There are cabins that have been destroyed. There has been compensation. There are still some that are outstanding, but we have to keep in mind that there is wildlife out there that we are destroying. Here we talk about decline in caribou. It has a huge impact on their food. If we don't see caribou, it means that their food is all burnt and they are going to a different country.

I would just like to have that on the record, Mr. Chair. It is a big concern in my riding. Also, it has an impact on other small communities in the North. This really needs to be stressed that we really need to refocus on fire suppression because there is a decrease in funding. I also would like to highlight the policy that we are going by should really focus on the wildlife, as well. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will note the Member's concern and appreciate the concern. It is the same in every region within the boreal forest area. I just want to reassure the Member, when you look at the main estimates, the funding has not been cut back. It can, periodically on a yearly basis, be supplemented by a supplementary appropriation, depending on the fire season.

The other point that we have to keep in mind is that fires are considered a normal part of life and habitat management occurs naturally. We can't fight every fire. We do appreciate the issue of the range of the animals and such, but we have also tracked on maps fires that go back 40, 50 and 60 years so we can have a sense of what the landscape looks like so that there is new and old growth and middle-aged growth. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I share some of the concerns of my other colleagues with respect to lands and the action zones that appears to the communities that fires aren't being fought, especially when they are kind of close. That continues to be a concern so nobody is quite certain about what criteria is being used. Sometimes they fight and sometimes they don't. The community leaders get quite concerned. How do they fight it up north? They get to fight what is close to their communities. Over here, they don't. They are not. People continue to be concerned about the fire suppression as well as the fire suppression contract itself. I am not too sure how it worked out last year, if there was almost an extra \$3 million spent last year. Is it the case sometimes where fires aren't fought because it seems like it is going to be too expensive? Is that how they are making decisions, rather than having observation zones and action zones? Just with that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will get the deputy to provide some detail, but cost is a factor. The values we look at are human life, property, resource values and, of course, cultural values are the four main values that we work off of. Of course, cost is a factor. I will ask, Mr. Chair, if the deputy could speak in more detail to that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bailey.

MR. BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are a number of factors that we need to take into consideration when we are dealing with forest fires. We need to look at the location of a forest fire, where it has occurred. We need to look at what the fire is threatening and place what it is threatening on that values chain that we have. If it is threatening a high value such as human life or a community, then we will need to take whatever action we can on that particular event.

We also have to look at fire weather and consider how weather is affecting a particular fire and whether our actions are going to be effective or not, and, also, we need to consider costs that we may have to put against a particular fire so that we attempt to remain within the budgets that have been provided by the House for this particular activity.

Without cost being a factor, it is possible that, for fire suppression, we could run up a bill that would not be in good order and it might not be efficient spending from a fire suppression perspective.

With respect to our high values, we take aggressive action to make sure that communities are not adversely impacted by wildfire. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bailey. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much. I appreciate that protection of life and then property are very high priorities. I concur with that. I guess I was just trying to

get at, if anything, is to apply the ruling as consistently as they can. Quite often, the communities are calling and saying one year you fought, and this year you are not. It is quite confusing. I don't know if there is some kind of communication method the ministry can use. Maybe get into the communities early before the fire season, meet with the chief and council because they are the ones that get nervous because everybody else is calling them, so they understand some of the guidelines and the rules. Some of it is spur of the moment conditions. The deputy minister was talking about wind conditions and that kind of stuff. All those can be appreciated, but if we can communicate it the best we can to the hamlets and to the councils that are out there.

Another thing of interest is reforestation and silva culture. I believe that we do have a base of people, but it has to be continually used. One of the good programs that I am a champion of back in Fort Simpson is the ability to have reforestation projects for our schools and the students. They don't have to be big projects. It is about helping them understand and of the silva culture business. It makes our students understand about reforestation, building our forestries back up. In fact, it may inspire some youth to pursue a career in natural resources; just understanding it from the roots up, as it were. I kind of know that our program expenditures in reforestation have been declining. Perhaps the ministry can tell me what it has been like on average for the last three years, because the forestry hasn't really been active so there are no opportunities to go planting trees and that. But I do believe if we can allocate some money to the schools on a yearly basis and keep our workforce kind of sharp, so to speak, Mr. Chair. If the Minister can detail again for me the kind of average reforestation in the last three years and some of the justification needed to get that tree planting back in the schools. It is a huge bonus for the children learning about our forestry, our resources, the need to protect the land, as well as they get to make some money, too. That is a big bonus. They get to get out there and get active. It typically happens on a long weekend. It is a good thing. I would like to see that continue. I don't know if it is an actual line item, like reforestation for schools, but, if anything else, I would champion something like that, Mr. Chair. With that, I would just get the ministry to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to the communication about the values at risk and how fires are fought and clarifying the rules of engagement, I will just commit to the Member that as we mobilize the fire crews across the North with the coming fire season, we will take the step to redouble our efforts to make sure that we communicate clearly with the communities and leadership as to the upcoming campaign season.

In regards to reforestation, I will ask the deputy to speak to the detail. It isn't a separate line item per se, but the deputy can provide some further detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bailey.

MR. BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tree planting activities are primarily aimed at regenerating areas that have been cut over by loggers and other harvesters of

forest products. When people buy a timber cutting licence or a timber cutting permit and they pay fees for the right to harvest trees, then portions of the fees go into the reforestation fund and provide a basis for us to regenerate the sites that have been harvested.

There have been programs in the past where we have offered tree planting experiences to school children. We should be able to entertain doing that again, as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Bailey. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I will just be brief because it has been brought up here before, just with the issue of the values at risk list. I brought this issue up a couple of years ago with the Department of RWED, when RWED was still in existence, about maybe reprioritizing the values at risk list or adding some additions to it, which I feel my friend from Monfwi here was talking about. Wildlife now is a valuable resource. I think we are starting to realize that now with the declining herds of caribou. I had asked the department to look at maybe having the caribou migration routes, feeding areas in the boreal forest area that they do migrate through, being put on this priority or values at risk list and to have fires that are threatening these main feeding grounds and areas with an abundance of lichen, to go out and fight those fires as if they were fighting for property and cultural values and everything else that they have on that list. I'd like the department to revisit that and really put some more emphasis on fighting fires, if there is an opportunity to do that and in the protection and in the best interest of wildlife.

Wildlife feeding grounds, migratory routes, I know we've got lots of studies about where they're migrating to and from and everything like that, so I don't think it's a real high problem with knowing what areas those are comprised of. Also, traditional knowledge; people, elders have always been telling me in the last couple years that they should be fighting the fire over here or this fire or that fire because it's a main breeding ground, it's got lots of lichen that caribou really depend on. It's the only thing they depend on and, therefore, RWED should prioritize it and go and fight that fire and put it out. I really think that's something that should go on this list.

This list is much too short. I think there's a lot of other items that should be put on that list that are a priority to northerners, especially within forest, with the new forest management regime coming around and there's going to be increased activity in the forest industry, I hope. I think that this management, this forest fire management policy is just too simple and it's not a policy that's...It's probably a policy that's too old and has to be revisited and reprioritized. I would like to see the department really take it into some serious consideration in the next year, in the next budget process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under the values that I listed off, there's one called the resource values, which is a broad term but it encompasses a lot of the areas and issues that the Member from Tu Nedhe references. I would be more than happy and willing to work with the committee. I would

suggest, for example, if the committee ever came down to Fort Smith, we could do a full briefing with the fire centre. We could lay out all the work that we do, how it's done. We can look at the values at risk. We could have that kind of discussion. Once everybody's fully briefed, then we can look at what kind of suggestions may come out of that briefing. So I appreciate the Member's comments and I'd just like to make that offer that we'd be very happy and willing to sit down with the Members and give them that kind of full briefing, and then they can see the extent of the work that's done, the historical data, and the fact, the complexity of the issue. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be pleased to visit Smith. How does June 9th sound?

---Applause

But thanks for the offer. Mr. Chairman, I'm fully aware of the complexities of the forest fire management department and all the things that they're up against. All I'm saying is the forest fire management policy is too old; it's an old policy. What's wrong with updating it and making it more concise and more clear, so that people understand exactly where human life, property, equipment, resources, cultural and wildlife sit on that list? I don't see what the big problem is with making some amendments to a policy that's outdated and people don't know anything about. So I'm not saying change the intent of the policy, I'm just saying it's time for an update. There's some additions to that policy. I know resource values, when people think about going to fight a fire based on resource values, they're probably thinking there's a mine out there or an exploration activity happening out there or stuff like that. They don't look at wildlife as a resource in many, at the heat of the moment, type thing, and you have to go out. If you're flying out in a helicopter going to fight a fire based on a resource value and they say why and it's because of caribou lichen, they'll be shaking their heads and wondering what is that all about and they won't understand the value of that. I'm just saying the department should revisit that and maybe put that into the policy as a definite priority for this government to retain some of those important feeding and migratory areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The current policies and values at risk were developed in the early '90s. So they're going on to 15 years old, or slightly over 10 anyway, and it was done through a fairly extensive consultation process. But the Member is correct. I mean, no policy is necessarily forever. I would suggest, though, that if the committee, if there is a clear interest, then we should take the time to look at the history and the background and how we got to where we are. If we're going to change it, how do we want to change it and what process of consultation would we want to take to do that? So I'm willing to engage in that exercise with the Members. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, we'll definitely be looking forward to that because it's not, to me it's not really a complex issue. It's something that could be easily brought forward for the public input and I'm sure the public will buy into it. You'll just have to give them the policy right now and say we're going to add this, and add this, and add that, and everybody says great; that's great. We got more things of value added to this values at risk list and I don't see how people would say, gee, we're not going to fight fires because of feeding grounds or migratory routes. I don't think people would be opposed to that to add everything out there, wildlife, it doesn't have to just specifically be caribou. It could be bison or marten, lynx, white fox, anything. I think people would be more inclined to give their consent and blessing to any policy that gets updated, especially in this government. Like I said, you know, some policies are written in stone, it seems, and changing them is like work for the government. I don't see what's wrong with that and people would be happy to embrace it. So thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've acknowledged the Member's comments and concerns and I will follow up, I'm prepared to follow up on the commitments that we've made here today to address that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Villeneuve. Thank you. Page 12-25, activity summary, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$29.114 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-26, 12-27, activity summary, forest management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Agreed. Page 12-29, information item, forest management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-30, 12-31, activity summary, wildlife, operations expenditure summary, \$12.92 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-32, 12-33, activity summary, wildlife, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$255,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$255,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-34, 12-35, information item, wildlife, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-36, information time, lease commitments infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12-37, 12-38, 12-39. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Well. Step away from the chair and you miss out on 10 pages.

---Laughter

Geez.

AN HON. MEMBER: Running shoes!

---Laughter

MR. VILLENEUVE: Okay, before we finish off this department, I wanted to ask the Minister, like I was asking him in the House earlier, where is the Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy dollars coming from?

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

MR. BAILEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Barren-Ground Caribou Strategy that I believe all Members have, indicates a number of strategy points and other information in the strategy. That document is intended for more consultation with all sorts of people and organizations across the Territories. What we have asked for for money for this particular item in '05-06 is \$550,000 was to do some work this fiscal year to get ready to move forward with the caribou strategy. We've also asked for money in 2006-07, an amount of \$525,000. We requested those in a submission made about a month-and-a-half ago to the Financial Management Board. The remaining money that's outlined in the caribou strategy, we will be returning to business plan processes to seek guidance and to consult with Members and the general public with respect to all the other items that are in the strategy for future years to obtain the resources necessary to implement the Caribou Management Strategy over the next five years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if my question has been answered. I am just wondering where in this budget is that \$525,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For this current year, we were given authority to take \$550,000 out of the surplus from the fire suppression budget. The \$525,000 for 2006-07 is going to come forward in supp No. 1 because the request came in after the mains were printed and the budgets were done. So supp No. 1 for 2006-07 will have \$525,000 and then

everything after that is part of the business plan for 2007-08 and on. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Last year, it came out of the fire suppression budget, but last year the fire suppression budget went over budget, as far as the mains to the actuals. There is a difference of a couple million dollars. Like my friend from Monfwi pointed out, they did go over budget and that's something that this government just seems to do every year. They budget for fire suppression and they usually go over and deal with it that way. I am just wondering, how can we divert a half a million dollars from forest firefighting, maybe because a lot of these priorities that we just talked about, these values at risk list, were not taken into consideration. I am sure that \$525,000 could have been used for those reasons. I am just really having a hard time figuring out even '05-06, the \$550,000, that apparently was put towards this whole strategy. The deputy minister states that we are going to have to do a whole bunch of consultation and talk to a whole bunch of new people and get more information. We are just counting these caribou to death. I don't see any point. We could be out a couple thousand here and there, but they don't fluctuate that much from one year to the next. I don't think we are really using this \$15 million that this strategy is going to cost us to the best of our ability. You can only count caribou so many times and come out with some definite and good estimates of how the numbers fit.

I am just having a rough time trying to envision where the money is being shifted around from one section to the other to punch out a strategy that really nobody has had any input into. It seems it has already cost us a half a million dollars here and now we are going to slide them another \$525,000 for doing work that we are really not sure what they are doing. I would like to see more of a communication between the committees and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the co-management boards to find out where people want this to go, and how soon do they want it to roll out, and what immediate measures do they want taken, and where the money is going to come from for another thing. People should know that if we are going to pump millions into this thing, I think people want to know where that is going to come from. If the Minister could provide some insight into that.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the broad strategy by our count is a total of about \$4.5 million over the next few years. We are taking the first 500-and-some-thousand for '05-06 out of the fire suppression surplus that we had turned back and we made the case to Cabinet, FMBS, and they said because it's an important issue, take that money out of there.

The second piece for '06-07 was too late for the main estimates. We were given approval to put that into the first supp for the '06-07 year. The rest of the funding is going to come forward and we will be building it into our business plans. We have been consulting now since just after April last year with all the co-management boards up and down the valley, along with the outfitters, the Metis,

the Yellowknives, the folks in this area. If you look at that nine-page interim measures document that I gave everybody, the co-management boards from WMAC, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, have given us very, very clear specific recommendations about what they want done. They want the counts redone; they want targets set. They have set some very, very stringent quotas of their own in their areas. They want to work with us to come up with a broader plan but, first and foremost, they want us to confirm the numbers. We committed to do that and we are doing the same with the Bathurst herd, as well as the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq caribou. So they haven't been counted excessively. One of the problems is that there hasn't been, with the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq, for example, a census for many, many years. It's a very important issue and we need the numbers. That's the commitment. This is going to be money, in my opinion, extremely well spent. The co-management boards have been very supportive, as have most of the groups that we've dealt with to make sure that we take the right proactive steps. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for his response. Sometimes if you are too proactive and you are throwing out a strategy there that hunters and trappers aren't aware of but suddenly they have a bunch of new rules to follow and I don't know about how they are going to deal with it, but I will just get off the caribou issue here for a second.

I know that strategy came out real quick when we noticed the decline in the caribou herds, but what about a bison strategy? We have bison coming out of every corner of the country here. They are just all over the place, the highways, the Liard area and the Wood Buffalo Park area. Is there consideration for a bison strategy that we maybe could develop just because the bison herds are getting quite large now? If there is a strategy in place, what is the strategy? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member raises a good point and, as we indicated to the Member from Nahendeh, we have made a commitment and we recognize that we need a similar strategy with the bison that's going to look not only at individual herds in the Mackenzie, the Nahanni in the South Slave, but a broader strategy that's going to allow us to deal with the common issues. So that is what we have committed to do in the coming fall or summer and fall. It will have, hopefully, the same kind of specific recommendations and will allow us to be able to deal in a more comprehensive way with some of the pressures that communities are facing, like in the Member for Nahendeh's riding, as well as Fort Providence and the concerns raised outside of Yellowknife with the traffic issues and herd numbers and health, quotas and those types of things for hunting. It is an important issue and it's next on our list after this caribou one. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: I want to receive committee consent to return to page 12-25.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): The Member is seeking the committee's agreement to go back to 12-25. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Villeneuve.

Committee Motion 29-15(4): Recommendation That ENR Revisit The Forest Fire Management Policy - Values At Risk Listing, Carried

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Mahsi, Members of the House. Madam Chair, I move that this committee strongly recommends that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources revisit the forest fire management policy and the values that risk listing and update the listing to include wildlife, migratory routes and feeding areas. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. We are just circulating the motion now. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Activity summary, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$29.114 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Back to the page we were on, which is 12-37, work performed on behalf of others. It's an information item, \$4.197 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Go back to the beginning of ENR. Page 12-7, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$54.711 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Now if you could turn to your book for capital, page 10-5, activity summary, infrastructure acquisition plan, corporate management, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$100,000, total activity, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Activity summary, infrastructure acquisition plan, forest management, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$1.075 million, total activity, \$1.075 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am in favour of the North Slave helicopter pad there, but not in favour of the location. Though I see it passing without any

problems, I just want to put that on the record. Even though we aren't on the page, rather than stopping committee on the next page, I will also say at this time I am also against the North Slave lab complex being down and I think that space could be better utilized by the City of Yellowknife. It's my opinion that the overall plan of ENR should be moving it out a little further along the bay. That's my opinion and it's a minority opinion, but I just wanted to get it on the record that ENR should be moving away from that particular location of being down in Old Town. Thank you, Madam Chair. I won't delay committee any further. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you for that, Mr. Hawkins. Activity summary, infrastructure acquisition plan, forest management, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, total activity, \$1.075 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Next page, 10-9, infrastructure acquisition plan, wildlife, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$1.852 million, total activity, \$1.852 million, total department, \$3.027 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee agree that that concludes the consideration of the main estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Thank you, Minister Miltenberger, Mrs. Magrum, Mr. Bailey, for your attendance.

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Let's rise and report progress... Move that we rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 19: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007, and Committee Reports 5-15(4) and 6-15(4) would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Is there a seconder for the motion? The honourable Minister for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

ITEM 21: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Caucus at the rise of the House.

Orders of the day for Friday, February 24, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 15, Court Security Act
 - Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act
 - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act
 - Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006
 - Committee Report 5-15(4), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 6-15(4), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process

- Committee Report 7-15(4), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process

20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 24, 2006, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 20:19 p.m.

