



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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### Mr. Charles Dent

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### Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

### Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

### Mr. Leon Lafferty

(North Slave)

### Ms. Sandy Lee

(Range Lake)

### Mr. Michael McLeod

(Deh Cho)

### Mr. Steven Nitah

(Tu Nedhe)

### Mr. Floyd Roland

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 18, 2003****Members Present**

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

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

-- Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford):** Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 16-14(6): Remembering Cliff King**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Mr. Speaker, I stand today to advise the House of the passing of a great educator yesterday in Yellowknife.

Mr. Cliff King of Inuvik was a dedicated teacher working for more than 30 years in Inuvik at the Samuel Hearne Secondary School. Mr. King will long be remembered as a teacher with a keen sense of humour who cared for his students, his profession and his community. He was a part of the school community, giving of himself in ways too numerous to mention. Many people in Inuvik will remember the 25 years Mr. King dedicated to his hockey teams and those he coached.

He demonstrated dedication not only to his students, but also to his profession. Most recently, Mr. King served as a vital member for the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, in the current collective bargaining sessions here in Yellowknife.

His passing will be a great loss to our teaching community in the North, and for the community of Inuvik.

Our hearts and prayers go out to his wife Jodie and sons David and Jason. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Indeed our condolences go from this House to the family. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****Member's Statement On Passing Of Cliff King**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, as well, would like to rise today and speak on the passing of Mr. Cliff King. Mr. Speaker, I had opportunity to work with Mr. King in my role as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and his involvement with education as a teacher on the negotiating team. But even before that, Mr. Speaker, I had opportunity to deal with Mr. Cliff King as a young student at Samuel Hearne Secondary School as he taught me a couple of courses in accounting, and his commitment to our community is one that

will be missed. It's difficult to express the loss that members of the community and his family would feel. Our prayers go out to his family for their loss at this time and to the rest of the teachers that he's dealt with and his friends back home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Member's Statement On Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum of Understanding**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge a major milestone of aboriginal people and the Government of the Northwest Territories. They are reaching a goal set forth in Towards a Better Tomorrow. The signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Government of the Northwest Territories ensures the participation that will give aboriginal governments more success in the business sector.

Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal people being the majority of the population in the Gwich'in settlement region, it is only fitting that they benefit from economic development through public sector contracts, providing employment, capacity building for communities and for the region. The seasonal work being considered as sole income for a lot of our residents and also for the North, has caused much delight, knowing the government has taken the steps Towards a Better Tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, this partnership will guarantee that both partners are working for the people and the residents of the NWT to ensure that the jobs, employment and economic opportunities stay within the local communities and the regions. With a more accountable system, the Gwich'in Nation would surely benefit from communities having ownership of the economic resources in the area they are serving. Mr. Speaker, the MOU intends that Gwich'in businesses be awarded 50 percent of public contracts for a five-year span. The GNWT contracting policies and procedures remain in place to ensure maximized local, regional and northern employment in business opportunities. This ensures that aboriginal ownership and work towards self-government in the Mackenzie Delta region is a success that allows for an economic footing in the developments that take place in the Mackenzie Delta and in the Gwich'in settlement region. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish the parties all the best and I look forward to the next five years of a fair footing for the people of the Mackenzie Delta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### Member's Statement On Anticipation Of The Federal Budget

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that every citizen of Canada, including Northerners, has at least two fundamental rights, that being the right to access quality education and the right to quality health care. By way of this Member's statement, Mr. Speaker, I would like to help rattle the federal government's chain once more on behalf of all Northerners. Mr. Speaker, I fully support the northern Premiers' stand against the federal government. It is high time we tell Ottawa that we won't be their puppet on a string anymore. The critical state of our northern health care system demands that we do nothing less. Mr. Speaker, the recent decision by the federal government defining health care funding on a per capita basis has effectively taken away our right to quality health care based on the proposed amount of funding that we are to receive.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have to remind everyone that of the proposed \$12 billion offered to the provinces and territories over the next five years, the NWT's share would amount to \$15.6 million. Mr. Speaker, this paltry sum offered by the federal government is absurd and a slap in the face to all Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, we need to keep the pressure on Ottawa to adequately fund us to reflect the reality of providing services in the North. Residents of the Northwest Territories have the worst health care statistics in the country. In addition, we have the highest health care costs in the country. Yet, we are slated to receive the smallest share of the pie. That really goes to show where the federal government's priorities are.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat encouraged by recent developments that have come to light since the three northern Premiers took their stand. I am honored that the Premiers have a meeting scheduled this coming Thursday with the Prime Minister. I truly hope that the Prime Minister will do the right thing to ensure that Northerners have access to the same quality of health care as other Canadians. I find it extremely sad, Mr. Speaker, when I hear Canadian taxpayers saying that the only time the federal government makes any attempt to listen to them is at election time. It appears this is sad, but true. Mr. Speaker, as I deliver my Member's statement in this House, Finance Minister Handley is getting ready to deliver the federal budget in the House of Commons.

---Laughter

---Interjection

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order, please. The time for your Member's statement has ended.

**MR. DELOREY:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to continue his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Proceed, Mr. Delorey. Brief us on who is going to be the next Prime Minister.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, as I deliver my Member's statement in this House, Finance Minister Manley is getting ready to

deliver the federal budget in the House of Commons. I anxiously await what he has to say. This will give Northerners a clear understanding of exactly where the federal government's priorities lie. Mr. Speaker, after the Prime Minister announced that he won't be seeking re-election, he has spoken at length of what he wishes to leave as his distinct legacy for Canadians. Well, Mr. Speaker, it appears that if we, as Northerners, appear to have our distinct needs ignored by the federal government, then this legacy will truly be a legacy of neglect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### Member's Statement On Firearms Registration In The Northwest Territories

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to revisit the subject of gun control as it impacts many of our constituents of the Northwest Territories. January 1<sup>st</sup> has come and gone, a date that should be of interest and concern to all Northerners who possess firearms. As all firearms were to have been registered by that date, firearms owners must have a registration certificate for every firearm in their possession. I previously voiced a concern that the offices of the Canadian Firearms Centre both in Yellowknife and Hay River have been closed. To date, there appears to be no commitment by the federal government to reopen these offices. This makes it very difficult for many people to access firearm registration information and registration forms. Firearms owners are being encouraged to register through mail-ins, telephone or the Internet. Mr. Speaker, not all residents have access to telephones or the Internet. Not all our residents understand what the consequences of not registering your firearms might be. Not all residents maintain English or French as their first language. Not all residents can read or write. Not all residents have access to someone who will assist them with their registration of a firearm or their gun. Penalties for not acquiring a licence can result in fines or imprisonment or seizure of the firearm. Mr. Speaker, possession of non-registered firearms can lead to charges under the Firearms Act or the Criminal Code. The firearms office has indicated it wants gun owners to comply with the law voluntarily, but is ready to enforce compliance if necessary. If this compliance is to be enforced, how many of our residents will become criminals for non-compliance? Mr. Speaker, during question period, I will ask this government this question. What action and support is this government willing to provide to the residents of the Northwest Territories to ensure they do not become criminals for failure to register their firearms? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### Member's Statement On Arsenic Storage At Giant Mine

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very early this year, residents of Yellowknife got a long-anticipated review of the arsenic storage situation at the Giant Yellowknife Mine. This was a well-received report, Mr. Speaker. It was quite technical

in nature, but for anyone who took the time to read it, it really presented the whole situation very well and I recommend it to anybody who has any interest in this very dangerous situation out there. But it's something I have a growing amount of confidence in, Mr. Speaker, because the science and the expertise being applied to research this issue and the way it is being communicated to the community, I think, is very good. I want to reinforce my confidence in the process to date, Mr. Speaker.

Now there is another briefing tonight at Northern United Place of the experts and officials from DIAND and the public is invited to this. Mr. Speaker, the message I want to deliver is that this is a situation that this whole community should be paying attention to, should be involved in. We are getting very good support from the DIAND people so far, but the quality and the depth of the understanding and the commitment we have to the solutions that are going to be eventually decided on are really up to this community. So I want to urge people to take in these opportunities to hear what's going on.

One thing I have learned, Mr. Speaker, is that we are not looking at something that is going to be solved in one potentially huge and expensive solution. We are looking at a perpetual management situation here at Giant Mine. This is going to go on for hundreds or thousands of years. The kinds of decisions that we make are very critical to how much this costs and how effective it's going to be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Condition Of Highway No. 3 Between Rae And Yellowknife**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I drove into Yellowknife yesterday from my home in Rae. I was appalled at the condition of the road on the gravel surface between here and Rae-Edzo. Mr. Speaker, the road was icy and it was difficult to drive, especially with the light snow on the surface. Mr. Speaker, the poor condition of this road is not an isolated incident. I have raised this issue constantly, both in the House and in letters to the Minister. I have been continually assured by the Minister that this road is a priority and that it is being maintained effectively. Mr. Speaker, there were two accidents along this road this weekend. In yesterday's News/North, a constituent wrote in thanking people for helping her when her vehicle went off the road between Yellowknife and Rae. In October, I wrote the Minister a letter offering detailed suggestions for improving the condition of the road. To my knowledge, none of these suggestions have been tried. Since my letter, there have been more than 25 accidents on this road. The frequency with which accidents occur along this highway leads me to believe that either we have a lot of terrible drivers in the North or the condition of the road needs improvement. As I drive this stretch of road almost daily, I can say with certainty that there is room for improvement in how Highway No. 3 is maintained. In response to the concerns that I raised in my October letter, the Minister invited me to go with him to the maintenance shop to debate this issue with the highway operators. Mr. Speaker, as I stated then, the Minister is responsible for giving direction to his department. I do not

have the authority to direct the operators in highway maintenance, but the Minister does. If they don't take direction from him, they certainly won't take it from me. There are problems with Highway No. 3 that need to be addressed. Mr. Speaker, the Minister continues to say the department is doing a very good job and the highway is safe. Mr. Speaker, I have to say the Minister is a total stranger to the truth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Interjection

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would caution Members to be careful with the words they use in the House. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

#### **Member's Statement On Affordable And Equitable Capital Planning Process Required**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to conclude my statement that I was not able to finish yesterday. Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, the current capital planning process and formula to determine how the GNWT capital investment is spent and which projects receive the priorities is not serving Yellowknife any better than it does other communities. While a more transparent and standardized process could help, I am not sure that getting more justifications of where the little money we have goes is going to make it any less painful for us to accept that some of us will inevitably and perpetually end up at the back of the bus. Mr. Speaker, I believe the fundamental problem lies in the woeful lack of funds we are putting into the capital investment pot. If we are really going to tackle this problem head-on as a consensus Legislature, we need to make some difficult choices together.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we want to make this a priority and agree that we need more capital investment in small communities for job creation. We should look again at what programs we currently have to meet that objective and how well we are doing at it. Perhaps we should look at repaving or channelling our money for that purpose. Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is time that we came up with a way to address the situations of rural non-tax-based communities, which are different from the tax-based communities that have capacity to raise some of the money for their infrastructure. Perhaps it is time because the needs of our cities and communities are so divergent and incompatible that two separate capital budgets with different standards and criteria need to be created. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the reality of taxing the residents of Yellowknife is not as rosy as it might seem. The reality is that property taxes continue to go up year after year. Many of my constituents are paying more than \$4,000 a year just in taxes, yet they continue to see crowded schools, inadequate recreational facilities and no land in the city to build affordable houses. Mr. Speaker, the reality still is that the presence of a territorial jail does not do away with the need for a school and an arena. Yellowknife still needs and should be entitled to its fair share of schools, recreational facilities, municipal infrastructure and land development for houses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to seek any more unanimous consents.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Maybe we can credit you for tomorrow. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

### Member's Statement On Representation On NWT Athletic Teams

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can't agree with Ms. Lee's statement. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the participants who will be travelling to the Canada Winter Games next week on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all the athletes who have worked so hard to get there, all the mission staff. However, Mr. Speaker, I continue to be troubled by the lack of participation by those athletes in the smaller communities. Having a quick glance at the representation at the Winter Games, I see the majority of the athletes once again come from the city of Yellowknife where all the facilities are, where all the staff and coaches are. I am going to be asking the Minister of MACA why is it that we continue to see over-representation from one area or regional centre and hardly any representation outside of mission staff from the smaller communities. This is an issue that I have brought to the House when I got elected. I was hoping to see a shift in how programs and services are delivered to the communities, how our resources are shared with the smaller communities, so that maybe we could get better coaching, better facilities, in those communities so that those people living in smaller communities can participate in our national pastimes. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, that has not happened yet. I am going to be asking the Minister why we continue to see high representation from the regional centres, specifically Yellowknife, and hardly any representation from outside. I would like to congratulate one member of my community who is going and that's Tausia Lal, the recreation coordinator from Fort Resolution who is on mission staff. Congratulations, Tausia. It would have been nice to see some of our athletes go with you, but unfortunately not this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Well, thank you, Mr. Nitah. Best wishes go with the athletes. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** I would like to recognize a long-time Yellowknife resident, Mr. Richinger. He's been here as a businessperson for many years and he is now retired in British Columbia and is here to help us for the next little while. Welcome back to Yellowknife and to the Assembly, Mr. Richinger.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

#### ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement, it is imperative that we Northerners get our fair share of the pie when it comes to distribution of federal health care funding. Many examples of inadequacies in health care service come to light and we only

have to look at our own communities to see evidence of this. I continue to hear examples from Hay River residents on what I consider primary care services. For example, Mr. Speaker, Hay River is without a physiotherapist and Hay River residents are still having to travel to Yellowknife to be treated by a physiotherapist. Would the Minister please state what his department is doing to assist the Hay River Community Health Board to successfully recruit a physiotherapist, so that the residents of Hay River can be adequately served? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Return To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is that Hay River, as well as some other communities, is competing in a very tight job market for physiotherapists. There was at one point in the recent past a possible applicant, I understand, who chose not to take the job. So we are looking, along with Fort Smith, for physiotherapists. Mr. Speaker, the reality is we are competing across Canada and in North America in a very difficult and scarce market. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in October, I also asked the Minister if he would be willing to have a physiotherapist transferred to Hay River in the interim while one could be found for Hay River. The Minister stated, that it would be an issue that he would be prepared to bring to the table to discuss with other Members of the Joint Leadership Council, which is all of the board chairs, himself and the deputy minister. Well, it's now February, and we are still without a physiotherapist. So I would like to ask the Minister if he has indeed brought this issue to the Joint Leadership Council and what the outcome was. I certainly haven't heard anything yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Further Return To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue has been discussed with the department and we are in a situation of having to rob Peter to pay Paul, as it were. At this point, we haven't come up with a way to take resources from one area of an under-resourced system to move into another area. So we continue to work with the authorities and the department on the recruitment side to see if we can fill that position.

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



**Supplementary To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whenever a Hay River resident has to travel to Yellowknife for physiotherapy, you are required to pay a co-payment of \$250 if they are not covered by another form of insurance. This is very much a hardship for a number of people. We talk at length as legislators that we don't want to see a two-tiered system for health care, but I am seeing one at work right here in our government, those that have insurance and those that don't. To me, that's two-tier. Would the Minister please indicate what his department is currently doing to address the issue of medical co-payments further to his answer in this House to my question of October 21, 2002, asking for the co-payment to be waived, whereby he stated that: "We have a review of a supplementary health program currently underway." Exactly where is this, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** It's such a good question that I am going to have to disallow it because it's not on the same subject that he started off with. He started off with physiotherapy, if I recall correctly, and moved on to something else. However, if you are indicating that this is on the same topic, Mr. Delorey, I will allow the Minister to respond to it. Mr. Delorey, clarify, please.

**MR. DELOREY:** Mr. Speaker, my approach to this is they are very much related because, for physiotherapy services to be accessed, patients have to come to Yellowknife and they have to pay a \$250 co-payment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. You clarified that for the Chair. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we currently have a draft paper on the supplementary health benefits issue and they reviewed it. We have passed that onto the Social Programs committee and we will await their feedback in terms of their thoughts. This is an issue. Mr. Delorey is correct, there are gaps in the current system. Those with third-party coverage have the benefit of medical payments and there is a very clear section of our segment of society that doesn't have that benefit of medical payments and it's not only co-payments. It's something we are struggling with and it has implications far beyond the co-payment issue.

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

**Supplementary To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister please advise why this department calls the \$250 that an uninsured person has to pay for a flight to Yellowknife to seek treatment a co-payment? Why do they call it a co-payment? In my view, there is no co-payment. A flight from Hay River to Yellowknife costs \$250 and the patient has to pay \$250, so where is the co-payment in this?

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

**Further Return To Question 34-14(6): Need For A Physiotherapist In Hay River**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the general rule is it is a co-payment. I appreciate Mr. Delorey's point that it's very expensive, comparatively speaking, to fly between Hay River and Yellowknife...

---Interjection

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** ...on a comparative basis, but the intent is to acknowledge that this is partial assistance and a personal contribution to what are normally very expensive flights.

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

**Question 35-14(6): Compliance With Federal Firearms Legislation**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up with a question regarding registration of firearms. I wanted to pose my question to the Department of Justice. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me if he has discussed with the federal government what course of action it would take with respect to compliance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Return To Question 35-14(6): Compliance With Federal Firearms Legislation**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a fairly lengthy legal opinion on several key issues that are related to the subject, but taking your advice from the previous Assembly, I will quickly try to summarize by saying that we have collaborated with the Saskatchewan justice ministry to take a joint position to the federal Justice Minister. At this point, we are still in the process of trying to put a formal letter together to the justice department since this very sensitive issue is...We want to take a joint approach Canada-wide. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 35-14(6): Compliance With Federal Firearms Legislation**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that information. It's good to hear that this government is trying to tackle this issue. I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell us the position he's taken, the joint position, they are formulating. What is the position this government is taking on the approach to this issue?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 35-14(6): Compliance With Federal Firearms Legislation**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well, I understand the three Premiers of the territories have jointly tackled this problem as well. Just to quickly summarize;

in early November at the federal/provincial/territorial justice meetings, the subject was to try to see if we can convince the federal government not to conduct prosecutions under the Criminal Code. That is one of the immediate steps we are trying to convey to the federal Justice Minister. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 35-14(6): Compliance With Federal Firearms Legislation**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister then if he knows what the position of the federal government is on those persons possessing unregistered firearms. Is there an amnesty period?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

**Further Return To Question 35-14(6): Compliance With Federal Firearms Legislation**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I am not aware of any specific positions taken by any jurisdictions. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

**Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, following up on my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to ask why is it that we see such high representation from regional centres and hardly any representation from small communities in events such as the Canada Winter Games and Canada Summer Games, even the Arctic Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

**Return To Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's quite evident that the larger the population of the communities, the more athletes you will have. Up to now, larger communities have more sports activities taking place of a different nature. Smaller communities, because of their size, more than anything else, have limited their various activities to the one or two that the community sees have the most participation. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 36(14)6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is a community. The 27 non-tax-based communities are a community in itself. How are we proportionally, by percentage, distributing our financial resources across the Territories? Are we giving more to the

larger centres because of their population base versus smaller communities? Why is it that we see more athletes coming out of the regional centres?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return To Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is more than one funding program that is being made available to the sports partners within the Territories. Some of it is coming, probably the major portion of the funding for sports activities, is coming from Sport North through the system they have for raising funding, through the lottery system. It is then distributed by Sport North to the retailers. MACA also has a program where we fund communities and it is based on population. Larger centres, because of their larger population would get larger funding. In particular, I believe there is a base limit for those communities very low in numbers. We bring the dollar figures back up so we don't go below a minimum number.

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

**Supplementary To Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the department doing to ensure that the same resources associated with sports are distributed evenly across the Territories, so that a person in Aklavik has almost the same chance of making the Canada Winter Games team as a person in Yellowknife? How do we distribute the human resources, so there is a somewhat even chance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return To Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department's human resources in relation to sports and recreation are normally done through the regional centres. We administer our sports and recreational programs through the regional centres. We do encourage the department to boost the ability for small communities to take part in territory-wide sport activities through the regional sports partners and then through the territorial sports partners. We've gone one step further in that we are recommending an NWT sports board be created so that all the sports partners have input, including the communities, to how the funding is distributed by Sport North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that might be a good idea. Once again the regional centres get all the resources, communities get left with whatever is left on the plate afterwards. That's not just sports, but right across the

board that program delivery is like that. I would like to ask the Minister some statistical information. Since the start of this government or the Canada Winter Games, what has been the representation from the Northwest Territories at these games from communities to regional centres? I would like to see a record of who has been representing the Northwest Territories at these games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. I realize that is a question, but it's going to require a long answer. We will let the Minister decide on the length of this. Mr. Steen.

**Further Return To Question 36-14(6): Representation On NWT Athletic Teams**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, it's going to be a short answer. This morning I signed information to each MLA as to which people from their riding will be going to represent the games. Some communities have some. I believe from my community, there is nobody going, but I believe the Member for Lutselk'e, there was somebody going from one of his communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 37-14(6): Medical Travel For Periodontal Treatment**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat and it's about periodontal treatment and medical travel. I have been corresponding with him for about the past seven months after several constituents of mine raised this issue with me. They are GNWT employees and need periodontal treatment not available in the Northwest Territories and have to find their own way south because our medical travel assistance policy apparently doesn't cover this type of treatment. The Minister indicated that the government is currently conducting a review of periodontics and medical travel and he also indicated that it would be completed by the end of January of this year. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me if that review has been completed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMB, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 37-14(6): Medical Travel For Periodontal Treatment**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the report has been completed. I have not received a copy of it yet, but I will follow up with the Management Board Secretariat and get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 37-14(6): Medical Travel For Periodontal Treatment**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in the way of some background, Mr. Speaker, medical travel assistance used to be provided for this treatment until the mid-90s and then it was deemed at that time that, not because it was not a medical

procedure but because we simply had to undertake some restraint initiatives, we were going to cancel the MTA for this procedure. Is that, in fact, the case? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 37-14(6): Medical Travel For Periodontal Treatment**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, generally that may be the case. I look forward to receiving the report though, and I assume it will provide us with more detail on why this coverage was taken away in the mid-90s, but we will have to wait for the report. Thank you.

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

**Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, because I am so concerned about the safety of motorists travelling on Highway No. 3 on a gravel surface, and the lack of results that we are getting, I am seriously wondering what happened to the correspondence, the questions and concerns I have been forwarding to the Minister about this road? I would like to ask the Minister if he can give me details? What happened with my correspondence or anything that was said in the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure you that any correspondence I receive from MLAs receives serious consideration. Most often it is passed on to the department and they take a look at the issues and get back to me as quickly as they can. I don't believe there is any outstanding correspondence with Mr. Lafferty. I believe I have responded to all of his letters and in fact any verbal advice he gives me I take seriously and relay onto the department. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that the amount of maintenance the road gets is based on a formula related to the amount of traffic on it. Although Highway No. 3 is a priority one, meaning it should get a lot of maintenance, the road is still unsafe. Can the Minister tell me why the correspondence given to the department, why is there nothing being done about the safety of this road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 38-14(6): Addressing No. 3 Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** If the road was unsafe, we would close it. We consider it safe. It is safe given the winter driving conditions people have to take into consideration when they use the road. That road or any other road in the Territories. We will put up notices if we feel that it is getting to the point where people have to take special precautions. The road receives daily patrols from the department. We continue to check out any spots where we feel there may be trouble. We listen to advice from the public. We have a toll-free line if people want to phone in with reports. Whatever work is necessary, we carry it on. In response to the Member's preamble, traffic count is only one factor. Certainly road condition and weather conditions play a very big role in terms of the maintenance that is done on the roads. None of the roads can be perfect. People have to use them with due caution and take into consideration the road and weather conditions. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for his answer, but the definition of safe depends on whose definition it is. Maybe their definition of safe is, when you get to the other end safely, it's safe, but from my definition that isn't what you would call safe. I would like to ask the Minister because of the condition of the road, could there be more signage installed on this road, especially where the gravel and the chipseal join? The warning signs are right at the corners and it's unsafe. I would like to ask the Minister if he could get his department to make sure the road is safe.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the department does everything they can to make sure the road is as safe as possible. They can never make it absolutely safe for all people, including those who drive recklessly beyond the posted speed limits and so on. We can't ever have it absolutely, totally safe. In terms of signage, we will continue to monitor. I will take the Member's concern to the department and ask the people responsible to take a look at it. If we need more signage, then definitely we want to put that up to ensure that there aren't any accidents caused by the road conditions. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I travel that road a lot during the time that I do my work in Yellowknife and I fail to see anybody patrolling that road because I travel that road pretty early in the morning. That would be the best time for patrolling. I would like to ask the Minister if he can give me details on their daily patrols, on the maintenance manual that

they are using, if he can share it with the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. This is going to require a long answer again. Make it short. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 38-14(6): Addressing Highway No. 3 Concerns**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, if the Member wants, I can give him my information on the road conditions. I don't mind doing that. I can give him some advice on the way we are maintaining the roads. I am not an expert at driving a grader and I am not going to tell those people who are professionals how to do it anymore than Mr. Miltenberger will tell the doctors how to do appendix operations. That's not our job. I will give him whatever information we have. I don't know if there is one maintenance manual we follow. I think our professionals out there take a look at the road conditions and do the maintenance that they feel is within their ability to do. So, Mr. Speaker, I will provide as much information to the Member as possible, but I can't say that we could ever give 100 percent safe conditions for people driving in any kind of condition. Mr. Speaker, I went on the road last on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. I drove to Fort Providence and back. The road was in great condition for people who drive within the speed limit, but if they are going to drive at 130 kilometres an hour, it is a dangerous road. They should not be driving that speed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Interjection

---Laughter

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement earlier today, the 237,000 tons of arsenic trioxide dust stored underground at Giant Mine is probably the greatest environmental situation we have to deal with here in the NWT, but a lot of good science has been done on it. Mr. Speaker, the community is looking at two options that are recommended. One is to freeze and keep this poisonous material in the ground perpetually or take it out and treat it and dispose of it that way. I wanted to ask the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development whether this government has taken a position on whether any of these options or anything else is the way we should go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the situation at Giant Mine with regard to the underground storage of the trioxide is that DIAND has been doing a lot of work. DIAND has been taking full responsibility for the underground contaminants and they have come out with about 12 different management alternatives, and zeroed in on two.

The honourable Member mentioned that. There are still consultations going on. We have departmental committees looking at it. As Cabinet, we haven't really made a decision on which option that we prefer at this point in time. We continue to work with DIAND to look at the best possible alternatives. Even though they have come out with two alternatives, we think there might be a third that we would like to explore. So as a Cabinet, we haven't really taken a position on one or the other.

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

**Supplementary To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the Minister would be able to advise the Assembly today of anything concerning this third option as he's mentioned, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I mentioned earlier, there were about 12 different management alternatives and DIAND had preferred two. One of them is the frozen block which leaves the contaminants in the ground and not exposed to the surface. The other one is the whole thing about putting it in cement and putting it at a disposal site. There is also a discussion about a disposal which would transfer the arsenic to the base of the mine and re-store it in vaults. I think this is another alternative that has been thrown around. At this point in time, there are still consultations going on and we continue to work with DIAND in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is encouraging. I am glad to hear the department is engaged. Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned that there are other departments as well that have a stake in this. I would assume, for instance, that MACA, which is involved in some of the leases, perhaps our public health, Health and Social Services, are also involved. Could the Minister advise the Assembly how are these multi-departmental interests being coordinated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, RWED is leading our working group and is compiled of MACA and Health and Social Services, the Workers' Compensation Board, in working on this long-term arsenic management plan for Giant Mine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**MR. BRADEN:** The situation on the surface cleanup is somewhat different I believe, in that we do have a more direct jurisdiction on the surface cleanup of the Giant Mine property. Could the Minister advise us of the status of that and any plans for the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 39-14(6): Options For Dealing With Arsenic Trioxide At Giant Mine**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from the very onset of this problem, our government wanted to engage with DIAND to look at which government is responsible for what is on the surface of Giant Mine. To date, DIAND has confirmed that the federal government has taken full responsibility for water-related surface liabilities such as the tailings ponds and the containment ponds and water treatment facilities, anything that has to do with water board licensing. We are currently, as a government, wanting to know further who is responsible for the other types of contaminants on the surface at Giant Mine such as waste oil, fuel spills, chemical spills, contaminated soil, so that we can ensure there is public safety. We are continuing to talk with DIAND to try to further negotiations on the responsibilities. We wanted to clear up who's responsible for what on the surface at this point in time. Thank you.

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**MR. SPEAKER:** We are back to business after that short pause. Your question, Mrs. Groenewegen. For the record, please repeat your question.

**Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services in follow-up to Mr. Delorey's concern about medical co-payments. There is the issue of expectant mothers who are not only expected to pay medical travel co-payments, but also other costs associated with coming to Yellowknife to have babies. They need to come three weeks in advance; there are accommodation issues, child care issues for the children they leave behind and it splits up the families. Is Mr. Miltenberger aware of Hay River's desire to add two positions to their complement of physicians, that being a GP anesthetist and a GP surgeon? Is he aware of that request and that need? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when would the Minister be in a position to respond to that request for the funding required for those two additional positions? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would hope in the next couple of weeks we would be able to address that issue along with the \$8.3 million that's in the budget for 10 GPs we also have to deal with. The package was offered to the general practitioners and was approved by their bargaining unit. So we are looking at those particular options right now, thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what criteria or information he will be using in order to make that decision. Will he be doing a cost benefit analysis of the savings that would be realized as a result of having those two positions located in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, apparently we have capacity in Yellowknife and Inuvik to deliver babies. We've been working at trying to implement midwifery into the system to have a broader spectrum of birthing delivery services capacity. We are looking at legislation and such. Hay River has expressed a desire as well to have the medical model that exists in Inuvik and Yellowknife. We are currently dealing strictly with general practitioners, so that is an issue that is on the table for discussion. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In considering this request for these two additional positions for Hay River, would the Minister commit to polling and getting a good indication from surrounding communities how they would feel about using Hay River as a regional centre for birthing

services in addition to the number of babies that are born from Hay River residents? Would he consider the desires of the surrounding communities with respect to receiving those services in Hay River? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 40-14(6): Requirement For Physicians In Hay River**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly if Hay River would be proposing to be a regional catchment site for birthing of babies, then we would consult with those communities that would be in that catchment area. So that will be one of the facts and factors that figure into the mix. Thank you.

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

**Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister of Health and Social Services and it's with regard to the medical co-payment as well. Mr. Speaker, this issue has been brought up many times and it was something I asked the Minister about yesterday. I totally sympathize with the concerns that Members from Hay River have. Mr. Speaker, the difficulty with this is that I believe the application of this policy of \$250 to some people and not others is so unfair and it's an unequal application of the law. It's discriminatory. I don't think it would stand up to our own Human Rights Act. So why doesn't the Minister just stop this and not talk about all these discussion papers and everything else that's going on. He's heard enough of it, Mr. Speaker, why can't he just end the policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this medical co-payment generates a significant amount of income into the health and social services system. The key is that there is a segment of the population that doesn't have third-party coverage. One of the concerns is, for example, if we just did away with the medical co-payment, we would be losing over \$1 million for the uninsured health benefits that currently comes into the system. So we have to look at this carefully and we have to see how we are going to respond to this. This is one item in the supplementary health benefits review. I am clearly aware of the impact and the concern it has. It has a similar concern in my community as well, Mr. Speaker. So we want to deal with this as part of the overall review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if this should be part of the review of the supplementary health benefit anyway. That's a wide spectrum of areas and

this is a very specific thing. Another thing I suggest to the Minister is I don't believe the government has the right to raise money by breaking its own law of equal treatment. Look at the situation, Mr. Speaker. It's only those who don't have services in their communities who have to pay this and it's only those who don't have their own company insurance, government insurance or some kind of non-insured health benefits under aboriginal programs. So it's the working poor without a job or the self-employed who are paying this. This is totally against equality provisions. So why can't the Minister come up with a way of dealing with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have indicated the process we have undertaken to address this issue within the context of review of supplementary health benefits. I am not in denial on this issue. I am aware of its pressing nature, but we have to do this in a broader framework and we have to do this with a plan that's going to stand scrutiny and make sense and not cost us money we don't have, but also recognize the need to close gaps that currently exist in our system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer the Minister has just given, if I were to repeat that to a constituent of mine, she would never understand it. That doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if he wants to take advantage of the revenues he is getting, why can't he come up with a rebate for those who can't afford it, those who are self-employed and who are being unfairly treated in having to pay for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, the issue of third party coverage is a complex one. In many jurisdictions down south, there is no such thing as people being flown to where they need the service. If you have a doctor's appointment in Toronto and you live in Peterborough, they tell you you have an appointment in Toronto and the expectation is you get there. What we are intending to do is provide a basic minimum level of service and additionally we try to provide enhanced services. What we have, unfortunately, is a gap in that level of service and we are trying, within a broader context, to address that issue.

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

**Supplementary To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**MS. LEE:** I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there is a way to address that gap without studying any further. The Minister could reduce the co-payment amount to those who don't have any other third-party privileges or give a rebate to those who can't afford it. Why can't he consider that, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 41-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns is, once again, if I can use the uninsured health benefits is, if it's not a universally applied fee, then the federal government will just assume that they should have to pay it as well. So it is not just as simple as giving a rebate to a particular segment of the population. We have to come up with a way that's going to allow us to meet all those considerations when we come up with that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is a follow-up to my Member's statement with regard to the signing of the memorandum of understanding between this government and the Gwich'in Tribal Council. Mr. Speaker, these agreements are part and parcel of what flows from the land claim agreements on economic measures and also looking at government contracting policies and procedures. One thing we hear a lot about is why do they negotiate these types of agreements. Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair. There are still 50 percent of the contracts going out to public tender. I would like to ask the Minister, could the Minister elaborate on how that 50 percent is going to be dictated and what's the process to deal with the other 50 percent?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Sorry, Mr. Krutko. I'm not sure to whom you directed that question. Pointing is not good enough, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and human resources.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

**Return To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this memorandum of understanding that was signed between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Gwich'in Tribal Council is the first of its kind and it provides for a framework for how we are going to be negotiating or contracting 50 percent of the value of contracts in the Gwich'in settlement area. The question is will normal Government of

Northwest Territories contracting procedures, including the business incentive policy, still apply?

How the Gwich'in MOU will work upon implementation on April 1<sup>st</sup> will be that we will probably go through some negotiated contracts and perhaps some other contracting process as well. This still has to be determined and the remaining 50 percent will continue to be done through our normal contracting processes such as the public tendering process or the request for proposal which we currently do. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the catch word in this one is "by value" and I would like to ask the Minister exactly who determines the value of these negotiated contracts and what amount is going to be set as the total amount of the value of a five-year contract. Is there a set dollar amount that is going to be taken into consideration for these negotiated contracts?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the MOU establishes a dialogue between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Gwich'in Tribal Council through a series of meetings, annual meetings, to determine what is going to be coming out of the Gwich'in settlement area in terms of government contracting. There will be a mechanism put in place to determine how these contracts will be made available. I understand the Gwich'in Tribal Council is coming out with a registry of their own of who is determined to be a Gwich'in business. Through the Gwich'in Tribal Council process and our process will be a joint meeting to determine what type of contracts will be made available. Like I said, Mr. Speaker, how the contract will be contracted out will be through the existing contracting process of the northern registrar. In the case of a negotiated contract, perhaps if there is a number of Gwich'in businesses, there will be a contracting process put in place to determine the best Gwich'in business to do the government job. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister elaborate on exactly what happens to the other 50 percent that isn't going to be negotiated but will go to public tender? Who will be able to bid on those contracts?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Mr. Speaker, the existing Government of the Northwest Territories contracting processes will remain in place for the remaining 50 percent of the contract that is going to be agreed upon between the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the government. That is going to be made available to people within the normal business world that have the Business Incentive Policy and that is how we are going to carry out the remaining 50 percent. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if the Gwich'in or Inuvialuit will be able to negotiate on the 50 percent that will be going to public tender?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

**Further Return To Question 42-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the remaining 50 percent that has been agreed upon by both the Government of the Northwest Territories and Gwich'in will be made available for other companies to put their bids in. Thank you.

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

**Question 43-14(6): GNWT Share Of Medical Travel Co-Payment**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping up with my line of questioning from before, I heard the Minister respond to another question that was asked; that we as a government can't spend money we don't have. I expect though, Mr. Speaker, that as the Minister responsible, he is expecting members of the public or residents of Hay River to spend money that they don't have to access health care services in Yellowknife. I want to know, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister can tell me how much money in this co-payment is paid by this government, back to the government for the co-payment? How much of the money that we are taking in as a government is paid by this government itself? How much is paid by insurance and how much is paid by regular residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Three questions there. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, short answer.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The short answer, Mr. Speaker, this a detailed question. I will take it as notice. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, the question has been taken as notice. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.



**Question 44-14(6): Access To Basic Levels Of Health Service**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Social Services, in response to previous questions, said that he and his department were committed to a certain level of basic service within the community. In the case of Hay River, physiotherapy is part of that basic service, which is available in our community. Now, if there are labour market issues and unavailable candidates for the physiotherapist position, then residents have to travel outside our community. Isn't that a bit of a contradiction of that basic level of service that he is talking about? Shouldn't those people who paid that \$250 medical co-payment, have that money reimbursed to them? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 44-14(6): Access To Basic Levels Of Health Service**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raises a good point as we struggle to fill our professional positions in the communities and in Yellowknife. But, the reality is, the system that is there is currently operational and we want to look at this whole area, as I've indicated a number of times in this House already, that we intend to do that and is there a way that we can cover all third party coverage for all members of the NWT. Is that an issue there is a clear answer to? We want to continue to work with the central programs committee to look at that overall review. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 44-14(6): Access To Basic Levels Of Health Service**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was kind of a general answer. We have certain services that are known to be unavailable in the community and, granted, we know in Hay River, for example, that we cannot have certain types of surgery, we can't have an appendectomy in Hay River. We know that requires medical travel but, where there is a service which is part of the stated service for Hay River and for some reason, completely outside of the control of the patient that service is not available in Hay River, should they be required to pay the medical pre-payment? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 44-14(6): Access To Basic Levels Of Health Service**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the ideal world, all those services would be available where they were intended to be and that would not be an issue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary To Question 44-14(6): Access To Basic Levels Of Health Service**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for example, in Hay River when we didn't have a full complement of physicians, if someone needed to go to the doctor and there were no doctors there, the government stepped up with enhanced offerings to physicians who have been coming on a locum basis. It cost more money, but it was better than the alternative, which was to have people go who knows where to see a doctor. So we responded to those kinds of deficiencies or gaps which occurred, like I said, through no fault of the people in Hay River. It was no one's fault, we just couldn't find doctors, but we were able and willing to expend the extra money to make those services available because that's part of the basic service available in our community as understood by everyone. So I don't understand why in a case such as physiotherapy, as an example, where there is a temporary inability to fulfill that service, why people needing those services would be required to pay the co-payment. Would the Minister consider waiving that? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 44-14(6): Access To Basic Levels Of Health Service**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the system we have, while it is on a comparative basis across Canada -- a very good one -- it is not a perfect one, but we are seeking ways to improve that. So, yes, I will consider that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen. No? Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

**Question 45-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was going to wait until a later time to wade into the issue of an MOU, but since it has once again come up here, I feel I am obligated on behalf of my constituents to raise a few questions here. Mr. Speaker, Inuvik is a community made up of people with diverse cultural backgrounds, so it is a concern that we would see this government taking it upon itself to set up guarantees for one sector of the population. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know from the Minister of RWED who has initiated this agreement, although signed by the Premier, what opportunities will be now taken from those companies who would not be Gwich'in in the community of Inuvik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 45-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this MOU that has been signed and the information contained in it... We are going to be travelling into the Inuvik region, mainly into the Gwich'in and that whole surrounding region to

try to get the message to all the different businesses there to let them know what is contained in it. I think it's important to have this information go to all the different companies that are concerned regarding this MOU. From there, we will have a better idea of what the concerns are and deal directly with the companies ourselves. Like I said in my response to the Member for Mackenzie Delta, there are 50 percent by value of the contracts that we intend to negotiate with the Gwich'in businesses in the Gwich'in settlement area. The remaining 50 percent will be made available to other companies other than Gwich'in businesses. I think how we do it will be through existing government contacting processes and that information has to be related to the companies up there. I don't think it's such a negative thing. I see it as a positive thing. I think we could see how it would work and we will work very hard to try to get the message across. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 45-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know that when a business is established and it goes to get financing, it has to establish to the banking community that it can afford to do business based on the amount of projects that it might be able to be successful to win. My understanding is 50 percent of the market is now closed to non-aboriginal companies in my community and on top of that, the aboriginal companies will be able to bid on the other 50 percent that we have to bid on. So there is an absolute disadvantage we are setting up here. I am worried about the future. What are we telling our children? That they will have to get in line to say you are Gwich'in, you line up in this line, Inuvialuit, this line, non-aboriginal this line? What example are we setting here? Again, what is this public government going to do for non-aboriginal companies that are going to be affected by this MOU? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 45-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent of the MOU is to try to work with the Gwich'in Tribal Council. I know there are other companies who are up there who are not aboriginal, Gwich'in or Inuvialuit, but our intention is to continue to use our contracting policies to have different government projects made available to companies that are up there. The government is not the only source of industry anymore in all the communities, especially up in the Inuvik region. There is a lot of oil and gas activity going on. That is going to continue. There is going to be a great debate right now on whether they are going to have a natural gas pipeline down the valley. If that happens, then the future is in oil and gas and more exploration up there. So if you look at the amount of work that is going on in the whole valley, there is more and more business and industry that are providing the contracts to different existing business up there. I don't see this in any way as a negative process. I see it as positive. I think aboriginal people over the years have been negotiating land claims and self-government and there are provisions in their claims, economic provisions, on how they want to get their foot into the

economic world. I believe personally that in order to have some political clout, political say, you have to have some economic stability there, so I think down the road you are going to see more and more aboriginal companies and corporations forming in the North and they are going to be competing on an equal footing with other corporations and businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 45-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned the last claims and self-government discussions and there is proof that those are working, Mr. Speaker, because in the Beaufort-Delta, the Minister mentioned all the activity that is there and the contracts being issued. On the Inuvialuit side when work is on the Inuvialuit settlement lands, it's the aboriginal companies that have first dibs on it. Many companies have formed to take advantage of that, but it's in the community where the government has its impact and now we are saying that part of that as well is you need to have aboriginal backing and ownership to be able to get that. So is that what we are telling companies now in the Northwest Territories?

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

**Further Return To Question 45-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's already been happening for a lot of different contracts, not only government issued, but as a whole in the North, you see many joint ventures happening. You see that in the Dogrib community. The Dogrib, for example, have joined with PCL to bid on BHP, the big contracts and Diavik. As well they have joint ventured with the different engineering companies. You see that right down the valley, that different Aboriginal companies are joining with other companies and construction companies out of Hay River are joining with some First Nations to go after contracts in the Cameron Hills. So it's already started that the business world is changing. I think Aboriginal businesses are getting more and more into business and they are innovating and improvising to try to get themselves into the best position to try to go for the different contracts that are going to be coming up. I think it's already started and is going to happen some more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Question period has ended. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mr. Ootes.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to recognize in the gallery today 21 Rotary exchange students who are visiting our gallery today. They're from around the world and they're in Canada for one year; 16 to 18-year-olds and they're accompanied by Glenn Fagnan who is with the Lloydminster Rotary Club, Mr. Speaker. Please help me welcome them.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Rotarians and future Rotarians. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to Budget Address. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

**ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS**

**Mr. Nitah's Reply**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mr. Krutko, spoke about the budget and some of his concerns. I, too, have some concerns on the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know we are challenged fiscally in the Northwest Territories. We know that the federal government collects most of the royalties and taxations from the Territories, and we don't get too many revenues. Mr. Speaker, what troubles me is for 35 years now this government has been in the Northwest Territories. For 35 years the city of Yellowknife and regional centres have been doing very well. For 35 years, Mr. Speaker, what I've seen are more positions being put into Yellowknife and regional centres so that these government bureaucracies could govern the smaller communities. Why is it that you need a regional body to deliver programs and services in Lutselk'e? Why can't we create a bureaucracy, an administrative arm in every community in the Northwest Territories so that people can have a role to play in their communities, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Budget Address by Mr. Manley; I'll quote Mr. Manley under the heading of families and communities:

"Canadians want to see more power in the hands of individuals to seize or better create opportunity for themselves to break the cycle of poverty and dependency. They want more power in the hands of communities to identify and solve problems and to share responsibility for building a better quality of life for their members."

But yet, Mr. Speaker, for 35 years this government has done the opposite. We'll govern from the top. We won't provide the resources and we won't provide you with a role. If you have a role, it will be through your elected band council or so on. But, no, we're going to keep the administrative staff in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Inuvik and Norman Wells. Those are our government.

When a person files an application for health or sends a letter to a friend in Toronto, a person from Fort Good Hope, Holman Island, Lutselk'e, it doesn't matter. They say Holman Island, Northwest Territories. They say Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. They say Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. But this government seems to be a government

of regional centres, which just happen to be in the Northwest Territories.

As long as we don't give a role to people to play in their communities... I'm not just talking about jobs, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about a role. If a person doesn't have a role, then they're dependent. We have been creating a legacy of dependency as far as I'm concerned. The budget that was introduced is just another example. We'll give more to the city of Yellowknife for administrative and bureaucratic purposes. We'll give more to Hay River and Fort Smith so that we can flood it with people, so they can deliver programs on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories to the poor people of Lutselk'e and Paulatuk. Those people can't do it for themselves. They're not educated. If that's going to be the legacy, what's the point of communities even negotiating land claims or wanting to better themselves?

Under our geographic tracking system, Mr. Speaker, we identify a little over 3000 positions that are working for the Government of the Northwest Territories; 3,843, let's say around 4000. Approximately 2000 of those positions are in the city of Yellowknife. Six-hundred-fifteen positions represent 27 communities. The majority of those are seasonal positions: forestry working for RWED; teachers working during the winters. How can we, as a government, tell people we have a plan for you, when we keep telling them do as I say? Just do as we want you to do.

We have been creating a legacy of dependency. When the communities want to participate with this government, what they do is have to fill out six stacks of applications or write proposals. Once they get their grants they have to respond to the government for accountability reasons, to a point where people don't even ask for money anymore. We need to diversify the economy of the Northwest Territories. We need to give Lutselk'e a reason to exist. We don't need to plant other people's wishes on them. We need to provide them with the human and financial resources so that they can create the opportunities, create employment in the communities, and create a role for themselves so that they can improve life in their communities and for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we have been losing our language and our culture. We haven't been improving the education system to a point where we are graduating 100 percent of the students. If we get 50 percent we're lucky. Those who graduate through our testing programs, we've determined that they're not even Grade 12 level. We graduate them for statistical reasons.

How can a young child in a small community be motivated to get an education when there are no jobs? Sure, there are jobs now in the mining sector. Without the mining sector or the possibility of employment in the oil and gas sector, what can motivate a young person?

We have to do a better job of creating opportunities right across the board, devolving government to the communities instead of being the overlord of communities. Why do we need a regional educational institution in Fort Smith so that they can deliver programs and services in Lutselk'e? We had a health board in Lutselk'e, we had a health board in Fort Resolution. The government took it back. There was one opportunity to create a role for the community. But as soon as there were some problems, it didn't take the government long to take it back.

How much longer do we have to govern before we realize that by creating regional institutions, regional bureaucracies to deliver programs in the communities, we create dependency in the communities that we expect to break out of this cycle? People want a role to play in the communities, but the only role we give them is that of complaining.

Housing is a shortage. My colleague, Ms. Lee, spoke on more than one occasion that Yellowknife gets less per capita. But how many millions of dollars have we spent on the oil and gas pipeline potential, without one lobbying movement by my colleagues from the city of Yellowknife? Mr. Nault, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs decided to place an office here. Why? Because all the facilities and all the resources are here in Yellowknife. As long as we continue to follow the same pattern, no other community is going to have the same advantages.

Earlier I spoke about how the Northwest Territories is represented in national athletic events by the regional centres, mainly the city of Yellowknife. Why is that? Because all the facilities are here. Why? Because people are moving here because there are jobs here, there's housing here. Lately, Mr. Speaker, that's been challenged, but that challenge has been faced by my constituents in Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e since day one.

I made a statement in the House yesterday regarding Mr. Handley's choice of foot attire, your moccasins. Mr. Speaker, I hope Mr. Handley and his Cabinet colleagues borrow the shoes of those leaders who represent the smaller communities, so they can walk a mile in their shoes and see the challenges that they face. It's a big challenge to live in a small community. Having all the bureaucracy here in the city of Yellowknife; sure, you have 2000 people employed who are not hungry. You'll have time to volunteer in the communities, you'll have time to coach. But yet in our small communities, that's all they ask us to do: volunteer, volunteer, volunteer. If volunteer is the only role that we're going to be expected to play, I don't think we want to participate too much.

We have to devolve the responsibility of delivering programs and services to every community, instead of being told from the top. We have to create employment and an economic base in our communities. We can't do that by setting up regional institutions to deliver programs and services at the community level. The only way we're going to regain our strength as a people, from an aboriginal perspective, is if you give us a role outside of aboriginal politics and aboriginal governments. We as a government are charged with delivering programs and services here. Let's devolve some of those positions to the communities so that those communities can come up with their own people to deliver the programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, we have to break the cycle here. We have to break the cycle of top-down government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 10, replies to Budget Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

#### ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

##### **Tabled Document 15-14(6): Government Of The Northwest Territories Business Plans, 2003-2006**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Business Plans, 2003-2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

#### ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

##### **Bill 6: Electoral Boundaries Commission Act**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, be read for the first time.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 6 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 7 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

##### **Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Elections Act**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. We have a motion and the motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 8 has had first reading. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

#### ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

##### Bill 4: An Act To Amend The Consumer Protection Act

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Consumer Protection Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill requires individuals who collect debts for collection agencies to become licensed. Creditors, collection agencies and collectors are prohibited from adding more to a debt than the amount that is legally owing on it, and collection agencies and collectors are prohibited from collecting more than the amount legally owing on a debt. Regulation making powers are included to allow for the regulation of debt collecting practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 4 has had second reading and, accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

##### Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Motor Vehicles Act

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Motor Vehicles Act to provide that the driver's licence of a person who is licensed in the Territories will be suspended and that a person who holds a driver's licence issued in another jurisdiction will be disqualified from driving, if the person operates or has the care or control of a motor vehicle on a highway while the concentration of alcohol in his or her blood exceeds specified limits or if he or she fails or refuses to comply with a demand to provide a breath or blood sample. The length of the suspension or disqualification varies from 24 hours to 90 days, depending on the amount of alcohol in a person's blood, whether the person is a novice driver and whether the person has been subject to a previous suspension or disqualification. If a 90-day suspension or disqualification is imposed, the person is permitted to drive for seven days before it commences unless he or she is a novice driver.

Persons who are convicted of criminal offences for impaired driving or failing or refusing to comply with a demand to provide a sample of breath or blood are prohibited from driving in the Territories. The period of the prohibition increases with each successive conviction in a 10-year period or if death is caused. There is an exception for persons who have been issued driver's licences by other jurisdictions after any prohibition period imposed by a judge or court in respect of the offence has expired.

The registrar may require a person who has been subject to specified suspensions, disqualifications or prohibitions to satisfy conditions, including undergoing assessments and completing programs, before reinstating a person's driver's license or issuing a driver's licence to a person. If the registrar issues a driver's licence to such a person, the registrar may impose a condition upon the driver's licence that the person participates in a prescribed alcohol ignition interlock device program.

The bill provides for the 30-day seizure of a motor vehicle that is driven by a person who is disqualified from driving because he or she was convicted of an offence in respect of operating or having the care or control of a motor vehicle while impaired or of failing or refusing to supply a sample of breath or blood under the Criminal Code.

The bill authorizes the enactment of regulations to establish a graduated driver's licence program. It also amends the act to provide that a person is not entitled by right to a driver's licence. A number of other minor amendments are made to this act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion and the motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to speak in favour of this bill. It is something that I had anticipated we would be seeing on the floor of this Assembly from the beginning of our term three years ago, and we have it here today. I look forward to watching and participating in the committee review of this bill and to seeing its passage, hopefully as soon as June.

Mr. Speaker, there are lots of things that can be said in support of this, and perhaps some of my colleagues will reflect on it. But I would like to make a point that the young people of the Northwest Territories, of this city, of the schools here in Yellowknife, especially the Students Against Drinking and Driving chapters at St. Pat's High School and Sir John Franklin High School and I know there are others in other communities, have shown tremendous leadership, Mr. Speaker, and tenacity in continuing to press the government for these kinds of amendments and these kinds of conditions. I understand that there has been work here in the Northwest Territories for the past six years at least, to see these kinds of amendments come through. I want to congratulate those young people and tell them that this proves that, indeed, young people can and do make a difference in the way this country is run. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would briefly like to speak in favour of this bill. My colleague, Mr. Braden, has pointed out that young people in particular have led the fight to see this sort of legislation come forward. I'm pleased that we are now able to follow through on the request that we had, that we bring forward this kind of legislation.

We have made tremendous strides in reducing the numbers of impaired drivers on our roads in the Northwest Territories over the last 10 years, but it's not enough. We still have a ways to go, and with this kind of legislation and by reducing the amount of blood alcohol content that a driver may have before they suffer consequences, I think we will be indicating to people in the Territories and across Canada that we do not accept this kind of behaviour. It is not acceptable anywhere or at any time, and we will be tough on the people who drive after drinking.

Mr. Speaker, I think another important aspect is that we're moving towards a graduated licensing program. All of the research that I've read indicates that that tends to allow young people and new drivers a chance to become conversant with the rules of the road and how to control a vehicle safely, before they get too far into dangerous circumstances.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the Minister on bringing this forward, and indicate that I will be supporting this bill wholeheartedly.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to echo the comments and sentiments of my colleagues who have previously spoken and indicated their support for this bill. I think that as a society we've become less tolerant of impaired driving, and certainly our laws should reflect that. I think this goes some measure toward that. I think it does the right things, Mr. Speaker, in the right direction. I'm particularly happy to see the graduated licensing program. I think the Minister indicated that a driver's licence is in fact not a right. There is the danger that if you're behind the wheel and you aren't competent, that you will injure or kill somebody. I think it's very important that we expect our drivers to demonstrate their competence, demonstrate ability, and certainly demonstrate responsibility before we allow them to drive.

The other thing that I'd like to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that through hard work, organizations like Students Against Drinking and Driving standing out in front of the fire hall on many a cold morning with their message asking for us to honk to show our support, I think that kind of demonstration, that kind of good work, that kind of show of support has made a real difference. I think when people see legislation like this coming forward and wonder where the impetus for this kind of thing has come from, I think we can point squarely to the work of good groups like that, Mr. Speaker. Clearly that work is paying off. So I'll be supporting this bill here today. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to speak in favour of this bill, and I won't take up much time. But I know that more and more we're becoming aware of the dangers of alcohol, when you mix alcohol and driving. We have seen much evidence of that over the years. I can only speak back over my lifetime and driving and my experiences and what I have seen happen over the last 30 years or so. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, when even the RCMP was very tolerant when they'd stop somebody and there was alcohol involved. Common practice was to just take the alcohol and let the guy go and whatever. I've seen a lot of evidence of that. But more and more as incidents have happened over the years with individuals being seriously injured or even killed by drunk drivers, the issue has come to a point where we as legislators cannot afford to ignore it.

So I just want to compliment the Minister for bringing this legislation forward. And I think for anybody who may have arguments about the negative side of this, I think we only have to look at what the reality is. That is that as legislators we cannot afford to take any credit for holding up something that is directly related to public safety, and this is all about public safety and safety on our highways. So, again, Mr. Speaker, I won't take up much time, but I will fully be supporting this bill for those reasons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to speak in favour of the motion. I don't believe I can add too much more to what's already been spoken by my honourable colleagues in the House. I truly believe that this is a good piece of legislation and the right thing to do, and I'd like to congratulate the government for bringing it forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am much younger than the Member for Hay River North, so I don't remember a time when RCMP might overlook drivers driving under the influence of alcohol, but I can tell you that in my own lifetime we have seen a progression of education in the minds of the public about the fact that we will not tolerate mixing of drinking with driving.

Mr. Speaker, I think a great deal of credit should be given to the young people. Whenever I'm in the company of young people, as I was in the Power Up Young Women's Conference in the beginning of this month, as well as when I spend some time with the young people in schools in my riding, I am always amazed at the awareness and the knowledge that they have about the negative effects of alcohol, as well as tobacco. I believe that if some of them had their way, they would make both of these illegal. I think that's a product of years of education and the realization and understanding that we have in our world today, that these substances, when they're abused, create a great deal of harm, and it could be a leading cause of preventable deaths in Canada.

So I'm happy to support this legislation. Another thing I need to add before I close is the fact that a good law will not have the full effect if it's not enforced. It is important that as much as we put the law in place, that we have human resources and mechanisms in place to make sure that the good laws are enforced in an adequate manner. So I do hope the Minister and the government is mindful of that, so that we have the

maximum effect of this legislation. With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be supporting the motion.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the bill and I would also like to thank the Minister for bringing this legislation forward. I think it is one piece in the puzzle that is reflective of how society is beginning to view drinking and driving as a public safety issue and I think it's not just about punishing people or having legislation in place, although I also believe it's about each of us taking responsibility for our own actions and also where we have influence with people that we may be with. I think we all need to do our part to ensure that friends and, in the case of people who serve alcohol, patrons are encouraged when consuming alcohol to find alternative means of transportation. So I think it's a piece of legislation that is reflective of the current times and current thinking and it is just one part of a whole approach that needs to be taken by our society to ensure the safety of not only those driving vehicles, but also those who may be on the road at the same time.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, will be supporting the bill. I have seen what the effects of drinking and driving has done to all of our small communities and the young lives we have lost because of alcohol and driving either in snowmobile accidents or rollovers on our highways where collisions have occurred because of a person being impaired. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is time that we bring our laws in line with the rest of Canada, and realize that we have a role to play not only in ensuring public safety, but also in making drivers aware that they are responsible when they get behind the wheel, and ensuring that our highways are not there strictly for the taking that you can drink and drive. We have seen accidents such as snowmobile accidents and deaths on our highways. A large number of the criminal offences that have occurred in the Northwest Territories are alcohol related and I think this is one way of educating the public and ensuring that they realize the effects alcohol has on the body and the mind. You are not immune to having an accident because of who you are. Also we have to do more to educate the youth and make them aware of the effects of alcohol, and make them aware that they can have a good time without alcohol. I have seen too many young people go to an early grave because of drinking and driving and accidents that have occurred. So I am fully supporting this legislation. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the principle of the bill. Are there any further comments? Are Members ready for the question?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 5 has had second reading and accordingly the bill stands referred to a committee. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-15(6), with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We are here to review Health and Social Services. As I recall when we finished yesterday, we were in general comments and Ms. Lee had the floor. Is it the wish of the committee that we continue where we left off yesterday?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** The Chair will call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

#### Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I will call the committee back to order. We are here to review Health and Social Services. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

---Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Sergeant-at-Arms, will you escort the witnesses in, please?

Mr. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

#### Department Of Health And Social Services

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We left off yesterday and Ms. Lee had the floor. I will go back to Ms. Lee. General comments.

#### General Comments

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yesterday at the end of the session, I was talking about the cuts or withdrawals of funding for 11 positions of child welfare workers and to record my disappointment about that. Then I began to talk about the increasing rate of apprehension of children. Mr. Chairman, I stated that I am one that supports apprehension of children where it is needed. I don't want to accept some... This is very difficult to talk about because we know there is some sense in some corners that the increased numbers of apprehensions of children might be the result of having more

child welfare workers. I don't want to accept that, but there is a little bit of a communication problem. There is definitely an issue out there. Our community leaders who deal with this on a day-to-day basis have expressed concern about the number of apprehensions of children. I am also aware and I respect the work that child welfare workers do. It is not easy work. It is difficult work. I accept their plea with us over the last number of years about the fact that they have an increasing workload. So this is a topic I have to consider with as much information as possible, but we are all human and this is the kind of work that is very sensitive and you are dealing with lots of complex issues in the families and difficulties the families are going through and so on. It is possible that some child welfare workers may be more prone to apprehend children rather than considering other issues that might be available to them or it could be that new graduates out of school want to err on the side of being cautious or there might be some child welfare workers who might feel that intervening and apprehending children is a better way to handle the situations they find themselves in.

So I would like to know then what sort of mechanisms are there for review of cases where difficulties arise. I have heard of cases where some families are in difficulties. They have had to go to court. They have gotten a favourable judgment from even the judge about what they should do and not do and still they keep having to go back to the court because the department keeps taking them back to court or whatever.

If there is a situation where there is a great deal of disagreement between the family or the caretakers of the children or parents of the children and a social worker, what mechanisms are available for these two parties to come together? Is there a mode of arbitration or talking together to work out the best solution? Could I ask the Minister for that answer? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the normal process would be decisions made by a child protection worker or a social worker with regard to the apprehension of a child, or a plan and care committee that is in place to deal with a particular child welfare matter. If there is no consensus, it can't be resolved, then there is the opportunity to go to the authority level, to the supervisor of the social worker or the child protection worker. As well, we also have, at the department level, the director of child welfare for the Northwest Territories that has authority over this particular program area and can also step in and review and mediate and arbitrate situations. On the more informal side, or a parallel process, is that people who are affected tend to sometimes go to their community leaders or their MLAs who may come to their Minister or deputy and we will take steps working with the director of child welfare that matters are resolved with a minimum of any kind of political interference on our part, but just ensuring that due process is done. Thank you.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that's what makes it very difficult because I do respect the process that's in place. I have all the confidence that it's probably working in the majority of cases. It's just the situations that don't work that end up coming to my office and I don't want to see a situation where there is political interference in these cases. That makes

it very difficult for all of us because these people when they have these situations where their children are being taken away, and they are doing everything they can to work with a social worker but it seems whatever they do, it's just not enough even when the court decision is in their favour. In the cases where these families find themselves at this stage, they might have lost the confidence and trust of either the social worker, the supervisor or even the director because they all come from the same body called "social services" and they can't distinguish between the Minister or the department or the board. It's just a whole system of social workers who seem to not work with them. I am not in a position to know all the details, but I do get the sense of frustration. So I am wondering if the Minister has looked into any sort of independent body of maybe someone in the private sector who could determine this and bring them in to look at the situation and see if the case is being dealt with fairly and so that everybody could step back and take a look at it. Has that ever been tried?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the earlier years, if my memory serves me correctly in the life of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, there were discussions in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly on the possibility of establishing an office of the child advocate. At this point, there are no formal plans in the works to set up any kind of independent body as it pertains to child welfare matters. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** I think the office of the child advocate has been proposed in this Assembly. As far as some of the Members here, it was supposed to be a very live issue, but it appears from the Minister's statement, that it's not. It's something we will have to remember to follow through with.

I just want to use the remaining moments of my time to speak about something that we were discussing earlier in the day, which has to do with the \$250 medical travel co-payment. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that a lot of this has been said, and I haven't had a chance to look at all the words that the Minister spoke, but I think if he would look at the transcript tomorrow morning, he would find quite a contradiction in what he stated this morning. One of them that I remember is the fact that somehow we cannot discontinue this because it's a revenue source item and second had to do with something like you can't charge the federal government... We have to charge everybody equally I think is what he was saying. So he gets some money from the federal government who pay for some co-payments under non-insured health benefits, I am assuming, and then GNWT pays for their employees and some other companies and municipalities will pay for their employees. So he seems to understand the concept of fairness, but what he doesn't seem to appreciate is this is all done on the backs of very few individuals who aren't covered anywhere. Those who are working, who are self-employed or who are working in low paying jobs that have no insurance. So to place such a burden to recover the costs, even if it's big money, \$1 million, in the big scheme of things, it's probably not a lot of money. To do it on the backs of those who can least afford it, I would really like to have the Minister reconsider that. Perhaps if he reads the transcript tomorrow morning, he will see the contradiction that he expressed. I want to give the Minister another chance to explain that. Thank you.



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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the concern as it relates to the \$250 co-payment and the fact that there is a specific segment of the population that doesn't have third-party coverage. We have engaged in a process to try to address that issue. I am prepared to work with the committee, the Social Programs committee, once they have had a chance to look at what we have pulled together so far. If there is a way we can move this to some sort of satisfactory resolution and come up with a plan that we can take to Cabinet and agree to, then I would be willing to do that. The intent is at the end of the day to try to make sure that that gap is closed and that that particular segment of the population as outlined by Ms. Lee is not disadvantaged or without the level of service that the majority of other Northerners do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to touch on a couple of items, one is the capital allocation process where we see large sums of money going into renovations of hospitals in larger centres, all because of the 20-year cycle whether it's needed or not. We see a community like Wekweti with nothing but one room which the dentist and the nurse that travels there once a month use. It's just a little room. It's not going to save any lives. All it does is tell somebody they can go there if they have a complaint and see the nurse; they can do that. If the nurse doesn't agree with them, they don't need to go anywhere else to get help. So a lot of people in my riding, by the time they are diagnosed with any serious disease, it's too late to save their lives because of the way this government operates. If they would have had a health facility with the right diagnostic equipment, x-rays and other facilities that can accommodate sick people in their own communities, that is not happening. So looking at the new budget and looking at the way this government is operating, we are not there to save lives. We are there to protect property just because the life cycle is there to upgrade it. So while people are walking down shiny hallways, people are dying in the smaller communities. We can't operate like this anymore. We have to change the way we do these things. We are being blamed for a lot of these things. People in my riding are getting diagnosed with cancer, three months and they are no longer around. They are dying because they haven't been diagnosed in time. People alive in Yellowknife say they beat cancer and they see the big wall with the quilt where a lot of them beat cancer because they were diagnosed in time because they have the facilities. They have the diagnostic equipment and doctors and everybody that can help them. The capital allocation is maybe one step forward so we can put a full-time nurse in one of these communities where a doctor can visit on a regular basis. I am very happy that my riding will get two doctors and in 30 years, maybe they will be able to help us in our communities. If we don't have the facilities to save lives, then we can't save their lives. Running down a shiny hallway compared to saving lives is not the way this government should be going.

This health information toll-free line, I think that should go ahead. It's great that you had this booklet that you are going to give to everybody in the NWT, every household, but how many households can make use of that? There are some households that can't even read that information. We could maybe save a

life if we could get somebody on the line with an interpreter on the other end on the phone, but how can you do it just by reading that paper? You can't. Sure, it's good for the larger centres where everybody is well educated. Some of our communities are still living the old, traditional lifestyles where they never went to school at all. They are living off the land. We still have communities like that. So I think this health information toll-free line should be happening and I would truly support that.

Talking about telehealth; it's one of the things I saw a demonstration of and I fully support that. I think we need to put that more into the communities. We can put a little health centre in Wekweti and a telehealth station there. Maybe we can help our constituents. You put one in Colville Lake. They had an accident last year. Someone had to fill out 10 pages of an application form before they would even medevac the patient. So if telehealth was there, it would have helped them a lot.

The other thing with the apprehension of aboriginal children, we see more and more young child welfare workers out there. They are all single. They have never known how to raise a family, how a child works. They don't even know how families work. These are the people put at the frontline to apprehend our children. I saw a case where a caseworker apprehended a child on the say-so of someone else and then later found out that it wasn't the case, but by then it was 45 days into the child care plan system. Some of the activities they do out there is criminal. It's like kidnapping, what they do. They've got protection and law on their side and they feel they can do anything they want. I think we have to have protection for the families who are out there. We are breaking up families for no reason at all. How can we bring the children back to the families if there is a problem in the family? We have no treatment for the parents. Where are we going to take them for treatment? We only have one treatment facility and culturally it doesn't support everyone. It only works for one culture and that's it. If you can't read or write in English, the system there is no good to you. You might as well just be watching a movie and watch people come in and out for 28 days. It's not going to help you at all. You won't understand them. They have no interpreters. The system is flawed.

So you are going to have to start thinking of putting some facilities into the regions where they can culturally help themselves in their own languages. It's time to do prevention instead of building multi-million dollar jails and young offenders' facilities. We should be doing prevention at the frontline and putting facilities in the front instead of at the back end. This government is working backwards as far as I am concerned.

There was \$300,000 allocated for a health centre in Wha Ti, which was never spent and nobody knows what is happening there. Can the Minister tell me why the money was not carried over if it wasn't spent? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I may just deal with the last question first, the question of the \$300,000 that was identified in this current year's budget for Wha Ti. From what I am aware, there is work underway. The majority of the money will be expended this year. There may be the need for a small carryover to next year, which will be done at year end by way of special warrant once

the amount is clear. They are installing a new double berm oil tank with assorted piping for about \$80,000; they are doing some metal roofing, replacement needs, worth about \$20,000; some light fixtures, about \$30,000; and they are investigating the wood pile... Sorry, they are investigating the wood pile situation to see what state they are in. That's going to be about \$10,000 and they are doing a ventilation upgrade for the total building. So the intent is to get this work done. The majority of the work, I have been informed, will be completed and as I indicated, if there is a need to carry over money, that will be done through the standard process of special warrant.

If I could just speak briefly to the issue of capital, there is clearly a need to have a balance, as I indicated previously, between maintaining the facilities we have and trying to work to build new facilities where they are needed. Both Hay River and Fort Smith, which are in the capital plan, have technical assessments going back a number of years that indicate that they are talking about building envelope failure. We are not just talking shiny new hallways. We are talking heating systems, roof replacements because they are leaking. I have toured both the facilities. Hay River has some problems with ground moving on one side of the building close to a ravine. In Fort Smith, it was done in 1998. We have those technical assessments available if the committee would like them. I would also like to extend the offer to committee, if they want, we can go down and take a look at those facilities. I would also like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that we, on an ongoing basis, seek to improve and maintain the facilities we have. In the last three years, we have put \$4 million into the Fort Simpson wellness centre, some money into Fort Liard, some money into the alcohol and drug treatment centre. We've renovated some work in the Tulita health centre, the Deline health centre. We've done a major renovation, a half life renovation in Holman. We've done some work in Tsiigehtchic. We've just opened a new Aklavik health centre. The Inuvik hospital, worth \$49 million, will be open this summer. We are doing a major renovation in Sachs Harbour. There's been about half a million in Fort Resolution, some work at Stanton. Also, in Fort Smith and Hay River, we have been doing emergency repairs trying to maintain the buildings until we get to the major renovations that have been planned for.

So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Member's concern that he would like to see a health centre, nursing station, in Wekweti. We are putting the money we have to what we think is the best possible use. We are also doing our best on the program side. We are going to add doctors. We are adding long-term care people. We are trying to do improvements with the alcohol and drug workers at the community level. So could we do more if we had more money? Without a doubt, Mr. Chairman. We are going to put the toll-free line in the business plan for next year. We agree as well that it's a good idea. Unfortunately, it came in greater than the budget we had allocated. As well, we would like to try to identify some of our information technology money to see if we can supplement the telehealth money because once again we agree that it's a good development, a good technology that can assist in areas outlined by my colleague, Mr. Lafferty. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to speak on the issue of the Family Law Act with regard to the effects we are seeing in our communities, especially my

constituency. This is a major problem in the communities of Aklavik and Fort McPherson. What we are seeing is that it's becoming pretty apparent that this is becoming not just a problem, but an epidemic with regard to the numbers of children who are now presently in care and also being put through the court system where the whole court party has to put aside two days just to deal with family apprehension issues in the courts. It tells you it is now taking up court time. In Fort McPherson, they have to put aside two days in this month to deal with the children in care. I met with the social services people in the region and when you hear that 11 children are being considered to go into permanent custody, that tells me that we are now in the process of doing less than what was done in the past, which was children were taken away from their parents at an age of five and they never saw their parents again until maybe they are lucky to be home when they are 10 years old. By the time they got home, they didn't know who their parents were. They didn't know who their grandparents were. I don't think we intended to reinvent history here by duplicating what was done in the past. For me, it's a total catastrophe waiting to happen. You see major cases regarding things like Grollier Hall, the hostel systems and what we have seen across the country because of how governments have treated aboriginal people, especially aboriginal children. I think it's offensive that this government is now duplicating past history. I think as a Minister, knowing this problem is out there and not really doing anything to deal with the problem, makes me wonder if we are really carrying out the regulations and legislation we put forward.

In the legislation, as it was presented, the first option that was supposed to be considered under legislation was establishment of plan and care committees in communities. From my understanding, there are no plan and care committees anywhere. Yet, looking at the correspondence that was given to us when this legislation was going to come forward, that was the number one option on the list to be considered. As a government, we cannot fund a system where the social worker is doing the apprehension, the social worker is doing the plan and care work, the social worker is developing the legal argument to take to court. The social worker is the one who is going to be presenting the case in court. That was not the intention of this legislation, to have our frontline workers being set up to do all the dirty work, knowing that they will have to live in those communities. Those decisions that they make will fall back on them because of the decisions that are made either by a judge or by a court. It is causing chaos in our communities. These people are under a lot of pressure because of carrying out legislation that was intended to protect the child, but also ensuring that it is not used or abused where we have this number of children in the process.

We have to have the mechanisms in place. You can't establish a plan and care order for someone and say you have to take alcohol and drug treatment. You have to take treatment because of violence. You have to take treatment because of your problem of co-existing with other people. Then you find out, sorry, there are no treatment programs. I believe there is one program being delivered in Hay River with 30 beds, but you might be lucky to get in in two years. If we can't implement decisions or plan and care orders that we cannot carry out as a government, we shouldn't be imposing plan and care orders on parents knowing we do not have the capacity for those parents to take those programs. Yet, that is what is in the plan and care orders.

Then your other option is to go to court. When you take that option, you find out that the courts are booked, so the 45 days, which is the amount of time these children can be apprehended, passes until the next court party or court date can be put on the docket. Then you have to designate two days for the court party to deal with this plan and care order which goes to court. I think there is something wrong with that system when we have this many children in the system and we find out that 11 of them may become permanent custody cases by way of court order. That would put them into that cycle of being bounced from one home to another home, to one home to where we end up finding out that these kids are going to be in the young offenders' facilities, in our jail facilities, in our federal jail systems. That's how it starts out. We have great intentions, but once the children get into that system of being institutionalized, they become born into a lifestyle where they will be going in and out of institutions. We've seen it. It seemed to me that we are not learning anything from this legislation.

I have met with the Minister on this. We met last week or a week-and-a-half ago with members of the community of Fort McPherson. We have raised this issue about the idea of the establishment of plan and care committees and communities willing to look at that. Now all they do is the chief gets a phone call and he's told what can you do. By the time he is called into it, it's too late or already going to court. When it gets to court, you are not even allowed to be in the courtroom. That's the type of situation we are running into by way of legislation, and how it's been carried out and how it's having a direct effect on the cost of not only the delivery of the program but also the time and resources that are being put into this by frontline workers. I think it's burdened the system so they don't even have time to deal with other matters such as the elders' issues, pensions or the overall problem of people with disabilities. It's had a major affect on our progress. I would like to ask the Minister to respond to that. It's something I feel strongly about and has to be seriously looked at.

The other area I wanted to touch on is the area of the mental health workers and alcohol and drug workers in our communities. My concern is that it's not really clear of how we are going to reprofile these so-called community-based frontline workers. In most communities, we have an alcohol and drug program that's administered by the community. We may have a mental health worker in the community and I am getting the calls from those workers saying what is the status. Am I going to have to go back to school or what kind of qualifications do I have? Do I have to have a degree in becoming a mental health worker? Do I have to go back to school for two or three years to become an alcohol and drug worker? Those types of questions are out there and as a community, we also would like to know what is this going to do to the services that are presently being provided in our communities and are these positions going to stay in our communities or are they going to go to the regional centres like we've seen with most other positions? Could the Minister elaborate more on that and give us some assurances about the status of this whole process to reprofile or redefine these positions? Those people are frontline workers, along with the social workers, who deal with the problems day in and day out. Yes, they are overworked and underpaid. I believe they should get a major increase, but I don't want to see us losing these positions from our communities. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, I will answer the last question first. We've worked with the Social Programs committee to do a briefing tomorrow at lunch time on the issue of the integrated service delivery model, but speaking mainly to the issue of reclassifying alcohol and drug workers into prevention workers and what is happening in the area of mental health and the clinical supervisors. However, I can tell my colleague what I told this House yesterday, there is no intention to lay people off. We are going to work with the incumbents to give them the skills necessary to do the job. We are going to have the positions reclassified, so there is a basic pay range and some benefits finally that have not been there all these years. There is no intent to take positions out of communities and move them to regional centres.

Speaking to the question and issues around the whole area of child welfare, I agree that there is almost an epidemic when it comes to the need to apprehend children. It's a serious situation. We've put in 20 new social workers over the last two years in addition to the staff we've had. Over the years, we've removed from social workers the burden of doing what we used to call welfare, which they used to say consumed a significant majority of their time. That was removed from them. We've also removed from social workers the issue of doing probation and parole, which is another corrections-related function which limited their ability to do social work. So we've done that, plus we've added social workers. Plus we've tried to add community health reps. We've tried to beef up the alcohol and drug programs. Yet, the need to apprehend children is still there. So we've also taken great pains to try to redo our legislation. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, we concluded a 10-year process to redo the child welfare legislation to build in the checks and balances, so that we would involve communities and families and have plan and care communities and avoid and learn from the mistakes of the past. However, the sad reality is that children still suffer neglect, that there are still situations that require social workers and child protection workers to step in and take children into care either briefly or for longer periods because of problems in the communities.

The Member is right, we have not acted on one piece of the legislation. We do have plan and care communities, but what we don't have is the child and family services committee that is supposed to provide a community oversight on child welfare issues, whereas the plan and care committees speak specifically to the issues of individual child welfare matters. As the Member indicated, we have committed to try to work with the community to set up that particular piece that's missing in legislation. We have been remiss in not doing this in other areas. It has probably affected our ability to have as much involvement of communities and handling child welfare matters as possible because that committee was to provide the community oversight and input into what's happening with child welfare matters in the community. The plan and care committees had a much narrower focus. So I accept that we have not met the mark there.

One of the fundamental issues is while we try to do a better job with the children we have to take into care, we have to somehow deal with stemming the need to apprehend children, to work with communities and families to avoid having that situation occur in the first place, which is once again why we are trying to rework our alcohol and drug and mental health services at the community level and bring in an integrated service delivery model to allow the service providers to work

more effectively together in a coordinated way. It is not a perfect system, but a lot of the staff at the community level are community people who have been trained and are working in very difficult circumstances. So I thank the Member for his comments and look forward to continuing to work with him and his communities as we try to deal specifically with the issues, in his case, with the communities in his constituency. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wasn't going to say too much more on this during general comments, but I would like to touch on some of the comments that the Minister made yesterday and bring a few more points forward and get some clarification.

Mr. Chairman, for probably the last two years or more, I have continually advocated in this House for the proper recognition by the Department of Health and Social Services of alcohol and drug workers in our communities. These people are extremely passionate about the work that they do on a daily basis to help eradicate addictions throughout the North. The least we could do as legislators is ensure they get the certification and recognition that they rightfully deserve. The chairperson of the North of 60 chapter of Canadian Addictions Counsellors Certification Board made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Programs almost a year ago now. She truly felt that there was a commitment from our government and particularly from the Department of Health and Social Services that the issue of recognition of addictions was going to get the attention that it so rightfully deserved. Now it appears the department has shifted its focus entirely.

While reading the NWT Health and Social Services integrated service model, I noted that on page 11 it states, "Mental health workers with broader counselling and referral skills and higher certification can be utilized in place of addictions counsellors." I was completely appalled when I read this. It appears that this government has chosen to drop the ball on this one.

Yesterday in Committee of the Whole, the Minister of Health and Social Services stated: "With regard to the alcohol and drug workers, I would like to reassure my colleagues that the intention is not to replace alcohol and drug workers with mental health workers. The intention is to convert alcohol and drug workers with a different focus. They would be called prevention workers." I would like the Minister to expand a little bit on this and clarify as it appears that it flies directly in the face of the department's integrated service model. Could the Minister expand and clarify those issues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can indicate to the Member and I can attempt to restate what I said yesterday, but the intention is not to replace alcohol and drug workers with mental health workers. What we are doing is adding where we can, with the money we have, some mental health workers where they didn't previously exist. We are also recognizing I would suggest at long last, in a very fundamental real way, the importance of alcohol and drug workers by finally giving them a job description and a pay level and some benefits that will allow them to exist as they do the job that they are so passionately committed to. We are going

to work with the alcohol and drug workers on an individual basis as we move to the broader role of prevention workers. We are also trying to add some mental health workers to the mix to work with social workers, nurses, doctors and community health reps and family violence people and all the other services that may be available to individual communities, so that we have as broad a range of services working together to deal on a prevention basis with the issues at the community level. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, also yesterday the Minister stated that in the budget, there was funding to give alcohol and drug workers, soon to be called prevention workers, an increase in pay with some benefits and to deliver a curriculum of training and certification for workers. Would the Minister elaborate on this, that they are going to set up curriculum for training and certification? What exactly does that mean and what is the certification going to be? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can give the Member a frame of where we are going with the certification for prevention workers and the training. The final detailed curriculum has yet to be completed, but in the days of old going back prior to 1995, there was an alcohol and drug course that was offered over at the college that was moved to the reserve and over time just faded from the radar in terms of requirement for alcohol and drug workers. So the intent is to work with Aurora College as the vehicle to develop a curriculum that can tie in hopefully and probably with the social work courses that are currently being delivered and that could be part of that area of study or on their own could become a certificate course. That's the thought at this point in terms of how we would like to proceed. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** It's good to say we are going to set up a curriculum and give more training and that at one time, the college had a training program for alcohol and drug workers or addictions workers and it was moved to the reserve and it has disappeared off the radar screen. But have we addressed it wasn't a successful program or why it has disappeared off the radar screen? With a new curriculum and new training under a different name, prevention workers, what is that going to give anybody that is working in the field? Whether you call it mental health, addictions or whatever you want to call it, what is it going to give somebody as far as mobility rights? If you work for 20 years as a prevention worker and you move to Alberta, what does that give you? Is this going to be a nationally recognized certification program or what is it going to be? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what we are going to have is a course that is going to be accredited through Aurora College that has accreditation and transferability with a number of southern institutions. It will have a course of study that has to meet

those requirements and it will allow within the Northwest Territories, for sure as they become certified, for prevention workers to have a basic level of training across the Northwest Territories and should anybody choose to move south and take their skills with them, they will have that particular document from the college, as well as their work history and the job description that outlines the skills that that job required to do that type of work. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't go into the whole avenue of all the people we have working right now in our communities. As far as alcohol and drug workers I know that as a government, it's not our job to try to do away with workers who are out there right now. I do have some concerns about this program. What curriculum is this going to be set up on? Where are you getting the baselines for setting up this curriculum? Is it a southern program that is particularly targeted to exactly what we are doing here? Are the prevention counsellors in the south that deal with the whole umbrella of mental health the way we are looking at doing it? Is it something we are doing strictly for the NWT? If we are going to be training somebody in the mental health area, what kind of training are we going to be giving somebody who is working at a community level right now, in alcohol or addictions counselling? What kind of training are we going to be giving them to now call them prevention workers under the umbrella of mental health? Is there a model in the south that we are looking at to design ours after or are we dealing with other programs that are already around and we are just going to call it something else because we want to give it our own brand name? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are working towards a northern solution to the problems, the significant problems that face us. We recognize that having just a narrow focus of alcohol and drug skills is not necessarily the best level of skill to deal with some of the problems as clients and people walk through the door. Invariably, there is a multitude of presenting problems. We want to be able to develop the basic skills in the workers to recognize what some of those other presenting problems might be and where they would go as a next step in terms of trying to provide the best service possible to the particular client. We are going to be working to develop this with the people in the field, with the college and we are not going to attempt to reinvent the wheel. I know there is still going to be a significant alcohol and drug addictions component and I know there is already lots of work that is there for us to access and we intend to do that as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to raise a couple of questions on the integrated service delivery model again. I just heard the Minister indicate he would be looking at doing the briefing tomorrow. I look forward to that. There are so many questions I have and it seems like this is a holistic approach to this whole issue of alcohol and drugs and mental health. However, right now, the system we have in place, especially in the communities I am familiar with, are delivered through a contract with the

aboriginal organizations, mostly the band councils. I am just wondering what will happen in the cases where there is contracts with the band councils? Up to now, many of my colleagues, including myself, have raised the issue that alcohol and drug workers were underpaid and a lot of times were long-term employees that really had not seen any increase in their salaries for, in some cases, many years. The argument that was put forward by the Department of Health and Social Services was they couldn't do anything because the contract was with the band councils and it was up to the band councils to increase their wages as they saw fit. I wonder how this is going to work. Is this department looking at pulling the contracts from the band councils? How are we dealing with this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, right now the majority of alcohol and drug workers work under the various authorities. Where there are contracts with individual bands, we will sit down with the authorities to discuss the best way to provide the service and to make sure that we have as integrated a service as possible.

I would like to point out as well, Mr. Chairman, existing services at the community level that are there, that have been identified by nearly everyone and by this House and Members over the years as being uncoordinated and fragmented and not working collaboratively. So the attempt is to take the resources we have, add where we can and try to bring them together so they work more effective as a team. So we will sit down with the bands that have alcohol and drug workers on their staff and we will, with the authorities, try to come to a mutually agreeable solution as to how to make sure that no community is left without the resources that have been voted by this House to improve a lot of the new prevention workers. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I also wanted to know how the certification of the prevention workers, as is being referred to in this case, are going to be certified. How is the certification process going to take place? We have many alcohol and drug workers out there who are going to require support through the transformation of being alcohol and drug workers to a certified prevention worker. I am wondering are they still going to stay on the payroll? Are these people going to be expected to go through the Student Financial Assistance Program? Are we using the School of Community Government on this to bring them up to the level that this department is expecting them to be?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is going to be a phased-in approach. We realize that the incumbents are going to require assistance and training. We have training money and the money that we have allocated to us to do that and we are going to do an assessment of each worker to see what their needs are. We intend to work this, as I indicated to the Member for Hay River North, through the college. We want to develop the curriculum. We also recognize in some cases we may be in situations where there is going to be some type of grandfathering arrangement made, which gets back to my fundamental

commitment that we are not here to get rid of people and to disregard the many long years of work that many of the alcohol and drug workers contributed to their communities, often, as has been pointed out, at very, very low pay with no benefits. So we want to make this a proactive and positive process. Once we get established, hopefully we will have people who choose to take the prevention component or certification as an area they want to get into coming out of the college as graduate, but the first little while is going to be taken up with making sure that the workers in the field have the skills to do the job. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that question seems to be fairly clear. However, we do have some people that are already in the field, especially the ones who are doing counselling at the Nats' Ejee K'eh facility on the reserve, for example. The counsellors there already have certification through the Nechi Institute. What kind of requirements and what kind of certification are they going to require? Are they also going to be expected to have certification as a prevention officer or is there another level of certification that they are going to require or are their duties going to expand? Are there going to be any changes there?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, part of this process is to allow for equivalencies. But the bottom line intent is to come to an agreement on the basic level of qualifications that is required to do the job and then work to bring the people to that level or above. So we are going to be looking at all parts of the system and we are going to be considering allowing for all equivalencies to see what the training requirements are and transferability of skills that may have been learned and training that may have been received in other areas like Nechi. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's also indicated in the document put forward by the department that you would be looking at primary community care teams. I am wondering, up to now in my riding we've been trying to set up interagency bodies to deal with wellness and Health and Social Services. We've been having a very difficult time securing funding to support these organizations and these groups. I would like to ask the Minister, these teams, because they are community-based, will they have any funding to support them?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the intent, as I indicated a little earlier is to take the resources for the most part that are currently in communities and to work with them under a more collaborative framework, an approach that allows us to work cooperatively and collaboratively. In the case of the alcohol and drug workers, we want to reclassify them and broaden their skill level. But they, as well, will be part of working with the nurses and the social workers and the community health reps that may be there and other resources, the family violence people, for example. We want to look at all the money we are spending at the community level and the resources that are there and come

up with a process that is going to allow us to better integrate them. As we look at finalizing an integrated service delivery model and the basic level of service that should be in each community, there may be funding requirements but that we haven't determined yet what that would be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said before, we tried to set up that type of body, not under the same title but the same players. One of the problems was always who takes the lead on this. Who carries the ball? Who does administrative? Who does the documentation, the writing, the legwork that is involved? Could the Minister point out to me, of all the different players who are going to be involved in these primary community care teams, the nurses, whoever else, social workers, alcohol and drug workers, who would be the joint person on these teams?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That will probably vary. In some cases, for example, if we use a broader look at some of the authorities. In some authorities, the CEOs are doctors; in some cases they are finance people that have the skills. In some cases, they are people who were in the social service field. At the community level, we are going to have to work out with the communities what makes the most sense, depending on the resources they have in a particular community. But the fundamental intent is to bring them together collaboratively. Who will be in charge when a final decision is required has yet to be determined in each community on a community-by-community basis. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't take too much time. There is just one more point that I wanted to ask for some clarification from the Minister on. I think most Members on this side of the House have felt that this past budget was fairly thin on initiatives and money for the social agenda. We have been urging the government to put its money where its mouth is, so to speak, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure that we see the kind of spending, the kind of effort in this area that we wanted to see. Our committee has asked the Minister for some response to some of these questions in the area of the social agenda. I was a little intrigued by a recent response from the Minister in speaking to the social agenda when he talks about the Intergovernmental Forum and the fact that he's using that vehicle to contact leadership to invite them to identify representatives to participate in an implementation group that just in general does some things, but is in the area of the social agenda. This tripartite negotiation process, to this point in my mind, has had a dual mandate of dealing with devolution and resource revenue sharing. If this is indeed expanding the mandate of the IGF to include the social agenda, that's certainly something that needs some discussion.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the regular Members are represented in that process. We have a Member who sits in on IGF meetings as an observer and our indication from the last meeting was that there was a message that was quite clearly articulated from the Minister of DIAND, Minister Nault, that he wasn't prepared to entertain an expansion and a broadening of

the IGF mandate. In fact, I think he felt that this would muddy the waters and wanted to keep things focused on devolution and resource revenue sharing. So I am interested to see that it seems that the Minister of Health and Social Services is intending to broaden the mandate of that body and I am wondering if he could shed some light on this and clarify it. Maybe I am misreading the response that he's given.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member is correct. Minister Nault was quite clear and emphatic about where he thought the social agenda fit or didn't fit. However, it is a body that brings together the three areas of government, the territorial, federal and aboriginal governments. It is more a case of going back now that some time has elapsed and there has been a response at least by the GNWT to the social agenda to go back to this body and get a direction, tell us if it's not the IGF, what's the best way to move this ahead and not just tell us to find a different forum, this isn't it. It just gives us an opportunity when all three groups are in the room to get some of their time, to get that sense of direction. It's not the intent to ignore the concern expressed by Minister Nault and come back and once again try to expand the mandate. It's just going to be the vehicle to give us the next step, if this is going to be more than a GNWT initiative, if it's going to be truly territorial that includes the federal and Aboriginal governments, as well as the GNWT. If the message is we are not interested and it's a GNWT initiative, then that in itself will be a very clear direction to us. It's our hope that we can somehow get a greater level of engagement from both the federal government and the aboriginal governments on that particular initiative through that step. Thank you.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would certainly agree that the federal government has a role to play and the Aboriginal governments and leadership obviously have a role to play in the social agenda. It makes sense for them to be involved, but I think we've heard the message that the Minister of DIAND does not believe the IGF is the proper forum for this. If we agree that it is important to have involvement from all three levels of government, does the Minister still believe that this IGF vehicle is the vehicle and is the place for the social agenda to find a home for now, or is it his sense that the minds of the federal government at least have been made up and we are just hoping for them to buy into some other process outside of this and trying to use this to force them to do that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the intent is not to find a home, however temporary, for the social agenda. In fact, the social agenda has a home right now. That's with the GNWT being the government that's driving this particular initiative at this point. What we would like is a clear sense of direction and level of commitment from both the federal and aboriginal governments to allow us to plan how we are going to move ahead. If this is going to be a one-government initiative, then it's going to be a whole different focus and kettle of fish than if the three governments come to the table in one way or another and start

addressing some of the recommendations that were in the social agenda. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have more questions I want to ask about the \$250 co-payment. The Minister has indicated several things in his replies to various questions regarding that issue. One of the things he mentioned is that he is going to bring some options forward to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, but this has been going on for quite awhile. I would like to know more about the timeline. When exactly is the Minister planning on putting it to the Social Programs committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have been in discussions with the Social Programs committee and we are just waiting to plan to meet, because they have a lot on their agenda, to look at the work that's been done to date by the department on the supplementary health review to try to map out the best way to proceed. I am looking to do that in the not-too-distant future. We are also prepared to try to move as quickly as is deemed to be appropriate so we can deal with the broad issue and the concern being this is not a tinkering exercise. These programs are long overdue for review and the work we do has to make sense and it has to fit. We have to be able to come up with a package that's costed and then go back to Cabinet as well and hopefully get the resources if they are necessary to proceed. So this is a fairly complicated issue as people will see when they read the work that's been done to date. There are some questions to be answered, so that's the timeline. If we can get something done by June or no later than September, I would be more than willing to aim for those dates. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** That's very parliamentary language, I must say. Holy moly, or something like that. Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister knows he has very receptive members on the Social Programs committee and I am sure they could make room on their agenda to address this issue as soon as he could wind up somebody to walk down the hall and deliver the document to the committee. In all seriousness, Mr. Chairman, I don't think a June or September deadline is one that the Minister should be working toward. I have communicated a couple of issues on the supplementary health benefits to the Minister and he's been indicating to me for months now, I think as far back as when he became Minister, about this review, so I am dying of waiting here breathlessly. I would suggest that the co-payment issue should be separated from the supplementary health benefits if that's what's causing the delay here. The phrases such as the not-too-distant future or whenever it's deemed appropriate or if there are resources called for, those things are the phrases that alarm the minds of astute parliamentarians, I would say. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, the people who are calling me are having to fork this money out today, right now, out of their living expenses. So I don't think we have a whole lot of time to waste and there are no indications that I have seen so far that say this is going to be resolved. I don't know what sort of options the Minister is going to put forward. Now while we are waiting for them, I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether or not in his package he would have

resolved some of the issues he was talking about like the one about he can't be giving rebates to some people whose insurance money is coming from somewhere else, those sorts of major issues. Are we to expect that those would have been resolved by the time they come to the committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The supplementary health benefits issue,

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those issues and others will be addressed as we come up with a final product with this review. We currently have some irritants like the \$250 co-payment, but we also have an outdated patchwork quilt of services where there are lots of inconsistencies and gaps and it's based in many cases on ethnicity and not necessarily on need. It's not targeted. There are no clear programs, for example, for children regardless of who they are. So as a system, we have to look at those issues; some fundamental questions about what the focus should be in critical program areas to provide the best support possible for all territorial residents. I appreciate the urgency and the irritation of the Member that we just can't stand up and say the \$250 is gone and we will worry about it later. That may politically take the heat off of us, but in the longer term, we have to consider that in addition to all these other factors to come up with a broad plan that makes sense, that is affordable and that addresses the needs that have been identified. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think I got anything in that answer at all. Mr. Chairman, I just lost my train of thought here. When you ask him questions about these things, he knows already what he needs to know. He knows the issues. He could tell you all about these issues, so let the documents see the light of the day. If there are resources involved, let us look at it. If he gets the support of the committee, he can take it to FMB. We can't be forever saying does it say this, does it say that, do you deal with that? If it is as complicated and multi-layered, let us look at it. I don't understand. That answer keeps coming back. We are in the last leg of this Assembly. Anything that is going to see the light of the day has to come in at this time, in the next few weeks, next few days, not in June, not in September. That's just saying he's not going to do anything about it at all. That's just not acceptable, Mr. Chairman. I hope that he will bring that document forward, whatever he has working and that it be debated and considered and discussed and have some decisions made. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I agree that to do nothing is not acceptable, but I can tell the Member that the department and authorities have been working very, very diligently for the last 14 months or so on a whole host of areas including this one. We are just waiting for the Social Programs committee to indicate when we can get together so we can have a fundamental discussion to see if we are even on the right track in their opinion and proceed down the track to coming up with something we can put forward to see the light of day.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** In defense of the Social Programs committee, we should put him up on the stand to see who's telling the truth here, because the information I have is that Social Programs doesn't have that. How does the Minister even know what they think if he hasn't even brought it to them? This is just getting psychotic. Mr. Chairman, I would really urge the Minister to just put the document before us so we can consider it and debate it and make decisions on it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister, is there a chance we can get a copy of the documentation so maybe we would have a chance to look at it in case we have questions? Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's my recollection, even though I am going on 52, which may be flawed, is that that document was given to committee. However, we would be happy to take the draft out of the briefing book to give the Chair of Social Programs another copy, but Mr. Chairman I am attempting to be as discreet and diplomatic about this as possible and I know the Social Programs committee is busy. We keep giving them lots of stuff looking for a response. Mr. Chairman, part of it I take the blame for. Maybe we have not been as clear as we could have been, but I have another copy here that I would be glad to hand off. It's got draft stamped all over it and it's what we hope will allow us to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think the Members will find it interesting reading. General comments. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, it's been an interesting afternoon listening to question period earlier when the Minister was answering questions. Unfortunately, it's not called answer period, it's called question period, and we weren't necessarily getting any answers when Members were asking about the co-payment. He's been talking today about the need to hear back from the committee, in terms of what we think. He talks about having put a discussion paper in front of the committee, which in fact he has. But he hasn't ever said that the Standing Committee on Social Programs, more than four months ago, gave him a very clear recommendation. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to read that recommendation to you that we gave to the Minister. "The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends the Department of Health and Social Services examines the medical travel co-payment program with a view to ending the program..."

---Applause

...to ensure that residents are not penalized because medical procedures are not available in their home communities."

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Still waiting.

**MR. DENT:** We have not yet had a reasonable response to this, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has avoided that issue all day today. The discussion paper that has been put in front of the standing committee will not lead to an answer that we can deal with this on, because he earlier today, in question period, said he's not prepared to spend money he doesn't have. You can't deal with this issue unless the government is prepared to put some money on the table. That's really what it comes down to. Without money to take the inequity off the table, it's not going to be dealt with.



The discussion paper talks about four options, and they're so broad. Each one of the options is so broad it doesn't clearly define what it is we're talking about. There's no definition. He can't expect that the Standing Committee on Social Programs is going to come back to him and say, "Oh yes, we think that you should do number three and know exactly what's in there because it doesn't explain to us exactly what would be included in number three."

So I don't think that it's led to a productive discussion today, to say well, I'm just waiting for the Standing Committee on Social Programs to get back to me on this issue. The standing committee has let the Minister know, in no uncertain terms, what our position is on the medical travel co-payments. The Minister doesn't need to meet with us to hear from us about that again. This message was sent more than four months ago, and we're still waiting for a reasonable response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear, hear.

---Applause

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as legislators we have to look at the whole picture in this case, in my opinion. Yes, there was a specific recommendation to come up with a way to rebate the \$250 when medical services that are supposed to be in the community aren't there. We've attempted to look at the whole area, the patchwork of the supplementary health benefits that come up, with a way to revamp and update and modernize and better link those services. We also can't afford just to lightly say we're prepared to possibly turn our back on over \$1 million of federal revenue that now comes through non-insured health benefits, if we don't handle the issue of medical co-payments in the right way. Anyway who thinks that we can just walk away from that and we'll just add it to our deficit? I don't think they would agree that that's the best way, and why should we let the federal government off the hook?

So we do have some fundamental questions to answer and, yes, we can look at tinkering. I'm trying to avoid tinkering so that we can in fact move as quickly, but in a measured and as comprehensive a way as possible, to come up with a way that's going to allow us to put a document on the table that will show how we can revamp those supplementary health benefit services.

That paper also points out that the way we're going is not fiscally sustainable, that's it's developing in an unplanned, uncoordinated, very expensive fashion. So we have some tough decisions to make. In all probability, yes, we may have to go back to the Legislature and Cabinet for more resources. But we definitely can't do that at the same time as we think we can just turn our back on federal money, which is why we have to take that look. I'm prepared to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune here in order to do that properly. That's the intent, Mr. Chairman. We'd like to get something on the table and we're prepared to work as fast as we can. I can do this with the departmental authorities in isolation, but then that defeats the whole point that the Members keep making about they want to be involved at the front end. The attempt here is to look at a major reworking of a key program area in a collaborative way that's long overdue. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister again talked about working with departments and authorities. Earlier in talking to him, Ms. Lee said that they had been working together for 14 months on this issue. Again, you're talking to the people who rely on the department all of their funding. How are they going to talk about whether or not we should, for instance, remove the specified disease list as part of the criteria for the extended health benefits? They are going to depend on this government to come up with the funding before they can answer whether or not that should be done. It's exactly the same thing with the co-payment of medical travel. It should be the legislators that are involved in this policy discussion, because we're the ones who have to come up with the money. So let's not obfuscate the issue by saying that we're going to deal with the authorities to try to solve it. It has to be those of us who sit around this table that make the decisions about how and where the money is going to be spent. I've made it perfectly clear to the Minister that if it means that the people who cannot afford to pay the \$250 co-payment get assistance from this government, if the cost of that is that \$1 million to this government from the federal government, well, then we're going to have to maybe bite that bullet. Because we can't say that only some people, a small class of people, because there are just a limited number of people out there who are not covered by an insurance program that we collect this from. But that small group of people typically work for low wages, have no insurance, and wind up having to subsidize this program for the rest of the people. It doesn't cost a lot of people money because they're covered through an insurance program. But it isn't fair the way this program has worked out now, since we've put in that \$250 co-payment. It's not productive to keep saying we have to deal with the authorities, and the department has been working on this. This is an issue that we're going to have either decide that we bite the bullet or we don't.

And it's the same thing with whether you look at a continuous program or a broad program. If you want to have a program that is seamless and broad, it's still going to cost the government money or else we're going to be reducing benefits across the table. That isn't a discussion that you're going to have to have with authorities. If you're talking about reducing benefits, that's something, again, we have to have around this table, because it's legislators who are going to hear the complaints from their constituents, as the elected officials who are going to have to deal with those complaints. People who are appointed to authorities don't have the same responsibility to the people in their service areas that we do. We have a responsibility and, therefore, we have to be accountable to the public for decisions that either increase or decrease the level of service. This is where the discussion needs to take place, but it has to be one that's very quickly past the concept stage. There's not much point of having an options paper if there is no money at the table. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Dent and I will continue to disagree on the approach that's being used to revamp and work with the health and social services system. But we do agree -- and that's why we're here -- that there's a document on the table stamped draft, to have that discussion. It's not just about medical co-payment. There's medical travel to seniors, extended benefits,

there's indigent benefits, there's ones for the Metis which are, effective April 1<sup>st</sup>, going to be raised to 100 percent. We have to look at this as a package. How do we look at revamping it? And I agree, it's more that just a concept stage, and it's more than telling the department we told you to get rid of that medical co-payment and rebate it and have done with it. We're here with a document that will hopefully take us to that next level, that will be more detailed at every step. Part of that will eventually be a costing out of what's finally, we think, the best way to proceed.

If it, upon review, is the decision of the Legislature that the status quo, for better or worse, is what we're going to go with, then that may be where we end up. But we have put a document on the table that was developed within the health and social services system as a starting point. Very clearly, the Legislature will determine, through this process and other processes, the final configuration of whatever is brought forward and we will be the final arbitrator of whatever money is put on the table. So we look forward to working with the regular Members and the Social Programs committee to do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Mr. Delorey.

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm beginning to see why it's so hard to get anything done and bring some positive results to areas when we're trying to get answers. You talk about tinkering and probably that's what we've been doing all afternoon, I guess, but we're certainly not getting answers. Probably part of the reason is exactly what the Minister just finished saying, it's not just co-payments, it's a lot of other things. If we want to find a way to do absolutely nothing, I guess that's how we do it. Let's bury it with 100 or 1000 other pieces of legislation and areas, and then we'll never get anything done because we'll never find an answer for all of them and we can't do one of them at a time if it's the only issue that's being addressed.

But I wanted to go back, if I can. I didn't get any answers to my previous line of questioning. I wanted to ask the Minister a few more questions, and then I'm going to leave this, although it won't be a dead issue, I guarantee it. But in training for counsellors, when we look at alcohol and drug counselling and addictions, there have been people working in this territory very hard -- extremely diligently, as the Minister would say -- to try and eradicate and deal with addictions. If the program didn't work, it has been stated many times, it's because the department didn't give it an opportunity to work, to do the proper training, to make sure that our counsellors are certified.

I'm hearing now through this totally new program that they have no idea if it's going to work, because they're in the concept stage. Would the Minister state right now that the department has given up on using the standards that were established by the Canadian Addictions Counsellors' Certification Board? Has the department decided that they will not use that model and are not going to go into that area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the prevention workers will have a significant part of their duties still relating to alcohol and drugs and addictions. I indicated earlier, we intend to use the curriculum

and training that's already there in that particular area. So we will make use of those resources and curriculum, and be able to meet part of the final training package that's there for prevention workers. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** I don't know. That's not a yes, that's not a no, at best it's a maybe. But it's not an answer again. If they are not using this program, it's simply no, we are not using that program. That is not what we're going to be using for a qualification and certification program. That is not it. That's all you say. No, we're not using it, and the people who are working in that field will know the department has no interest in it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are going to be developing a training and certification program through Aurora College, and there will be an addictions and an alcohol and drug component to that program, and it may, in fact, be part of the criteria and training that's currently offered, that Mr. Delorey has outlined. Are we washing our hands of that whole area? No, we're not, but our certification and training will be done through the college as the main vehicle. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** In the new integrated service model, it seems to me in reading through it if I remember correctly, that whole program delivery model identifies something like six supervisory positions -- I'm not sure if that's the right terminology -- that would require master's degrees to fill those positions. I would like to have the Minister clarify if that is a correct statement and, if so, how many of those people do we have in the North right now?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, at this point the goal is to hire as many qualified people to do clinical supervision as possible. How many clinical supervisors do we have in the Northwest Territories working for the government or not? I can't tell you off the top of my head. If the Member would like, I can find out and report back, at least on the government side and with the authorities. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister didn't clarify if those six positions, the professionals that he's talking about, the training positions, do they require a master's degree in mental health?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, we're going to take a two-pronged approach. We're going to ask them for hopefully a master's level, but we're also going to be prepared to look at equivalencies. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** How do you get an equivalent to a master's degree?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it may be a combination of experience and education.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question then is this: would an alcohol and drug counsellor with the highest degree possible in that field be able to train somebody in the mental health field?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, that's truly a hypothetical question. If we had specifics, we could look at that. Is it possible? Right off the top, I suppose, hypothetically it may be. I can't give you a definitive answer just on the basis of that question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few more questions on the \$250 medical co-payment. First of all, I don't agree with the Minister's assertion that to deal with this issue without dealing with all the other ones will be nothing but tinkering and that's not what he wants to do. I think that's just a way of avoiding dealing with something that can be dealt with separately. There is no rational connection between medical co-payment questions, and whether or not certain diseases should be included, or certain services should be included as a health benefit under the NWT health care system. I think they are connected and they're put together because the Minister chose to do it that way. So I just don't think that that washes in a defense of inaction.

Mr. Chairman, I have a question on the possibility or the option of coming up with a rebate for those people who have to pay \$250 and not have any other means to pay for it, other than out of their pocket because they're not insured by their company or any other extra medical insurance that they might have. I think that this issue is fundamentally different than the other issues of whether or not this is an extra health benefit or not for that reason, because it's fundamentally wrong for some people who live in Yellowknife because they have doctors down the street, but they don't have to pay \$250 when every other community that might not have that service has to pay for it. Then to say that most of them get covered in one way or another, but those who are not fortunate enough to have insurance packages don't.

The Minister was asked a question about what's the percentage of people who do not have the benefit of third-party insurance, and the Minister took the question as notice. But I'm hoping that the Minister will provide that answer as quickly as possible. Given that he's been studying this thing for months and months and months, for 14 months, I'm sure that the Minister and the department have looked at this. I would like to know if the Minister has reviewed the option of providing a rebate, because we had a precedence for that not too long ago. There used to be a rebate for property taxes. There were

a lot of residents in the Territories, or in Yellowknife and I'm assuming in other places, too, that they pay property taxes and they applied for a rebate and they got \$200 or \$300 back. I'm sure that that had to go through the scrutiny of whether or not it meets the standards that the Minister suggests it has to meet for any exceptions that he might make for this one. So I would like to know if the Minister and the department have reviewed the possibility of a rebate. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, supplementary health programs is a basket of benefits and different programs, and they are all under the title of supplementary health benefits and many of them are in fact linked. We have looked at some options. Are we prepared to consider looking at options? Yes, we are. I don't agree that it's as simple as the Member sees it in her mind at this point. But we're going to continue working to deal with the issue. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, can the Minister answer whether or not the Minister has reviewed the option of a rebate, and has he any documents pertaining to that? Has he looked at constitutional consequences or legal implications or logistics or financial implications of a rebate for those who are paying for this? With every indication, the Minister is not meaning to collect from, but that he hasn't been able to find a way to get them out of. So has he looked at the option of a rebate, and are there any documents he could show us as to the pros and cons of the possibility of a rebate?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there have been many discussions over what's the best way to proceed with supplementary health benefits. Do I have any specific discussion documents that I can put on the table that outline all of the many varied discussions? No, I don't. I can tell you that there is work on other options to the supplementary health benefits. Tomorrow when we do the briefing, we can share more detail with the Members on some of the issues. At the end of the day, this is a policy-driven set of programs. So it's policy and money driven. So we've created these programs over the years and reinstated the \$250 way back when, when we were trying to raise money. It has implications that now if you want to back out of it how you do that, and how much it will cost to do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, maybe I'm so simple minded that I'm not able to explain very well here. I like to think that I'm focused on this issue at the moment. Mr. Chairman, maybe I'm wrong, but in his answers earlier today, when I suggested that maybe if the Minister needs to collect the money -- and I'm assuming that he's having to collect it from those people without third-party insurance, because he doesn't know how to find a way to exempt them from that because he doesn't want to forgo the revenues that he's getting from the federal government by way of non-insured health benefits or from his NWT counterparts by way of government insurance or any other agencies that provide insurance for the people so they can pay for this. I thought it was a way of

suggesting a solution, then why don't you come up with a rebate for those who can't afford it? And then he said that the federal government may object to that, because then they will be singled out for paying for this and they may not pay for it. So I just assumed, in my simple-minded way, that he looked at this option. Now I'm being told that, no, he doesn't have documents specifically on this thing. So maybe it's too premature for him to suggest that this is not workable. So now I have to ask, will the Minister consider the option of giving a rebate for those who don't qualify and don't have the luxury of third-party insurance? He should cost that out, like Mr. Delorey asked earlier. How many of those people who are paying this \$250 because they don't have any third-party insurance, what is the percentage of that out of the millions that he's collecting? And what will be the cost of a rebate? And what is the legal implication of that? Does he have legal authority to do that? Do we have to pass a law to do that? I mean, he should have looked at all those by now, because we know that he's been studying this for 14 months. So if he hasn't done that, would the Minister commit to looking into that? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, of course, we're interested in solutions and not just trying to defend the position. We want to do it in the right way. We know that we want to come up with a way that's going to close the gap not just for medical co-payments, but for the other related services that this particular segment of the population does not have access to. So, yes, we're prepared to look at a rebate. We're prepared, once we have our discussions with the committee, to see if we can pull that one whole program area out of the overall supplementary review. I just think it would not be the most appropriate way to proceed in terms of any kind of planned comprehensive change. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has raised an interesting point in response to a Member earlier. He has indicated, I think throughout the day, that he didn't want to deal with this issue of the co-payment. And remember, committee did make a very clear recommendation that we thought this co-payment should be scrapped because it was simply targeting a small segment of society, and in effect picking on these people when they're sick to boot, Mr. Chairman. He had indicated that it wasn't a matter of just being able to deal with that in a piecemeal fashion. He said supplementary health benefits are a basket, a basket of programs that are linked. There are programs in here that we can't look at in isolation. It has to be an overall comprehensive plan. It involves Metis health benefits, senior benefits, benefits for the indigent. He's talked much about the consultation discussion paper that he's put out there and said that there is this list of options and he wanted to have a response from committee on these options and get our feedback, before moving in a comprehensive manner, in a well thought-out, well planned, coordinated manner, and simply not deal with the co-payment issue in isolation. But then I believe, unless I misheard the Minister, Mr. Chairman, he indicated that as of April 1<sup>st</sup> he was raising the Metis health benefits to 100 percent from 80 percent. I don't understand how that's possible, if in fact we are dealing with this as a basket of benefits and not looking at these pieces in isolation. Option

one in this discussion document speaks to creating a single policy to house all GNWT supplementary health benefits, except for Metis health benefits. I mean, there are things in here that involve... Really some of the options are precluded if the Minister has already decided that April 1<sup>st</sup> Metis health benefits are raised to 100 percent, and he is in fact dealing with it in a piecemeal fashion. Is that not the case?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if we accept the fact that in the Canadian Constitution the Metis people are recognized along with First Nations people, and that First Nations people and Inuit and Inuvialuit have non-insured health benefits, we've had them I think initially I believe at 60 percent, the Metis people; recognizing that they are one of the aboriginal governments of the land and should be on the same par as the other First Nations and Inuvialuit. We've kept it at 60 percent, then 80, and we've moved it to 100 percent. I see that as a separate issue, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. With that I will rise and recognize the clock. We'll rise and report progress. I will thank the Minister and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses out?

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

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

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do I have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Thebacha seconds the motion. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, may we have the orders of the day.

#### ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Speaker, at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning of Accountability and Oversight, at 10:30 of the Board of Management, and at 12:00 noon of the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 19, 2003:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
- Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act
  - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
  - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004
  - Committee Report 3-14(6), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
  - Committee Report 4-14(6), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
  - Committee Report 5-14(6), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 19, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

