



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, March 8, 2007**

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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, March 8, 2007****Members Present**

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

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Mr. Dent.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 81-15(5): International Women's Day**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. This is International Women's Day.

---Applause

International Women's Day was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1977 to celebrate progress made to advance women's equality and to reflect on the challenges ahead. This year the theme is Ending Violence Against Women: Action for Real Results. This theme is especially important to us as we know that violence against women in intimate partner relationships in the NWT is five times the national average.

Mr. Speaker, this government has taken significant steps over the last four years to reduce incidents of family violence. We responded to the Coalition Against Family Violence Action Plan with a government framework for action and have implemented almost all of the actions in that framework.

We are proud of our accomplishments to date. Examples of these accomplishments include:

- the implementation of the Protection Against Family Violence Act;
- the development of a first response protocol in Yellowknife; and
- a tool kit to help communities establish their own first response protocols.

However, Mr. Speaker, the real benefit has been the partnerships we have built along the way. Government cannot address incidents of family violence in isolation. Our community partners have the knowledge and the relationships to better analyze needs and potential solutions. Over the past three years, we have established strong working relationships with these partners through the Coalition Against Family Violence.

Since October of 2006, the Coalition Against Family Violence and the Government of the Northwest Territories have been working together to develop a phase II framework for action. Phase II will build on successes

from the first action plan and more completely address the needs of residents affected by family violence. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Coalition Against Family Violence for their work.

Mr. Speaker, partnerships with the other two territorial governments have allowed us to speak to the Government of Canada with one voice about the injustice of DIAND announcing increased funding for on-reserve shelters, but not increasing funding for shelters in the three territories that serve our aboriginal population.

As part of the annual International Women's Day celebrations, the Status of Women Council of the NWT acknowledges five women, one from each of our regions, who have been chosen by members of their community because of their contributions in advancing issues of significant importance to the North. I am pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate and recognize the recipients of this year's Annual Wise Women Awards. I would like to congratulate Rachael Mundy from the Beaufort-Delta; Bertha Deneron from the Deh Cho; Sue Heron-Herbert from North Slave; Julie Lennie from the Sahtu; and Dora E. Cardinal from the South Slave.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, these women have worked tirelessly in their communities. It is because of the commitment of individuals like these in the NWT that we see real action and, therefore, real change.

Mr. Speaker, this year has been established the year of action to end violence against women. I encourage each Member of this House to reaffirm their commitment individually and as MLAs to work towards ending violence against women in this territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Menicoche.

**Minister's Statement 82-15(5): Construction Of The Tulita Bypass On The Mackenzie Valley Winter Road**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Construction of the Tulita bypass on the Mackenzie Valley winter road...

---Applause

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Holy Tulita!

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to report on the successful completion of a project in the Sahtu region; the construction of the Tulita bypass on the Mackenzie Valley winter road.

The winter road was originally constructed for community resupply and intercommunity travel. Quite naturally, it followed a route through town. In the early years, traffic was light and presented no serious concerns. However, as volumes increased, especially heavy truck traffic associated with the oil and gas industry, residents of Tulita expressed legitimate concerns about safety. At the same time, the motor carrier industry also began to raise issues about negotiating the narrow streets and steep riverbank.

During the spring of 2005, in response to the growing concerns, Department of Transportation officials held a series of public meetings to discuss and develop the Tulita bypass. In consultation with community leaders and residents, several routes were identified. A departure point from the winter road located approximately two kilometres east of the community was deemed the most practical. By March 2006, construction of the Tulita bypass had begun.

The construction of the Tulita bypass was enabled through the federal government's cost-shared Canada strategic infrastructure fund and the ongoing Mackenzie Valley Winter Road Grade Improvement Program. This program also funded the construction of a bypass route at Norman Wells, a similar project that was initiated as a result of safety concerns expressed by the community.

I am pleased to announce that the Tulita bypass is now open. Through-traffic moving up and down the valley is routed around the community. Only local traffic now enters Tulita.

Mr. Speaker, this project has truly been a joint effort of the community and the Department of Transportation. Community leaders and residents were consulted during all stages of the project, from the initial identification of the need to the completion of construction. Community members were involved in selecting the most suitable location for this bypass, participated in the regulatory process and assisted the department in securing the necessary permits to start this project. And finally, it was a local contractor that constructed the bypass. I would like to thank everyone from Tulita who was involved in this process.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to acknowledge the effort and support of the MLA for the Sahtu, Mr. Norman Yakeleya...

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Yay!

---Applause

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** ...for his hard work to make this project a reality. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement On Lack Of Health Services In The Nunakput Communities

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand it's International Women's Day today and I would like to congratulate the women sitting up there. Thank you.

However, Mr. Speaker, today my Member's statement is with regard to health services in my region. Mr. Speaker, the regional director and his executive staff in the Beaufort-Delta and my constituency assistant conducted a tour of Tuktoyaktuk, Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok from February 15 to the 21, 2007. I understand the tour went very well and a number of issues were raised by my constituents to the regional director and his staff.

Mr. Speaker, I have raised this issue before in this House and once again it was raised by my constituents to the regional director and his staff regarding the lack thereof of health services provided to the Nunakput communities; in particular, Mr. Speaker, services for dental, doctor and eye clinics.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services, I understand, has contracts for both the dental and eye clinics. Both of these services provided are for about a minimum of four days in each community. The amount of time these clinics spend in the communities is not long enough to see the patients that require dental, doctor and eye care. Mr. Speaker, not only does it involve a number of days in the community, but it involves long hours for the dental, doctor and eye clinic to see patients in such a short time. This is unacceptable because we should deserve the same level of service as large centres.

Mr. Speaker, on the same issue, a visit by the doctor from regional health has the same problem with the amount of time the doctor visits the communities of Nunakput. We need the Department of Health and Social Services to review and revisit the contract for the dental and eye clinic teams and the doctor to stay longer in the communities, so that all residents have a chance to get a thorough check-up of their bodies, eyes and teeth. In order for the people of Nunakput to be healthy, we need to upgrade on the level of services.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### Member's Statement On International Women's Day

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recognition of International Women's Day today, I would just like to take this opportunity to recognize and celebrate the work of individuals and organizations who work on a daily basis to improve the lives of women and their families and, in turn, the entire community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize and celebrate the strength and determination of the women in all walks of life, whether they be the mothers and elders who volunteer countless hours in our schools and communities, or daughters I know who look after their aging parents through various illness, or the silent and unsung heroines of working mothers who hold full-time, paying jobs outside of the house but also manage to master the impossible juggling act of taking on two more full-time jobs at home, that being of a mother and wife

and, of course, Mr. Speaker, the single-mother families, who have to soldier on and carry the burden all by herself.

I would also like to recognize the women who forge on in the men's world, so to speak, of politics, banking or in our military. Mr. Speaker, I know we have two women in this House, but I don't know if you know that three of the five banks in Yellowknife are headed by women managers and I am sure everyone knows our top military brass, our very own Mrs. Chris Whitecross was recently promoted just last week to become the youngest woman one star general in Canada.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I want to also recognize and celebrate the NGO organizations like the Status of Women Council of the NWT and the Native Women's Association of the NWT for the work they do in supporting women in all aspects, in combating violence, training women for better jobs, and speaking against discrimination against women and being always a strong voice in issues related to women.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many women in Yellowknife and in our communities who work to improve the lives of our women and families. I meet them and I am constantly inspired by them. Today, we will be celebrating and rewarding five wise women and I will have a chance to meet them personally and speak to them later on, but I would like to join the entire House in congratulations and acknowledging the work of Rachael Mundy, Bertha Deneron, Dora Cardinal, Julie Lennie and Sue Heron-Herbert. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### **Member's Statement On Women In Leadership**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this International Women's Day, I want to talk about women in leadership. A question often asked of me as an elected woman is why aren't there more women in politics. This is an interesting question and I am not sure I know the answer to that question, but I hear people speculate about it.

One theory is that women don't support other women. I have to tell you that certainly has not been my experience. Another theory is that men don't support women. I have to say that neither has that been my experience. One other theory is that it takes a woman to champion women's issues. Mr. Speaker, I think if that were true then we would have to concede to the flipside of that, that women could not be expected to address a wide range of issues. I have personally heard many times in my 11 years in this House men stand and passionately speak to the issue of family violence, childcare, child protection and women's health issues over that period of time.

So I think we should not fall into the trap of trying to categorize men and women. I think we all have a role to play and women should be able to cover every issue that could possibly be raised in this House.

Mr. Speaker, maybe there are a lot of reasons why there aren't more women in leadership, but I don't think we can

package it up categorically or absolutely and attribute it to any particular reason. I have been a Member of this House for almost 12 years and I can't think of a time when the gender factor in my relationship to issues or my constituency was an issue. Surely no one would support or not support someone solely on the basis of their gender. I prefer to think that the voters would look at the qualifications, attributes and experience of a candidate, and I would hope that they would. There are certainly many women in our communities that have demonstrated outstanding leadership in many areas with impressive credentials to take their experience to a new level of leadership.

Rather than pondering the past fortunes of women in leadership, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the future does look brighter. When we look at our educational institutions in areas of medicine, science, engineering, and law, we see that the statistics in terms of the female participation in those areas of leadership is constantly growing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I, too, today would like to recognize the outstanding women of the Northwest Territories that are being honoured this year, thank them for what they do in our communities and with an upcoming federal and territorial election, I encourage people to...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your time for Member's statements has expired.

---Laughter

---Applause

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### **Member's Statement On Honouring The Contributions Of Women**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to congratulate all the women in the Northwest Territories and around the world because today is being recognized as their day. I think for myself every day is to be recognized as women's day.

---Applause

With all the work that they do. Mr. Speaker, I thought about it this morning as I was having my cup of coffee at 6:00 in the morning. Mr. Speaker, I thought about the women in my life, the women who had pushed me forward in my leadership. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I thought about my grandmother when she was young. I thought about the work that she did and the sacrifices that she made for us young men in my family and the men in my community. The sacrifice she made to...She was a midwife. She brought over 250 babies into our community. She was taught by a blind lady at 14 years of age. That's why I support the midwife program in the Northwest Territories. I thought about her wisdom and how gentle and quiet and how she ruled the house very quietly, and you respected women.

I thought about my mother recently, who told me stories of the strength of the women and the compassion they had for their people and how she brought me up, and the sacrifice she made so I could stand here and be in this House, and the joy on her face when she saw the first

time that I was elected by my own people. It was the women that are the true leaders of my people. It is the women that give life to our young boys and girls, our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, then I thought about my wife and the joy I had when I was in the birthing room with her and I saw my little son breathe life for the first time. He's five years old. I saw the sacrifice of this young woman, how sacred they are and how sometimes we have such a disrespect for our women here. I thought the beauty that she's given life to my child, our child. It's women like that all over in the Northwest Territories that we really have to honour.

Especially every day, we should honour. They are hard-working women and they are the ones that are truly the leaders, no matter if it's in... (inaudible)... in the regions in our communities, they are really the ones we should really be careful how we speak about them because they're our sisters, our nieces...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Yakeleya, your time for Members' statements has expired.

---Applause

Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

#### **Member's Statement On Importance Of Reviewing Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, as well, recognize International Women's Day before I start.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak today about the priorities of Members and how they don't always seem to fit into the priority list of Cabinet. Case in point is the review of the boards and agencies. Mr. Speaker, one of the top priorities of Members coming into the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly was to do a comprehensive review of boards and agencies. Shortly after the election as a group, we supported the establishment of a Joint Special Committee on Boards and Agencies. On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the Premier announced in this House that the committee would be overseen by the former Minister of Health and Social Services and he also committed at this time to involve Regular Members in the process as part of an overall commitment to bring Regular Members into the decision-making process.

The committee was established in order to review the mandate, organization, and governance arrangements of existing GNWT boards and agencies. It was supposed to make recommendations on what reforms are required to ensure the board or agency fulfills GNWT objectives and provides effective programs and service delivery to GNWT residents. It would also make recommendations that would provide for a consistent framework for governance, accountability and fiscal arrangements.

It started off so well, Mr. Speaker. In fact, some of the best work I've ever seen from this government came in the first phase of this review. The bizarre thing is that the review was shelved over a year ago. Obviously the government seemed to have higher priorities, like the establishment of the macroeconomic policy division in the Department of Finance, or how they could miraculously find half a million dollars to sole source a contract at Human Resources.

If the decision was a matter of resources, why were we not informed of this? This work has to get done. It's of paramount importance as we navigate our way through the implementation of self-governments and what will ultimately become a new political reality here in the Northwest Territories. Obviously, with six months left in the life of this government, this work will not get done. If resources are scarce, why can't we task the regional directors with the responsibility to get this work done? They know the regions; they know the communities better than any newly established commission would here in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

#### **Member's Statement On Honouring The Contribution Of Women**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are times when you take things for granted and on a day like today you get to thinking more and more about the contribution that women make to the lives of the people in the Northwest Territories. I'd like to stand today and honour that. There's so many times, Mr. Speaker, that I've seen women who are left to fend for themselves. I've known women that have left abusive relationships and are forced to start a life on their own with a large family. A lot of these women, Mr. Speaker, meet these challenges head on. I've known women who were widowed at a young age and again are faced with the challenges of raising a family alone.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity since I've been an MLA to speak at a few Aurora College convocations. One of the things that has always impressed me a great deal was the amount of women that were graduating while raising a family. Now, these are women in their mid-40s some of them, their late-30s. They have a family, but still they realize that to get a good life for their children, they go to school and they graduate and they go find a good job.

Mr. Speaker, there's an old saying, that behind every good man there is an even better woman.

---Applause

---Laughter

And that rings true in my case, Mr. Speaker. I'm here because of the faith that one person had in me and what I can do. So this is something that you don't really have an opportunity to think about and today is International Women's Day and we use this day to pay tribute to the contribution that women make across the Northwest Territories. But like my colleague from the Sahtu said, we must not just do it this day. I mean we must every day honour the contributions and be grateful to the contributions that women do make because years ago, Mr. Speaker, they did all the hard work and I've known a lot of women who are out working a job, trying to raise their families, their husbands in some cases are not



helping them, so they do make a sacrifice and I think that should be honoured. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

**Member's Statement On Tamerlane Ventures Negotiations With Deninu Kue First Nation**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to congratulate all the wise women recipients today too. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement yesterday I mentioned important reasons why industry has to work in unison with the First Nations on potential projects on traditional lands in order for these projects to proceed without obstruction or opposition. Today I read a story in the Hay River Hub about the negotiations between my First Nations band, the Deninu Kue First Nations, and Tamerlane Ventures hitting roadblocks on issues of great importance to the Deninu Kue First Nations, such as impact benefit agreements and socio-economic agreements, jobs, health and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the Deninu Kue residents have a long history with the Pine Point mine. Many residents still have strong feelings of the neglect and the blatant disregard for the land and the people displayed by the company that operated there for the 20-plus years that they were in operation. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, the legacy of Pine Point is one of pollution, contamination and cancer, and that is not something to be proud of.

The residents are well aware that times have changed. The technology is better for the people and the environment. Cooperation and consideration are at the forefront of partnerships. Remediation is a commitment. All good things and changes that we have to work together today with. But, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that you cannot put on paper that success and approval is based upon and is paramount in order to move forward on projects such as reopening a mine with a legacy such as Pine Point, is trust. This is something that is earned, Mr. Speaker, and not bought or negotiated.

So if Tamerlane wants to further develop what was one of the largest and most profitable lead zinc mines in Canadian history, start earning the trust by negotiating in good faith and on First Nations' terms and reasonable conditions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Member's Statement On Honouring The Contributions Of Women**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many, many issues that are before this House that we are taking time to debate and discuss. But today it's time to recognize the role of women in our world and in our land and in our homes. As MLA, as a son, brother, father, grandfather and husband, I would like to do that. I would like to honour and recognize the recipients of the Wise Woman Awards. I'd like to honour the women

of the North in my community, in my constituency, and in my family.

Mr. Speaker, I know that women do many things that men would find very difficult, if not impossible, to do. It is something that has been said might be taken for granted, but if you ever tried as a man to do some of the things women do basically with one arm, you would know how difficult some of the things are that they do. I've had the benefit of working now in this House for 11 and a half years with the strong women that are currently here. Mrs. Groenewegen and I came through the door together in 1995 and Ms. Lee, beside me, has been here for seven years. We know how women can operate in the political arena. They don't take a backseat to anybody. In fact, they pretty well are often in the front seat...

---Laughter

...and let us know that. Mr. Speaker, there would be no good men without women. It's a reality. I think we should recognize that, take time today to think of the ones that have loved us, and do love us, and support us, and allow us to be here, and recognize how bleak our lives would be if we didn't have the many good women. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Member's Statement On Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I start my statement today, I'd like to make special mention of our women leaders and mentors in our public gallery today. I truly appreciate their work and their commitment. Like our Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod, has said about his wife, I, too, wouldn't be here without the support of my wife, as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with today being International Women's Day, I think then it's now fitting and appropriate to talk about what the Mackenzie gas project socio-economic agreement is doing for women. Women make up roughly a quarter of the positions in the oil and gas industry. Many of these women are clustered in support, sales and clerical positions, as opposed to technical and managerial positions. Women account for roughly 47 percent of Canada's total labour workforce and we need to ensure that they are given full opportunity to take part in this employment sector.

The Mackenzie gas project parties undertake in section 2.4.9 of the SEA to support and encouragement the participation of women on an equal basis with men in all aspects of training and employment. They propose to do this through mandatory gender training, workplace policies, security measures promoting women, job market understanding, and seeking skilled female role models.

These sound like good practices on the surface but, when carefully examined, they are not very proactive and specific. Support and encourage are not especially strong words. For the most part, these measures listed address the need for the workplace to be safe for women. Which is an unfortunate necessity, but certainly not adequate to increase participation in the workforce. They do not

convey the impression that the Mackenzie gas project parties are prepared to actively get out in the communities and recruit women and train them for the jobs.

In contrast, the Snap Lake socio-economic agreement includes specific commitments by De Beers to put in place scholarships and award programs, establish a female role model to visit schools, and develop and further offer trades programs for women in communities. These are proactive steps, Mr. Speaker, and I expect that they will make a real difference in getting the interest of women in these sectors.

In closing, we often state in this Assembly that northerners must be the primary beneficiaries of development with women making 49 percent of the North...

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** That's good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

#### **Member's Statement On International Women's Day**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, today women play a vital role in the communities and on a day-to-day basis. They are the backbone of our nation. Mr. Speaker, they are the main reason why we exist here today in this Assembly. They have taught us the true value of life, the value of growing up, the value of literacy, the value of respect, the value of sharing, and the value of simply being there when you needed them.

Mr. Speaker, the traditional garments that we wear here in the Assembly from time to time symbolizes the hard work of our ancestors, the grandmothers, mothers. Without them, this precious work, these beautiful traditional garments wouldn't exist here today.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, the teepee, the tent, means a safe, secure home. It represents a woman's womb. She comforts you, keeps you warm, protects you from danger outside. The lodge poles represent men. Look at how many it takes to support a woman in the right way. Those men come together at the high point and are joined to form an intricate circle, a circle that exists here today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my mother, grandmothers, for raising me with their language and traditional values of Tlicho to become who I am today. I especially would like to thank my wife for simply being there and supporting me. Without her I would not be complete.

Mr. Speaker, I have four women in my life at home. I am proud to say I'm proud of them and grateful for today. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Member's statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

#### **Member's Statement On International Women's Day**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to acknowledge and commemorate International Women's Day, this year the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this international movement. It's with great pride and affection that I will be able to look at my wife in just a few months' time, Mr. Chairman, and celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

---Applause

I know I have a lot of ground to catch up on some of the Members around here...

---Laughter

...but I'm proud of every day of the relationship that I have with my wife.

Mr. Speaker, the role of government and Legislatures, of municipal councils and leaders everywhere, to step up to the plate and work with the women in our lives and in our communities is one that can never be satisfied. In this respect our territorial Legislative Assembly has a number of things to be justifiably proud of, especially in the area of social programs and justice that I think we have achieved and continue to put effort and resources into. But there are some areas, Mr. Chairman, where we still fall short.

I remember a debate in this House just a couple years ago when there was a big pot, a big pot of money, federal money, that was available for interveners to prepare their cases for their interest before the Mackenzie Valley pipeline process and how, led by the NWT Status of Women organization, they were denied sufficient funding. Our government did very little, if anything, to step up to the plate for them. We let them down. I think there are other aspects in agreements before us now that we are failing to address issues of, for instance, day care. The ability to prepare for and manage the social and family disruption that we know will come with major developments and to really, truly, set the affirmative actions that should be in place for women in our society to advance with the rest of the interests here in the North, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. The honourable Member responsible for the Public Utilities Board, Mr. Menicoche.

#### **ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Return To Question 344-15(5): Power Corporation General Rate Application**

**HON. KEVIN MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Villeneuve on February 16, 2007, regarding the NWT Power Corporation generate rate application.

The Public Utilities Board does not refuse to review a general rate application. The PUB reviews the general rate application, which is a multi-phased process, and

makes decisions throughout the process that guide the eventual rate determination.

Before changing its rates, the NWTPC must make an application to the Public Utilities Board seeking approval to do so and providing evidence on why the rates should be changed. This is known as a general rate application. Information on assets, operations and financial affairs is provided in order to explain change to rates.

The GRA is usually handled in two phases. The first phase, known as the "revenue requirement," examines the utility company's revenues and expenses. The purpose of phase one of a GRA is to determine the amount of revenue that the NWTPC needs to earn in a year to cover its costs in providing service to its customers and to earn a fair return on its investment.

Once a decision on the phase I revenue requirement is made, a phase II application is filed. The main purpose of a phase II filing is to determine the specific rates that each type of customer will be charged and to demonstrate that these rates will enable the utility company to collect its annual revenue requirement. Hearings are held to discuss contentious issues and obtain the views of the utility's customers.

On November 24, 2006, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation filed its phase I of the general rate application to determine the revenue requirements for the fiscal years April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007, and April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008.

The application requested:

1. approval of interim rate increases in the amounts of 3.52 cents per kilowatt hour in the thermal communities and 2.16 cents per kilowatt hour in the hydro communities pending completion of the GRA process, effective January 1, 2007.
2. approval of an increase in the fuel rider applicable to the diesel fuel communities of 4.02 cents per kilowatt hour effective January 1, 2007, to offset increased diesel fuel costs.
3. Approval of an increase in the Taltson system fuel Rider T of .21 cents per kilowatt hour to offset increased fuel costs used for back-up generation, for the communities of Fort Smith and Fort Resolution.

On January 10, 2007, the Public Utilities Board:

1. approved the Northwest Territories Power Corporation's fuel rider and Rider T, effective January 1, 2007;
2. did not approve the NWTPC interim rate application, as the proposal would not result in interim rates being as close as possible to the probable final rates at the community level.

On January 26, 2007, the Public Utilities Board approved the Northwest Territories Power Corporation's interim refundable rate rider effective February 1, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member responsible for the Status of Women, Mr. Dent.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are joined in the gallery today by a number of women who are very active in the field of women's equality in the Northwest Territories. From the Status of Women's Council of the Northwest Territories: the president, Lynn Brooks; board member, Dolly Simon; and executive director, Sharon Thomas. From the NWT Native Women's Association: the executive director, Denyse Nadon-Holder and two members of the staff, Cindy Villeneuve and Faith Woodruff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my sister Cindy Villeneuve, too, the finance officer for the Native Women's Association; and a constituent, Ms. Dolly Lafferty-Simon, also with the Native Women's Association.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the president of the Council for the Status of Women, who happens to be a constituent of mine, Ms. Lynn Brooks, and welcome all the other women with us this afternoon. Mahsi.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a constituent of mine, a very hard-working woman, Deb Mageean from Hay River South.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I, as well, would like to recognize Deb Mageean in the gallery today. She's also my constituency assistant in Hay River.

---Applause

If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. It's always nice to have an audience. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

**Question 449-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House I had questions for the Premier on resource revenue sharing and devolution and

it was replayed on CBC Radio this morning, the entire exchange. So for the record, I think if you listen to most of what I say in this House, I do support resource development, but I think it is just an outpouring of the level of frustration that we feel because we need the money in order to ensure the best health care, the best education, the best infrastructure; what we want to achieve for our constituents, a social safety net. So I guess sometimes we just get very, very frustrated. In response to that exchange, I received a suggestion from a constituent this morning from Hay River who suggested that the Premier should draft a letter to the federal government -- because constituents want to become involved in this -- post it on his website, let residents of the Northwest Territories download it, send it to our MP and send it to the Prime Minister. Could I have the Premier's reaction to such a suggestion? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 449-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would do that. In fact, it may be worthwhile to post some of the letters that I've already written to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Indian Affairs on the same topic. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 449-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that this suggestion speaks to, again, the level of frustration that is being felt by residents of the Northwest Territories on this subject, and sometimes it's just difficult for them to articulate that and sit down and compose a letter. If they had something that they could download, complete with the addresses to where they should mail the information, it is just another venue of getting our message to Ottawa. It was a good suggestion. When could the Premier compose such a letter so that we can begin that campaign? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 449-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to put together something like that that clearly articulates, as much as I can, the issue and the concern we have, and the ask we have. I can't give a specific time but certainly within the next week or so we should be able to have something put together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 449-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next obvious question is, in association with such a campaign would the Premier undertake to invest some resources in making people aware that that is an avenue

in which they can participate so that it would become known to them that they could access that? We would like it to be widely...We'd like uptake on it on a wide basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 449-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we could propose some alternatives that they could use, if they want, in terms of forwarding this to their MP or to the Prime Minister or wherever they choose to put pressure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 450-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to ask questions on the resource revenue sharing and devolution negotiations. I want to ask the Premier in terms of Mrs. Groenewegen's suggestion, how do we, within the life of this government, see any light of a deal between now and the end of the life of this government? Besides shaming the government and putting pressure on the government in terms of working with our aboriginal organizations, turning up the heat, so to speak, on the issue with the federal government. This is an important enough issue that Mrs. Groenewegen has suggested a moratorium and it has come to that place here. So how do we, in terms of the life of this government, turn the heat up in Ottawa that says come and let's negotiate a deal that's beneficial to the northern people?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 450-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday, it's not just me who has to be out there. We need all 19 MLAs speaking the same, getting the same message to Ottawa and to those who are going to be influential in this decision, whether it's in industry or banking or wherever it may be. We do need the money for our people here and we have a right to the money. We have a right to be able to make those decisions ourselves. Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to do such a letter, to get some wording that all of us can use and do that as quickly as we can. As we enter the last months of our government's term, I think it's important that we all be heard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 450-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand what the Premier is saying and sometimes we have to take some drastic measures as some of the Members on this side talk about in terms of getting some action. I understand that the farmer has to hit the donkey

right between the eyes to get its attention, so I guess what I'm asking is how do you get the attention of Ottawa? Do we, as a government, say enough is enough in terms of the resource revenue sharing deal, because that's where we're backed into this corner in terms of what is it that we've got to do? I mean, we're playing the nice guy, so how do we get the attention of Ottawa? Do we have to hit them right between the eyes where it hurts? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 450-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I'm being referred to as a farmer, but I'm not sure.

---Laughter

It is an honour.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, we have to do what we can to move it ahead and at the same time recognize that the Prime Minister has made commitments. He does say to me in letters and so on that he is encouraged by the progress our negotiators are making. So we don't want to change the path we're on in terms of negotiations, but we want to put more pressure on to put some real meat to this agreement, some finality to a lot of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 450-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, our leader is similar to a farmer, you know, you reap what you sow in terms of your gardening here. So, Mr. Speaker, would the Premier, in terms of the urgency and the need for this type of deal to get done with the aboriginal governments and with the people of the Northwest Territories, would he look at strong...People are asking why are you guys not a provincial government? You'd have more authority. Right now you're a territorial government under the administrative act of the federal government. You know, what type of leverage do we have? Right now we have our land and we have the aboriginal governments onside on some of the issues. We need to move this up so, again, can the Premier give me some assurance in terms of things are getting done and that we need to reach a point where there's no turning back? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 450-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to do everything we can. We're going to stay the course on the negotiations. Those are going on. I think there is some progress being made, but, as I say, the federal negotiators look after the federal interests and they're tough; our people have to be equally tough. Mr. Speaker, we need to continue to have, as I said, the 19 MLAs onside, we need you talking to your constituents, we need your constituents talking to the federal

government. Mr. Speaker, the window is short and as a farmer I have to make hay while the sun shines...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

---Laughter

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** ...and we must continue to move forward. Contrary to the CBC media report this morning, I'm not giving up on an agreement-in-principle by the end of March. I never did say we could get a final agreement, but I am still working toward an agreement-in-principle. The federal government say that's my timetable, not theirs, and I want to do everything I can to make sure that that's our timetable collectively, the federal government, aboriginal leaders and myself, that we want an agreement-in-principle by the end of March or as quickly as we can here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 451-15(5): Review Of Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Premier and it gets back to priorities. When the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly was elected, one of our priorities as a group, I believe, was to get a review, a comprehensive review done of agencies and boards in the Northwest Territories. I want to ask the Premier why it is that the review of the boards and agencies was dropped by his Cabinet as a priority in favour of some other things that I've mentioned earlier? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 451-15(5): Review Of Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** The work that was done by the Minister responsible at the time for it is excellent work, there's no doubt about it. I think what was done on boards and agencies was a first step, not the conclusion. It's work that is not going to be wasted; it's work that we can pick up and carry on with. Mr. Speaker, given the workload we have, there's only so much we can do. Given the budget we had, there's only so much we can do. However, Mr. Speaker, I'm also not happy that we weren't able to conclude this, but I am pleased that we were able to do some things that have carried this forward. For example, the excellence through partnerships, the third-party accountability framework, does a lot of the work from a different perspective, but does a lot of the work in dealing with the accountability of boards and agencies, so it's not as if this was dropped and nothing was done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 451-15(5): Review Of Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, it was an arbitrary decision made by Cabinet to drop the review of agencies and boards in the Northwest Territories for whatever priorities they chose. The work is

not going to get done during the life of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and somebody has to be responsible for that work not getting done. I'd like to ask the Premier, when was Cabinet planning on renewing the effort to conclude this work? Why wasn't it in the 2007-08 mains? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 451-15(5): Review Of Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cabinet made the decision -- I don't think it's an arbitrary decision -- but they made the decision not to proceed with it in this budget for the 2007-08 year. This work can still be done. The work is not wasted. The work has been partly done and a big piece of it is done through the third-party accountability framework. That's already done. In fact, I would say more than half, 50 percent of what's left has already been completed through that. Mr. Speaker, we always have conflicting priorities and we hear from Members saying we don't want to build more staff into headquarters. The proposal was to put more staff into headquarters. We can go that route and at the last few months of our government's term we can probably get people hired up by this summer and we would just begin doing that work. Mr. Speaker, it's my intention that this important task be put into the transition plan for the next government with a strong recommendation that they move it ahead at the beginning of the next government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 451-15(5): Review Of Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter remains the work should have been done by the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly; it shouldn't be included in a transition for the 16<sup>th</sup> and left to the next government to deal with. It should have been dealt with by this government. Mr. Speaker, Members have heard me stand up in the House on previous occasions questioning job growth and questioning new positions being added. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier, why can't the government task the regional directors who know communities, know the regions intimately well where some of these boards and agencies are located, and task them with getting the work done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 451-15(5): Review Of Territorial Boards And Agencies**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I like those kinds of recommendations rather than the route we're on here of just building more and more people into managed boards and agencies. I like the idea of reviewing the boards and agencies we have now to determine whether or not there is overlap or duplication or where there's ways of doing things more efficiently. I like those kinds of things. That is the kind of action that I think will make for better governance in the long term than just jumping on this, adding more people, putting it in a secretariat and so on.

Mr. Speaker, when we put this forward in the transition document for the new government, I intend that we will look at options like taking some of the people we have now and seeing whether or not they can contribute or possibly handle some of these tasks themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 452-15(5): Funding For Territorial Schools**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, I attended a community meeting held at William McDonald and it was about their funding adjustment and pressure on the YK 1 to give up a school to YCS. Mr. Speaker, if I could make a simple observation that I would describe as ECE needs a brand new philosophy that I haven't heard of lately.

I strictly say I am not suggesting in any way we should do this. But according to the philosophy they are now applying on financial dollars and how they should fund schools, is the Minister going to proceed with combining the two schools in Fort Simpson down to one because we theoretically could? Is he now going to take the three schools in Hay River and make two? This is something we need to be aware of and very concerned of. Is ECE singling out one school board, or is this a trend that we have to be very aware of? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 452-15(5): Funding For Territorial Schools**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this moment, we have some pressures in Yellowknife in terms of finding space for students who will be affected by a construction project and that is what has led to us moving forward on this issue. The government has to be careful with how it spends its dollars, so as we look at how educational facilities are being used, we will continue to examine them. We always look for ways in which we can save money and schools are always encouraged to find ways to reduce their expenditures. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 452-15(5): Funding For Territorial Schools**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I say pressures are territorial pressures. Mr. Speaker, when the Minister says careful, the Minister has singled out one school board, not territorial policy, one school board. How can he demonstrate that that is a fair process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 452-15(5): Funding For Territorial Schools**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have another community in which we have a school board that has 900 empty seats. Sorry, let me rephrase

that, 840 empty seats. Even if you look at it with an 85 percent occupancy rate, which is the rate at which ECE says that schools should not operate over, there are more than 400 empty seats in that system. We don't have another community with that many spare seats. So, Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about here is a unique situation. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 452-15(5): Funding For Territorial Schools**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, well, this is off the ECE website which is the fact that we have some schools that run at 27 percent, we have some schools that run at 31 percent. The list goes on; we don't need to hear it today. The fact is we have schools that are running with big percentage gaps here. So the fact is he did single out one school board. I want to hear how he is doing this. He needs to go back and redo his calculations of space. Will he go back and sit down to work out a sharing arrangement as opposed to a push and shove arrangement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 452-15(5): Funding For Territorial Schools**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important that we talk apples to apples. The Member says we have some schools with very small percentages. Sure, we have a school that has a 32 percent occupancy rate. That's a one-room school. So it has one classroom that is sized for 22 and it holds seven students. We can't make it any smaller than that.

In this community, we have the equivalent of almost two schools that could be freed up. So there is a big difference in that situation. Mr. Speaker we are interested in the best solution for kids. We want to put money into the classroom, into the teachers, into the programming and not into bricks and mortar. Thank you.

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

**Question 453-15(5): Tlicho Community Services Agency Hiring Practices**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I raised an important point about building a positive relationship specifically with our neighbouring government, the Tlicho Government. Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho Community Government in each community appoints representatives to sit on a regional board for this agency, the Tlicho Community Services Agency. The chairperson is jointly appointed by the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, in consultation with the Tlicho Government. However, under 4(2) under the Tlicho Community Services Act, the legislation says that a person is not eligible for appointment to the board if their spouse or dependents work for the agency. This has been interpreted to mean that, once appointed, spouses and children of the board members cannot work for the agency, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs is would the Minister please tell us is there a compelling reason why conflict of interest for the agency board such as the Tlicho Community Services Agency members need to be imbedded in legislation where it is difficult to change? Mahsi.

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

**Return To Question 453-15(5): Tlicho Community Services Agency Hiring Practices**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the document the Member is referring to and I don't recall exactly the section it's imbedded in. Mr. Speaker, I can't think of any reason it has to be imbedded in legislation. I think there are conflict of interest guidelines, there are rules. But in answer to the question does it have to be in legislation, I don't think it does. I would want to get more information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 453-15(5): Tlicho Community Services Agency Hiring Practices**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, coming from a small community such as Wekweeti and Gameti, they are small, isolated communities and almost everyone is related; the board members, the employees, whoever it may be. I would like to ask the Minister, will the Minister commit to working with me to find a workable solution to this problem that we are faced with that will allow the families of the Tlicho Community Services Agency board members to access employment with the different departments and programs of the Tlicho Community Services Agency in their communities while ensuring that the agency is protected from decisions by board members where a conflict of interest may exist? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 453-15(5): Tlicho Community Services Agency Hiring Practices**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are committed to working together with the MLA and with the Tlicho leadership on resolving these kinds of issues. I suspect that the wording, if it is put in legislation, was put in there jointly and it may have been an oversight on somebody's part. There may be some reason. I don't understand why it's there, but using our heads and good common sense, there should be a way of resolving this one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 454-15(5): Meeting With Alberta Officials To Discuss Transboundary Issues**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of ENR and it's with regard to the proposed meeting that he is going to be attending on March 20<sup>th</sup> in Alberta with some of his Alberta counterparts and I am wondering if he could indicate to this House what the intention is or the content of the meeting would be in terms of water issues. I understand

how important that is for us, but what is the message he will be bringing and the items that are going to be discussed? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 454-15(5): Meeting With Alberta Officials To Discuss Transboundary Issues**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intention of the meeting is, first of all, to do a meet and greet with Minister Rob Renner and also to discuss a number of issues we share in terms of water, resource development and how to build on relations that would help us work together a lot better than we have been. We also wanted to discuss some of the initiatives that they may have in terms of some of the planning that they are doing. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 454-15(5): Meeting With Alberta Officials To Discuss Transboundary Issues**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The meeting is a good idea. I would just like to ask the Minister, is it his intention to develop a work plan with Alberta to look at some of these very complex but critical transboundary issues being as we are a downstream jurisdiction and Alberta, as well, has their own challenges with the environment, water and development and how we can collectively look at dealing more effectively with those possibly even outside the Mackenzie River Basin Board. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 454-15(5): Meeting With Alberta Officials To Discuss Transboundary Issues**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, yes, that's the intention. First of all, to make a connection with the Minister and start working on trying to develop a relationship where we will deal with a number of issues that face the jurisdiction of Alberta and also the NWT.

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

**Supplementary To Question 454-15(5): Meeting With Alberta Officials To Discuss Transboundary Issues**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary is with regard to the role of the federal government which has, as we are aware, a critical role to play in the Northwest Territories. Are they going to be involved in this meeting, or would the intention be at some point shortly thereafter to make sure they are at the table as well since we can't deal with these issues in isolation? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 454-15(5): Meeting With Alberta Officials To Discuss Transboundary Issues**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have the federal government working with us on a number of initiatives including the transboundary agreement and other issues we brought to their attention, and we plan to have several more face-to-face meetings with some of the federal Ministers. At this meeting with the Alberta Minister of Environment, the federal government will not be involved. It will be a meeting between the Northwest Territories and Alberta and we will talk about all the issues we have in common and see how we can start working on a longer-term plan, if that's an option we can work out. Thank you.

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

**Question 455-15(5): Management Support For The Fort Resolution Band Council**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Mike McLeod. I just want to raise the issue I have raised in the House several times on the co-management agreement that we've signed with the Deninu Community Council and Municipal and Community Affairs with respect to management of community issues. I just don't feel that the government is pulling their weight in that agreement. By that, I mean there are several issues in the community that have been dragging on for many years. There are many projects that are going uncompleted or they are just not starting. One of the main reasons of why we got into this co-management agreement was for this government to assist them in moving along on things of this nature. Some of those things included the youth centre, Mr. Speaker, was approved over a year and a half ago now and the government hasn't really received anything on that. The playground equipment, \$9,000 worth of playground equipment that has been sitting under snow for the last two and a half years, three years almost, without being put up at the school. I think that if the community council wants to do all these things but just is not doing it, I want the government to go in there and say you guys have to get it done; if you aren't going to do it, we are going to do it. That is part of the co-management agreement. Can the Minister instruct his department to do that? Thank you.

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

**Return To Question 455-15(5): Management Support For The Fort Resolution Band Council**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the situation with Fort Resolution and its co-management agreement has expired. The community is now operating on their own. They have been able to rectify a lot of the problems they were facing. They have their own SAO. Our staff continues to work with them; however, they are in a position that they operate on their own as a settlement council. Thank you.

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



**Supplementary To Question 455-15(5): Management Support For The Fort Resolution Band Council**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there any likelihood that we can revisit a co-management agreement or some kind of a working relationship which the government...They are providing a lot of funding for this community infrastructure and they are not seeing anything come to fruition at all. So since we don't have a co-management agreement, can the government go into the community, instruct the SAO to start moving on these things and if she needs assistance from the municipal government from the South Slave region, then they should request it. The South Slave region should be in there on a weekly or monthly basis. Can the Minister instruct his department to make regular visits in there to report progress? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 455-15(5): Management Support For The Fort Resolution Band Council**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not been requested by the council to come in and provide any assistance at this point. The council has been doing well. They have been developing a lot of capacity in terms of dealing with the serious issues that were challenging them. We have our staff meet with them on a regular basis. Our regional staff has always been very open to travelling to the community and has, for some time, been very regular. The Member is also free to meet with the council if he so wishes. At this point, without an invitation from the community, we are quite reluctant to come in and start imposing somebody's, from the outside, desire to build infrastructure or programs. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 455-15(5): Management Support For The Fort Resolution Band Council**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I communicate with the council quite regularly and I raise all these issues and I am always getting the same answer, that the department is getting saying we are working on it. Really, you know, Mr. Speaker, nothing is happening. I don't mind the fact that if somebody from outside, like this government...The government has paid for this stuff, Mr. Speaker. It's coming out of their pockets. It's coming out of taxpayers' pockets to pay for equipment like this and I don't see why they wouldn't have any kind of authority or they would feel guilty if they went in there and told them we bought this \$90,000 equipment, why is it sitting under snow for three years? That's all I am asking the government to do. Maybe just a little push at the community council level during their council meetings and say it's great to talk about in a meeting, but actions speak louder than words. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 455-15(5): Management Support For The Fort Resolution Band Council**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly can convey the Member's concerns to the community. We are planning to go into the community of Fort Resolution. We have written to them this fall. We

wanted to talk on several issues, mostly around land and property taxes and things of that nature. We'll take the occasion to raise these issues that the Member is referring to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 456-15(5): Student Financial Assistance For Students With Dependents**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke to the amount of women who were going back to school who had families. I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if the SFA rates are adjusted for women attending school who have families? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 456-15(5): Student Financial Assistance For Students With Dependents**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The levels of support to students with dependents are higher than supports for students without dependents. So whether they are women or men with dependents, the rates are different and are adjusted. This is something that we take a look at on a regular basis and is something I have asked the department to have another look at recently to make sure we are providing adequate levels of support for students with dependents. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 456-15(5): Student Financial Assistance For Students With Dependents**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that because that was a concern I had raised to me a couple of times. I would like to ask the Minister if the department does interviews with students who have gone through this program to see what they can do to improve the SFA rates. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 456-15(5): Student Financial Assistance For Students With Dependents**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our SFA workers are typically in contact with people. We often hear through them when issues are of particular concern and we have been hearing over the last little while that there is a real concern for students with dependents in the area of childcare. So the money that's in the budget, that's before the House right now that we've talked about increasing the amount of funding for user subsidies, a good portion of that will be targeted to students with dependents.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 456-15(5): Student Financial Assistance For Students With Dependents**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if the SFA rates are cast in stone, or are they flexible, or can they be adjusted all the time? Do they have to have a full review to adjust the rates? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 456-15(5): Student Financial Assistance For Students With Dependents**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I don't think we need to have formal reviews in order to adjust the rates. We are always keeping track of concerns and issues around the rates and we will propose changes when necessary. The one issue I can't do arbitrarily is make a change that would drive the cost up over the budget. In that case, I would have to seek approval to make that change through the budget process.

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

**Question 457-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a few questions to the Premier and this is in relation to the resource revolutionary tactics and devolutionary tactics and the whole business of making sure that the control and the wealth from our resources comes to the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I was having a look at the speech that Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave out here in the Great Hall last August. He made a couple of fairly clear and fairly straightforward commitments in here. Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote from his speech when he said that "we" -- I believe I take that as Ottawa -- "we are committed to renewing and strengthening territorial formula financing and equalization, and a new deal on resource revenue sharing is inseparable from these negotiations." Earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, the Premier advised us that, according to the Prime Minister, it is premature to expect a resource revenue sharing deal; however, we will be able to go ahead with deals to deal with fiscal imbalance. That part can go ahead. So there's quite a contradiction here from last summer when the Prime Minister said financing and resource sharing were inseparable and now they are. Can the Premier help square up this contradiction in terms from the Prime Minister?

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

**Return To Question 457-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for the Prime Minister or get inside of his head exactly how he thinks these things all fit together. The Prime Minister, in a letter to me -- as I just received one from him today in fact -- where he confirms that he is dealing with fiscal imbalance in the upcoming budget. He goes on in the letter to say that he is pleased with the progress at the negotiations table and looks forward to continuing progress. So in his mind he is talking, I believe, about the formula for us in the territories, the three territories, and he's talking about the equalization formula for the

provinces. But I would, reading between the lines, expect that he is not going to arrive at a deal on resource revenue sharing while negotiations are still ongoing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 457-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MR. BRADEN:** Right, Mr. Speaker. I wish I could get into the Prime Minister's head and thought processes and try and sort this out too. It makes trying to manage and lead this territory extraordinarily difficult and frustrating, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister also said last summer that in relation to these negotiations he said, "Let me remind you again that it won't happen unless the North builds an open, competitive market economy, and it won't happen unless you...", the Prime Minister is saying it won't happen unless we, make sure that projects like the Mackenzie pipeline come to fruition." So again, here's the conundrum: Ottawa holds the key. Ottawa signs off on the permits, on the permission, the tax deals, everything. But it's up to us to make sure projects like the Mackenzie pipeline come to fruition? Can the Premier explain this position from our Prime Minister?

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

**Further Return To Question 457-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I'm uncomfortable trying to explain the Prime Minister. He can do that for himself. But, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear that he believes the North's time has come. When I look at resource revenue sharing and look back 20 years, there was only 10 or 12 million dollars a year. Now it's 224, 270-some million dollars. Our time has come. We have a strong and a very rapidly growing economy. But if we're going to be independent and be like a province, then we do need an economy. Two or three diamond mines isn't going to do it. We need oil and gas, we need tourism, we need mining, we need a strong business sector. I believe that is the Prime Minister's message to us. If you want to be treated like a big boy, you want to be treated like a province, then you're going to have to work to support projects. I don't know if he nailed it specifically to the pipeline or just saying generally you have to support and encourage this kind of business environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 457-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MR. BRADEN:** Then, Mr. Speaker, of all the measures that we have undertaken to support the pipeline and the other major resource projects here in the North, we do training, we do strategic things, we report, we put out big fancy reports on diamonds and things like that. What more can we do to show Ottawa that we support this and that we can indeed build our own economy? What more is it that Ottawa expects us to do, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 457-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have done a lot, and we've done some things like the socio-economic agreements since the Prime Minister was here. We've settled that one. We have been working with the National Energy Board. We've taken steps to make sure that we don't just end up with a project that will be put on the shelf. We'll continue to work with the Joint Review Panel. We've had intervention since that time where we laid out our ask to both the joint venture, the joint panel and also to the NEB. So there is a lot done. What more has to be done by us? I think the main thing is that we have to keep up the pressure on the pipeline proponents to build that project. We have to keep pressure on the regulatory agencies to get on with those and get them done as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. So there are things that we can still do. But, Mr. Speaker, I think our government can be proud of its record in keeping its side of the bargain and doing everything possible to get a fair deal for everybody; a win-win for all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 458-15(5): Public Sector Growth**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions now are for the Minister of Human Resources. Yesterday I talked about position growth in the GNWT and the fact that the Government of the Northwest Territories today does not have a comprehensive human resource strategy for the future. I find this amazing given the fact that we're settling land claims, we're going into implementation processes on land claims. The political landscape is going to change here, make no mistake about it. I think we should be working with aboriginal groups, we should be working with the UNW to come up with a strategy and a game plan to address the changing needs of our residents here in the Northwest Territories. I'd like to ask the Minister of HR, when can a process like this start? It should have started a number of years ago. When will this get started? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 458-15(5): Public Sector Growth**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the negotiations tables, the self-government tables, the structure of governance after self-government entities draw down their powers is a topic of discussion. HR is involved in those discussions in conjunction with Aboriginal Affairs and other departments at the table.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 458-15(5): Public Sector Growth**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government talks about capacity building at the community level and the numbers are here. They're broken down by regions in terms of job growth. How many of those 1,600 jobs actually went to small communities who have needs, who

need front-line workers? Most of these jobs end up in Yellowknife or in the regional centres, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Human Resources if he can break down the number of 1,608 new positions that were created by the government in the past seven years. Where exactly did these jobs go and to which communities? I don't want to know regions, I want to know which communities they went into. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 458-15(5): Public Sector Growth**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have with me that level of detail, but there are a number of examples. A lot of the examples include the health clinics in Lutselk'e, Fort Resolution, the ferry workers in Fort Simpson. So a lot of the situations are people in the communities. In Health and Social Services a lot of the growth was in nurses in communities across the Territories. I think the information has already been provided to committee, but I'll see what other information I can provide. But I don't have any further detail in the House, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 458-15(5): Public Sector Growth**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we had a discussion regarding the economy and how important it is when you add jobs or look at new positions, front-line workers, how important a job is in a small community. The information that we got from the department thus far would show regional distribution of these new positions. I want to know how many jobs are going into every community in the Northwest Territories and if the Minister could provide that to this House. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**Further Return To Question 458-15(5): Public Sector Growth**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take a look at what information we can put together from across government and see what I can provide.

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

**Question 459-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this issue again of resource revenue sharing and devolution, it is difficult to know how to approach it. I really hope our constituents out there understand what drives this discussion and why it is so important. The Premier talked about royalties of \$10 million 20 years ago coming out of the North. They didn't want to talk to us about resource revenue sharing then. Now that it's up to \$224 million, what would make us think they'd want to talk about it more? In some ways, Mr. Speaker, it's like the ultimate abusive relationship. You know? We try to be nice. We go down to Ottawa. They say they really like us.

We come back to the House. We're afraid to say anything against them. We are working very hard, as the other Members pointed out, to do things to accommodate industry and invite companies into the North to exploit our resources so that the money can continue to flow to Ottawa in the form of royalties, and they just keep saying we'll talk to you about this later. It's premature. We don't want to talk to you about it now. So we don't know whether to take a hard line or a soft line or any line, or if we should just bury our heads in the sand and watch the development come through here. But we are sending a lot of money to accommodate development. We're spending a lot of money that could be spent on other things to accommodate development.

So I guess it's a frustrating thing and we talked about it yesterday and what can we do to get their attention on this. As there is a federal election campaign coming up, this should be an issue that is at the top of somebody's agenda. This should be at the top of a national party's agenda. I'd like to ask the Premier if he would commit to making sure that every leader of every political party in this country is keenly aware of what we're facing here. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 459-15(5): Resource Revenue Sharing Negotiations**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we started talking, as a government, starting talking about devolution probably in the late 1980s at the time when our government created the Department of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and hired a deputy minister for this new department because we were all excited that we were going to get devolution at that time. Things didn't quite unfold the way they should be. We worked on it, but it wasn't as critical to us because the revenue was small and so on. But now it's critical for us. It is really critical for us. Mr. Speaker, we have to get beyond words. I know political leader in Ottawa after political leader has talked about treating all Canadians equally throughout the country, that we should get the primary share and so on, but we have to get beyond that. So, Mr. Speaker, it's my intention that we turn up the heat a bit and start asking for some specific time frames on things. What are you going to do? We don't need to just hear the nice messages. But we need to know that a time frame to get an AIP in place isn't my timetable. We've got to put timetables on things. We've got to talk specifics of what we're doing. To answer the question that the Member asked, yes, I will raise that with all the political leaders. We have to do something here. We can't just keep saying nice things. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen. Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**Question 460-15(5): Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I raised my concerns about the lack of real opportunities for women in the Mackenzie gas project. So my questions will be directed to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mr.

Speaker, what is the GNWT doing to ensure maximum participation by women in the Mackenzie gas project to ensure full benefits transcend gender lines? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

**Return To Question 460-15(5): Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are opportunities for all northerners in the MGP as there are in the mines. I think the challenge and the problem and the concern has been the barriers that exist for getting women into trades and getting them into the training required to work in these kinds of environments. I think we need to do a better job as a society generally in encouraging young women to move this way and to look at these careers as viable options. We're getting better and a Member earlier in one of the statements pointed out and talked about the number of doctors and lawyers who are women today. In fact, I believe I have read that there are more women entering medical school than men today, Mr. Speaker. So we have a lot of work to do, but that's the most important thing we can do. The opportunities will be there for everybody. We've got to remove barriers and I believe we need to do a better job of that. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 460-15(5): Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With that said, then, how does the Mackenzie gas project SEA compare to the other socio-economic agreements the GNWT is party to in terms of recruitment and training geared towards women to break down those barriers to get them into skill trade opportunities such as the ones that will grow during the Mackenzie gas project? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 460-15(5): Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, targets or predictions about the number of women that would be hired at a jobsite are essentially irrelevant if we don't have women accessing the training and being eligible for the jobs. That's where we need to focus our efforts. We've got a \$20 million training fund that we've negotiated. We can be involved in setting the policy objectives as a government and making sure that the training is tailored toward removing barriers and making sure that we have more women interested and eligible for accessing those jobs. The future of jobs in the Northwest Territories, a large percentage proportion of those jobs will be in the natural resources sector. We've got to do a better job, I think, and our policies and objectives need to be reflected in our training and programming. I think we can do that, but we've got to set our minds to it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Supplementary To Question 460-15(5): Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what discussion and what has the Minister done to put into firm paper and into concrete, Mr. Speaker, about firm targets and training opportunities? What has he done to ensure that women are being given the full opportunity of meaningful opportunities within this Mackenzie gas project with penalties if they don't fulfill them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 460-15(5): Opportunities For Women In The Mackenzie Gas Project**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Speaker, I say again, we could have negotiated in this project 50 percent employment guarantees for women, but we know that can never be met if we don't have women eligible who have got the training in these trades areas. We could set 50 percent targets, 100 percent targets for northern businesses. It would be mute, Mr. Speaker, if we don't work with our businesses to make sure that they have the capacity to fulfill some of the commitments. So, Mr. Speaker, I say again, and the Member pointed out in his statement or opening question, section two speaks to employment. There are a number of provisions to make sure we break down some of the barriers for women and to make sure that we have a safe worksite and workplace, a harassment-free workplace for women. But more important than that, as a government we need to make sure that we've got more women accessing our training so that they have a meaningful shot at the opportunities that we are creating. Thank you.

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

**Question 461-15(5): Pan-Territorial Northern Vision**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, further questions for the Premier. Again, it regards our place in the Canadian mosaic, Mr. Speaker. Late last year the Premiers of the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories met in Iqaluit, as they do annually, I believe. Among the items of business that they arrived at was to take yet another shot at a northern vision. According to the press release of the day, they directed their officials to develop a strategic action plan to frame a dialogue with Canada on a northern vision. This was to cover things such as Canadian Arctic sovereignty, circumpolar relations, and climate change. Mr. Speaker, how are our officials doing on developing this iteration of the strategic action plan for the North?

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

**Return To Question 461-15(5): Pan-Territorial Northern Vision**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was in, I believe, late November or December that we met in Iqaluit. The direction was given to our staff. They are working on it. We are meeting again as northern Premiers within the next two or three months. I don't have the exact date. I'd expect to have a report back from officials at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 461-15(5): Pan-Territorial Northern Vision**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some cynicism about this. We engaged in quite a lengthy and extensive exercise in some cooperation with the previous federal government that just got quietly dropped there. We don't seem to make a lot of progress on this. We keep talking about it, but something about the way we're approaching this just isn't getting results. Mr. Speaker, what is different about this approach to a pan-northern Canadian vision that hasn't already been tried?

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

**Further Return To Question 461-15(5): Pan-Territorial Northern Vision**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we need to have a vision of where we're going, we need to have plans. We can fill documents up with nice words and anecdotes and malapropisms, all kinds of things that can be said, but it doesn't mean anything unless we can get down to some specific action. Mr. Speaker, my intention, and what we talk about with the other Premiers that we talk about an action plan, we're not talking about more nice, fluffy documents. The last one wasn't a complete loss, Mr. Speaker, with the previous government. They ended up with a \$40 million payment and that resulted in our community capacity fund, which I think was greatly appreciated by communities and resulted in some good specific projects. Not quite the intention we wanted, but it did get beyond those nice words. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 461-15(5): Pan-Territorial Northern Vision**

**MR. BRADEN:** You know I'm not going to discount at all every one of those \$40 million and the value that they will have to us but, you know, it's these little, kind of buy-offs, these little, sort of, well, here, you know, here's some money, go away, go down to the candy store for a little while and come back when you're hungry again. This seems to be the pattern that we've set up with Canada and I don't like it. This is why I want to know, with this northern vision, what efforts are going to be made to get a broader buy-in from across the North, from all sectors of the North, and not just have this as a circle of government guys getting together to put together what they think is going to work. How are the rest of us going to get involved? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 461-15(5): Pan-Territorial Northern Vision**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I get the same frustration. I would really feel terrible if we were the only ones being treated that way, but I can tell you that is the pattern right across the country with every jurisdiction. I think all of us, as Premiers, are frustrated with getting these little short-term, one-time buy-offs and

never getting a longer-term commitment, whether it's resource revenue sharing or a better deal on health funding or post-secondary or whatever it may be that is an agreement that is long term. We all wish we could achieve that but, in the end, sometimes we have to take it step by step and we will get there eventually, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of where do we all get involved. I've committed this morning to say that I want to work with the Members; I think all 19 of us have to do that. I'd like to work with the chairs of the committees and say, okay look, how do we move this ahead now. We're at a critical point. We still have negotiations going on, but at the same time, we want to turn up the heat a bit more, turn up the pressure a bit more and I'm ready to work with everyone on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 462-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project Socio-Economic Impacts Funding**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier and it goes back to the socio-economic needs of the Territories. Again, I'll mention the fact that the \$500 million going to the 22 communities along the pipeline route, they're going to need every dime of it. My worry -- and we talk about the future -- my worry here is the future of our territory. There's no doubt, little doubt, when you build a \$9 billion mega project down the heart of our territory, every community is going to be impacted as a result of this development, every last one. The government is going to be faced with cost in education and training, health care, addictions, transportation infrastructure, and really, Mr. Speaker, we haven't got a plan on how we're going to pay for it. So my question is how does the government propose that we pay for the incremental costs of socio-economic impacts in our territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

**Return To Question 462-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project Socio-Economic Impacts Funding**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, we have a budget that has grown considerably. I think, as the Minister of Finance said, it's a \$1.2 billion budget now. That's grown considerably if you look back three years. So we haven't been completely without new revenues over the last few years. That doesn't include some of the one-time money that we've achieved. Most of what we will pay for will come through that \$1.2 billion budget. But what we need, if we're going to build a sustainable economy in the long run and build infrastructure and have people who are prepared to take on jobs that at a greater rate than they do right, we're going to need a fair share of that other money, that resource revenues that come from our land. We also have to think ahead because we have non-renewable resources and what do we do once those are all mined out? So we need to look at things like a trust fund, a heritage fund for the future. That's where we need that money.

Mr. Speaker, we have been paying -- I think in a 2001 report that we did on non-renewable resource

development -- we have been footing the bill for about \$68 million minimum per year additional cost because of mining development. That's a reality that we've had to pay for that out of our money. We wish we could have paid for that out of resource revenue sharing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 462-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project Socio-Economic Impacts Funding**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for his response but we've been paying the price for far too long. We've been paying the price on negotiations for devolution, negotiations on resource revenue sharing for years and years, not to mention the millions of dollars -- the Premier mentioned \$68 million -- in mining development that the Territories spent. We've also been spending money in preparation for the pipeline. Are we going to be able to recoup any of this money? I don't think so, absolutely not. If we don't have an agreement with Ottawa, we have no ability to get this money back. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Premier, when is he going to address the fact that 75 percent of the population in this territory is left without any ability to pay for the impact of this mega project in our backyard? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 462-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project Socio-Economic Impacts Funding**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, let me say again that if you go back to the beginning of our government and look at what the budget was at that time, what it is now, we have a considerable increase in our budget; it's gone up to \$1.2 billion. That is what's paying for a lot of our programs. We have \$50 million of housing money, not to build 500-plus houses, that's new money that we've achieved. We have had considerable income. We've had expenses because of development; we will have even more. However, for those who are right along the pipeline, they will benefit from the \$500 million socio-economic impact fund. The rest of us will benefit from the increased revenue we get from the federal government through our formula. We'll also benefit in the fact that more people are working, more people are paying taxes and more people are making purchases and so on. We're not destitute here. But the issue isn't that we're broke; the issue is that we're not being treated fairly in terms of resource revenues. We'll manage with what we have, but we should get a share of that money that is being made out of the mines, the oil and gas, and that should be our nest egg for that rainy day when we no longer have as much mining going on. That's the argument. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. The time for oral questions has expired, but I will allow the Member his final supplementary. Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 462-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project Socio-Economic Impacts Funding**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that the Premier and his Cabinet are perhaps some of the biggest riverboat gamblers we have out there. They're gambling our future on what? On hopes and promises

and dreams? We don't have any guarantee. That, Mr. Speaker, is the bottom line, and I think the Premier needs to get some guarantees on socio-economic impact funds for the rest of the communities that aren't included in that \$500 million...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

**MR. RAMSAY:** We need another fund and we need it for the communities that are going to be impacted. I'd like to ask the Premier, will he negotiate with the federal government a subsequent fund to look after socio-economic impacts in the other communities? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

**Further Return To Question 462-15(5): Mackenzie Gas Project Socio-Economic Impacts Funding**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly discuss it with Cabinet, but I'll tell you my instinct is that let's stay focused on getting a fair deal on resource revenues and resource revenue sharing. Let's not start throwing out other pots that we want to negotiate at this time. I think this is the time to focus. It's the time to work together on this and get our fair share and that is at least 50 percent of that \$224 million or more that's being made off our land right now, and make sure we have that before that pipeline is built. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Written questions. The Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** I'm suffering from Mr. Menicoche's problem here. Nope.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Written questions. Returns to written questions. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. First reading of bills. The Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

**ITEM 14: FIRST READING OF BILLS**

**Bill 22: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 22 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

**ITEM 15: SECOND READING OF BILLS**

**Bill 22: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007**

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 22 has had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 21, Committee Reports 7, 8, 9 and 10, and Bill 22. By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 22-15(5), Committee of the Whole may sit beyond the hour of adjournment until it is prepared to report, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

**ITEM 16: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Okay, I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee this afternoon? Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008, specifically dealing with the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Human Resources and Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Is the committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Agreed. Thank you. Then we'll do that after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Members, we are dealing first with the Financial Management Board Secretariat. I would like to ask Minister Roland if he would please deliver the opening comments.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the Financial Management Board Secretariat's Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2007-08.

The secretariat's 2007-08 Main Estimates propose O and M expenditure levels of \$69.836 million. This is an

increase of \$14.725 million, which represents a 21 percent increase over the 2006-07 Main Estimates.

The adjustments to the secretariat's budget are related to the following:

1. an increase of \$337,000 related to the revisions to the Collective Agreement for the 2007-08 fiscal year;
2. an increase of \$20,000 for amortization expense;
3. an increase of \$14.382 million to the contribution funding provided to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, NWTHC. As was reported during the October-November 2006 session, FMBS has no direct authority over NWT Housing Corporation funding other than providing the NWT Housing Corporation with its operating cash flow.

In support of the planned replacement of the government's financial information system, the secretariat's proposed capital acquisition plan includes an allocation of \$7.5 million in the 2007-08 fiscal year. With FMBS leadership, a number of GNWT departments will be involved in the selection and implementation of the new financial information system.

An assessment of the government's management practices is currently being undertaken in an effort to identify and prioritize areas that may require corporate and departmental attention in upcoming planning periods.

FMBS will continue initiatives to strengthen and standardize management activities, including:

1. the review of the Financial Administration Act;
2. the reform and modernization of the Financial Administration Manual; and
3. the planning for the establishment of financial shared services centres.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Roland. At this time, I will ask Mr. Braden if he would please deliver the AOC response to FMB's budget. Mr. Braden.

#### **Financial Management Board Secretariat**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee met with the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board on September 19, 2006, to review the draft business plan for the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

Committee members noted that the Financial Management Board Secretariat is proposing to spend \$18.626 million in operations expense for the fiscal year 2007-2008. This represents a slight increase of \$343,000 since the main estimates in 2006-2007. The secretariat is also proposing to spend \$7.5 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2007-2008 for the replacement of the government wide financial information system, or FIS.

The committee offers the following comments:

#### **Growth Of The Public Service**

Members have repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the growth of the public service, especially with the recent news that the NWT's population may be decreasing. The creation of new positions that do not provide front-line services is of particular concern.

Members recognize that at this point in the life of the 15th Legislative Assembly, it is too late to conduct a full review of the GNWT workforce. However, we believe that the next government should consider undertaking a zero-based review of GNWT positions early in its mandate.

#### **Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the government include in its transition document a recommendation that the next government undertake a zero-based review of public service positions early in its mandate.

Madam Chair, to complete the committee's report, I would turn the balance of it over to the Member for Monfwi. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

#### **Funding To Front-Line Organizations**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. During the 2006 pre-budget consultations, the committee was disappointed to find out that pressing issues for frontline organizations, such as the need for better funding arrangements, improved partnerships and support, have not improved much since last year. Even though the government established new third-party funding criteria to provide guidelines to GNWT departments, little has changed, with inconsistencies persisting and few multi-year funding arrangements in place.

The committee recognizes that funding must be distributed equitably amongst organizations, allowing them increased financial and program stability based on predictable funding arrangements.

Front-line organizations have repeatedly raised concerns regarding insufficient project funds, lack of forced growth funding, lack of funding to provide wage parity, training and adequate supervision and support for staff, inadequate project administration and core funds and delayed receipt of funding from signed contracts and contribution agreements. Furthermore, the lack of multi-year funding results in insecurity and the inability to do longer-range program and operational planning or to participate in policy and program development and consultations.

Government needs to be mindful that volunteer boards with representation from across the NWT govern these front-line organizations. The lack of certainty and security for their commitments to staff, office space and clients wears them out, as does the burden of annual audits, contracts and contribution negotiations. The GNWT should be demonstrating support and good faith towards these volunteers.

While the increase in funding for community justice committees, forced growth allocation to the first tier health and social services sector front-line organizations, and



multi-year funding agreements with a few organizations are steps in the right direction, more is needed. There are also concerns about unequal treatment of organizations based on whether they are in a contribution agreement or have a contract arrangement with the government.

The government needs to live up to its commitments to improve the support for front-line organizations, including the full implementation of the third-party accountability framework, the completion of binding government-wide policies and the revision of the Financial Administration Act and regulations. Most importantly, the government needs to fully engage in the Finance Action Working Group that was created through Volunteer NWT to improve coordination between GNWT departments and non-government organizations.

Failure to address these concerns sooner has brought many front-line organizations to a crisis point. It is not acceptable for the government to halt all action now and label this a transition issue for the next government. Proposed revisions to the Financial Administration Act and associated regulations and policies should be ready for the next government to consider by the time this government leaves office.

#### **Recommendation**

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the GNWT continue to work to fully implement the third-party accountability framework, develop required legislation and policies and engage with the Finance Action Working Group to improve coordination between departments and front-line organizations.

Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. Then I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he would please bring the witnesses to the table.

Mr. Roland, would you please introduce your witnesses, for the record?

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right is the secretary to the Financial Management Board, Mr. Mark Cleveland; to my left is Mr. Robert Taggart, director of policy and planning. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. I would like to see if there are any general comments from the Members on FMBS. General comments. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to accent the report of the standing committee, Madam Chair, especially as Mr. Lafferty reported our extensive support for the non-government organizations that we

contract with to deliver a wide range of services and supports and programs across the NWT.

Madam Chair, this has been a message that I have put out quite strongly and consistently for the past several years. Other Members have joined in on it as well. It is something that I just haven't seen a lot of evidence of. I know that there are some pockets where we are engaging in longer-term contracts and commitments with some NGOs, Madam Chair. This is what I have heard, but I am just not getting a lot of strong indication from the government that it really is taking to heart the seriousness of the situation that a number of NGOs...Well, every one of them that contracts with us, Madam Chair, naturally has to go through a process of arranging contracts or contribution agreements of accounting for them. This almost always includes full-blown annual audits of worrying about the commitments that are made for leases, for staff, for other projects as they continue and yet it still seems, Madam Chair, that far too many cases even where an NGO has a strong track record, very trustworthy performance, we still require them to go through this considerable administrative exercise on an annual basis.

We don't have to force these organizations or our own staff, Madam Chair, to go through this on an annual basis where there is a strong track record, a continuous level of service required, good people and systems and supports in place. We really do believe that we could sign longer-term agreements with less demanding and less rigorous levels of accountability and reporting. Of course, we still have to satisfy our need to make sure that what we want done is getting done for the money we pay.

What it comes down to for the people that I have talked to, Madam Chair, is that they are largely run by volunteers. The governance of these boards and organizations, the YWCA is one that really comes to mind, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Yellowknife Association of Community Living, the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors, and on and on. These organizations are governed by volunteers. Where we can take some of the stress and angst, if you will, and time and energy away from getting the job done, then I think we should make every effort to do so. I think this is where creating multi-year agreements in financing situations can help not only those organizations, but can lighten up considerably the administrative burden that we have on our own bureaucracy to keep track of all these things. I will stop there, Madam Chair, as a general comment. My concern is that we do not seem to be moving forward on this change in the way we do business I think as aggressively as we could be.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next for general comments I have Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On page 2 of the Minister's opening comments, he highlighted the review of the FAA and reform and modernization of the Financial Administration Manual or FAM document. I am just wondering how that prose has been going. The reason I ask this is because I have, on a number of occasions, been very consistent on the fact that I would like to see it modernized in such a way that we deal with our NGOs a little more seamlessly. The reporting process and the burden that it puts on our NGOs because the way we have it structured now, it is extremely firm on how they have to account for the money they receive. By no way am I suggesting that they should not. So it shouldn't be

implied in any way, but I am talking about flexibility when they have to hand in their audited reports, how often they have to do them.

We have many NGOs out there that have been receiving excellent financial contributions from our government. I know they are very thankful for them. I believe that the NGOs are providing, many of them, excellent quality work out there that the government just can't do. What I would like to see and hear from the Minister today is has there been some work towards building some flexibility into our accounting process to allow these organizations to report in an easier method? The fact is, Madam Chair, these organizations are there to serve the people in capacities. The government doesn't. If they can still meet the intent of the requirements of reporting, I think we should attempt to be as flexible as possible in a working relationship so we both meet the achievables that we want. We want good value for money. We want to ensure it is being spent properly and I know the government wants to see that. They want to see that, too. Can the Minister reply on how these things have evolved in that area of my concern? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We aren't having questions and answers with the Minister right now. This is just for general comments. If you could just save your questions to the appropriate page in the detail, that would be great. Do you have any further general comments?

**MR. HAWKINS:** No. Then I will look for the appropriate page. Sorry; I couldn't hear you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Are there any more general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Detail. Okay. Then I would like to please direct Members' attention to page 2-114, information item, Financial Management Board Secretariat, revenue summary, \$19.833 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Page 2-117, activity summary, directorate, budget summary, expenditure category, \$54.422 million. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have been informed that the directorate would probably be the best place to pose that question I highlighted in the opening comment section. Without having to repeat the question, I think the Minister heard it the first go-round. Thank you.

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

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the FAA rework that has been ongoing is something that we are at the stage now, we went through three phases and we are into the third phase and that is getting the legislative proposal ready. We have done the initial work, presented that to Members and received a feedback. We are now in the final stage of getting the legislative proposal ready. It will be a few months before we get that concluded, though. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the news on that, that a legislative proposal is coming forward to make that adjustment. That is well and good and I will accept that as a good step forward on this matter. I have just one small comment and, depending on the answer of course, there might not be anything further at this time. Has the Minister taken the step of contacting a few of our good, hard-working NGOs to see if we are able to achieve some of the needs that would work well for them in the adjustments and updating the FAA and our FAM manual to ensure that, again, we are meeting our requirements and we are helping them? As we all know, they are tight for money. We get them to provide services and we need to work together. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the issue of consultation, Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we have been working with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs on a fairly major piece of the work that is ongoing and how volunteers are funded through that office, working with other partners and this work. For more details, Mr. Cleveland will give some of the breakdown.

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

**MR. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Volunteer NWT published a report that I think was referred to by one of the Members earlier. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and Financial Management Board Secretariat have been working collaboratively on a third-party funding framework which would be a companion piece to the third-party accountability framework. The idea would be to bring some standardization, as the Member Braden indicated, to how we consider different NGOs. That will then help us in the determination of consistency in funding and the like. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. So that was a long answer. That would be yes, I think, through all that process. That was my concern, just making sure that there has been some informal discussion out there with the NGO organizations. I will take that as a yes. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next I have Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Under this activity, directorate, committee is proposing to make a motion. I will do so at this time, Madam Chair.

**Committee Motion 49-15(5): Zero-Based Review Of Public Service Positions, Carried**

I move that this committee recommends that the government include in its transition document a recommendation that the next government undertake a zero-based review of public service positions early in its mandate. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The motion is in order. To the motion. I am just

waiting until the motion gets distributed. I believe everyone has a copy now. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Directorate, budget summary, expenditure category, \$54.422 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. 2-118, activity summary, directorate, grants and contributions, contributions, \$61,210,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Activity summary for government accounting, budget summary, expenditure category, \$12.343 million. Mr. Lafferty.

**Committee Motion 50-15(5): Implementation Of The Third-Party Accountability Framework, Carried**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on this specific activity, the committee has a motion. I move that this committee recommends that the GNWT continues to work to fully implement the third-party accountability framework, develops required legislation and policies and engages with the Finance Action Working Group to improve coordination between departments and front-line organizations. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Activity summary, government accounting, budget summary, expenditure category, \$12.343 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Activity summary for government accounting, grants and contributions, contributions, \$8.307 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Page 2-129, activity summary for budgeting and evaluation, budget summary, expenditure category, \$1.678 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Page 2-131, activity summary, budgeting and evaluation, grants and contributions, grants, \$77,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Page 2-135, activity summary, Audit Bureau, budget summary, expenditure category, \$1.393 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Page 2-138, an information item, work performed on behalf of others. Are there any questions on this? No questions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, members. Please turn back in your books on page 2-111, program summary, expenditure category, \$69.836 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. On page 2-12, in the capital acquisition book, infrastructure acquisition plan, directorate, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$7.5 million. Total activity, \$7.5 million, and total department \$7.5 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Does the committee agree, then, that that concludes the consideration of the Financial Management Board Secretariat?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Thank you, Minister Roland, Mr. Taggart, and Mr. Cleveland. At this time, I will ask Minister Dent if he would like to make his opening comments on Human Resources. Minister Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the main estimates for the Department of Human Resources for the fiscal year 2007-2008.

The department's 2007-08 Main Estimates propose O and M expenditures of \$31.591 million. This represents a \$2.354 million, or 8 percent, increase over the 2006-07 Main Estimates. The net increase results from Collective Agreement adjustments and forced growth changes to reflect medical and dental travel assistance, database administration and software licensing costs.

The Department of Human Resources' main estimates includes funding for 171 positions; 46 in the service centre offices outside Yellowknife and 125 positions in headquarters. There has been a net decrease of 17 positions from fiscal year 2006-07.

Over the past year, Human Resources has built on the transformation efforts started in May 2005. Significant work has gone into implementing recommendations from the review of the people, processes and systems needed to provide a consistent human resource service to help managers effectively manage our human resources. Refinement of roles and responsibilities based on Canadian and North American best practices is well underway.

While there is still work to do, there are a number of indicators of more consistent human resource

management across the organizations. Some indicators are more consistent evaluation of jobs through interdepartmental review committees, common recruitment approaches, a greater consistency among managers in dealing with issues of employee discipline, and accommodation of medical issues. In terms of backlog, the benefits backlog is caught up to a point where few files are more than two months old. On the pay side, part of the organizational change has resulted in a group focussing on current pay and another solely on old files. Not only is the current team staying up to date on files coming in, the termination team has dealt with more than one-quarter of the backlog in less than eight weeks.

In addition to the transformation efforts, programs that make a difference in the public service continue to show strong results. The government is committed to building a northern public service. With solid student employment opportunities in all departments, boards and authorities, we are introducing over 300 students a year to government. When they complete post-secondary education, opportunities are also supported, both in government and in the private sector, for employment in the northern graduate's field of study. For northerners who are already in the workforce, we have introduced limited competitions and under fill some positions in order to allow the GNWT to consider local northern residents on a priority basis. This also allows us to support northerners who may need some additional training and mentoring on the job for the first year to be fully qualified for a position.

Madam Chair, fair and consistent GNWT recruitment and retention practices are critical to the success of our programs and services. With this budget, we look forward to continuing our improvement of human resource management practices across the public service in all communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time, I will ask Mr. Lafferty if he would please give the committee's response from AOC to the Human Resources budget. Mr. Lafferty.

#### Department Of Human Resources

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the committee met with the Minister of Human Resources on September 20, 2006, to review the draft business plan for the Department of Human Resources.

The committee noted that the Department of Human Resources is proposing to spend \$31.591 million in operations expense in fiscal year 2007-2008. This represents an increase of \$2.354 million, or 8.05 percent, since the 2006-2007 Main Estimates due to increased cost for salaries and benefits, medical travel for GNWT employees, database administration and PeopleSoft licensing.

The Department of Human Resources is also proposing to spend \$217,000 on capital projects in fiscal year 2007-2008. This amount will be used to complete the PeopleSoft human resources management system upgrade. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. At this time I'll ask Mr. Dent if he would like to bring witnesses to the table. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Yes, please, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Is the committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. Then we'll ask the witnesses to be escorted in by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Mr. Dent, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses?

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right I have Shaleen Woodward, who is the director of Human Resources, planning and policy; and to my left, Ms. Lynn Elkin, the deputy minister of the department.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. General comments on Human Resources. Any general comments? Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Minister for his opening remarks and I welcome him and his staff to our proceedings this afternoon. I just have a few general comments and I know it's been a struggle, to say the least, in terms of the amalgamation of our government-wide human resource services into one department, what is, in effect, now one department. I've been very concerned with the amount of expenditure in this area of our operation from roughly \$20 million when it first happened two years ago to the amount that appears before us today, which is \$31.5 million. I know the Minister spoke of a decrease of 17 positions in this fiscal year and I think he should be congratulated on that. There's been some work done inside the department by the Hackett Group last summer and I am going to be very interested to see what the Minister has to say on what those recommendations were and how they've been acted upon by the department and what value for money we did receive there.

There's some other interesting questions that I'll pose to the Minister but, again, I think when it comes back to the department itself, when you're a Member of the Legislative Assembly you have constituents, you have people who talk to you who have concerns. To be honest, Madam Chair, the level of concern out there on inaccuracies or timing or access to information, things of that nature, just doesn't seem to me to be getting much better than it was at this time last year. I know we've gone through this Hackett Group report, but a number of our employees are still having issues dealing with the department. It shouldn't be that difficult for our employees to deal with the department. Mistakes are constantly being made on pay and benefits, things like that, and I just, you know, at what point in time do you say that's unacceptable anymore? Are we going to wait another year or two years? Things will happen. Don't get me wrong, Madam Chair; things will happen. Mistakes will be made. But how long are they going to continue to be allowed to happen? I think our employees deserve a Human Resources department that is responsive to their needs and to date I just don't know if all of our employees are getting the level of service that they should get. I'm just being completely honest with the Minister and this House today when I say that. I'll have questions for the Minister during the detail, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Any further general comments on Human

Resources? If not, then we will go to the detail and I'll ask Members if they'll please turn to page 2-49, program summary, operations expenditure summary, \$31.591 million. Oh, sorry. We're standing that page down. Please turn to page 2-53, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$816,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. Page 2-57, activity summary, human resource strategy and policy, operations expenditure summary, \$4.837 million. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to ask the Minister how the recommendations from the work the Hackett Group did last summer are being implemented by the department and what has been the success of those recommendations? Thank you.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Hackett report took a look at what the operations plans were for how they were planning to restructure the department. Because remember, the department is right now less than a year old. So the Hackett Group came in early in the process to give us a third-party view of whether or not the process that was proposed was good. They confirmed that the structure that we were moving towards was generally the right way to go, provided some recommendations for improvement, and we have started to move to implement. There are changes that are underway as recently as this week. There are job competitions underway within the department to bring people into new positions and new roles. Maybe I could ask the deputy minister to talk about some of the more significant details along the way since the Hackett report.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Elkin.

**MS. ELKIN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There were many recommendations in the report, some of them that have made a huge impact across the board. For example, we have introduced an allied health recruitment unit that's made a difference in terms of the ability to recruit and provide consistency in allied health recruitment across the Territories. It's starting to reduce the number of agency nurses that we're needing to use and has established a more stable casual pool. So that was one of the areas.

We have revised part of our approach to recruitment so that references and regrets can be done more quickly than they were in the past.

We've made a number of changes in the pay area. As the Minister indicated in his opening comments, we moved to most of those recommendations on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year and since that time the staff in that unit have managed to stay current on all pay items that have come in since that time and, as well, have dealt with...As of today, it's 40 percent of the outstanding backlog has been dealt with in two months after implementing all of their recommendations. They also gave us a lot of information that has allowed us to save costs on the upgrade to PeopleSoft and make the right decisions in moving to a reduced customization and enhanced usage of that system. That includes the implementation of self-service,

which again improves the accuracy and timeliness of payment. It's meant, for example, that shift workers are no longer working on estimated paycheques and overtime payments that can sometimes be two to three months late. They're actually getting paid on the next paycheque for those kind of payments that they're due.

So those are a very small list of some of the examples the Minister would be able to provide, if he wished, in greater detail at some point. But those are just some of the examples of the things that we've done out of the Hackett report.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Elkin. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the deputy minister for that. That's helpful. Another question in this area I have is because we have varying degrees of workers that Human Resources looks after, such as our health boards at Stanton and the Beau-Del, we have the North Slave Correctional Centre and areas like that, wouldn't it make some difference if pay and benefits officers were assigned to a specific class of workers instead of going by the alphabet? I think, and this might be something the department has looked at, but it would seem to me that if a pay and benefits officer had a specific group of employees to look after, it would be able to look after them better and getting a call from an office worker who doesn't work any shift work than a gentleman or a lady at North Slave Correctional Centre who does work shift work. I'm just wondering, has the department given that any thought? It's especially critical, I think, in the health care field that pay and benefits officers are designated to look after a certain area of our operation so there's consistency there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent. Ms. Elkin.

**MS. ELKIN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We did look at setting up that way. The recommendations from Hackett were in part to not do that for a number of reasons. So I'll just give you some of those reasons. On the pay side, most of our pay comes now through self-service. So the basic information and the shifts are entered straight in by the employees. The specialized information is interpretation of the Collective Agreement and that support is provided by our human resource officers and managers who are assigned by department so that they can be expert and gain additional knowledge in the area of justice or in the area of health services. So we do provide it that way. It also allows us by ensuring we have extra staff who know how to deal with, for example, someone in Justice and how they get paid. If that one person in the past when they did assign it by department, if that person was away, we didn't have that expertise. Or if they moved on to another job, we didn't have that expertise. This way we can make sure that we have three, four, five people who have the knowledge to deal with a specific type of shift worker or specific type of seasonal worker so that it's not lost in one individual and we can spread that knowledge.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Elkin. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to switch gears for a brief second here and I wanted to talk about an overall plan for the future. I had a discussion with

the Minister on this this week in regard to the settlement of outstanding land claims here. There's some that have already been settled and will go towards implementation of these claims. The fact that I really do believe the government, the GNWT has to work with the aboriginal groups, self-governments, as well with the UNW to try to come up with a comprehensive plan of where we go from here. We're, as Regular Members, we go through a process, the business planning process every year and there seems to be no end to the request for new positions in whichever department. Some of them are justified and some of them get a bit more rough ride than others. But I'm suggesting that the Department of Human Resources and the Minister responsible for Human Resources should set a goal or target to try to get some type of plan for the future. I think it's vitally important and if we don't pay attention to where we spend half of our annual budget, almost half, then I think we're missing something. I know in the past I believe the deputy minister and the former Minister have talked about developing a plan or looking at something, but I haven't seen anything yet. I know the department is in its infancy still and it's going through some growing pains, but I would really like to see some work started on this. because it's very important at the community level. I'm talking about the smaller communities. This is where we should be looking at plugging in front-line workers and if there's job growth, it should be happening in the small communities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The department has been intimately involved in the development of the government's position at the negotiating tables about or with self-government negotiating tables and is working at or has always worked at providing an analysis of positions to self-government entities so that they get an understanding of what positions this government has that are delivering services in their communities and where those sorts of responsibilities lie.

In terms of developing an overall government-wide plan for how positions develop, the department is prepared to work with every department. So the Department of HR has, for instance, worked with Health and Social Services on an overall human resource plan. It's working with FMBS at developing an overall human resource plan. But it's difficult to take it on a government-wide basis to say this is where the plan should be, because as legislative priorities change, for instance as we put more money into nurses or into teachers, that changes the priority for what hiring takes place. So it's difficult to say from a centralized position that this is where your human resource development is going to take place. As we have, for instance, this year said with reduction of the PTR, we know that's going to lead to more teachers in the communities. It's not going to happen, I mean, that's where the teachers are going to wind up if that's where the schools are because we've already committed that, you know, our government has said that the smaller communities will see a preponderance of the value in that PTR reduction.

So HR is prepared to work, but it really needs to be on a department-by-department basis because we have to react to priorities that are set by this Legislative Assembly, because this Assembly changes directions sometimes on

which departments are priorities for development. So we have to be able to follow that.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess that's food for thought and this government only has six months left to go before the next election and then there will be a new government. It's something I think that people really need to pay attention to, because we have to set up a plan. We have to set up some priorities. We can't have an unlimited amount of priorities because if you have an unlimited amount of priorities, then you have none, really. I mean as a government I think you have to identify some areas of your operation that you're going to concentrate on and if there is position growth, that's where it happens. The life of government is only four years. It's not a tremendous amount of time. Sure, there will be some instances where you're going to have to do something. Those are extraordinary things. But I think when the next government -- and it should be part of the transition document that's developed by the current government -- that the next government come in and develop some type of strategy to set a couple of priorities. Where are those priorities? Probably education and health care. You know? What I think is happening far too often is we're allowing administrative, policy, things like that to eat up a tremendous amount of what we have left to spend in priority areas. Like I said, if everything becomes a priority, then you don't have a priority. I really think that's what's happened with this government. Again, I certainly would like to see the department start work on something, a plan for the future on how you're going to work with aboriginal governments. It's vital to our very existence here that we get a plan for the future. If you don't have a plan, then what do you really have? I mean we're flying by the seat of our pants. We have been for four years on position growth. The numbers prove it. Sure, some of them have been spent in the health care field and education and areas like that, but there's a tremendous amount of that growth that hasn't gotten into the communities. So I think that's where we have to pay attention to this, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I take it as more of a comment. I didn't hear any questions there. At this time on the list I have Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the history of Personnel, by my memory, was that it was basically blown up in 1995-1996 by the government as a cost-cutting measure. All the functions were farmed out to the various departments and they were going to deal with it. Deputy ministers were going to be held accountable. Affirmative action was parcelled out. At the time the majority of us that weren't on Cabinet didn't support the move, but it was done anyway and for nearly 10 years, or nine years, we kept raising the issue of fragmented, uncoordinated services, the way hiring was done or wasn't done, the ineffectiveness of the affirmative action policy. So finally there was agreement to bring back the Department of Personnel to, in fact, coordinate, to integrate, to do a better job hiring, to be able to link the government initiatives across department.

The Grant Thornton report was done and one of the pushes -- because I remember being a Regular Member at the time -- was the need for a government-wide HR

plan, and the commitment was made to do that. That was now almost six or seven years ago. Commitments were made to work on that. It was kept being put forward.

As we talk about a macroeconomic policy and the need to have a frame around all the different initiatives that we're doing, so too do we need a broad HR plan that sets the frame about how this government is going to do business when it hires. Flowing out of that, each department should have their own HR plan. You cannot expect, and that was a problem before, all the departments had individual plans. They didn't even have HR plans. In fact, I would submit to you, most departments still don't have HR plans. Health and Social services maybe does, but I would think they would be the exception rather than the rule. So this government, and the government before this, made a commitment to a general, broad HR plan for this territorial government, but it has yet to be delivered. It is a failure. It is something that was promised, and I know there's been work done on it. It's like the affirmative action review: It came late to the table so it's going to get transferred down to the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. However, we should be clear of the value of this; the need of this, the support of this by the previous Legislative Assembly. The fact that it's undone, unfinished business and, most importantly, the need for it is still there as a government.

I mean we talk about PeopleSoft systems where we're hooking all the pieces together; that was bastardized beyond belief when they first put it in so that it became almost non functional, and the millions we spent to get a system-wide information system back in place to link all these departments together. So my question to the Minister would be that it is unfinished business. It's not just department by department; we do need that broad frame, and it has been in the works. He's recently new to the portfolio, but it should be there somewhere and it shouldn't be a new piece of work. When would that be done and how far along is it? Is there at least a draft? I remember talking about this in the last Assembly. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I'm just going to check the dictionary to see if bastardized is a word in the dictionary. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Over the past few years, bits and pieces of a government-wide approach have been brought to the table. One of the key pieces that this government came forward with was the approach to change from affirmative action to employment equity. The reason being is that we saw employment equity as a process that would allow a proactive approach rather than the reactive approach used, or seen, in affirmative action. So we have been struggling, since there hasn't been a widespread acceptance of that -- which is one of the key pieces of the government-wide process, or one of the key pieces that we saw as a government-wide HR plan -- we've been struggling with where to go from there and don't have a lot of manpower to invest in follow-up. So it hasn't moved very much since that proposal was advanced.

It isn't something that's been forgotten. It is something that is still being worked on and we're still working at bringing things forward to the deputies' table and then on up the ladder, but it's an issue that's going to take us some time to work around because we had thought we had one of the key pieces there and that doesn't appear to be well supported.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Dent. I guess bastardized is in the dictionary here, so I guess it's parliamentary language. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair, for that ruling. The issue of this government-wide HR plan, if we expect it of departments, we should have an outline in our mind of the key pieces of what we would expect each department to have as part of an HR strategy. So too would those pieces be expected of the government as it lays out its broad plan of how you do business, the criteria, the issues, the focuses. Affirmative action is but one relatively small piece. I know that it's been in the works for a long time, because the push to review that goes back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly that it's been in government. So to say in the last five months of this government that they've only done a few little bits and pieces of work, I find truly surprising. I would ask the Minister if he could outline for us -- since they've talked about how they're prepared to work with the departments on their HR plans -- what are the key pieces of an HR plan, in his mind, and how long would it take the government to flesh those out as a government so that the departments would have a clear idea of what is expected of them? Or are we expecting the departments to wander off on their own and do this plan? There should be a relatively simple outline available where you fill it in by department with your respective program content and hiring requirements. Our need and our desire to employ northerners, to focus on certain activities, how one develops staff, the support to staff, all those should be consistent across government. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Did I hear a question there? Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Department of Human Resources does have a framework that it uses when working with departments in terms of what you need to have in order to make sure that you've got the right person in the right job at the right time. That's really what an HR plan is. In terms of a framework, it wouldn't be much different for a government-wide framework. Fleshing out the key parts of that is where we've stumbled right now and one of the key parts, as I've said, we had thought, was an employment equity process. So that's where we were in terms of moving this forward.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, from the time of the Grant Thornton report even, I mean that's six years ago. Once again I'm somewhat surprised to hear that we're still stumbling. The affirmative action review, or the equal employment review was what was done but was hung on to so long that it's not going to get acted on by this Assembly. Would the Minister be willing to share what work has been done on this particular key issue besides the employment equity piece and outline for us what are these key pieces and the trouble that they are having fleshing out which pieces? Because I'd be more than happy to provide my support and input to help them fill in the blanks if they're finding that difficult. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a guide that we use when discussing HR plans with departments. I'd be happy to share that with the Member so that he has a clear idea of what it is that we have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Final question. Could the Minister tell us, or does he know how many departments, in fact, have HR plans? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe Health and Social Services; MACA; FMBS, I'm not sure if theirs is completed yet; corrections; Transportation has theirs underway; and Stanton's will flow out of the review that's happening at Stanton.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on the list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask the Minister in terms of a follow-up to Mr. Ramsay's questions in terms of the aboriginal self-governments and the plans of meeting the aspirations of the self-government negotiations and fulfill their commitment or obligations that they're going to be signing off in terms of having their own government up and running. Is the department working with them so that they're meeting their aspirations for them? I'm afraid, Madam Chair, that once these deals are signed off that they're going to be left with some giddy up and go sort of thing of getting their act on the road to implement those negotiations, implement those agreements that were negotiated to the spirit and intent of what was negotiated in terms of capacity building and having communities run their own government. I'd like to ask the Minister in terms of plans by our government how this fits into the overall scheme of the human resources strategy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We cooperate with people at self-government tables by making sure that we can help them understand what happens in human resources, how you have to administer positions, what sorts of positions you're looking at. Ms. Woodward has, for instance, participated at the Deline table to help them understand what they need to know in terms of how we administer human resources. Then, of course, there has to be some discussion at the table between the feds, ourselves and self-governments about the overall administration of human resources. There are still some things that aren't clear that have to be negotiated, so there's quite a bit of work, actually, there to do in that end. In terms of what the actual nuts and bolts are, we're making sure that they're given that information, then it's going to be a situation of negotiating authorities.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in terms of the continuing negotiations of the human resources issue and the self-government agreements, are the communities such as he made

reference to the Deline community, is that community given the support that is needed to say this is what we're negotiating, we've finished this negotiation, this clause, and now we want to start providing support for our people to implement this part of the agreement? Or are they waiting until the last chapter has been negotiated, the last clause has been signed off on and then say here is your negotiated self-government agreement, here is your government, and then they would implement their agreement with the governments involved? Are they getting support at this time to do some pre-planning, pre-training, and pre-career counselling in terms of that kind of initiative? Or is it a situation where they're waiting until the final deal is signed and then the human resource programs, the department here is signed off to satisfy the people in Deline?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We're not into the implementation phase, so it's not a situation where there would be that support that the Member is asking about at this point. Our job is to make sure that the self-government entity understands what it takes to provide human resources to the staff that they have once they take on the programs. At this point, we make sure that they understand what it takes to deliver human resources when they take on the programs.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister is right in terms of his support staff is just going into the community. Again, he made reference to the Deline self-government to understand what it takes. I think, Madam Chair, I'd like to move it a little further in terms of going beyond... I think they know what it takes to run the Human Resources department and I'm asking...I know when they speak of implementation that it is a whole new ball of wax that when you get into implementation of the self-government agreements I'm asking if there's some consideration in the agreements that the community of Deline gets some support in terms of beginning some of the training, otherwise they'll be catching up on some of these issues. I'm not too sure how other agreements are dealt with. I know, for sure, the Tlicho are certainly far ahead of us in this area. Is there some discussion with this government as to how the Tlicho is doing with their taking over of some of the program? What are some of the things that we need to learn from the Tlicho in terms of their taking over the human resources? What are some of the things that we need to be aware of in the Sahtu when we take over our government here in terms of how do we implement it? What are some of the things we're running into? We want to avoid some of those pitfalls that we don't know about. We should look at some of these things, otherwise we're going to walk down the same path as the Tlicho people and, you know, I don't know, I haven't talked to my honourable colleague over here in terms of what's happening in the Tlicho region. That's what I'm getting at and I hope I'm conveying this clearly. That's what I wanted to ask the Minister as to create a little smoother path for our people to take over the HR department in regard to the self-government things. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.



**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are looking at how things are working in the Tlicho region and our staff are working with their staff to discuss what we've learned from the operations to date. We'll certainly take what we learn there and bring it to the table in other regions. The goal is to, obviously, make sure that the transfer of ability to do the job is smooth. We want to make sure that as many employees as possible are offered positions that they want to take with the self-government entity and that the transfer for those who chose to move to the self-government entity is very smooth for those who do. It's in our interests, our staff interest, the self-government's interest, all to work together to try and make it as smooth a job as possible.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Certainly, again, I would agree with the Minister, Madam Chair, in terms of the smooth operation and transition from one government to the next government...(inaudible)...government-to-government transition and the negotiations are happening in that sense. Madam Chair, I say this because early in my life in terms of working with the Tulita Self-Government Secretariat that our community wanted to put forth a human resource strategy in terms of what will we need and things that we will require in terms of taking over some of our programs as we negotiated and look at some of the things on a basic level as to what things that we need to get prepared for. We didn't receive much support from either government. That's why I'm saying this to the Minister. I'm looking at this type of a strategy here, because we did get no support from the feds or the territorial government. So I'm wondering if the Deline self-government is running into that type of a situation. I know the government has to follow a process, they have to follow a lead based on the advice from the staff members, but if the community wishes to do things a little different, than what we are already offering as a government here. That's what I'm looking at, the respect that we need to sometimes look at the communities who are going to be taking over or setting up their own governments. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. I interrupt this normally scheduled program to announce that Brendan Green has won gold in the 15-kilometre cross-country ski...

---Applause

Our first medal for the Canada Winter Games. Okay, who was talking?

---Laughter

Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of where we're moving at self-government tables, as the Member will be aware, a lot of the responses have to be determined by the tables themselves. With the Deline table, we're at a situation where we're providing advice, but there's still some issues around administration of labour in the self-government entity that have to be resolved before we even know what things are going to look like afterwards. So it's not something that we can go in right now and say here's what you have to do and we know this is how it's going to look, because some of the

issues are still a bit up in the air and will only be solved after some discussion between the federal government, the self-government and the GNWT. We're not totally there yet. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to pick up where my colleague, Mr. Yakeleya, left off in terms of talking about what will happen to our public service as we know it today. If we look at the Northwest Territories and our requirements on human resources, 15 or 20 years from now it's going to look much different. The important thing, and the Minister talked about this, you are observing what is happening with the Tlicho Government. Have you got a policy? Have you got a plan or are you developing a model that's going to enable the Government of the Northwest Territories to work with other self-governments? That's the work I talk about, trying to get the government to understand and appreciate that that type of work has to take place. This is the first I have heard of it, Madam Chair, that the department has actually been involved with the Tlicho Government. I think we need a plan and we need to develop a model or framework or whatever the case may be to coordinate our efforts with aboriginal self-governments. We have to build capacity at the community level and we have been doing a bad job of that. We have to get better at it and I would like to ask the Minister how we do that. Thank you.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What we are hoping to do in the Tlicho region is learn from how things are operating there, but we can't say that that region is necessarily going to be a model for every self-government region in the Northwest Territories. The model in Deline and the model in the Deh Cho isn't necessarily the same. The model that we might see in other regions might be different. So we can't say that we are going to develop one specific model. The government has a set of core principles and values that it negotiates from when it's at the self-government tables. Once we move forward at the tables with some of those values and principles, as the parties get to agreement, then human resources is able to respond to say given this situation, here is probably how you are going to have to react when you draw down your authorities. We are quite prepared to work with self-government entities in each of the regions to provide that information, but I don't think it can be a cookie cutter approach. It's something we have to respond to. Each of the self-government entities at this point look like they are going to be substantially different in nature and make-up. They may draw down different authorities at different times. Therefore, our government, in order to be facilitating that transfer, has to be prepared to be nimble enough to respond differently in different regions. We recognize that.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Minister's response, but again we do not, as a government, as an entity in and of ourselves, we do not have a comprehensive human resources plan for the future, and without one, I don't know how we deal with the self-government entities to try to talk about which

positions might be devolved there, whatever the authority is they are drawing down, as you mentioned, Madam Chair, that's going to happen differently in every area. That's a given. What I think we need is to develop a plan.

Madam Chair, when you get elected to this Legislature and there are 19 of us here, I think what really should happen when the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly is elected, we walk through the doors and we tell the departments get an HR plan and get it ready right now. Hopefully somebody is listening out there. To those departments that don't have an HR plan, get one. You know what? We are going to have to use that and develop a comprehensive HR plan and then, this is the other thing, Madam Chair, the Members of this House are going to tell the bureaucracy what the priorities are. The bureaucracy is not going to tell the Members of this House what the priorities are. I think sometimes it goes backwards and we don't always get the priorities we want. If the priority is to get jobs in the small communities, build capacity in the small communities, that's what we are going to do. We all have to be on the same page on that. Those priorities have to be arrived at when the new government comes in here in six months' time. I would suggest, as some of my colleagues have mentioned, we get that plan and develop it because you are going to need it six months from now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Department of Human Resources is ready to assist departments to develop their plans immediately. We have the framework ready to go and I would agree that it wouldn't take a lot of effort to get the departmental versions done. But this body itself has to wrap its head around some of the other issues before we can develop the government-wide plan. That's the other step that has to be taken.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** That's good, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. We are on page 2-57, activity summary, human resource strategy and policy, operations expenditure summary, \$4.837 million. Next on the list I have Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't want to go over ground if it's already been covered. I had a couple of inquiries I wanted to make about affirmative action, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, one of the expectations that the government has given the Legislative Assembly is that when the new HR department is essentially rolled out and on its own and making its way, that it would not consider action or revisions or reviews of the affirmative action until such time...The HR shop has now been up and running for a couple of years now and I wanted to ask what is the government's intention as far as addressing this longstanding requirement to review and modernize our affirmative action policy, Madam Chair?

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one point, the Department of HR was established on April 1, 2006. So it's less than a year old at this point. In terms of the government response to affirmative action or the review of affirmative action, the government was interested in examining whether or not we should move from affirmative action, which is a reactive policy; you wait for people who have the qualifications to apply for jobs, to employment equity, which is a way that allows you to use targeted actions to improve the representative population that you have working for the government. There hasn't been a lot of buy into that switch. So we are still in the process of having some discussion about whether to move forward with employment equity or to revise the Affirmative Action Program. At this point, we aren't looking to revising the affirmative action. We are still continuing the consultation process on employment equity.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a big piece of work and requires care and attention in rolling it out. I am interested in finding out where, to the employment equity initiative, would the levels of support report and what is the nature of the resistance to taking that direction as opposed to affirmative action, Madam Chair?

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A number of Members of this Assembly have expressed some concern about that change. I guess we are in the process of examining how we can respond to those concerns and whether or not we can address them to the satisfaction of Members of the Assembly before we go much further.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Could the Minister be any more specific about what the circumstances are or the conditions that we are looking at amending?

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of the program, the real difference is in approach. As I said earlier, an Affirmative Action Program is one where you run a job competition and then when people who meet the qualification level and also have priority status, then they are offered the job ahead of those who don't have priority status. But in that process, you just wait until that happens. With an employment equity program, you are in a better position to target, to undertake training initiatives, special identification and mentoring initiatives, targeted hiring. There are a number of different mechanisms you can use that are then brought into play to improve the government's ability to hire persons with priority.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Since the affirmative action policy was brought in -- and quite some time after it was brought in we introduced the new Human Rights Act in the NWT which further defines some of the circumstances under which advantage or discrimination can be undertaken -- do the conditions, other terms of the Human Rights Act, come into play in this, or to what extent do they? I am wondering if we are compelled to make any changes because of the human rights legislation, and is this something that causes us to undertake this on a priority basis? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Any time you look at this kind of policy, we have to keep in mind legislation like human rights legislation and we would have to be very careful that if we were proposing a change, that we either were able to find some way to be outside it if we saw that as necessary, or demonstrate why there was a requirement to have a policy and priority, which is allowed under the Human Rights Act. We just have to make sure that we are keeping in mind that act as we make changes to our current policy.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One last question. What is our next step or what does the Minister anticipate the next step will be in addressing this situation?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I proposed to discuss the issue of affirmative action/employment equity with the unions that the government has and then, following that, we will take a look at the comments we get there. I would then want to come back to standing committee and want to discuss it with the standing committee.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. We are on page 2-57, activity summary, human resource strategy and policy, operations expenditure summary, \$4.837 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Page 2-60, page 2-61, activity summary, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, \$7.231 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Turn to page 2-64 and 2-65, activity summary, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$8.492 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe one of the members of committee might want to backtrack a little bit, so if you want to see if another member wants to look after that, go ahead, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies. I just missed that page. I am wondering if I could have permission to go back to page 2-61.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** The Member is requesting that we go back to page 2-61. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. Activity summary, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, \$7.231 million. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, colleagues. I would just like to ask the Minister on the human resource management and recruitment issues at the hospital specifically. As you are well aware, we are doing a human resource review at the hospital and we are waiting to hear the responses on that in terms of where the staff at the hospital feel that there could be improvements in terms of their working conditions. I don't know what it is, but we do know that there were some concerns raised last fall and we were hoping to get to what the issues are and what the possible solutions are. That process is laid out and we are following that process with the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Having said that, just generally we have a lot of issues coming to us from nurses, especially nurses, but other health care workers at the hospital who are feeling they are not being listened in terms of the way their work environment is. That's an issue we want to find out from human resource management. The bottom line is they feel they are not being appreciated as much as with all the talks about the importance of recruiting, especially retaining workers, that a lot of decisions being made or things being told are working against the principle of what people are saying in terms of keeping them, but they don't feel like they are being treated in a way they would want to be kept.

We are also dealing with nursing students at the Nursing Program at Aurora College where it's an excellent program where the government committed a lot of resources to hire our northern nurses. It's one that we are going to rely on to address the recruitment and retention issues for nurses. This is a separate issue, but I want to ask the Minister what work Human Resources is doing and what role does it play in working with other departments like Health and Social Services to work out an effective recruitment and retention policy. I have to question whether we are working together. When government says we are training students so we can create our own northern nurses so we can have them in our hospitals, I am not sure whether there is enough resources being placed on the receiving end so that there are accompanying steps being taken at that other end so they are prepared to receive the grads coming out of Aurora College which is as a result of the government policy.

For example, we have been getting a lot of letters from nursing grads at Aurora College. When they show up to work, it's either that they are not getting enough support or coordination or have a say on their training plan or they

would indicate what areas of the hospital or practice areas that they would like to work in. They give top three priorities and they know that they can't get it all. They know that, but they would like to feel that the employer would be interested in listening to what they have to say. This is especially problematic when they know that they apply for positions and they are told there aren't any spots for them and then, just before they get there, the positions they were looking for have gone to somebody else who is not from here.

I am just interested in hearing what role Human Resources is playing in coordinating the government policy of training our professionals and then putting them into our workforce. Thank you.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Human Resources works with Health and Social Services, with Stanton, on staffing. It does work in cooperation with both of them to try to ensure that graduate nurses are placed in appropriate placements across the Territories. Obviously, there has to be a balance of experience and knowledge in every one of the units. That will sometimes mean that graduates can't get their first, second or even third choices sometimes of where they would like to get some practice. So the department provides help in the staffing beforehand. The mentors are actually Human Resources staff and they are assigned to help the recent grads in their placements. That is one of the roles that HR plays, is actually providing those mentors.

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

**MS. LEE:** Could I be provided with a policy on this mentorship? Is there a written policy on anything that would show us the level of coordination between government's pronouncement that we would like to train our own northern professional labour such as nurses and that the government has made a promise here on maximizing northern employment to hire our grads out of nursing class? Is there a policy statement that speaks to how the government is going to live up to that? Maybe the Minister doesn't have it now, but could I get information on how many positions were filled at the hospital? Let me reduce it to nursing positions so that I don't have staff going and looking at all of the positions, but just tell me how many vacant positions were filled at the hospital and how many of them were filled by Aurora grads and how many were from outside. Further, if it is possible, how many of the positions required experience or were positions that new grads could take? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would be happy to give Ms. Lee the guidelines for the program that she has requested. We will get that to her on hard copy. Could I ask if Ms. Lee could specify over what period of time she is asking for that other information? I would be happy to get that, too.

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

**MS. LEE:** I would be happy for stats for the last two years. Thank you.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Chair, obviously we don't have that with us today, but we will get that to Ms. Lee shortly.

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

**MS. LEE:** That is fine. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. Committee, we are on page 2-61, activity summary, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, \$7.231 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Can we now turn to page 2-64 and 2-65, activity summary, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$8.492 million. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the corporate human resources, on the activity page number of programs underneath or within Human Resources' watch are listed. Among them is the Graduate Employment Program which, I think, my colleague Ms. Lee may have been discussing and talking about, too. It relates to the promise made by this government, although not in this Assembly but the previous Assembly, that jobs would be offered to all graduates of our nursing and teaching program under the Graduate Employment Program. This was met with great acclaim at the time. I think it has had a fairly good uptake and very much an expression of confidence and support for our northern students and graduates that we value them and we want them to go to work here in the northern homeland and we are ready to step up to the plate and guarantee a job offer in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chair. One area, though, that this has run into some difficulty and it continues, is where the people who do the hiring are not directly within the realm of the GNWT and especially in the area for teachers. This applies to our school boards and authorities. I know that it has caused disappointment and continues to cause disappointment, Mr. Chair, for some of the graduates of our teaching programs at Aurora College who, when the principal teaching employees are boards and authorities who do not have to follow our policies for whatever reasons, are bypassing or not including the northern graduates on their front line for hiring and, in fact, to the frustration and consternation of some of these graduates, they stand back and see southern employees continue to be hired by our northern school boards. They get bypassed in the face of the promise that our government made. That is the review that I get, Mr. Chair, as an MLA. I am wondering if the Minister has any information or rebuttal to that and discuss just where we can go to enable northern graduates to truly be considered by our boards for hiring, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Braden mentioned teachers and nurses. We also have a

similar promise to social workers. We have the Intern Program which also is an extra 35 grads in other areas of study. So the government does have a fair investment in recent grads in helping them get their first job.

In terms of teachers, there has been a drop over the past three years in the number of teachers who have been coming out of the program and finding employment in the North. The two Yellowknife boards tend to get the most applicants but can't take them all. The commitment we have made, as a government, is that the offer will be made of a position somewhere in the Northwest Territories. What we are finding is that many of our grads are not anxious to return to some of the smaller communities, which is where a large number of the jobs are. The two or three boards in Yellowknife can't take all of the grads that we are getting out of the program. So people are going to have to recognize that the guarantee of a job won't necessarily be in one of the larger communities; it may require working in one of our smaller communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Minister could provide, at a later date, any of the statistics that would track graduates, job offers and placements, that would be appreciated. When the Minister says that, specific to the Yellowknife boards, we cannot take all of the people who want to work here in Yellowknife, I don't want to argue that point. I am just wondering if we could sort of fine tune this any more and take that very specific area that where we have a northern graduate, are we able to direct, compel, coerce or convince the Yellowknife authorities or any of the authorities here to actually undertake to hire those northern graduates on a priority basis? Do we have any way of requiring that they do this, Mr. Chair?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know that we could impose it as a requirement. I don't think I have the right to make that kind of regulation, but I have talked to the chairs of the boards and they tell me that they do want to hire northern residents. It only makes sense. They don't want to have to turn over any more than any other employer does. The continuity of northern residents is much higher, or tends to be much higher, than people who come in from the South for jobs, so the boards are quite anxious to hire northern residents, but they are also in a position of hiring teachers with specialties. So you have to recognize that not every teacher is suited for every teaching job. What you have to find is the right match between the job and the position that's vacant. It would be difficult in any given year to see both of the Yellowknife boards here find that suitable match for all of the applicants out of the program that applied to both those boards.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One other aspect of this that I understand is a barrier or has come up, and this may be a Collective Agreement area and, if so, maybe you can tell me, but where an indeterminate position may be held by a teacher, an individual, yet they

may apply for leave, they may be out of the territory or at least not working in that indeterminate position for some time. I understand that this may continue for years, which becomes a barrier for that school authority to hire a full-time person. If they have somebody booked on an indeterminate PY but that person is on leave, and the leave may be an allowed and justified leave, it prohibits the board from replacing that person on a permanent basis. One condition we have, Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, is graduate teachers do get hired; we do put them to work here, but only on a term basis. They do not enjoy the stability of being able to get hired full time because a number of positions are in reserve for other teachers who aren't necessarily on the job. Sorry for that kind of involved explanation here. Mr. Chairman, could the Minister advise whether or not our school authorities have ever encountered this as any kind of a problem? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure if the situation is one that is unique to the Yellowknife boards, but, if it is, we are not party to that Collective Agreement. So I am not sure if that's where this would be coming from.

In terms of GNWT employees who are teachers, it would be very unusual to find a teacher who was off for more than a year. Checking with the deputy minister, she doesn't believe we have any in the Northwest Territories. So this may be an issue that's unique to Yellowknife but that's not something I have heard of before.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next I have Ms. Lee. Thank you. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question and it's probably along the same lines as what Mr. Braden was talking about, but more in reference to tradespeople in the NWT. I know that many of our tradespeople that get certified and out of the trades here in the NWT are a result of not the government pushing them through the trades schools, but more private companies or maybe they are LHOs who devote a lot of time and energy and don't receive any government funding even on the LHO level to do any sort of training initiatives for even administration, let alone apprentices. Only to have the government recruit them after they have reached their certification and then they go and work for the government after they are done, for a better wage than what a private company or even an LHO or local board can afford with the budgets that they have.

I am not sure how to address through Human Resources, but that kind of a retention issue to me is serious at the local level, because I have LHOs now that really don't want to devote any time and energy into hiring apprentices and pushing them through the four years in school all the time. It's a lot of work to keep track of their hours and filing it with Human Resources Canada. This alleviates a lot of time for the Government of the NWT. At the end of the day when they recruit them, they have saved all that recruitment time and money and it leaves the LHOs just hanging there with nobody to handle the trades or the businesses that are just left empty handed with no compensation package or training remuneration package. I am not sure how to address that kind of human resource strategy, but to me it doesn't seem like it is the

way it should be going. We should encourage, definitely, local businesses and private industry to train and take on apprentices in the trades area, but we can't just turn around and recruit them for the government's use, or under use is what I like to call it.

I just want to ask the Minister if the Human Resources department with this labour relations department, I guess or maybe the organizational development department would have any models or any consideration for how they can provide training dollars to local businesses either through a remuneration package or compensation package or a training package. Even at the LHO level, there is not one nickel of training you can get out of the government for apprentices. Have they put any thought into how they can...I don't want to downplay the whole issue of training and apprentices. I know it's a big initiative now with the GNWT again, but how can they work with local boards and agencies, even DEAs, to maybe devolve some resources, money, human resource expertise into how they can try to retain those people that they train? How can we share those resources? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is such a shortage of skilled tradespeople that everybody is struggling to keep them. Between the oil industry in Alberta and diamond mines here in the Northwest Territories, it's very difficult for even the government to hang onto skilled tradespeople. They can make better money outside of government than they can even working for government. So it's a challenge for everybody to keep tradespeople. One of the solutions, obviously, is to train more.

As we went through the budget earlier in the Department of Transportation, this Assembly talked about, and the Minister brought forward, a proposal to put money in his budget to bring some tradespeople on stream and to start to train more tradespeople. Our government needs to get more involved in training tradespeople. That is one of the areas we are hoping to expand into over the next few years. The Department of Transportation was first off the mark with some funding in this budget. We are hoping to be able to see more over the course of the next year.

Switching hats from Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, I can tell you that private employers are eligible for wage subsidies that they have in training programs for apprenticeship programs. So that support is there. In terms of when the LHOs might see some support, that would be when the Housing Corporation is able to flow some money for supporting tradespeople. I hope that we will see that in the not-too-distant future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand there's wage subsidies, but I more or less want to point toward or lean towards more of a human resource support network, I guess, out there that a lot of private businesses, a lot of local boards and agencies, LHOs for instance, would love to take on apprentices. They can scrape up dollars, Human Resources, Education, Culture and Employment. But just putting together the forms and the filing every month, the

reporting that's required even for the Department of Education, Human Resources Canada, workers' compensation. There's a whole list of reporting requirements for an apprentice, and getting them into school, the logistics that's all involved and stuff like that. There are no support mechanisms out there. It's just more or less you apply to us, we'll subsidize you, you do everything. A lot of private businesses, LHOs included, don't have the time or the energy to put that much effort into it and basically it just goes by the wayside. So I'm just more or less looking for more than just dollars and cents, I guess, especially on the human resource side. How can they offer some kind of a contact person or a network where they can access information and assistance to help them move apprentices through their system? Is there anything like that in the Human Resources department?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Much of the support that Mr. Villeneuve is asking about is available right now through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. For instance, the department will coordinate the access to technical training, whether that's in Fort Smith or in southern locations. They'll make sure the apprentices are able to access the funding that they qualify for in order to travel, and for living supports while they're off at their studies down south. Assistance for applications and for filling out forms is available through ECE employees, and ECE does have a network of employees more regionally distributed than HR does. So there's a much better chance that a small business is going to be able to access that kind of support in a community from ECE than from HR. So if your constituents aren't aware of what's available, you should be suggesting that they get in contact with ECE and we'll make sure that they find out about what supports are out there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Well, that's fine. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you very much. Before I continue, maybe I can ask, we have some guests up in the gallery right now. I understand they're from the Rotary Northern Experience Exchange. Welcome to the House here.

---Applause

Thank you, Members. We're on page 2-65, activity summary, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$8.492 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to ask the Minister, in terms of the total rewards management that's on 2-64, corporate human resources. I'd like to ask the Minister, to what level do we involve the UNW in evaluation of positions? Is there any involvement by the union with the evaluation process? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The UNW is not involved in the process. The UNW is involved in the selection of the system and the pay equity approach, but they're not involved in the actual evaluation right now.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering, going back to looking at developing a human resource strategy or plan, would it be the department's intention that the UNW be heavily involved in a process like that? How would you involve the UNW in that? Because I think they are, Mr. Chairman, a part of the equation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A government HR plan would be one that says you need to get the right person in the right place at the right time, and that wouldn't necessarily involve input from the UNW. The UNW is there to advocate on behalf of their members if they think that the process that's followed in hiring a specific person to a position isn't followed properly, or if they think there's some other problem. But in terms of planning and personnel planning, that's a government function and it's one that the departments have the lead on and set the plans up in place.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the other issues -- and I'll pick up where my colleague Ms. Lee had questions about Stanton -- one of the concerns that I've heard from management at that facility is the fact that managers, and you pick a ward, pick an area of operation in that hospital, managers end up dealing more with staffing issues and concerns from the staff than they do managing their area of operation. I'd like to ask the Minister, what support is out there within this department of HR to try to get some assistance for Managers on the ground, in our health centres, so that their day is not spent on the phone talking about staffing issues or in an office in a meeting with staff dealing one on one with staffing issues and, in fact, they should be left to manage the unit or the area of operation and not deal with staffing issues all day long. I think that's part of the problem, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Minister how he could address that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Human Resources offers management training assistance in helping managers understand how to do the job, particularly in managing people. But let's be clear, that part of a manager's job is managing people. So you're going to have to expect that they're going to spend a fair bit of time managing people in any circumstance or any situation, any job in the Northwest Territories. If they're a manager, that's part of the job.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't imagine 80 percent of their day would be taken up with staffing issues. I don't think that should be allowed to happen. I think managers should be able to manage. Sure, they're going to have some staffing issues, but not 80 percent of their day, or 90 percent in some cases. That shouldn't happen. I just, I'll leave it there. I've got some more questions on the next page, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. We're on page 2-65. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Next page. Sorry.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. We're on page 2-65, Human Resources, activity summary, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$8.492 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Can we now turn to page 2-70 and 2-71? Human Resources, information item, client services, operations expenditure summary. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you. Under this section may I ask the Minister about the situation on the pay scales at the Stanton Hospital? I'm sure we're talking about a group of nurses, so I'm sure it's not in violation of any private information, but I'm going to assume that the Minister, I haven't had a direct conversation with the Minister about this, but there are a group of nurses, pediatric nurses, whose positions were reclassified and I think they might have had their pay scale raised up and some of the nurses, pediatric nurses, got retroactive pay, but others did not. This is not new; I mean not new in terms of there have been lots of issues like that at the hospital where a group of nurses or positions get reclassified and then some of them get paid more than others and some of them, especially in this situation, my understanding is that now everybody gets the same pay, but there are only some of them who get retro pay and others who do not. I would like to ask the Minister what the explanation of that is. Thank you.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that some employees appealed and others did not.

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

**MS. LEE:** What steps were taken to make sure that everybody was aware of the fact that they had the right to appeal?

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Every employee is given notice of how to appeal a job evaluation and on appeals we have a process that's been agreed to with the union and that is the process that is followed.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that there may be answers to this procedurally, but in practice and in the outcome in terms of employees' morale, these are the things that really impact the working environment and this is when people feel that they're not being treated equally and they're being punished on a procedural error. Now I seem to recall, if my memory serves me correctly, I recall that there were situations at the North Slave Correctional Centre where the correctional officers' positions were reclassified and a lot of them had to go through the appeal process and there were some who did not meet the appeal time, but in the end I think they were all compensated. It could be another section, I can't remember, I'm sorry; I just know that we have dealt with this situation before. I seem to remember it was at the North Slave Correctional Centre, but I could be wrong. But there were a whole group of employees whose jobs were reclassified and I think it was with the jail because I remember meeting with them and I think we were able to settle that. So I would like to ask the Minister if he could commit to looking to see if there are any ways we could find a way to resolve this, because I would think, in the end, dollar amounts aren't that significant, but that the impact on the morale is quite severe. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll certainly take Ms. Lee's advice and look into the situation and see whether or not there are similarities between the situation to which she has referred and the one with the nurses.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you. I appreciate that answer and could I just ask the Minister to commit to giving the answers to me as soon as possible in writing as a Member? Thank you.

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

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to pick up where Ms. Lee left off with this. First of all I want to ask what involvement the Department of Human Resources has had with the reclassification of the positions, the pay plan re-evaluation of positions at Stanton and, if the Minister knows, what, arguably, Mr. Chairman, is one of the worst decisions the government has made, ever? I mean it was a bad decision at the time and I want to know how much money it has cost this government to do that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The changes, I'm advised, came about because it was requested by nurses and by the union. So the government responded to that request and clearly some of the employees weren't happy with the change. The

government acted in good faith on a request from the union and now we're hearing from some nurses that that isn't what they're happy with.

In terms of the Member's first question, whenever there is an appeal for reclassification, it goes to an interdepartmental committee. The Department of Human Resources has one person of three on that committee.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What assistance is provided to groups of employees requesting to appeal those types of decisions? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That sort of assistance should, and does, come from their union.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. So that assistance doesn't come from HR, is that what the Minister is telling me? If the union doesn't help the group of employees, they're left basically on their own to appeal the decision, is that correct?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The process for an appeal is not complicated. It's as simple as an e-mail and it's easy to find the information and file an appeal.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, that's the easy part. The hard part is putting together the arguments and the job description or whatever else that a group of employees would have to come up with and if they're not experts in the field of writing job descriptions or identifying duties and whatnot, it makes it very difficult. Is there assistance available from the department for employees that are looking for assistance like that? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The mediator would normally walk that person through the process. It wouldn't be appropriate for the government to participate because that would prejudice the outcome of the appeal. How can you have the whole appeal process work if you have the government involved in that, and the process is one that's established in part by the Collective Agreement? We have to make sure that we're following that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know some of my colleagues might not believe this, but that decision has cost the hospital tremendously in terms of staff morale



and retention of employees and you name it, it's been bad.

The other thing that has happened at Stanton Hospital, and I wanted to ask the Minister to comment on this as well, over the past 10 years the privatization of services at that hospital has also added to the low morale and there's been issues brought up in this House about the operation of that hospital. Between the reclassification of positions and the privatization of laundry, janitorial and kitchen services, we've really done a good number on Stanton Territorial Hospital. I'd like to ask you, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister could commit today to take a look at what it would cost the government to repatriate those positions at Stanton? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that might be outside the scope of the mandate for the Minister responsible for Human Resources and would be a question better put to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have already asked the Minister of Health and Social Services that question and I'm trying to ask you that question so that I can get an answer. Between the two of you, I think I should be able to get an answer on what it would cost today to repatriate those services. I think that would do a tremendous amount of good for that hospital. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll make sure that I pass on the Member's interest to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** That's good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. Members, we're on page 2-71, human resources, information item, client services, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that under this activity would come the responsibility for HR to deliver the Employee and Family Assistance Program and I know that this program has very recently changed to a new contractor. An area of more concern or what I understand to be some considerably elevated trends in the usage of this service, employee and family counselling by people and families within the GNWT. I am wondering if the Minister could confirm this or provide any comment on it to the area of assistance or need for counselling and assistance to our employees and families, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the numbers are relatively high and have been high since we started off in the program. It's difficult,

though, to know what the causes are, what the underlying reasons are for the increase. That's difficult for us to assess.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Okay. Thank you. I would appreciate that we certainly shouldn't have access to the individuals and their own situations or the reasons for calling on assistance, but do we have any way or are we asking for any way of tracking the nature of the concerns? If we are seeing a dramatic rise or any kind of change in the volume of inquiries, wouldn't it make sense if we tried to find out the nature, what is causing these changes in volume? There may well be things that are going on within our workplaces that we should know about and maybe we could change, but without the knowledge of what is causing people to ask for help, how can we know whether or not we should be doing something differently, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't use the term "dramatic" when I talked about increase. There has been an increase, part of it driven by access. We know, for instance, that when counselling was locally available in Inuvik, the numbers of people who accessed the program in Inuvik went up a fair bit. As the program becomes available in more communities, the numbers in those communities who are accessing the program goes up. There seems to be, too, since centralization, an increase in awareness of the program. That is probably driving some of the increase in utilization.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Does it not still make sense that we should have some way of tracking, anonymously of course, the nature of concerns and complaints? I don't know that this is any different, Mr. Chairman, than being able to tailor our conventional health care services to the need for certain types of illness. We know, for instance, that diabetes is on the rise and there is going to be an even more demanding part of our health agenda, so we are gearing up for more diabetes. Could it not be the same in terms of employee family counselling? Just what are people asking our help with and shouldn't we have some sense of that to see if we can make some changes, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do get a very high level report about every six months of what the requests are about. So we do have that sort of information, but it's just on the first request. Oftentimes, when you get into a counselling situation, there are things that fall out. It doesn't necessarily lead us to have what we consider a very accurate snapshot of information, but every six months we do get a high level snapshot of what the usage is about.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, maybe a couple of details about the new contract that's been let. What is the term of this, over what length of time, and what is the cost of the new contract, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a three-year contract and the budget for the service is about \$1.2 million over three years.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Does this amount reflect a change in the cost of the program from the previous two years or the previous contractor, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. I'm sorry, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it represents a reduction.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, if we know that the demand for assistance is going up and that we have negotiated a contract for less money, have the terms of the contract been changed then? Is the lower cost of the program reflective of a lower quality of criteria or requirement in the contract? Are our employees going to be getting less service, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, the terms of the contract are for the same level of service.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you. The Minister remarked that there is a rise in the volume. Information that I have would suggest that it is quite a substantive rise. I wonder if the Minister could provide information to committee on the volumes that have been experienced in calls for assistance, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will provide that information to Members.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. We are on page 2-71, Human Resources, information item, client services, operations expenditure summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Can we go to page 2-76 and 2-77, information item, employee relations, operations expenditure summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Page 2-80 and 2-81, information item, employee services, operations expenditure summary, \$10.215 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Turn to page 2-86, Human Resources, activity summary, work performed on behalf of others.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Turn back to page 2-49, Human Resources, program summary, operations expenditure summary, \$31.591 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Now can we turn to page 2-5, Executive, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$122.038 million.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Now turn to main estimates, volume II, page 2-7.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Human Resources, infrastructure, acquisition plan, employee relations, tangible capital assets, total tangible assets, \$217,000. Members?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Total activity, \$217,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Total department, \$217,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Human Resources is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. At this time, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Can the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses out? Thank you.

Members, can we take a five-minute break? Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, Members. I am going to call Committee of the Whole back to order. The next departmental budget before us is that of the Legislative assembly. At this time I would like to call on our Speaker, the Honourable Paul Delorey to make his opening comments.

**HON. PAUL DELOREY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2007-08 Main Estimates for the Legislative Assembly. The upcoming fiscal year is perhaps the most unique in the four-year cycle of the Legislative Assembly. It will be marked by the remaining five months of the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and the important first months of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

This year, the Assembly is requesting operational funding to the tune of \$16.3 million. This constitutes an increase of just over 12 percent compared to last year's budget of \$14.5 million. An annual increase of this magnitude is unusual for the Assembly which has made a point of leading by example in terms of fiscal restraint in the last four years.

This year's increases are the result of several important initiatives. The first and by far the most substantial reason for the increase is the requirement to hold a general election in the fall of this year.

An addition of \$680,000 has been requested by the Chief Electoral Officer to conduct the 2007 General Election. I am pleased to advise Members that the position of both the Chief Electoral Officer and the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer has been filled by qualified northerners and that preparations for the vote are well underway. All we need now is the approval of the federal Cabinet to dissolve the 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly on August 31, 2007, to allow an October 1<sup>st</sup> election.

The second reason for this year's increase is tied to the report of the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits, which was tabled in this House last year. As each of you are no doubt aware, this Assembly rejected a recommendation by the Commission to increase MLAs' salaries by 9 percent. Other recommendations included an expansion of the Page program and increased funding to allow Members who represent multi community constituencies to travel to each community at least five times each year and will have a financial impact of roughly \$200,000. I think these are positive change and ones that Members of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly will surely appreciate.

Finally, Madam Chair, the 2007-08 Draft Main Estimates include an additional \$40,000 for the pre-budget consultation recently initiated by standing committees, a one-time increase of \$80,000 to the budget of the Cultural Enhancement Commission, and a \$90,000 increase to the NWT Human Rights Commission to respond to a higher than expected caseload.

Madam Chair, I always want to take a few moments to discuss a few real success stories from last year that we hope to continue in the future. In June, I travelled to the community of Whati with Mr. Lafferty, Premier Handley and Commissioner Whitford...

---Applause

...for the first of what I hope to be many legislative Assembly outreach programs. The visit marked the first time that our Mace has been displaced outside of the capital since its creation. The delegation met with community leaders, staff and students from the Mezi Community School and handled some tough and interesting questions regarding the role of the Assembly and individual MLAs. Funding remains in this year's budget to conduct two additional community visits and Mace tours.

Madam Chair, in cooperation with the Speakers of Nunavut and Yukon, we are very close to implementing a broadcasting solution that will provide television access to the Assembly's proceedings in every community and in every official language of the NWT.

---Applause

It is our hope that this system will be tested during our August sitting and fully rolled out at the commencement of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. In the meantime, I am pleased to hear positive feedback on our interim broadcasting solution, particularly the effectiveness of CKLB Radio broadcast. I have even heard that there is a competition underway for whoever can guess the total number of times Members have said "Mr. Speaker" during this session. I know that this is the first and only time I have said it so far this session.

---Laughter

Members will recall last year, the Legislative Assembly implemented a number of specific energy conservation measures in addition to the general conservation activities that have been underway for some time. These include turning off the exterior dome lights on the Assembly when the building is closed to visitors; limiting the annual Christmas lights display to six hours per day; initiating a new lighting system to better conserve energy. These initiatives, while modest, have resulted in savings both in terms of money and energy use. I am pleased to inform Members that next week, the Assembly will take delivery of a hybrid vehicle to replace one of its aging fleet of cars. This will be parked right next to the Premier's parking spot so we will know soon enough if it's smaller than his car.

Members have, in past years, expressed concern over services provided to visitors to our Assembly, particularly those whose first language is not English. Statistics for the current year indicate that the largest category of visitors to our Assembly is walk-in traffic, followed closely by Japanese tourists. Each of these categories far outnumber the scheduled and guided tours that are offered in English and French. As I have said in the past, the first priority of my office is to provide services to residents of the Northwest Territories in the official languages of the Northwest Territories. This being said, I am pleased to announce that this year the Assembly will proceed with the acquisition of technology that will allow visitors to participate in either guided or self-directed tours in any of the NWT's official languages and Japanese.

---Applause

This proposed solution will include a descriptive pamphlet and a self-guided tour using iPod technology in any number of languages. This is a first step towards providing an increased number of services in all of our official languages.

Finally, Madam Chair, I am proud to advise Members that we are making excellent progress in terms of recruiting and retaining a more representative workforce. This year, for the first time, over 50 percent of the Assembly's staff are affirmative action employees.

---Applause

Of the 15 statutory appointments that the Board of Management is responsible for recommending to the Legislative Assembly, 12 of the current incumbents are now women, as are more than half our supervisory staff here at the Assembly.

---Applause

We still have work to do particularly in terms of recruiting persons with disabilities, but we are making progress and I am proud to say this Assembly is leading by example in this important area.

I want to take advantage of the fact that today is International Women's Day, to announce that the theme for this year's Youth Parliament will be increasing the role of women in positions of leadership. I have also directed that a minimum of 50 percent of the selected delegates for this year's Youth Parliament be young women.

---Applause

We may not be there on the floor of this House yet, but the youth are the future and we need to start with them.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opening comments, Madam Chair. I welcome any questions Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. At this time, I will ask Speaker Delorey if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber for the consideration of his budget.

**HON. PAUL DELOREY:** Yes, I would.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms, please, to escort the witnesses to the witness table.

Mr. Delorey, for the record, could you please tell us who your witnesses are.

**HON. PAUL DELOREY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my left I have Cheryl Menard, manager of finance; and to my right is Tim Mercer, Clerk of the Assembly.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. If I could then turn to the Members and ask if there are any general comments. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a few general comments. I want to congratulate the Legislative Assembly and Board of Management for some of the initiatives undertaken as stated in this statement. The increase of women and other affirmative action groups in the staffing and in contract positions, as well as just the general tone of the Assembly trying to lead by example, not only in hiring but in energy use and such. People did notice how the beautiful Chamber, as it is, when it's not in session it used to light up the whole bush all around us. People used to wonder why that was. I think that's a good step to make to reduce energy and to lead by example.

Another thing I want to congratulate the Assembly and the Board of Management on is the use of technology to make official languages of the NWT available to tourists. This is a place for the people and I think with the advent of all the technology that is available, I think it will set a great example and make people welcome to come here and be able to use a device where they can walk around in their own time. In most museums around the world, you can walk in and get some sort of device where you can put an earplug into...I don't know if that's what the plan is

because the detail is not indicated here, but whatever device it may be, it will allow you to move at your own pace and hear in your own language what is being presented. I do also appreciate the extra step taken to allow Japanese language to be available. I think we understand that that is not our official language and, in fact, Japanese people are not the biggest resident population in the city, but I think it's a great way to show our appreciation to the Japanese visitors who spend their time and money and they do not get many days of holidays. They don't get anywhere near the amount of holidays that most Canadians are used to. In the short four, five, six or seven days a year that they have and they choose to come here and visit here, when they do come, they always make the point of visiting this Assembly. I think it's a nice gesture to make them feel welcome.

Just one last thing I want to speak about is something I have spoken about elsewhere, and that is my big dream and desire to see some sort of communication network TV channel or something like that for the Legislature that could broadcast the proceedings in this Legislature, and the possibility of partnering with Yukon, Nunavut or any other jurisdictions that would be interested in doing that. We are here and when we are making statements, asking questions and making decisions on behalf of the people, it is really important for the people to see that. Not only that, I am constantly amazed at how much power the media has in connecting the people to this place. I am constantly amazed when I go to communities. I think Members mention often about the fact that Yellowknife has a community channel where this is broadcast all day long, but I think I would venture to say that a lot of people who watch the programming here are people who are working for the government, but in communities they are in many ways closer and they are more connected to what's going on here.

My dream is not only can we broadcast the proceedings of the House, but if we were able to set up a broadcasting system where we could use it as a community channel for all of the Territories. One of the privileges of being an MLA is to be able to partake in lots of community festivals whether it be the Beluga Jamboree in Tuk or many, many festivals that happen everywhere. There is a very rich culture of music, a special way northerners play their fiddles, jigging, all of the summer assemblies that take place. We, as Members, are privileged to be able to go to these gatherings as part of our work to meet the leaders, hear what they have to say. Community leaders and elders and regular citizens have a very unique way of presenting their stories. The aboriginal tradition is so rich in oral communication skills. I am constantly amazed at how anybody can just grab a microphone and speak for hours and tell all these really interesting stories.

I am really sorry that the people in Yellowknife who don't have that kind of opportunity through work don't get to listen to that.

Also, so much music, art and culture. The power of TV is so strong. There are areas on why TV personalities and movie personalities have so much impact on lives of people, especially the young people. Wouldn't it be great if the young people could look at themselves on TV, whether they are playing in NWT Games or Arctic Winter Games or community sports events? I would like to see the Legislature take a leadership role in trying to accommodate a broadcasting network that would start with the venue that would allow the proceedings of this

House to broadcast, but that would allow the accommodation of other programming to take place.

Our young people need to see themselves reflected on TV. I know APTN is a very popular channel in the communities, but that channel serves all of the country, not just the Northwest Territories. I don't think we can minimize the power and the positive impact that sort of medium and that available mode of communication could have on our youth, our culture and our ability within the Territories as communities to be able to learn about each other and to become more familiar with the most unique cultures that are present in different parts of the territory. The NWT is not a homogenous place. It's made up of all sorts of different people. I would love to see something like an NWT Broadcasting Corporation. I guess that would be called NBC or something.

I am just going to leave it at that and that's something I am going to continue to speak about and talk about in the hopes that one day that dream will come true. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. General comments. I have Mrs. Groenewegen and then Mr. Villeneuve.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we talked about technology and how it might assist us in people having a tour of the Legislative Assembly, but one thing we do not have yet is advanced technology in this House. I was reading and noticing recently that even the town council of Hay River now have laptops on their desk for council meetings, so they don't have to have so much paper photocopied and distributed. In fact, they can just scroll down and click on the document required that they need to consider at that council meeting. That is the town council of Hay River. I guess I have often wondered why we need to continually circulate things like Ministers' statements, committee reports, things like this, when we have the perfect setup here for a desktop glass window with a keyboard that pulls out and we can just access all of our information in a modern way.

So I am very happy to hear that you can take a virtual tour with an iPod and language translation, but I think the services in this Chamber are somewhat behind the times. I just wanted to make that comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think probably this is one department that will get more praise than criticism, the only department in this whole process here that will probably be on the flipside of the coin here for once. I just wanted to say that I really have to commend the Legislative Assembly. I know I did make some references in the past about the lack of affirmative action here in the Legislative Assembly and I really have to commend the office of the Clerk and the Legislative Assembly for really forging ahead and getting some action done on the affirmative action side. I definitely have to commend them on that. They are definitely a model for all government departments, that it is doable and even at the highest House of the NWT. I think the rest of the government departments should really give them a lot of praise for carrying out that initiative in such short notice.

The APTN and our own TV channel option was always discussed here with all the Members. I was sad to see that the APTN channel went because a lot of the small communities really relied heavily on it. I still get a lot of feedback now from a lot of the smaller communities. You would be really surprised to know that there, in the small communities, they stay up until past midnight just to watch the sessions here and take part in what's going on in government. So even though it is at the wee hours of the evening, I think the tuning in of the Legislative Assembly is still really on the high priority list of a lot of people here in the NWT, especially out in the remote centres.

With regard to the technology side of things, I know there are definitely pros and cons to more technology here in the House, but I think if we keep it good and simple and put more emphasis into what actually gets discussed here as opposed to what gets distributed, I think that is the important thing to come to grips with. I was never really in favour of bringing in too much technology into the House in the first place because of distractions. But the door is still open for it anyway, so I would encourage the office of the Clerk to forge ahead and see how we can improve in that area. There's always improvement, undoubtedly; but I think what we've done so far is leaps and bounds anyway. That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

---Applause

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Any further general comments?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to mention a few things for general comments. Like my colleague Mr. Villeneuve, I'm happy to see the level of employees around the building, including the affirmative action candidates. It's a very welcome addition to the building and I commend the Clerk's office for doing that.

---Applause

He should be applauded for that.

I also wanted to mention we spend a tremendous amount of time in this building, especially during session, and obviously we need to eat here. The food service has been tremendous, and I just wanted to commend the Clerk and the Speaker for the provision of that contract. I think it's good and I think most Members here, or all Members here, will stand by me on those accolades for the level of service there.

I also wanted to talk a bit about the technology. I think we have to try to either go full on with laptops or desktop computers, whatever the case may be, or we don't. Right now, I think it's a bit of a grey area with Members and it's something we need to get some clarity on. Some Members today are using devices in the House that have the capability of sending and receiving e-mails, and it's happening today. As a Legislature, I think we have to come up with some rules of engagement in terms of technology. Either we're going to do it or we're not going to do it. Right now, some of us are playing by the existing rules and some aren't. So I just wanted to mention that, Madam Chair.

The Speaker's Outreach Program is a fantastic program, and again I want to applaud the Speaker's office for undertaking this initiative. I know he has a couple more trips planned next year. This is a fantastic opportunity to take government out to the smaller communities, interact with children and people that live in those communities, and give them a little taste of what happens here at the Legislative Assembly building in Yellowknife, show them the Mace. I think that's a fantastic program that the Speaker has embarked upon.

I think that's about it for my general comments, Madam Chair. Again, I thank the Speaker for being here. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments. Next I have Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Madam Chair, thank you. I want to extend my compliments to the Speaker and Mr. Mercer and the management team here very much on the staffing side, and the achievements that we're posting here in terms of the number of women and affirmative action candidates who are among the complement of staff here and the statutory positions. That's a fantastic record and really shows that I think we can be proud of demonstrating some leadership.

Madam Chair, I also wanted to compliment the initiative that is underway now to provide more interpretive and informational services about the Legislative Assembly in official languages, and also, as the Speaker indicated, in Japanese, who account for a surprising number in the total number of visitors to the Assembly. I have been an advocate of this for a couple of years at least now, Madam Chair, and I'm very pleased to see what looks like a very economical but a very up-to-date and easy-to-use technology.

This building is a jewel, not only in Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, but in Canada and even in the Commonwealth, Madam Chair. I know, from talking to other parliamentarians from Canada and around the world, how impressed they are with this building and that we are proud of it and we should continue to be, and the more we can do to show it off and help people understand what it means to us and what we do in here, the better. So my compliments, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next I have Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the Speaker and the Clerk, the staff. I just have a few quick comments here, Madam Chair. I'm glad to see they indicated the Outreach Program is ongoing here and will continue to be ongoing. I remember back I think in the early '70s when the territory was one whole territory with Nunavut, I remember when they came down to Tuktoyaktuk and had a session down there. So I think that was one of the starts when they used to travel to communities, so I think it's a good idea that this Outreach Program will help the young people to realize exactly what we're doing in this regard.

I'm glad to see that we're trying to solve the problem of broadcasting. I think if we can have something in place by the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly that's technically broadcast, that would be very well. I'm glad to see with the Youth Parliament coming up in May, that they're pushing for 50 percent

women participants. But I think maybe we should go one step further and just sort of reverse and have 17 women and two men, and see if the men can be discouraged in that regard.

These are just some of my comments, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. I have Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to mention a couple of other things. I wanted to mention research services and the services that are provided to Members. I don't think they get enough credit for the job that they provide to Members, and I wanted to mention that.

I also wanted to mention, too, that I do believe that they should be remunerated on a level that you'd find research staff inside the various departments. I think they should be. When we get to that page in the detail, I will ask that question about that issue. I do believe they provide a valuable service to Members and they should be looked after accordingly.

The other thing I wanted to mention, too, and I'm happy to see this, the tour of the facility with the hearing device. I think that's an excellent, excellent idea. Full marks to the Speaker's office for going down that road. I think it's a good opportunity for visitors to this building, in whatever language, that they can have a tour of the building and find out what certain things mean in this building and why they're here. So that's great.

As well, when you're talking about the Legislative Assembly, it's obviously the department that's closest to home for Members. Not just the research staff, but I think having the staff at the Legislative Assembly makes our job so much easier. From corporate services, research, it's topnotch from top to bottom and I just wanted to give the Clerk's office full marks for having a top rate staff here at the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple points I want to make is in regards to a comment that was made to me last week in terms of the work that we do as MLAs and the amount of time that we sit in terms of going through the mountain loads of documents, the level of detail that we discuss and the amount of time that we spend away from our families, and the, at times, misconception by the public who don't have the benefit of being here day in and day out as we are elected to do and represent our people in our constituencies. One of the comments was made by a constituent who said I wish some people in our communities, in my communities, would come and sit and go with you throughout the day and see how many hours you put in in the House and the amount of work that you have to be up on and the type of work you have to deal with. I really think that's so important, Madam Chair.

I'm looking forward to the schedule of the Outreach Program that the Speaker has outlined. I'm glad that Whati was the first community, along with Member Lafferty, in terms of explaining it to the people, because

bringing the role of government to people, it really would help us in terms of some of the bigger issues that we have to deal with, some of the bigger issues that we have to deal with with the federal government, and the amount of work that we do as Members. I say this because of the sacrifice that all Members make, a personal sacrifice. However, that's the role that we chose. The role was chosen by us by our members who would like us to be here to represent them. So I really want to stress this initiative of how important it is now to undertake and to fully deal with. I certainly want to tell the Speaker that you certainly have my support in this area here. I think that's a good thing you have worked on and initiated, and talking about the role of the Assembly and even MLAs into our communities. I think it's a real good move here. I think we're cutting some new path here in terms of how the Assembly is getting back to the people in our community so that they understand our role. Sometimes it's good to have people really understand what we do as MLAs.

Also, Madam Chair, I want to look at the broadcasting solution that the staff has worked so hard on. It seems that we have some agreement that we'll do some testing in the coming years and coming months. In terms of what we're doing would be very beneficial to our people.

Madam Chair, just this afternoon the Member for Range Lake mentioned the importance of broadcasts in our communities. One of my constituency members saw her for the first time and said, ah, that's you, I see you, and I see you and him together. Not like that...

---Laughter

I mean in the House here. She was so happy, because she said I watch you guys at 12 o'clock at night. I watched what you guys are doing. This is an 81-year-old elder that watches us, and it's so important that they watch us. I think this is so cool that we're going to have our own broadcasting system. I think that's right on. So they are watching us and it's something that's important here.

Madam Chair, the last point I want to raise is following Mr. Ramsay's comments in terms of our research staff and the fairness of them being looked at in terms of the work they do for us. I've seen them work magic. I've seen them work tirelessly and I've seen them work to make us look good in front of the House here, in front of the speakers. They've done a wonderful job and I can't say enough about them, and I think they should be compensated for what they're worth. I think that should be something we look at seriously, because it's not fair.

I think, Madam Chair, the House in terms of this item here for the Legislative Assembly, it has done a lot of good for us. So I want to leave it at that and again say congratulations on these new initiatives that mean a lot for our people here, to the Speaker and to the Clerk. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. General comments. Next on the list I have Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair...(English not provided)

Madam Chair, I'd just like to highlight two key points as a general comment. The Mace that was travelling last year

was a real successful trip, as the Speaker indicated, last year in Whati. It was a very successful outcome. The students had a lot of questions for us, which was great. The first ever, and that won't be the only time. There will be others going to small communities, and this is a learning experience for them, as well; even for us going to communities and demonstrating that this is what we do on a daily basis for you, for the North. So it was good and I'm glad that it will be continuing to the other communities as well. This is a good start.

Madam Chair, another topic that I've highlighted in my language was the aboriginal program. We did have the broadcasting, but, due to technical difficulties or negotiations, we're not broadcasting anymore except for at midnight. I've been approached by several elders in my community and they say when you talk in the Legislative Assembly, all we see is your lips moving. They say it's all in English, and they said it would be nice to hear you in the Tlicho language. I told them it's coming this fall. Our staff is actively working hard at it, and I'm glad to see it's part of the progress I'm hoping to see this fall. Like my colleague Mr. Yakeleya said, there are elders out there that stay up to midnight. It's not fair to them to stay up until midnight just to watch us perform, how we perform. But at the same time, speaking our language does not air in our language there. But it's coming, which is good. I'd just like to highlight that because it has been an issue, and those issues are certainly being addressed by our staff.

So those are the two main key areas I wanted to highlight, Madam Chair. Mahsi.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Any further general comments on the Legislative Assembly? Detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, Members, I'll direct your attention then, please, to page 1-10, information item, revenue summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. No questions? Page 1-13, activity summary, office of the Clerk, operations expenditure summary, \$7.653 million. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had a question in regard to the research services and remuneration for our research staff here not being on a level that would be comparable to research staff inside a department. I wonder if the Speaker could fill us in on why this is the case and what steps we could take to ensure that our research staff here are paid comparably to research staff inside the departments.

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

**HON. PAUL DELOREY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The issue that's brought up by the Member, and I thank him for the question, is one that's been around for a while. We put a lot of importance in the research staff that we have, especially the staff that's working with our standing committees. It's an issue that we've been trying to address for some time now. We're making some progress in that, have had some agreement from Human

Resources to allow us to reclassify some of the positions and make them more comparable to analyst positions that work for Cabinet and that's progressing. As we speak, actually, there is communications going on between the Clerk's office and Human Resources, and with the new job descriptions we're hoping to have the pay levels more equalized and that should help us recruit and retain staff that will work with the committees a lot better. So that's where we are now on that. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wish the Speaker and the Clerk's office well in the negotiations or the discussions with Human Resources because it is imperative that Members on this side of the House have the opportunity and ability to attract and retain a research staff that is comparable to what a researcher or analyst inside a department would be remunerated at. It's obvious; I mean we have to be as well prepared as our colleagues across the floor when it comes to getting information to us at our disposal so we can use it here in the House. Again, I want to wish the Speaker well on that.

One of the other things in the office of the Clerk, I just wanted to touch on this for a second, I think we've added a public affairs officer. It's not a new position, but that has been a tremendous help to Members as well. Again, I wanted to mention that that office has been a really big help to me individually and I know other Members. Attracting that person to that position was a very good move on the part of the Clerk's office. So again, I wanted to say thank you for that too. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay, and our new Clerk. I think we're grateful to all of the staff that serve us here at the Legislative Assembly. We have got a very good group. Activity summary, office of the Clerk, operations expenditures, \$7.653 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Activity summary, office of the Speaker, operations expenditure summary, \$388,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 1-21, activity summary, expenditures on behalf of Members, operations expenditure summary, \$6.045 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Activity summary on page 1-23, office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, \$1.123 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 1-27, activity summary, statutory officers, operations expenditure summary, \$1.085 million. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I had my hand up on 1-23, sorry about that, but if I could request the

committee's indulgence to go back to 1-23 just for one question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Does the committee agree to go back to office of the Chief Electoral Officer?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask this question, too, to get it on the record. There are going to be some changes coming up to boundaries in Inuvik, Hay River and in Yellowknife and I just wanted to know, from a public standpoint, when are we going to be going to a public relations campaign to show the public what these new boundaries are? I know the election is six months away, but I think we have to get that information out there.

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

**HON. PAUL DELOREY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That information should be out fairly shortly. The only thing that we're a little bit hampered with right now is waiting for the federal government to actually sign off on the resolution to dissolve the House on August 31<sup>st</sup> so that we will be allowed to have an election on October 1<sup>st</sup>. We're still planning on that, but we're getting tight on the time on the six-month period and timelines that affect the election. So the Chief Electoral Officer is being hampered somewhat waiting for the federal government to sign off on that, but as soon as that comes through, then the Chief Electoral Officer will be proceeding with plans for the election and the information that you're looking for. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** That's good. Thank you, Madam Chair, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Activity summary, office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, \$1.123 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 1-27, activity summary, statutory officers, operations expenditure summary, \$1.085 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Activity summary, statutory officers, grants and contributions, contributions, \$343,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, Members, if I can direct your attention back to page 1-7, department summary, Legislative Assembly, operations expenditure summary, \$16.294 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.



**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Does the committee agree that that concludes our consideration of the main estimates for the Legislative Assembly?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Clerk and Ms. Menard. Members, can you check in your bills binder please and look at Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008. Okay, Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008. So we will stand down the preamble and the clauses and we will consider first the schedule, which is on page 3, part I, vote I, operations expenditure, total appropriation for operations expenditure, \$1,152.550 billion. Part II, vote II, capital investment expenditures, total appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$108.629 million. Total appropriation, \$1,261.179 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. I don't know how to read such big numbers. Back to the clauses then. Bill 21, clause 1.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Clause 2.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Clause 3.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Clause 4.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Clause 5.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Clause 6.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Now to the preamble.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Bill 21 as a whole?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Does committee agree that Bill 21 is ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

----Applause

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, committee. Bill 21 is now ready for third reading.

---Applause

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Does committee agree that consideration of Committee Reports 7, 8 and 9 are concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. So Committees Reports 7, 8 and 9 are concluded. Now it's my understanding that you would like to start with Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3. Mr. Minister, if you would like to provide your opening comments at this time. Mr. Roland.

**HON. FLOYD ROLAND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007. This bill requests authority for additional appropriations of \$14.71 million for operations expenditures and \$19.235 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

Operations expenditure appropriations requested in the supplementary appropriation include:

- approximately \$2.6 million offset by federal revenues;
- \$342,000 to be recovered through own-source revenues; and
- a negative appropriation of \$6.567 million to record a change in accounting treatment of the Federal Gas Tax Transfer Agreement due to recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada.

Capital investment expenditures requested in the supplementary appropriation include:

- \$800,000 offset by federal revenues;
- \$18 million to record the fair market value of CL-215 water bombers transferred from the federal government at no cost; and
- a negative appropriation of \$624,000 to record a change in accounting treatment of the Federal Gas Tax Transfer Agreement due to recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada.

Major items included in this request for operations expenditures are:

1. the transfer of \$38.139 million from the NWT Housing Corporation to the Financial Management Board Secretariat, to complete the transfer begun in Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2006-2007, recording the corporation's budget as a contribution under the Financial Management Board Secretariat budget as suggested by the Auditor General's office;
2. \$4 million for costs associated with hospital and physician services to Northwest Territories residents receiving services outside the Northwest Territories;
3. \$2.9 million to fund 50 percent of the 2005-2006 accumulated operation deficit and 50 percent of the 2005-2006 operating deficit at the Stanton Territorial Health Authority;
4. \$2.1 million for increased costs as a result of transitional costs associated with the Human Resource amalgamation;

5. \$1.8 million for increased GNWT costs resulting from the rise in fuel prices in the NWT since 2003. This represents 50 percent of the total calculated amount included in 2005-2006 Supplementary Appropriation, No. 3 that was not approved on an ongoing basis; and
6. \$1 million for increased expenditures for supplementary health benefit programs, including extended health benefits, indigent health benefits, and Metis health benefits.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move to report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your motion is in order it's not debatable. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I get the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### ITEM 17: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008; Committee Report 7-15(5), Committee Report 8-15(5) and Committee Report 9-15(5), and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted, that Committee Reports 7, 8 and 9 are concluded and that Bill 21 is ready for third reading. Mr Speaker, I move that report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Do we have a seconder? Honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

#### ITEM 19: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Friday, March 9, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions

7. Written Questions
  8. Returns to Written Questions
  9. Replies to Opening Address
  10. Petitions
  11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
  12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
  13. Tabling of Documents
  14. Notices of Motion
  15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
  16. Motions
  17. First Reading of Bills
    - Bill 9, Write-Off of Assets Act, 2006-2007
  18. Second Reading of Bills
  19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
    - Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2006-2007
    - Committee Report 10-15(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner
  20. Report of Committee of the Whole
  21. Third Reading of Bills
    - Bill 21, Appropriation Act, 2007-2008
  22. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, March 9, 2007, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:28.