



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2nd Session

Day 13

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Pages 391 – 424

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	391
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	391
25-14(2): Fort Providence Ice Crossing Closure (Steen)	391
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	391
Notification of Inuvik Capital Project Deferrals (Roland)	391
GNWT No-Layoff Policy (Miltenberger)	391
Disparaging Remarks in Committee of the Whole Documents (Krutko)	392
Northern Manufacturers Association (Lee).....	392
Positive Events in Rae Lakes (Lafferty)	393
Addressing Small Community Housing Needs (McLeod)	393
Funding to Participate in Super Soccer Tournament (Nitah)	393
Edmonton Oilers Alumni Hockey Challenge Game (Allen)	394
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY.....	394
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	394
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	405
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS	405
NOTICES OF MOTION.....	406
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	406
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	423
ORDERS OF THE DAY	423

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Good afternoon. The House will come to order. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Krutko for sitting in for me yesterday. After reviewing the comments he made during question period yesterday, we will be sure to hold him to those comments as well. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 25-14(2): Fort Providence Ice Crossing Closure

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise the House that the Mackenzie River ice bridge on Highway No. 3 to Fort Providence, Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife is deteriorating at a rate faster than in recent years. Residents and businesses north of the Mackenzie River have benefited, in recent years, from the ice bridge remaining open until mid-April. The earliest recorded closure was on April 12, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, this year, warm temperatures and rain showers at the crossing will likely force a closure, as soon as this weekend. I regret to say that when Mother Nature brings warmer weather, there are no practical, cost-effective means of keeping the ice bridge open. If weather conditions change and the temperature falls, the Department of Transportation will keep the ice bridge open as long as safely possible.

Mr. Speaker, the department encourages highway travelers to contact the toll-free highway information line to confirm conditions before they begin their trip. The information line is updated as conditions change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Notification of Inuvik Capital Project Deferrals

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address a very serious issue that I was informed of yesterday. It ties in to what I said last Friday on information and how we receive it. Mr. Speaker, at the start of the 14th Legislative Assembly, we were told that this government would be more open and transparent, and that we would be able to win the respect of the people in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, what I have been finding during the interim appropriations is in fact, almost the opposite. The only time I have found out about the restrictions or the reductions that are happening in my community and region of Inuvik, is in this arena, on the floor in committee of the whole. Mr. Speaker, that is unacceptable.

The previous practice of Assemblies was to inform Members before notice was given in such a matter. I was speaking to the mayor in Inuvik, Mr. George Roach, and he said he was on the phone with the honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment the other day for about 15 minutes, and this topic did not come across the lines.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shameful.

MR. ROLAND: Instead, we wait until we are in the House, trying to pass a budget, and at that time, only after questions, does it become apparent that is happening. Not only is it the Aurora Campus that I am concerned about, it is every project that was in the Education, Culture and Employment's capital plan for Inuvik that has been deferred.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to pursue this and I will be questioning the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment on what kind of consultation he had with any of the residents from my community. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on GNWT No-Layoff Policy

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the no-layoff policy that is currently in effect that is a carry over from the 13th Assembly. It was put in place for a specific period and for a specific purpose. As we await the direction from the new Cabinet on how they want to deal with this particular issue, I wanted to take this opportunity to make some comments.

During my campaign, Mr. Speaker, I was clearly on record as saying no more job cuts. What I think we need is not a no-layoff policy, we need a redeployment policy. I know, under the old policy, there are dozens of positions sitting in government in what would otherwise be redundant positions.

The current policy, I believe, ties the hands of managers. As these positions would have been redundant in otherwise normal circumstances, the Northwest Territories, the government, is left with expensive resources tied up while there are desperate needs in other areas in the communities.

Under the policy of the 13th Assembly, these positions have been retained with no opportunity to have them do anything but sit there. Mr. Speaker, clearly this is not fair to the departments,

it is not fair to the employees, and it is not fair to the people of the Northwest Territories. It leaves employees stuck in limbo without the benefit of layoff options or a clear career path left for them.

Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that layoffs will be an answer. They are a final option when all other opportunities have been explored. What we need is an effective redeployment service that can help employees move to areas of government where they are needed. We have to provide training and support for them to make the adjustment, and in some cases, the most appropriate move for employees in the department will be layoffs. The employees should have that option in exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one piece of the bigger issue of effective use of our very, very important human resources. Priorities change over time. Some programs need less time and attention than others did before. What we have to do is have a coordinated policy and a coordinated way to move employees from areas of lower priority to those of higher priority, and not necessarily in the same community. We have to be able to move our very valuable human resources to where they are most needed. As we have demonstrated in this House, the need is there. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Disparaging Remarks in Committee of the Whole Documents

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am still very discouraged about an incident that occurred during the committee of the whole while we were reviewing the interim appropriation for the Department of Transportation. I seriously considered rising on a point of privilege. However, Mr. Speaker, I have calmed down a bit since then and will contain myself.

With a few clarifying remarks today, when we are reviewing documents provided by the Department of Transportation to the committee of the whole, explaining the differences between the 1999-2000 capital plans and the 2000-2001 capital plans, I noted that the department made reference to remarks that I made in a meeting with the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

Mr. Speaker, that would have been the basis for my point of privilege. Remarks and procedures of committee meetings are the property of the committee. I was concerned, Mr. Speaker, that in the two pages of explanations on the differences between the 1999-2000 capital plans, and the 2000-2001 capital plans, that I was the only MLA mentioned by name. In fact, Mr. Speaker, every other explanation was dealing with a technical matter.

Mr. Speaker, I was concerned until I realized, in a way, the department actually had given me a backhanded compliment for doing such a great job in committee of the whole. I want to assure the constituents of the Mackenzie Delta, Aklavik, and Tsiigehtchic that I will continue to fight for every capital dollar for my constituency, the Mackenzie Delta. I will continue to examine every line item that is in, on, or about this interim appropriation and capital items, to ensure the needs and aspirations of all Northerners are met. I will fight to ensure that the needs of rural communities are not forgotten.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, if I have to make what they call a big deal about any item in this House, I definitely will. With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Northern Manufacturers Association

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today in the Great Hall, the Northern Manufacturers' Association, in partnership with the Government of the Northwest Territories Regulatory Reform Secretariat helped launch the Canadian Standards Strategy. I would like to take this opportunity to speak a little about this Association and highlight the good work it is doing.

The Northern Manufacturers' Association was formed in 1997, Mr. Speaker, to improve the competitiveness of territorial manufacturers and to develop a strong and vibrant northern manufacturing industry. It also serves as a voice for the northern manufacturers. Its membership has grown from nine original members to over 40 members in just over a year. It currently represents communities all over the North, including Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, northern manufacturers produce a wide range of products, everything from clothing, accessories, furniture, windows, log homes, fiberglass, steel tanks and paper products, to name a few. In this House, Mr. Speaker, we often speak about the need to diversify our economy. I strongly believe that the manufacturing industry is a key to our diversification potential.

The northern manufacturing businesses contribute to our economy in a very strong and direct way. They create a wide array of jobs and foster a strong community spirit in the process. More manufacturing in the North means less imported goods. It also means enhancing our northern economy by exporting our goods to the markets world over.

Already, Mr. Speaker, our manufacturers export our products not only to the rest of Canada but to international markets such as Russia, the Far East, Japan and Alaska. Most importantly Mr. Speaker, northern manufacturers are homegrown. They live and work in the North. They know the consumers, and they know how to produce products that meet the standards necessary for the rigors of the northern climate and conditions.

Mr. Speaker, may I close this statement by saying the association deserves our support and northern businesses need our commitment to do everything we can to help them grow and prosper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Positive Events in Rae Lakes

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to announce two positive events which have occurred in the community of Rae Lakes. The first is that on March 21st, the Department of Transportation, in partnership with NAV Canada opened a Community Aerodrome Radio Station, also known as CARS in Rae Lakes. The CARS will provide weather and communication service to aircraft operating around the Rae Lakes airport. The goal of CARS is to provide both employment and service to local people.

The second event which I would like to recognize is that two residents of Rae Lakes have just graduated from the Observer Communication Program in Fort Smith. In this nine week course, Nancy Zoe and Priscilla Wettrade learned weather observation skills and radio communication procedures. I would like to congratulate Nancy and Priscilla for completing the training needed to work at the CARS. It is great to see local people taking the initiative to get the training they need for local jobs. It makes us stronger as a region. I wish these women every success in finding employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Addressing Small Community Housing Needs

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to focus my Member's statement on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's need for a new approach to meeting the housing needs in our smaller communities.

My colleagues have heard me speak of the Extended Downpayment Assistance Program as being essentially useless to the communities I represent. The gap between who the corporation will support and what the banks will offer in the way of mortgages means that there are viable, potential homeowners who cannot realize their dreams.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the decision to withdraw social housing funding by the federal government is patently unfair to the North. The decision that the aboriginal residents of the Northwest Territories are not eligible for any of the millions of dollars that the CMHC and DIAND make available for on-reserve housing is also unfair to northern aboriginals.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, time to change the policies of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to meet the fiscal and political realities that we face in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, community control over the programs offered in the community is paramount. Who is the corporation to dictate to a community what kind of housing is appropriate to the community, or how the funding should be spent? Communities must be able to decide whether they should continue to build one or two stick-built houses each year, or use that same money to build a four-plex, or four or five modular homes.

Mr. Speaker, there are many barriers to meeting the housing needs in the smaller communities. Some of the barriers are economic, some are political and some are the fault of the policies and practices of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Policies that state that modular homes and trailers cannot be used to provide social housing may no longer be realistic. I cannot stand by and watch two or three generations live in the same overcrowded stick-built house, when I know that it is going to be four or five years before the situation can be alleviated.

That is the reality in the communities without a viable housing market. I no longer believe that the economic gains and the short-term jobs are worth it, given the overcrowding and desperate core need. If the community decides that trailers would better meet their core social housing needs, so be it.

The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation has already committed to looking to aboriginal development corporations to build social housing and leaseback to the Housing Corporation. This is a good idea and should be followed up on. I will be asking questions on this issue today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Funding to Participate in Super Soccer Tournament

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring up the issue of a lack of funding for Super Soccer, which is just one small example of the tremendous problems faced by youths and other interest groups in all of the small communities. Mr. Speaker, the way Super Soccer is structured is limiting and constrictive. I am not certain that the structure is serving the needs of the soccer-playing community. Smaller communities are at a disadvantage. Soccer could be further developed so that more individuals can take advantage of the training. Often, smaller communities have difficulty developing competitive individuals and teams compared to the larger centres.

There are several problems, Mr. Speaker. The first is that smaller communities have to come up with their own up-front funding to send sports teams by air to Yellowknife for Super Soccer. While there are some ways to recover partial travel costs, it is largely after the fact -- and only for a percentage of travel.

Another problem is with the huge costs of obtaining a bingo licence. Often sports groups have to fund raise, competing with other interest groups, just to get the very scarce money in small communities together to pay for a bingo licence. There does not seem to be a manageable separate rate for non-profit groups. The Super Soccer tournament is coming up this May in Yellowknife. Soccer teams in Fort Resolution have been holding bake sales, penny and bottle drives, and holding lunches at the school. They are scratching the bottom of the barrel, trying to come up with the funds they need to send the number of teams they want to.

If Super Soccer were held in March, many teams would not have to fly into Yellowknife, they could drive. That way, more teams would be able to compete. They would also save on the

amount of money in the car to make the trip. The problem with all of these concerns is that many individuals and teams are missing out. Communities, such as Fort Resolution, can only afford to send so many players by air. Many more students would be participating if they did not have to fly or worry about funding.

It has been suggested that since Super Soccer is aimed at school children and takes place in the schools, that it also be funded by the divisional boards of education through the Department of Education. Soccer is a universal sport, requiring little equipment. All you need is a ball and a good pair of shoes.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah, your time has expired.

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

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It should be accessible to anyone who wants to develop that skill. Soccer is probably the largest house-league sport in Canada and is growing every year. For Northwest Territories youth, it is a chance to participate in a world-class sport. Young people should not miss out, just because they cannot afford to attend and participate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement on Edmonton Oilers Alumni Hockey Challenge Game

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was approached this morning by one of the organizers of the Edmonton Oilers Alumni Hockey Challenge Game and I was asked to put my blades on and to play for the Yellowknife team. This hockey challenge is to take place tomorrow evening at the Yellowknife Community Arena beginning at 7:00 p.m.

The Yellowknife team will include a number of local youth from The Yellowknife Minor Hockey Association as well some old veterans from the Yellowknife Old-Timers.

It is important because the proceeds from the fun-filled event will go directly towards supporting the Yellowknife Minor Hockey Association and to help support this year's Caribou Carnival. I encourage all Members to come out to support this worthy event and come and cheer team Yellowknife on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: At this time I would like to recognize in the gallery, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Dan Marion, and with him the Commissioner-designate Glenna Hansen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. Barry Greenland the sub-chief of the Inuvik Nihtat Band Council. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Bob Doherty, the executive director of the Manufacturers' Association. I believe he is up there with another person, who I am assuming is Allison Barr, who I believe works for the association. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Indeed they are there. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Oral Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was saying in my Member's statement, I am growing quite concerned with what has been occurring as we have been going through the interim appropriation. Mr. Speaker, this government, while running for office, spoke of being open and transparent but I am beginning to feel, and I feel I must express it here. The only thing transparent about this government is the government's commitment to transparency. Mr. Speaker, I wrote a letter to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment on January 25, 2000, regarding the Aurora Campus project. I received a response February 11, 2000. At the end of this letter he states: "I will however keep you apprised of the plan for the campus as this information becomes available." I would like to know from the Minister if this information became available last night between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information became available to me when we were doing the review of an overall government look at where reductions could take place. I believe it was about a month ago, and I have to point out, Mr. Speaker, that this has been a very unusual situation that we are in. We are dealing with an interim budget which normally is not done by that process. The process normally, is one where we have business plans and then we go into a budget process, so there is a great deal of procedure which we follow. Because of the late election and because we did not sit until January and February, it has created tremendous pressure on getting things done, getting things into place. So, it has been a difficulty trying to stay on top of all the needs that we need to meet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that, in fact, interim appropriations have been done in the spring of 1992 and 1996, 1999, and again this year. Mr. Speaker, the Minister stated that he was aware of this approximately a month ago. He wrote me a letter and, approximately 18 days after that, the Minister was aware of this a month ago and he did not have the decency or the courtesy to inform me, as a Member or my community. When is he going to inform the community? Is it after the fact that the budget was passed and then we would find out the following day? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes it is true that there is an interim budget. There are some precedents for interim budgets, 1992 and 1996. But there is very little precedence for budget cutting the way we have to do at this particular time, and it has caused some difficulties. I do recognize the Member's concern of not being informed, and I do apologize to him for that. I think he deserves to have been informed. I have to also state about my particular position that I am not sure, having not been in this situation before, under these kinds of circumstances, as to what my particular responsibilities are, and where I can draw the line of what I can release and what I cannot release at one particular time. Simply because of the new process that we have had to go through with this particular process. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only thing new about this is the evasive maneuvers the Minister has been able to make around the question, which is who has he contacted in my community about this project? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not contacted anyone on my part, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is there going to be any formal notification besides the fact that this has come out in public now in this House, in committee of the whole? Are you

going to be contacting the campus or the mayor in my community? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 147-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did inform the board of governors of Aurora College in a meeting that the Inuvik Campus would be delayed. That was in response to direct question. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Now that it is clear that the Power Corporation is splitting and that there is a significant change coming, there is a possible regulatory review being undertaken by the Public Utilities Board. Communities like Fort Simpson are looking at alternate sources of power. Can the Minister tell me, in relation to a broader energy policy and strategy for the Northwest Territories, what steps he is going to take to insure that the Power Corporation plays a key role in the development of an energy strategy for the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Honourable Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are several issues that are key in the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. One is the division of the Power Corporation between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and the other, of course, is the issue with respect to the franchise in Fort Simpson.

We are working on that very heavily. We are trying to ensure, in the case of the split of the Power Corporation, that we become the service provider for Nunavut. In the case of Fort Simpson, we are in ongoing discussions and contact with the community. We intend to take a leading role in the energy supplies systems here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question of the issue is broader than the supply of energy as the Minister refers to power. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation is the main asset of the Northwest Territories. It is a big one. It is the main provider of all of the services. There is a possible change in the regulation to

expand the capabilities under the PUB of what is able to be provided.

Is the Minister going to take a broader look, other than just looking at the division issue and having to restructure because of the shrinking of the corporation, and look at what role the Power Corporation plays in the 21st century as we deal with the broad energy strategy issues facing us? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Honourable Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not yet dealt with what the broader mandate will be of the Power Corporation or this government in terms of energy supply in the Territories. I have been dealing with some immediate firefighting in certain areas and that has maintained my attention.

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

Supplementary to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was not aware there are forests in Israel. My question to the Minister is when will he be able to put his mind to this very significant issue that is underway now as we speak? The government has committed to an energy strategy. The NWTPC and this Minister should be playing a key role to make sure the right strategy is drafted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Honourable Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be dealing with both the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Power Corporation and its future the moment we are through with the Session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to provide a more concrete update when we next gather to possibly review business plans and he appears before committee to talk about the issue of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Honourable Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 148-14(2): Energy Strategy in the NWT

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question has to do with the statement that the Minister responsible for Transportation made earlier today with respect to the early closure of the ice bridge.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about this record-breaking time in the ice bridge closure. It is two weeks ahead of the earliest time we have. It is going to have serious impacts on the residents of Yellowknife and surrounding areas, as well the businesses. There are schools going up and they have to get the supplies in. I was wondering if the Minister could inform this House, seeing that the statement probably was written earlier, I wonder if he could give us the absolute latest on when he expects the ice bridge to close. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question. The department does its best to advise the public as early as possible as to work conditions. The Member is quite correct. There is an update to the report. The department report now states that Fort Providence ice crossing will close to light traffic tomorrow at noon. That would be March 30, 2000 at noon. Light traffic means cars and vans. Heavier traffic may be closed as early as the weekend of April 1st. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. His statement indicates that the cause of this early closure is due to an act of God. It is the warm temperature. I wonder if the Minister could say it is 100 percent an act of God and not the overuse and heavy traffic volume on that ice bridge?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The crossing is closed due to warm weather. There is a lot of slush and a lot of water there now, which would prevent light traffic from crossing. Heavy traffic can still cross. It is an act of God, or I suppose the weatherman, at the least, who is responsible for the deterioration of the ice crossing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious issue. I think we should remember that the ferry went out earlier than normal last time. In the last legs of my campaign, I had no less than five or six people asking me this question, so I feel I have to ask the Minister, is this not the time for a bridge? We cannot handle this short time for the ice road. Would the Minister consider building a bridge over the Mackenzie River?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I suppose the Member now can expect questions as to when the ferry will open rather than when it will close. The department will try and have the ferry running as quickly as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. I am anticipating your final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the department has more power than God Him or Herself. But seriously, Mr. Speaker, we have Winspear, Diavik, and Lupin who are doing all they can to get their supplies over there. We have grocery stores that are not going to have enough supplies. We only have two or three days notice now. I know the Minister is going to have meetings with the federal Ministers about our conditions in building roads. I would like to know if the Minister will seriously consider the option of building a bridge over that water?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. You were talking about ice bridges initially. That is pushing the envelope a little, but...the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 149-14(2): Early Ice Bridge Closure

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I have said in the past that the department would be happy to build a bridge as soon as somebody comes up with \$60 million. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was also caught off guard with the situation with Aurora College in Inuvik. I have been pushing for several years to ensure that we get a new college in Inuvik through some new process or a P3 initiative. Realizing the economic potential we have in the Beaufort Delta with oil and gas and the activities and amount of revenues it will bring to this government, I think it is more important now than ever to ensure this facility gets built.

It is also important that we start preparing ourselves to have the people trained and in place so when the development happens, they are on the ground available to work and are taking advantage of this project.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of money spent by this government in the diamond industry. I thought through this initiative, it would give us an opportunity to take advantage of the oil and gas industry and what it can offer. My question to the Minister responsible for Education is, when will the Minister consult with all the Members in this House, the Arctic College Board in Inuvik, and the Delta Divisional Board of Education to try and find a way to ensure this capital project continues on? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the concern there is regarding this project. The project initially was in the capital plan, and then it was switched to a P3 project. Because of the fiscal situation we are facing, it is now back as a capital plan for several years down the road. We recognize the facility is an old one, but because of the priorities we have faced, particularly with K-12 schools, it was essential that we proceed with those.

While I appreciate the Member has concerns with respect to when this project can be done, it would have to be done in consultation with what the capital planning is for this particular government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that the Minister mentioned how important this project was. It was listed on a short-list for capital projects through the P3 project. Yet through that list, this was one of, I believe, two facilities that were going to be built. One was the residence facility in Fort Smith and this was the other facility in Inuvik. With that, I would like to ask the Minister, where does this project stand in regard to the priorities of this government at this time?

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

Further Return to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been repositioned as a capital project several years down the road and it is back in the capital plan, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister when will this project get back on track to where it is a priority to Members of this House? And also, it was a priority to the previous government. Because it was a priority, I would like to ensure it is done within the next year. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The project has been delayed by several years and in order to change that, it would require Cabinet to consider looking at the capital plan. There were reasons why it was placed where it is because of the tightness of money. We had to eliminate \$10 million from the budget. That is where it is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When will this Minister ensure that this project gets off the ground?

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

Further Return to Question 150-14(2): Aurora Campus Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, it was put back into the capital plan and it is scheduled for 2003-2004.

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

Oral Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier and it is in regard to summer student hiring. I had posed a couple of questions to Mr. Ootes and they were later referred to Mr. Kakfwi about summer student hiring and I was reassured that, indeed, an office would be set up by the Executive to handle incoming resumes, incoming calls and coordinate the employment of summer students. This may be the last time I get to ask the Premier about summer student hiring before we break and students will be arriving shortly. I am wondering if the Premier can tell me, how many summer jobs has the government identified for returning students this year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Premier, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi.

Return to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not clear on the number of positions that are potentially available. I do know that last year, students were matched with 261 positions. In fact, 261 students were placed with summer jobs, which is an increase of 242 in the previous year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can appreciate the Minister might not have the information on how many jobs have been identified this year. I am hoping that he will provide that to this House. I am wondering if, in fact, this office which has been set up with phone numbers and contact people has been receiving resumes?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Premier, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot confirm that, but I can confirm that no one has indicated any difference. Someone would have pressed an alarm button if, in fact, no applications or resumes had been received. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad there have been no alarms. We can assume, I guess, from the Premier's comments that students are submitting their resumes as usual. Everything is going along. Everything is fine. There will be jobs for these students. Maybe the Premier did not have the information on the number of jobs. Can he tell me how much money has been allocated for summer student hiring, though?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Premier, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am unable to provide that information either. I think in large part, we try to match every student that applies for work with the government with a job. As I have said, I have no idea how many will apply this year. I do know that last year, 261 students that applied for work with us were given summer jobs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to get a commitment from the Premier that he will respond in writing and let this House know how many students have applied this year when that information is available and how many jobs have been provided for those applications. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Premier, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 151-14(2): Summer Student Employment Program

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is something I will do for the Members. I will provide information on how many students have applied for work with the government for the summer employment program. We have also asked departments to identify a number of positions or jobs that are available for students within their departments. The information will also be shared with the Members. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 152-14(2): Support for Log Homes Initiative

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. As many of the Members know, there is both the housing and employment crisis in many territorial communities. There is a need for more housing and employment. Last Wednesday, I mentioned that sweat equity programs existed which allowed people to cut and haul their own logs for building homes. I asked the Minister responsible for Housing if government programs like this could be re-introduced. He stated programs such as this are currently being revised.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that not everybody wants to cut logs and build their own home, but I also know that the majority of people in my region need housing. I would like to ask the Minister if he would support the log housing initiative by establishing an industry where northern logs are supplied for northern homes?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 152-14(2): Support for Log Homes Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been discussion with the Minister for Housing, about opportunities and initiatives that might undertake to increase our capacity to provide adequate housing to our people, particularly in the small communities. Given our limited resources and the almost total absence of federal resources for building homes and houses, there have been a number of meetings between the Northwest Territories Development Corporation, the Housing Corporation and the Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and even the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

The idea of providing logs to build homes would create a housing market in small communities and utilize the labour force that we know exists in the communities. People who are ready, skilled and trained to build houses are there. We are looking at an overall picture trying to come up with some ideas on how we can, given our very limited resources, increase the number of houses that we can build in our communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 152-14(2): Support for Log Homes Initiative

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister assure me that there will be funds allocated for employment opportunities in log harvesting for homes in the June budget?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 152-14(2): Support for Log Homes Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is work currently underway, as I said, to see what we can do to support communities and their push for increased available housing, especially on the private side. There is an interest and some work underway to look at ways in which we can increase our capacity to provide more houses to small communities and to utilize the resources at the community level, as well as the workers. There are people at the community level, who, we know are already skilled and trained and are interested in being trained in the housing construction business. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 153-14(2): Program Re-Design for Community Empowerment

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today will be for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. In my Member's statement today, I talked about the need to let the communities themselves make decisions about what kind of housing they need and how the funding should be used to achieve those needs. My question for the Minister is, whether the proposed redesign of programs of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation gives consideration to the empowerment of communities?

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

Return to Question 153-14(2): Program Re-Design for Community Empowerment

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am trying to answer the Member's question. We have put together a four-point strategy, a plan that would address the housing situation in his community, which will be community driven. We feel that we do have a community survey that drives the housing requirements. We would like to revise that somewhat. Again, in view of Mr. Lafferty's question, to ensure that we

provide more affordable housing to the communities, I am prepared to answer more questions as they relate to this subject. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 153-14(2): Program Re-Design for Community Empowerment

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Minister indicate that there will be consideration for log homes. I wonder if the Minister is considering the use of modular homes or trailers to address the social housing in his proposed redesign.

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

Further Return to Question 153-14(2): Program Re-Design for Community Empowerment

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of new methodologies I would like to introduce to the communities. Again, it is in the context of what is affordable housing? In some areas in the South Mackenzie, we feel perhaps modular homes would be ideal. In other remote communities, again we talk about log structures being more affordable. It varies from region to region. That is why it is important that we travel into communities with the residing MLAs who know what the requirements are and what is most affordable to that community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 153-14(2): Program Re-Design for Community Empowerment

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplementary is on the involvement of aboriginal development corporations. In the provision of social housing units has there been any dialogue with these development corporations, and are they interested?

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

Further Return to Question 153-14(2): Program Re-Design for Community Empowerment

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reference to the Member's question, and again, I go back to our presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, we did communicate with the local development corporations. There is some initiative to work with them. There is a plan for perhaps some leaseback arrangements. We will continue to consult with the committee leadership to further that interest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 154-14(2): Status of Diavik Land Leases

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is in regard to the Diavik project and I would direct it to the Minister responsible for Finance, who has been designated as the government's lead Minister on this project. Just recently, Mr. Speaker, the mine cleared one of the permitting requirements for a land use permit, but another deadline looms for another important part of their permitting and that regards land leases, which are in the jurisdiction of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

A new regime comes into effect at the end of March, Mr. Speaker, whereby this kind of authority would go over to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Waters Act, if I have my information correct. The consequence for Diavik could be considerably more overlap, duplication and cost. My question for the Minister is whether he can advise the Assembly of the status of these land leases now before the Minister responsible for DIAND. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister, Mr. Handley, regarding a special assignment.

Return to Question 154-14(2): Status of Diavik Land Leases

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information the Member summarized is essentially correct, but Diavik needs a land lease. As of April 1, 2000, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, Part 4, comes into effect, which gives the responsibility for water permits, licenses and land use permits to that board. If Diavik does not get their land lease by April 1st, 2000, then they would have to apply for a land use permit, which would go through a 42 day consulting period and so on.

If they carry on with the land lease, they do not need a land use permit. The federal Minister is aware of the situation and, I am sure, is handling it. The other condition that the federal government has placed on the issuing of the necessary permits and so on, was that there be some satisfactory progress on participation agreements and I understand two of those have been completed and the others are proceeding along. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 154-14(2): Status of Diavik Land Leases

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is good news that the various parts of the permitting are going along, but as the people of this Territory experienced in the last process the clock is ticking, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister provide any assurance that we will, indeed, see a clearance of these land leases by the end of March? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 154-14(2): Status of Diavik Land Leases

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot provide that kind of assurance. That is really a decision that has to be made by the federal Minister responsible for DIAND. I

can assure the Member though, we know the federal Minister is aware of the situation. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today, is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Speaker, does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment currently fund sports and teams from schools in the Northwest Territories to participate in sports in and outside of their communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funding process that is used for schools is used through the district education councils, who in turn, allocate funding to the communities and it is mostly based on enrolment. I am not sure whether there is direct funding by the department for recreational or sports programs in addition to that funding. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that most of the communities, especially those that operate in the social envelopes on behalf of their communities and to a certain extent this government, are having great difficulties with their financial resources. We know the importance of sports and recreational activities and the healthy choices that young people make today. In light of that, would the department consider an increase of block funding or allocation of funds to divisional boards of education, so that sufficient resources are made available for young people to participate in sport events in and outside of the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am also aware that we have Municipal and Community Affairs that runs the recreation program. There may need to be some co-ordinating and checking with that particular operation to see what programs they have available. With regard to the department providing specific programs, we do have an arrangement to work directly with the district education councils and I think, we would have to co-ordinate through that process. I am not sure what the district education councils have in place at this particular time, for the type of program that Mr. Nitah is speaking of. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister responsible then, approach the district education boards to start a process to answer some of the questions he has asked and bring back that information to the House, so that everyone understands the processes available to sporting teams and sporting committees within communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Member for this. I certainly agree that recreation and sports are all part of healthy youths. I think it is important for us to address any areas that may lead to the betterment of their lifestyles and their academic achievement and other achievements. I will undertake to contact the district education councils and see what they have in place and to see what programs are administered through my particular department. I will also, of course, check with the recreation department of Municipal and Community Affairs to see what programs are there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not certain, but almost certain, that once he does his inquiries, he will find that the resources available to the district education boards will not be sufficient to supply necessary funds and resources to sporting teams in the community. Would the Minister then undertake, based upon information he receives, to rectify potential problems or come up with solutions that will address the very limited access to resources for full participation of sporting teams in small communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 155-14(2): Sport Funding to NWT Schools

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot commit that we could provide funding for this. I can commit that we can work on a project to see what is available at the moment and to see who the present funders are and through what process. For example, Sport North offers funding in various ways to communities, I understand, but I am not sure of the specifics of their particular program. I will undertake to look into this.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Oral Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question at this time will be directed to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, it seems that we have developed some forgetfulness. I recall the Minister as a regular Member was very concerned about information on the timing and receiving of that information and pushed government to have it available in time for consultation. The Minister has told me that it has been a month and he has not been able to consult. In fact, in response to my earlier question, the Minister stated he met with the board of governors and informed them of a delay. I, in fact, spoke to a Member who was part of that meeting. There was discussion of changing it from a P3 process to a capital project. They were reviewing it and they knew the importance of it, but there was not talk of deferral and how long it would be. Can the Minister confirm with me that, in fact, there was discussion, they were given advanced notice that deferral was imminent. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My meeting with the board of governors was last Saturday. The Inuvik College Campus was discussed. To the best of my recollection, certainly I mentioned that the project was being changed from a P3 to a capital project. To the best of my recollection, and I stand to be corrected, I indicated that it was delayed. I did not tell them how long.

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

Supplementary to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe you can take this as a correction. I have heard it from a reliable source that, in fact, deferral was not a highlight of the discussion, and another response to the idea of the project going from a P3 to capital, back to a P3 based costs, is as I see, ludicrous. It went from a P3 process because it was a new way of building facilities in the North that did not demand cash up front for the project. Turning it back to a regular capital process, means that we have to come up with the cash in a one-time, one lump sum. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the 1999-2000 main estimates, it is listed under Education, Culture and Employment, Aurora Campus facility in Inuvik, estimated completion of occupancy, August 2000, Mr. Speaker. What has happened in a year? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, the project was at one time a capital project, then changed to a P3 project. On direction from the government to address the issue of the need to cut \$10 million from the capital

projects, this particular project was not ranked as high as some others. For that reason, it was delayed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for this project to go as far as it has in the public-private partnership completed for occupancy in this upcoming summer and to change so dramatically in that time and knowing that a P3 would not have required cash up front, what is the reasoning for changing it back to a capital program from a P3 process? We know for a fact, the way the P3 process operates, the way it is accounted for, would not require the \$10 million up front, but the fact of doing it this way, requires that \$10 million up front.

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

Further Return to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to refer the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform me that if there are any further changes in operations and maintenance or capital programs that affect my community, that he will at least give me more than five minutes notice? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 156-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, the process we use is a little different than we have previously used. Usually we go through a business planning process. Members are informed, et cetera, and then we go into the main budget.

This has been a particularly tough situation to reach this stage. That is the way it is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Speaker was unable to hear the reply because of the murmur in the background.

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Oral Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment regarding the Arctic College project in Inuvik changing from a P3 project to a capital project.

I would like to ask the Minister when did Cabinet make a decision to switch this project from a P3 to a capital project?

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

Return to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to refer that to the Minister responsible for the Department of Finance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Minister has answered the question. However, Ministers cannot refer questions to other Ministers. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me how far along this project was in the planning stages? I know a call for proposals went out to see if there was interest. I believe there was a request for proposals after that once it was short-listed. Would the Minister tell me how far along this project was while it was still a P3 project?

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

Further Return to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that information in hand. I will have to get back to the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister also tell me exactly how much money was spent on consultation with the different parties in compiling a proposal for the possibility of going with a P3 on this project?

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

Further Return to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information here at the moment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister make an attempt to get us this information before the closure of the House on Friday so we can have a chance to possibly ask him a few more questions on this? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 157-14(2): Aurora Campus Capital Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will do that. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services. Last week, there was a provincial-territorial meeting of health Ministers. Apparently, we did not deem it important enough to send Mrs. Groenewegen to these meetings.

This week, we have a federal-provincial-territorial meeting of health Ministers. Mr. Rock is in attendance. I am wondering if this is an important enough meeting for us to send our health Minister to? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. There was a meeting last week of provincial-territorial health Ministers. It was held in Montreal. It was a strategizing meeting. I was able to save the government significant money by attending this meeting by conference call.

-- Applause

We did receive a report of that strategy session. Subsequently, the Premiers of the provinces and territories met to discuss the outcome of the Montreal meeting. Mr. Kakfwi was kind enough to invite me to sit in on that and hear what the agenda was going to be, as a result of the meeting in Montreal.

In fact, tomorrow in Toronto, there is a meeting with Allan Rock of provincial and territorial health Ministers. If I left at 5:00 p.m. I could still be there by tomorrow morning.

Again, it has turned into an inter-governmental and Premiers' issue. We know what the agenda is going to be and I would be happy to share that with the Members. Again though, I am torn between my responsibilities in this House. The interim appropriation for my department has been deferred and has not yet been passed. My loyalties are to the House. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Supplementary to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would love to see that agenda. I am sure, front and centre on that agenda, is the fact that the provinces and territories need more money for health care. Maybe the Minister can tell us if she feels we have enough money? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, we do not have enough money for health. One of the items that will be discussed at the meeting in Toronto tomorrow morning, is the Canada Health and Social Transfer. This is something that has been raised with the federal government since the recent federal budget, which did not restore the CHST to former levels. The request has been to restore it to the levels that were in place before the significant reductions in the mid 1990s.

The items on the agenda at the Toronto meeting tomorrow are the CHST restoration, issues of cost drivers, and potential prospects for the reform of the health care systems. Mr. Speaker, for every billion dollars the federal government announces, our government does receive approximately \$1.2 million in health funding. I am sure the message will be delivered very capably to Allan Rock tomorrow that the CHST funding should be restored. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like we are making out like bandits. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us if she feels that this would be a worthwhile meeting and that she should be in attendance. Given that she is torn between her responsibilities here and there, should she not be there?

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

Further Return to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have said, after hearing the agenda discussed at length by the Premiers yesterday, I would say that the outcome of tomorrow's meetings is fairly predictable. I know there will be a request put forward for a task force to look at some of the cost drivers and compile more information for another health Ministers' meeting to be held in May.

Mr. Speaker, I very much look forward to meeting the other provincial-territorial health Ministers. I intend to do that in May, at which time my travels will not conflict with the Session. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear the Minister feels the meeting will have a predictable outcome. I would suggest that if we did not attend meetings with predictable outcomes with the federal government, we would not be going anywhere.

I would suggest that the Minister should be at this meeting. Although she has offered that she will be meeting with Mr. Rock this spring, I really think this is an oversight on the government's part, and a snub. I hope Mrs. Groenewegen will seriously consider my comments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. There was no question there. That was a comment. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 158-14(2): Health Ministers Meeting

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, these are important meetings. I hope Mr. Rock will not feel snubbed. We do have a significant delegation there, including someone representing inter-governmental affairs, a senior official of our government, as well as the assistant deputy minister of Health and Social Services, and the senior official responsible for the Northwest Territories relations between our government and other governments.

If Mr. Rock feels snubbed by my absence, I certainly do apologize. I look forward to working with him in the future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Oral Question 159-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I rise simply for clarification.

I was listening to the discussion going back and forth and the shameful way that my colleague for Inuvik Boot Lake has been treated in the issue of deferred capital, and how he was blindsided in committee.

I am wondering if the Minister could elaborate. He has gone to great lengths to say that this particular Assembly has somehow instituted unique processes that have prevented him from showing the common courtesy of consulting with Members, letting them know bad news is coming down the pipeline. Could the Minister elaborate on these unique circumstances? It is still not clear to me, as I see this Assembly following on the

footsteps of the 13th Assembly with no dramatic change in process. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 159-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The interim budget is one that is unusual. It usually happens every four years. As I have stated earlier, there is some difference between this one and other interim budgets in previous years. It has been one where money was available, and there may not have been the cuts that had to be considered.

In this particular budget, \$10 billion had to be cut from the capital program, which created some problems. It has been a situation where it has come to us on a pressure basis. We have had to deal with some things very quickly. In the course of that, there has been perhaps an omission of communication.

As I mentioned earlier, I apologized to the Member for not communicating with him. Under normal circumstances, I think we would have had a different system. I think that a different system allows us a better communication system to contact and stay in touch with Members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The time for question period has expired. Mr. Miltenberger, you may continue with your supplementaries.

Supplementary to Question 159-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to try to get the history straight here. There were interim appropriations in 1992, 1996, 1999 and the one currently before us. The Minister has taken part in 1996, 1999 and of course this one.

In 1996, there were significant cuts made to the budget. Is the Minister telling us there is more bad news coming now, worse than what we went through in 1996, as a justification for what is transpiring in this House? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 159-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure what the Member means when he asks if there is more bad news coming. I cannot address that question, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 159-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as an excuse for what has happened, the Minister is using the fact that this is somehow a unique Assembly, and that somehow the cuts and the financial situation we have

somehow precluded him, unlike in any other Assembly, from following the basic steps of working in a consensus style government with other Members.

I am asking him to clarify that. When we compare it to what we went through in 1996, that was far worse than what we are going through today. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 159-14(2): Aurora Campus Project Deferral

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I have explained the situation to the Member already. I was not a Cabinet Minister back in 1996 or 1999. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The time for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 13-14(2): External Legal Services

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Honourable Jim Antoine, Minister responsible for the Department of Justice. On review of the contract report for the second quarter year to date of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2000, I would like to request a response to the following question as it relates to the Department of Justice:

For the contracts listed under the Department of Justice, could the Minister provide an explanation as to why the Government of the Northwest Territories spent more than \$1.3 million on external legal services during the first half of the fiscal year?

Thank you for your timely response.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, and wishes to report that Bill 4 is ready for consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 14-14(2): Request for Comprehensive Audit of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development**

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 31, 2000, I will move the following motion. Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the Legislative Assembly request the Auditor General of Canada to undertake a comprehensive audit of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and report thereon to the Legislative Assembly.

And further, that the Legislative Assembly request the Auditor General to complete this comprehensive audit as expeditiously as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 14, notices of motion. The Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Motion 15-14(2): Enactment of Human Rights Legislation

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 31, 2000, I will move the following motion. Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the Government introduce legislation regarding a human rights act no later than November 30, 2000.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Minister's Statement 1-14(2), Sessional Statement; Tabled Document 14-14(2), Our Communities, Our Decisions "Let's Get on With It!", Final Report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act; Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001; Committee Report 2-14(2), Accountability and Oversight on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation; Committee Report 3-14(2), Governance and Economic Development on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation; Committee Report 4-14(2), Social Programs on 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation.

By authority given the Speaker by Motion 13-14(2), the committee of the whole may sit past adjournment until it is prepared to report. Item 19, committee of the whole, with Mr. Krutko in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Good afternoon. We are dealing with Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee continue consideration of Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, along with Committee Report 2-14(2), Committee Report 3-14(2), and Committee Report 4-14(2) concurrently. Specifically, that we consider the appropriations for Public Works and Services, followed by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. After that, the Legislative Assembly. Should we have the will after that,

perhaps resume Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): At this time, I would like to recognize a former Member of the House, Mr. James Rabesca. Welcome, James.

-- Applause

With that, we will take a short break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee back to order. Before the break, we decided to start with Bill 6, with the review of the Department of Public Works and Services. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening remarks. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, I will keep my remarks today brief. I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services interim appropriation for the first four months of the fiscal year 2000-2001. The budget for operations and maintenance is \$12.3 million, which is 34 percent of the Department of Public Works and Services preliminary planning target.

This percentage is in line with historical expenditures for the first third of previous fiscal years. The major components are \$4.2 million for salaries and benefits, \$4.5 million for lease payments and \$1.8 million for maintenance.

The capital interim appropriation amount is based on projects that need to begin before the end of July. There is a list of these projects in the papers before you.

Mr. Chairman, this plan was built from a review of the department's expenditure history, as well as an estimate of new year requirements. Overall, the proposed interim budget is comparable to the current year's budget. No major changes have been proposed for the new fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this department have any remarks? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee met with the Minister and his staff on March 17, 2000, to review the proposed 2000-2001 interim appropriation for the department. The committee made note of the following issues.

Petroleum Revolving Fund

The petroleum revolving fund has a limit of \$5 million. The purpose of the fund is to subsidize the storage and distribution of petroleum products in 17 remote communities in the Northwest Territories. Committee members, in light of the recent increase in the price of oil, the petroleum revolving fund may have exceeded its \$5 million limit.

The department replied that the fund currently has a deficit of \$2.8 million and is projected to add another \$1 million in debt for the upcoming fiscal year. The Minister further explained that increases in the price of petroleum products in the department's client communities averted any chance of the fund exceeding its cap.

Committee members commented that the prices of petroleum products were already high and the recent price increase made by the department did not help any. Many consumers are also not aware of subsidies for fuel.

The committee noted that the high price of fuel especially affects the elderly and those on income support. This puts extra strain on the resources of the government's social envelope. Many consumers are also not aware of subsidies for fuel.

Committee members recommended that absorbing any increases in the price of fuel may very well mean savings for the government in other activities, such as within the social envelope.

At the request of the committee, the Minister agreed to provide the fuel pricing rationale for review by Members. The committee also recommended that subsidies for fuel be clearly identified for the consumer.

Privatization of Petroleum Products Division (PPD)

Committee members were concerned that if the PPD were to be privatized, it should be sold in its entirety to one corporation, thus ensuring economies of scale are maintained. Any community not supplied by the potential purchaser will require further fuel price subsidization by the government, which will no longer have any economy of scale of its own. The result of not selling the entire operation to one entity would most likely mean higher levels of government expenditures to maintain an affordable level of fuel pricing in unserved communities.

Committee members also noted that by selling the PPD, subsidies to the fuel price might no longer be possible, as the government will no longer be in the petroleum storage and distribution business.

The government, at the request of the committee, agreed that if the petroleum products division was to be considered for sale, a call for proposals would be publicly advertised, and the division be sold as a single entity.

Proposed Renovations for the Laing Building

Committee members raised the issue of renovating the Laing Building, one that has a long history.

Further, the committee pointed out that there is much unutilized office space being leased by the government to which the potential and existing tenants of the Laing Building could move.

Furthermore, members suggested that all options should be considered if larger or more specialized spaces are required, including private sector investments.

The Minister, at the request of the committee, agreed to provide the members with a rationale and a briefing by department staff to explain the proposal for further renovations for the Laing Building.

Records Management

Currently the government leases warehouses and other costly storage space to store vast amounts of records. See page 1, operations and maintenance, departmental submissions, PWS, 2000- 2001 interim appropriation.

The committee noted that a more current records storage system, including microfiche be considered, to ensure better use of existing space and perhaps a more manageable records system.

Further, the committee noted that this is not a new area as previous Legislative Assemblies have made this recommendation as well.

Committee members recommended that the government's record system might be better managed and operated with the adoption of a more current records management system.

However, the department replied that although it provides the lead for records management for all government departments, the departments are responsible for their own records management.

Further, the department summarized that the government is only in the infancy of its records management and will take some progress before a more current records management system can be considered.

That concludes the committee's comments, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like to bring in witnesses.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-At-Arms, could you please escort the witness in?

Would the Minister introduce his witnesses for the record?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Mr. Bruce Rattray, deputy minister of Public Works and Services. On my left is Mr. Brian Austin, director of petroleum products.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments for the Minister regarding the Department of Public Works and Services? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of managing petroleum services, the department looks after the petroleum revolving fund in providing petroleum services to communities that are not presently served by the private sector.

One of the things that is of concern to everyone around the world is the uncertain and escalating price of fuel. I am wondering if the Minister could provide us with a picture on what the department might estimate the impact of the

increasing cost of fuel products would be for the government as a whole? Would the Minister be able to help us out there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Bruce Rattray to reply to that, as it applies to all of our leases and operations and maintenance costs, both department-owned buildings as well as leases. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, the portion we see directly is the impact that price increases have had on communities where we actually provide the services. We also see the impact on our own department from the increases in cost to operate buildings that we have the responsibility for, or the increased costs to leases that we manage.

At this point, there has not been a large impact to date on the government facilities in the communities. Our fuel resupplies were completed last summer, for the most part. That was prior to the major increases that have taken place recently. We have just completed the winter road resupply. That is a portion of the total fuel volume we supply, but it is not the bulk of it.

We certainly incurred some increased costs on that. Eventually, we will have to include that within the pricing structure. That will be passed on to consumers, a large number of whom, particularly in the small communities, are government departments. Those increases will be somewhere down the line.

At this point, we are not sure what the impact will be when we move into the resupply season again this coming summer. There has been a bit of relief in the pricing in the last few days, as production cores have been increased. Obviously, we are hopeful that will have a larger impact as we get closer to the resupply season this summer, but it is hard to predict what that will be.

With respect to our own operations, the facilities that we operate and buy fuel for and the facilities that we lease, we have not seen a major impact to date. There has been some increase over the course of the winter. That has been manageable within our existing budgetary resources. What the impact is going to be when we get to the next full winter season, will largely depend upon what the fuel pricing looks like at the time. We are still to some extent in a wait and see mode as to what the larger impact is going to be.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department also advised us of the petroleum revolving fund and we have some information on how that works. The essential purpose of this, as I understand, is to protect customers from spikes, particularly the customers and the government from spikes in fuel costs and give everyone some certainty of a price regime. Given the price shock we have just recently seen, can the department give the committee some indication of how it is managing this, such as cost increases that are passed on to

customers. Will that kind of thing be done in good time, to make sure that the funds are not threatened? How is the department going to go about managing this situation? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have with me Mr. Brian Austin, who is the director for petroleum products. I will ask him to respond to the Member's question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: The petroleum products divisions operates its revolving fund as was indicated, off to the side. There is a thing called the price stabilization fund, which is a fund that absorbs losses or profits that the fund may enjoy over a fiscal year. The maximum value that the stabilization fund can carry is \$5 million. At this point in time, the fund is at a negative \$2.8 million. We anticipate a loss at roughly a \$1 million this year, which will take it to \$3.8 million.

There is still room for the stabilization fund to assume a level of loss, but only to the maximum of the \$5 million. If that amount is exceeded, then an appropriation would have to make up the difference between the \$5 million and the actual amount of loss. The management of the cost of fuel is something that we are focusing on to the maximum set possible, but certainly, a substantial amount of the cost is based on the wholesale price of fuel.

At this time, the wholesale price of diesel fuel is running around 34 cents a litre, where traditionally, we expect to see it around 22 cents a litre. If the prices were to continue, we would have a considerable problem in trying to deal with it, in trying to stay within the price stabilization fund.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the department's ability to pass these additional costs, if they are incurred, to the customer? In the answer to the previous question, I understand if it tips over the \$5 million threshold, then an appropriation would be requested, but is there a provision within the way the fund is managed to actually go to the customer and treat this more as a user pay situation? Is that an option? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe the department, as it has done in the past, has the option of going to the FMB and requesting a price increase for the petroleum products if we feel that we cannot reach the threshold. We have taken that measure and we have, in fact, in December, taken and requested the FMB to raise the price of petroleum products in the communities by ten cents a litre.

It was approved and it came into effect January 1st of this year. We have the option of raising the price of fuel in order to keep ourselves within the limits set out by the revolving fund process.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One more question as I see my clock running out. What would be the department's preference as it sees that \$5 million threshold coming up? Would it be to go to the customer or would it be to come back to the Assembly for an appropriation? What is the preference? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, there are certain requirements under the revolving fund the department has to abide by. Like I said, we have a mandate to stay within the limits set by the revolving fund. If we have any indications that we are going to reach beyond the limits of that revolving fund, we do not have an option other than to take our concern to the FMB and to Cabinet for consideration as to how we would address the particular situation. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister, what is the strategy when it comes to Deh Cho in terms of any plans for privatization or any contracts to be let or asset transfers in the Deh Cho region?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will pass the question on to the deputy minister to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are no plans at the present time. I recall the Member mentioned asset transfers, privatizations. That is not contemplated at the present time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: For the record, I can read into the answer there will be cuts and no deferrals for new projects in my riding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, perhaps, I will pass the question on to Mr. Brian Austin, who is involved with petroleum products, as a director. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the Deh Cho riding we do not have any communities where petroleum products division supplies its service.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I did not hear a question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is to the department as a whole, if there was anything else?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman. The question is, does the department as a whole have any cuts? Is that the question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Yes, I believe it was, but I will ask Mr. McLeod to rephrase his question. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will rephrase the question. Are there any cuts, any contracts to be deferred in the Deh Cho from within his department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Rattray to respond to that, but I am not aware of any cuts that the Member is talking about.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have no cuts that are planned at the present time. There are no capital projects that were previously identified for those communities and consequently there has been no change in them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Mr. McLeod. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question in regard to the renovation of the Laing Building and Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the information that the Minister provided as requested by the committee members. I think that the information that the Minister provided in terms of the history of the renovation of the building and the different options that were considered by past Assemblies, confirms what I was hoping that he would confirm, which is that the building needs work and that renovating that building is the most economical option. With that, my question is: I see in the interim budget there is \$445,000 allocated for the first four months of this year, but the target is \$3.5 million. I am wondering if that target represents the whole 100 percent of the project and if that target was meant to be spent this year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will defer the question to the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, the \$3.5 million is not the whole project. There is work to be done in future years. It is certainly our intention to complete that amount of work over the course of the coming year. However, we are looking at some delays in the project just as we firm up with the department's organization which will be in the building. That may result in deferral of some of the work into next year, at which point we would be looking at re-profiling the funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Rattray. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the information on how long the department is planning on working, how long it would take to have this project completed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, we are looking at approximately a three-year time frame to complete the work.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I wonder if the Minister could provide us with the information as to what work is going to be done with this interim budget and if whether or not that meets a minimum requirement to sort of keep the project floating, so to speak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, in the first four-month period we are planning on completing most of the structural and mechanical system design work. We are also looking at undertaking replacement of the elevator system in the building. Those are sort of the first few steps that we can take prior to confirmation of who the building occupants will be. Once the building occupants are identified, then we will be looking at initiating design work for those floors and then moving on a floor-by-floor basis to complete the work. This is a fairly complicated project in terms of the scheduling. We are trying to do it with a minimum disruption to tenants. There will be some relocations as part of the project and it will be necessary to phase the work so it proceeds in a logical order.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get information as to what percentage of the building is occupied at the moment with government employees? Approximately?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, I do not have the exact figures at the present time, but typically, we have been running at 50 percent occupancy of what the building could actually accommodate if it was properly fitted up. That is for two reasons; one reason is the building's mechanical ventilation system does not meet current code requirements. Current requirements for ventilation air have changed considerably over the last ten or 15 years and the current system simply cannot provide enough volume of air to accommodate as many people as we could accommodate within the building.

The second reason is that some of the floors in the building are fitted up, certainly the top floor is fitted up for the previous government's executive offices and the occupancy load is very low. There are some very large offices and it is difficult to get what would be considered to be the current occupancy standard on that floor and at least one of the other floors. We are expecting that we are going to have a more efficient utilization of existing space following the upgrade to the building, plus we are also expecting that with the ventilation system, we will be able to accommodate a full occupancy load.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: May I ask the Minister why it is that the building needs the ventilation system? Is the old system in the building so inadequate? Is that because of aging? I would have thought that even 30 years ago, they would have still needed a ventilation system. Is it that the system has aged and it cannot do the thing it was supposed to do? May I just have a little bit more information as to why this is the way it is? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, age has affected some of the equipment in the building and certainly it makes it appropriate to change that equipment anyway. It is at the end of its useful life. That really does not speak to the capacity issue.

The capacity issue is more related again to the standards which have changed since the building was built. It was built to the building code standards and the standards of the time. In those days, the perception of what was required in order to meet or maintain a healthy work environment is quite different than today. It is now recognized that a substantial amount more ventilation area is required in order to maintain a healthy working environment. The codes have changed and it is now necessary to meet the new codes.

To some extent that is a structural problem in the building. We actually have to enlarge the access to the building in order to pull in enough air and circulate enough air to all of the floors.

There is another issue in that building. The building was initially, if I recall correctly, built as five floors. The sixth floor was an add-on and was not envisioned as part of the initial ventilation system. The ventilation system has been piecemealed as well. All of those factors mean that we need to invest heavily into the building's ventilation and air conditioning systems.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to state for the record, I think that given the location and history of the building, it was one of the first buildings the government moved into in 1967. However, it is just not a nice thing to look at in downtown Yellowknife.

It is one of very few buildings the government owns. I think that it makes economic sense to renovate it and make use of it in a way that it should be used. I hope the Minister will keep this on his list and continue to try to find the money so we can make that building not only functional, but also a very beautiful building in downtown Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Ms. Lee, was that a suggestion or a question?

MS. LEE: A suggestion, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Would you like to add anything, Mr. Rattray or Mr. Steen?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for her comments. I believe the renovation includes bringing the building up to standards, including its looks. There is a paint job as well as both indoor and outdoor renovations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah, general comments.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me what percent of subsidy is provided to a community where the department operates the storage and distribution of fuel products? What is the savings per litre for people purchasing that fuel?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, I will ask Mr. Austin to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point in time, with the subsidy based on the landed costs from the last year's re-supply to recover operating costs, we were subsidizing five cents a litre on average across the Territory. For the full recovery of all costs, the subsidy is in the range of 13 cents to 14 cents a litre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: That would mean there would be a savings of 13 to 14 cents a litre by the consumers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: That is correct. That was based on the landed costs from last summer. Of course, we are looking at some higher pricing of fuel at this time, which would at least add to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Add to the savings or add to the price of fuel?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: That would be a matter for the Financial Management Board to determine whether they were going to offset those higher costs with increased prices.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Does the department have any influence on the Financial Management Board when it makes a decision on this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: Mr. Chairman, our mandate is to recover our operating costs through retail pricing of fuel. That is the mandate we have. So of course, when we are not making that mandate, we have to return to the Financial Management Board and advise them what kind of price we would need to meet the operating cost recovery, or what the implications in terms of incremental loss would be if the price increase was not provided.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. In our committee meetings, you agreed to provide a fuel pricing rationale for review by Members. I have not seen this rationale yet. Is it forthcoming?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Austin to respond to that.

MR. AUSTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is in progress, we should expect to have it to you within the next week or two.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. At this committee meeting, Members also recommended that by absorbing increases in the price of fuel, there may very well be savings for government in other

activities, such as in the social envelope. Am I to understand now that it is up to the Financial Management Board to make that decision?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the price of the fuel includes a subsidy. It is up to the Financial Management Board as to what we would charge in order to recover our costs. If the Financial Management Board indicates there should not be a subsidy, that is done by suggesting to us what we are going to charge.

However, we have been trying to identify the subsidy. We have taken the trouble to inform the communities as to the subsidy that is applicable to the price of fuel in their communities. We have identified that subsidy to them. Whether it is five cents, whether it is ten cents a litre, whatever.

What we as a department and I think as a government have been trying to do is identify all subsidies, including this particular subsidy, so we can see that it is applied where it is needed.

When we apply subsidies to fuel, it is included in the price of fuel. Anybody who buys at that pump is subsidized, which means some people who do not necessarily need a subsidy will be enjoying a subsidy.

Therefore, it is very important we identify the subsidies where they are being applied. That is what we have been trying to do, to identify these subsidies and where they are being applied. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So my understanding is that the subsidy may not be realized at the pumps because we are afraid others will enjoy that subsidy when they really do not need it.

If we look at the price of fuel, especially in the small communities where the income level is hovering around \$30,000, a lot of people fall through the cracks when it comes to subsidies and other government programs.

When fuel prices hike up dramatically the way we have experienced through the ten cent increase in the beginning of the year, through the actions that might be taken through the department to get back some of the cash from the recent increases in the price of fuel, I would argue others that have fallen through the cracks may become users of income support.

There are a lot of people in smaller communities who are just barely meeting their needs with their jobs now because their fuel costs increased. They do not make more money when they are on income support. This puts more pressure on this government, especially where hunting and trapping are used for country food to help with their income. The cost of fuel is so important.

If we cannot, with the 17 projects that we have, all of which are in small, isolated communities that really depend on hunting and fishing...they really rely on the fuel. If we cannot take care of the subsidy of the pumps, then it just leaves more administration problems for this government to deal with down the road, which is going to cost more money to this

government. I would strongly encourage the department to consider all these factors when and if they decide to raise the price of fuel in the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raises some very good points. The department will be taking those points into consideration.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Can the department tell me where they get their fuel? Do they get bulk sales at a preferential price? And is that preferential price reflective in the prices of pumps?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Austin is probably best to answer that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Austin.

MR. AUSTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we purchase fuel in bulk. We pay a refinery wholesale rate. Those costs are the costs that go against the price of the fuel.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: I will ask a quick question. In page 1 of 2 of Public Works, in our red binder, I do not know what colour your binder is, there are compensation benefits for the departments in management, finance, policy planning, human resources, records management, programs in delivery, division management facility planning, et cetera.

That is for pay periods, and so those are administration costs. Am I to understand that each of these departments or organizations within the departments are paying their own staff and doing their own administration, human resources and so on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rattray is prepared to answer that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That list of functions are the functions that are included within the directorate and corporate services for the department. Those groups provide, as indicated, human resource services, financial services, and so on to the full department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following on the same line as Mr. Nitah in regard to small communities and making sure that we have a fair, reasonable price in the communities, considering the high cost of living in the small communities. My concern is more in the area of privatization.

What I see in privatization is that people that are looking at POL for privatization are looking at the lucrative operations where they know they have the volumes. They will be able to sell the fuel and they will be able to get the price and make

money at certain operations, such as the larger centres. But in the smaller communities, Tsiigehtchic, or Colville Lake, or Lutsel K'e, any communities that have these operations where you have to bring a lot of these fuel costs where it is going to cost an operator extra dollars to maintain that service in these small communities.

What we are discussing in committee is that there have been a few places where they have privatized. Recently in Tuktoyaktuk, and they are looking at other communities. We have to realize that once you start cutting different portions of the business where you take all the profitable business out of the picture and we are stuck with the ones that are losing money, the communities or the government are going to be stuck paying the cost to continue to maintain that service in those communities. Especially communities such as Colville Lake.

I would like to ask the Minister exactly what they are doing to insure there will not be a monopoly out there when this privatization takes place where we sell off all the profit and we are stuck holding the bag with the ones that are losing money.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the point the Member raises is a very valid point in that we, as a government, do not want to be left with only small communities to subsidize, because we will not have the economy at scale.

Before we accept any proposals, we, as a department, take it to the Financial Management Board Secretariat and Cabinet. We have to identify how this specific proposal we accepted is going to affect the rest of the service that we have a mandate to supply. So, all the points the Member raised are very valid. We will have to take those into consideration before we accept any privatization proposals. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I like the fact the Minister is saying they will take it under consideration. But the area that Mr. Rattray touched on briefly is that they are considering looking at the possibility of having the individual communities pick up the actual costs of these operations.

I for one do not support that. If you start looking at the smaller communities, where you look on our capital plans for the last couple of years, we have been putting a lot of infrastructure in communities who did not have fuel services in the past.

I will use Colville Lake again as an example. They have just come on stream in the last couple of years because of this government putting the power generators in that community. Now they have to supply the fuel to offset that, as well as supply the fuel for aviation.

I do not support that initiative. I believe the reason for the government getting involved in the area of petroleum products was to ensure there will be a stable price. Also that they will be subsidized where the cost is higher in some areas and lower in others. It would be a balancing act to ensure we are able to sustain that cost.

This government, especially in many of our communities, makes up a large portion of the client-service for that fuel, the

Power Corporation, the Housing Corporation, the municipalities. This government pays the cost to use that fuel. I think you are damned if you do and you are damned if you do not.

I think that is something we have to keep in mind, especially when you mention that there may be increases in communities to offset that cost. If that happens, I would like to ensure we have a public hearing or a public process before that goes anywhere. Will the Minister consider looking at that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department will be taking the Member's comments under consideration. I would also like to comment on the fact that, as the Member pointed out, if the subsidy for fuel is only being applied within those communities that are on the department's service list, it is very limited compared to the Territory as a whole. The only people that are subsidized are the ones that are receiving and buying at those pumps.

Larger communities that are on the highway are not involved in the subsidy system, so they are not subsidizing the smaller communities. The smaller communities are all subsidizing each other. But the larger communities, who are not buying from the government pump, are, in fact, not involved at all. That is the idea the government is looking at.

If we are actually going to have a subsidy on fuel, then it should be directly recognized as that. But how that subsidy is applied would be up to the government to see that the funds are applied to the department where the subsidy is. For instance, if a subsidy is on one of the social envelope departments, the funding would go to the social envelope departments, rather than the way it is being done right now. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My other question is the whole question of timing as to when these price increases take effect. In the last increase, ten cents a litre, I believe came into effect on New Year's.

I think the next time we do it, we should allow the residents and communities to have a heads up so they can prepare for this. If we do it, I believe we should impose these increases in the summer months so the people can be ready for it. Not halfway through the winter, where the cost of fuel usage is high during December and January, especially in my area.

I have received a lot of complaints because of the timing of it and the way it came about. I think it should have been better planned out, where the communities had an opportunity of putting some money aside for six months, realizing their bills are going to increase and they are ready for it. You do not get caught New Year's Day with an increase having to fill up your fuel tanks, because that is the highest usage of diesel fuel, especially for homeowners.

If you can take that into account. Consider the next time you do that, maybe you could consider doing it in July or August so that people can be ready for the colder, winter months and can plan for an increase.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department will do as the Member suggested. We will try and give the public as much notice as we possibly can the next time we raise the price of fuel. We will also take into consideration the Member's comments as to what time of the year it would be preferable to raise the price. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I would like to receive a bit more information about the project that has been put forward under land and buildings, North Slave Region, Yellowknife, office renovations, various. The interim appropriation amount is \$445,000 for design and tendering costs for ventilation, air-conditioning and elevator replacement before July 31st, 2000.

This particular issue has had much debate over the years. As a Member of the 13th Assembly, I know it was an item that was overlooked and looked over and under a number of times.

I think that on one hand, it was proposed that the government get out of owning buildings because they were seen as a cost side of maintenance and so on. Whereas if it were a private sector facility, all the costs would be included within the lease.

With that, can the Minister inform us if what I see here is actual work going ahead on this facility? Again, knowing there was a lot of discussion in previous Assemblies, going back to the 1999-2000 main estimates under assets, management, details of capital, there is no mention in that budget of any work being done on the Laing building or planning dollars.

By going through the interim appropriation, have we stepped around some of the work that would have gone on in the business planning cycle? I would just like further clarification, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rattray is prepared to respond to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have the previous main estimates document in front of me, so I do not recall what was stated in there. But there certainly was money in last year's budget for the Laing building. In fact, there has been for a couple of years now. Because the debate has gone on for so long, it was not being spent and continued to be passed on through the carry-over process into the subsequent year's budget.

If I recall correctly now, and excuse me if my memory is not 100 percent correct, but there was not a portion of the Laing Building funding that was included in the supplementary appropriations last year. It may not have been identified as Laing Building. I believe it was identified as office renovations.

There were two major projects last year. One was on the Hodgson Building and one was on the Laing Building. Some design work has been underway in the Laing using funding from the current year budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have the actual document for the 1999- 2000 main estimates. Under asset management, there is no reference to the Yellowknife office renovations. I believe that in the interim appropriation document we are speaking specifically to the Laing Building preliminary planning target of \$3.5 million. So is this going to be as part of the business planning process that is coming in June? So committees will have a chance to review it in more detail?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rattray will continue to respond to the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes, there is another opportunity to discuss the balance of the project. We are certainly continuing the work that is already underway on the Laing Building by using the funding that we are seeking approval for in this interim appropriation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: In the document here it does not speak of any previous year's funding that went to it or what the total amount is, unless it is this preliminary planning target. I would like to know.

Again, bringing my own quick research and looking at the previous main estimates, I do not see a specific project in asset management that refers to this facility. In the supplementary appropriation, there might have been dollars spent to it, but without having that available or having it listed as previous work done, I am in the dark here on how much. What was the project? Is this \$445,000 a continuation or a new phase of the project? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rattray will continue to respond.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, there has been a project entitled "office renovations: various, Yellowknife" that has been a part of the department budget for a number of years. There has been money that typically includes a number of different projects. I believe expenditures under that project last year were in excess of \$1 million,

I have said before that it included a couple of projects. One major project that was completed was the Hodgson Building project. There was an upgrade and a renovation.

The other project that was started was the Laing Building project. We have begun designs on that project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: My concern is the material we have to go through as a Member. If I was not a previous Member of the Assembly, I would not know if this was an ongoing project or a previous project. Going from one document that was voted approval by the 13th Assembly, under asset management, the only area of land and buildings was \$260,000. I came to grants

and contributions and then details of capital and there is not one here that says Yellowknife area.

The information we are presented with does not allow me as a Member to find out if there is a history to this. It is a continuation of a project. The deputy minister stated that approximately over a million dollars must have come through a supplementary appropriation. However, because it is not included in this or previous years, I have no opportunity to identify if this is ongoing.

I know that he has explained and I have heard in the committee, but I want to make a record here. The information we are presented with here, and it is not only this department but others as well, is not adequate enough to be able to do a substantial review of the expenditures. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, I can reiterate that the funding for the project was approved. If I recall correctly, funding was approved two years ago and was carried over into last year, at which point the work began.

Much of this project has been deferred from previous years because of delays in agreement on what the course of action was going to be for the government. The case was overwhelmingly in favour of upgrading and renovating the building. We debated the business case for that for a considerable period of time. The decision was to invest in that building and the funding was approved through the supplementary appropriation process.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments or questions for the Minister? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one question for the Minister on the negotiating contract with the Nishi-Khon building in Rae-Edzo. I wrote him a letter in February supporting the negotiating contract. He returned a letter to me saying that with the support of myself and the band, it might go ahead. I am wondering how far they are with the negotiated contract?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rattray will respond to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Rattray.

MR. RATTRAY: Mr. Chairman, as far as I am aware we have not received a proposal at this time, although we have received the letter of support the Member provided. We have not received a proposal from the company at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments or questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 5, the Department of Public Works and Services, total Public Works and Services, operations and maintenance, \$12,604,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 7, Department of Public Works and Services, total, Department of Public Works and Services, capital, \$840,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): The Honourable Roger Allen, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Do you have any opening comments?

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present to the Legislative Assembly, the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, and Members of this House are aware, two of the most basic needs are food and shelter. It is the second basic need that the Housing Corporation works to provide.

The corporation is requesting a contribution from this government of \$17,886,000; \$9,789,000 for capital programs and \$8,097,000 for operations and maintenance. The capital of \$9,789,000 constitutes 45 percent of the 2000-2001 main estimates. It is normal for the corporation to spend almost half of its capital budget within the first four months because the majority of the building materials are transported during that time.

The operations and maintenance total of \$8,097,000 is 37 percent of the 2000-2001 main estimates plus forced growth of \$113,000 due to pension reform.

Over 90 percent of the operations and maintenance capital being requested will ultimately be spent on projects that will be community based.

Mr. Chairman, the corporation is at the final stage of the 2000 housing needs survey, which I expect to table later this sitting. The corporation will be using the needs survey as one of its key documents in developing a strategic plan to decrease housing needs in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, the corporation is at the beginning stages of developing new goals and strategies that better incorporate community input. The president and I have traveled to many communities to see first hand what the housing problems are. We will continue to travel until all communities have been visited by either Mr. Beaulieu or myself to seek their input in addressing their housing needs. We have already begun discussions with several communities on ways that we can work together as partners in developing a strategy to address housing needs at the community level.

Mr. Chairman, the corporation will continue with its provincial and territorial counterparts to lobby the federal government to at least maintain the current federal funding provided by the federal government.

Mr. Chairman, the corporation plans to work with the communities and other government departments to ensure that the money spent first addresses housing needs and secondly, creates some positive economic impacts for the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my comments and we will be pleased to answer any questions the House may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Does the committee responsible for the Housing Corporation have any opening remarks? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on March 17, 2000, and would like to offer comment on the following issues of importance noted during the committee's review of the interim appropriations.

Allocation Of Seniors' Housing

Committee members are very concerned over the annual indecision on the placement of seniors' housing between the Department of Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation. Members believe this indecision could lead to possible construction delays because of shipping deadlines being missed. The indecision also raises the question of potential political interference in the choice of the community that receives the seniors' housing.

The Housing Corporation believes that the housing needs survey, in conjunction with community consultation on the part of the Housing Corporation, should be adequate to determine which community requires the facility. The committee strongly encourages the Housing Corporation to work with the Department of Health and Social Services to resolve this issue. Members look forward to positive news during the review of the business plans.

Seniors' Housing Issues

Members have heard that in some communities there are units dedicated to seniors that are vacant. According to what Members have heard, the vacancies relate to design flaws in the units themselves and the lack of consultation with elders in the community as to whether they wanted to move into new units in the first place.

The members have heard that the standard design for the seniors' fourplexes means the unit's entrances are set too high for seniors to access safely. This may have been appropriate as the design standard when the Housing Corporation was building in the High Arctic, but lacks relevance for construction below the treeline.

It is apparent to the committee that the seniors' fourplexes may not be appropriate in smaller, predominately aboriginal communities, where traditional activities are still a way of life. Some committee members believe that it would be better to build small standalone houses in these types of communities utilizing simple technologies that the elders understand.

Members have heard of instances where the lack of consultation between the local housing authorities and the elders has meant reluctance on the part of seniors to move into newly constructed seniors' facilities. The design of the units does not incorporate adequate areas for elders to store equipment to participate in traditional activities. This also contributes to the reluctance on the part of seniors to move into seniors' units.

This still leaves the issue of what to do with the vacant seniors' units in the communities. Committee members believe that if there are no seniors in need of the units that they should be turned into social housing. We are still facing a housing crisis, particularly for single-parent families and these units, and any other surplus government units, should be utilized. There is also the option of these units being used to house teachers or health care professionals in communities where there is no viable rental market.

Leaseback of Social Housing from Local Development Corporations

The committee is very interested in the possibility of leveraging more money for social housing by entering into long-term leaseback arrangements with local or aboriginal development corporations for the construction of additional social housing units. It is clear to the committee that the federal government's withdrawal from the funding of social housing has meant the territorial government has been playing a desperate game of catch-up in trying to meet the housing needs of its residents. Innovative approaches, such as leasebacks with development corporations, will help the Housing Corporation stretch its always-diminishing dollars. Committee members look forward to discussing this issue further during the business plan review.

Repair/Maintenance of Social Housing

Committee members are interested in reviewing the Housing Corporation's plan for the repair and maintenance of social housing over the three-year period, once it is complete.

EDAP Program Review

Several committee members were concerned that the Extended Downpayment Assistance Program was not meeting the needs of residents of our smallest communities. A "catch-22" situation exists for residents who make too much money to qualify for downpayment assistance directly from the Housing Corporation. These residents also cannot qualify for a regular mortgage from the banks because they do not hold title to the land on which they propose to build a house.

Committee members believe that a review of the EDAP Program as it relates to residents of smaller communities is in order. This review should include consideration of how the Housing Corporation can help those residents who make sufficient money to look after their own housing needs, but cannot access Housing Corporation programs or bank mortgages.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I would like to ask the Minister if he wishes to bring in any witnesses?

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Yes I will Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Will the Sergeant-At-Arms escort the witnesses in please?

Minister Allen, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my immediate right is Mr. Jeff Anderson, our chief financial officer.

To my immediate left is the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Tom Beaulieu.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister responsible for Finance is in a seeming rush to get through these departments.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like some clarification in doing the interim appropriation. Could the Minister indicate when the latest housing survey will be done and the results published? So that we can see how we are going to move ahead in addressing the need and what that need is? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my opening remarks, I stated that the housing needs survey will be tabled later in this sitting. I would ask the present Housing Corporation to answer any questions specific to any details the Members may have. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I have some questions in regard to the design and building of units in the communities. In our committee report, we raised the concern, especially with our seniors' facilities, that there are a number of issues that may be of concern. The consultation of seniors, the actual design structure of the units being such that there are things like furnaces near the doors.

It is difficult for seniors living there because of the location of the buildings, to access any land where they could have fire pits and take care of any outdoor activities they would like to undertake. I was wondering if the Minister could speak to those general issues and see if he could alleviate our concern. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly present the Member with the specifics to our community visits. In our travels, we spoke to a number of seniors, about 19 to date. And, yes, there were some noticeable design impairments as we assessed some of the homes.

Again, our future plans are to involve the local seniors to help us design what we feel is their need, not our need. Although we have spoken to them about remaining consistent with the Housing Corporation policies in terms of public and personal hygiene. That includes running water and sewage pumps.

There were some noticeable deficiencies again in the heights of the buildings. We confirm that. We are trying to involve the community leadership in the overall planning, design and construction of the units. We feel there was some concern from community members that they needed to be independent and have individual homes. We have raised that with the president of the corporation in follow up meetings.

There is a whole range of new ideas, a whole range of new approaches we have discussed initially with Cabinet in trying to address all those concerns the Member has expressed. I would

like to ask the president if he has anything to add to my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, the detached designs that we have for seniors' independent living units are available, and were available to the communities when we initially built the fourplexes. The designs for detached are available and can be offered to communities for any future construction such as seniors' independent units.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister clarify a bit further or indicate on the design side for seniors' facilities, how many design options are there? Do you have a number of on-the-shelf designs that you pick from to go to the communities? Or do you use another approach that allows communities to have a say?

I am thinking specifically of the facilities built for seniors in Fort Smith. They are duplexes basically. They are side-by-side, one floor, all handicap accessible. I understand in Fort Resolution, they built some stand alone small units that were very small for individuals or couples. So could the Minister just clarify the design options that are there? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask our president to answer, as it is a technical question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, the Housing Corporation offers for the Seniors' Independent Living Program a fourplex design, as well as detached designs. But in cases where we have built fourplexes, we have consulted with the communities. The communities have made design changes to fit the community better. Essentially, we have two options at this time; a fourplex design or a detached unit.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some other concerns that were raised in committee were design features in the units. There was one which had the furnace room right by the entrance in and out of the house. If there were problems such as fire, the furnace room being right by the door limits access to windows that are set high and do not open significantly to allow an alternative exit, if that was ever required.

And the other feature was the height of the buildings off of the ground. They were set very high on blocks or piles. Can the Minister speak to that issue? I am assuming all these designs must meet building code standards for safety and fire. Could the Minister or the president speak to that issue please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to speak to part of the question regarding the design. I believe in our community consultations, we spoke about lowering the units to a more accessible level for tenants. Again, the idea here is to go into the communities and discuss this with the

community membership. That provides an opportunity for them to have input on how we deliver future seniors' housing. That is all encompassing to the prerequisites. I believe in the future we can build homes that are more satisfactory. From the standards side, Mr. Chairman, I would like to again call upon the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As far as the standard goes, it is acceptable to have one door and a second means of exit from a unit. However, that was a design option that we had under the alternate housing plan. We no longer offer designs to seniors which only have one access. The designs that are detached have two entrances. Also, the designs that are configured in a fourplex have two entrances as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Before we go back to Mr. Miltenberger, I would like to recognize Shawna McLeod who is watching us. She watches every session on television. She is the daughter of one of our Members.

-- Applause

Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was watching the clock down there, and I have just one quick follow up. If the Minister or the president could clarify the issue of the location of the furnace rooms. If it is two doors, I can see that it is not as big of an issue. But I see on those units that only have one door, it is an issue when the furnace is located right by the door. If there was a fire, access and exits would be impeded. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since that was a fire safety issue raised by the occupants of the buildings, we have suggested that we look at alternate heating sources. From that, we have asked the person responsible for that to provide us with information. We were hoping to have that information provided to us this week. Unfortunately, we do not have it. If the president would like to add on to what I have already said, I would welcome him to speak to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Minister Allen. Mr. Beaulieu, would you like to add anything?

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to add that in all cases where we have been approached by seniors who were not comfortable with having one exit because of the location of the door, we have been able to add a second exit. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Presently, there are still many government owned units in our communities. What is your department doing to try to retain those units so we can use them for public housing? They were on the market for sale, but the majority of them have not yet sold. It has been a couple of years in this process.

For example, in Aklavik, there are two three-bedroom duplexes which are shutdown, and yet there is a housing shortage in Aklavik. I would like to ask the Minister what is his department doing to try and take advantage of the offer made by this government to turn those units into public housing, since they have not been sold?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask Jeff Anderson to respond to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is responsible for the property management of the remaining staff housing portfolio. I understand there are about 70 units left across the western Northwest Territories at this time.

It is important to note the Financial Management Board Secretariat is responsible for the policy side relating to the staff housing units. In cases where there are surplus units, they cannot be sold or passed on to other organizations. I understand the policy is that the Financial Management Board Secretariat will turn those units over to the Housing Corporation for public housing.

There are two cases now, Norman Wells and Fort Simpson, where we recently received nine units that were transferred over to us through that arrangement. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the question is when will the Housing Corporation take over these units from the government of the Northwest Territories, the Financial Management Board Secretariat?

This has been going on for some three years now and yet, there are still units in the community that could be used but are instead sedentary. They are shut down. If the units are there and they are not being used by the government, they should be automatically transferred to the Housing Corporation so we can make use of them wherever we find the need. We should definitely be using these homes if there is a shortage in the budget for the Housing Corporation to build houses. Let us find a new way of making use of these units and turn them into social housing where they can be used.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to again ask Mr. Anderson to respond to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes we would certainly be prepared to discuss those units with the Financial Management Board Secretariat. If we can, we would certainly be willing to take those on as additional public housing units. We would be prepared to follow up on that. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me what the department spends on travel every year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our total annual budget for travel is about \$500,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one thing I find to be a waste of time and money is, it seems like whenever we have a new Minister, we have to do the tours of every community. I think it is a waste. We know what the problems are. There is a report out regarding the housing needs study. I think we should start implementing some of those recommendations instead of spending \$500,000 on travel. I think we could build a few houses with that kind of money.

I would like to know why we have not implemented some of those recommendations regarding the housing needs study instead of having to waste that amount of money in travel.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a big philosophy regarding that question. I will try to answer it as best I can.

One of the things we are finding is that the committee has long said they did not have enough ministerial visits to look first hand at some of the housing problems. We are trying to address that very quickly. Secondly, I think that it is important to visit communities, especially when we are starting to deal with communities on the lease-back option.

In the context of what the sessional statement says, government to government, we want to involve all community governments in participating with us to address housing needs. That is the basic philosophy behind our visits.

The other thing that is important to understand here is that good, healthy, community lifestyles are based on good housing, because housing is really the cornerstone for healthy living. That is the reason for our visits, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I for one believe that we should start practicing restraint and start trying to find monies to implement recommendations that have come forward through the different reviews that have happened over the years especially in regard to housing needs in our communities.

I feel we know what the problems are. I think that unless we are going to go into the community and deliver a capital project and make a public announcement, then I cannot see us going into the communities. When we are going into the communities with nothing to offer and we do not have the resources to build new homes or have the capital budgets to do what we would like to do, I think we are just building up people's hopes.

And we are not going to deliver. We know what the problems are, but financially this government is not sound. We cannot deliver what we would like to deliver.

With that, I would just like to mention that I think we have to start taking advantage of whatever little dollars we have. If it is \$500,000 and we could build a few more units, then we should do it.

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, with all due respect, I believe it is a wise comment. We have heard that throughout the week. The important thing here is that we are going to the communities with the intent of developing more homeownership. I still believe the needs survey will determine the housing needs of each community.

The important thing here is that we involve the community governments to come forth with the knowledge that we are delivering homeownership. I still believe that if we do things according to our strategic plan, we will be able to meet all of the thresholds within four years. That is the intent of our visits. To convince the community government that is the proper way to go.

I feel that if we can revise many of the existing programs and put more dollars into economic housing, than we can meet those objectives. I believe the president would like to add to this comment, Mr. Chairman, if he can. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A lot of our travel into the communities lately has been with the intent of dealing with some of the community finance and land corporations' elaborate sum funding from them in construction of some additional social housing for the community. The communities and the land corporations are interested in seeing us escalate the social housing at the community level. They are prepared to cost share some projects with us. We are traveling to the communities to try and negotiate some sort of financial arrangement with them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: I would like to ask the Minister if he was aware of a growing problem in many of the small communities, especially in the ones that are involved in a land claim such as the Deh Cho. In the communities that I represent, a lot of the programs are not working because of the land question. Many of the residents feel the land belongs to them and they should not have to pay land leases.

During my time as the mayor, it was a growing concern. We had it up to about 15 properties that had houses that were built by the Housing Corporation and were in arrears. Given the economic situation in our communities with the high unemployment rates, there is really no way to rectify that. I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware of the situation? If he is aware of it, what does he plan to do about it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not aware of the specific details, but I will ask our president to respond to the question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although the tax arrears was not the driving force behind our decision, we have decided that we will be reorganizing some of our functions at headquarters. We are going to be looking for a land administrator to take a look at the status of all of the land, in light of the land claim agreements that are now being settled, and to look at the overall status of the land situation and market communities as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One final question. Given that most of the smaller communities do not have the luxury of looking at different markets for renting or purchasing homes, and also recognizing there is a growing waiting list in all of the communities for housing, I would like to know if the Minister would consider, in his re-organization, a way to focus more on the smaller communities. Maybe something in line with the different levels the business development fund has developed, whether this community is considered level one, two or three. And the main focus would be the level three community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is very important, and I alluded to this in the appearance before the committee, that we are leveraging new funds. Not necessarily new dollars, but inviting other departments to participate in our overall strategy to raise a profile of small, non-tax-based municipality home ownership. There are several new initiatives that are being presented to Cabinet in mid-May. I believe we will be able to, at that time, show that we can create a housing market in non-taxed-based municipalities, providing that land matters are taken and put under control of either the local community ownership, either through the bands or the municipalities. That is one of the key questions we have been dealing with.

The revisions to the overall housing delivery programs will improve the level of home delivery. That is the essence of this shift in this revision. I would like to advise the Member that we are working fast and furious to get that underway. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Any general comments for the Minister? Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the Minister tell me where they get their products when they build homes in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like the president to answer that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We follow the government policy, using the business incentive policy to procure all of the building materials. In situations where this government is funding the majority of the cost of the construction, we also supply northern manufactured products that are built in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is very good. I think there is a need to support the northern manufacturers and people who sell products in the North. Has there ever been a study done to indicate the difference in cost if the corporation went to a cheaper source for quality material, it does not matter where in Canada or the world? A cost comparison?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I again will ask the president to answer that question. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In relation to the northern manufactured product, it is the feeling of this government that for a northern manufactured product, there are more benefits associated with using northern manufactured products. We have a preference of 25 percent landed costs on northern manufactured products. The products that you can purchase directly from the south could potentially be 25 percent less than a northern manufactured product. We do not think that it is, but there is the potential for that to be the case.

In recent tenders that have gone out, there was an actual northern manufactured product that had bid on an open tender, and they were the lowest price. Although that preference is there, it is possible that it is under that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I think it is 25 percent that is well worth it. Where does lumber product come from to the Housing Corporation? I am not aware of any manufacturers in the North that manufacture plywood and building materials. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I will ask the president to respond to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, could the Member please repeat the question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Could the Member please repeat the question?

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Housing Corporation, in the business of providing homes to the people of the Northwest Territories, is in the business of purchasing large quantities of lumber; plywood and other lumber materials associated with the construction and manufacturing of homes. I am wondering if the lumber comes from the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On last year's construction project, we had requested that there be a supply of northern lumber. We were able to purchase all of the northern lumber that was available. With the balance of the lumber that was needed, it was supplied by a northern supplier, but it was southern cut lumber. All of the plywood is from the south.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is unfortunate, considering that in the Northwest Territories one of our greatest resources is forestry. There is a large inventory of forestry in the south side of the Mackenzie. I am just wondering if there has ever been a feasibility study being done to utilize the forestry industry in the Northwest Territories.

One of the communities in my riding is in the sawmill industry. One of the problems they have is trying to find a market for that industry. An idea that was to go out a couple of years ago and never really followed through was to build a manufacturing plant in a local area on the south side where the transportation link will be good, to build prefab homes that could be sold on the open market within the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alaska, anywhere else in the world, actually. I am just wondering if the Housing Corporation has ever done a feasibility study to see if the costs to the Housing Corporation by using such a manufacturing plant will be beneficial to the Housing Corporation in terms of savings? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. This question can be answered by the Minister, but I think it is relates to another Minister. I will let him go ahead. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not aware of any previous studies, but I would just like to talk to the idea we have been discussing with other departments in terms of prefab homes, manufactured homes. We know that there was one manufactured home business here in town heavily supported by not only the Housing Corporation, but also by Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

The future of affordable housing in the Northwest Territories is quite viable using our own resources. We talk about using smaller mills, building log homes where logs are fairly accessible to the community. We believe in our own analysis that we can build more affordable homes in using imported lumber. If the Member cares to know more about that, it is part of our overall four-point strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Log homes are great, but unfortunately not everyone in the Northwest Territories will want log homes. For those that do, it is available and if it is cheap, it is great. My thinking is that we should be manufacturing homes of different styles, using northern lumber manufactured in the North, cut in the North by people in the North.

I know in Nunavut alone they need 2,000 homes today. That is without projections. The biggest cost they incur when they are building up there is the time it takes to put a house together. The short summer season does not allow them to finish the job. The work then goes into the following year and that is a cost overrun.

There have been studies done by private groups who say they could design a home, prefab it and send it anywhere in the Northwest Territories and put it together for around \$285 with a team of four or five individuals. This, incidentally, is just enough for EI, for a lot of those guys who are working seasonal work. I am wondering if there has been a feasibility study done by the Housing Corporation in that area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, there is no feasibility study that we are aware of that has been conducted to determine what the costs were. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One final question or maybe a request. Will it be the responsibility of the Housing Corporation, or maybe the Housing Corporation could find out how to do a really short preliminary work in that area and they would save this government a lot of dollars in the long run and also provide lots of employment and develop a manufacturing industry with a new housing market and develop the forestry industry. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you for the suggestion for the Minister. Do you wish to answer?

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman. That is the reason we are travelling to the various regions. From a regional perspective, we are finding that it is probably more feasible to use locally produced products, such as logs in the South Slave, probably in the Deh Cho. It varies from region to region. So it is important to know that if we are looking at the need to meet the overall housing needs and housing shortages. We do have to work within the specific budget.

In terms of developing vocational skills, we feel that a portion of that has to come from another department in terms of financial investment. Again, we are dealing with another department, so all this, Mr. Chairman, should come together by May 15, 2000. Hopefully, we can then share that very document with our fellow colleagues.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that we all know that the North is going to experience an aging of its population. In Yellowknife, we are specifically concerned about providing housing units for seniors. We know we are a magnet community. We know that there will be continuing escalation of demand. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me what the department's plan is to meet the needs of seniors for housing, if they have done any projections that would let us know exactly what they think this demand will be, and whether or not they are going to be in a position to meet this demand?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Member is speaking specifically about Yellowknife, then I would ask the president of the NWT Housing Corporation to respond to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have the projections of need, also based on the ages of the individuals and needs, et cetera. It is not difficult for us to pull the numbers together to determine what the needs will be in Yellowknife in the future and what the current needs are. We do not have a specific plan right now to expand more senior units in the city of Yellowknife.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it is deemed that demand warrants it, we would certainly look at expanding to provide more housing for seniors in Yellowknife. Is that correct, given that we know we are a magnet community? We know that people will be migrating here, especially as they age, to access services, health care, et cetera. It would only make sense, I think, that we could anticipate a growing demand for seniors' housing in Yellowknife. If we could determine there was going to be growing demand, would we then put in place the capital dollars to find and build new homes for seniors? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I would ask the president of the NWT Housing Corporation to answer that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once we have reviewed the needs survey and we have compared the seniors' needs in Yellowknife to the other communities, and if the needs in Yellowknife are greater than other communities, then we will look at providing something in Yellowknife. I am not sure if it would be standard construction of a seniors' facility but it might be that there could be something available already in Yellowknife that the Corporation could lease.

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

MR. BELL: Can the Minister tell us if the NWT Housing Corporation provides funding for the Aven Senior Centre in Yellowknife? Could he also let us know what the vacancy rates are like? They have many open units just waiting to be filled and no real demand. I am wondering if he can tell me if that is the case.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Yes, the Corporation does provide subsidy to the Aven Senior Centre based on what we refer to as a "two percent write down" on the mortgage. Regardless of the interest rate, the Corporation pays the difference between what the current interest rate is and a two percent interest rate to reduce operating costs for the Aven Senior Centre. Currently, I do not have the vacancy rates of the centre, so I am not aware if there are vacant units.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not mean to be facetious, but I am pretty sure there is a waiting list. I am wondering if the Minister could tell us if the Corporation would look at putting more dollars into the Aven Senior Centre to expand? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the corporation is able to compare the 2000 needs survey with other communities and the needs of other seniors in other communities, we will be able to determine this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. I look forward to seeing the needs survey because I am sure that we are going to see an increasing need for seniors' housing in Yellowknife with the aging of our population. I hope the NWT Housing Corporation will seriously take a look at what it can do to try to meet this demand, especially considering the inflow of seniors to the larger centres in the North. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will endeavor to meet all the needs, as I expressed earlier, in the next four years. I think we can achieve that. That is my response to that comment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The area of seniors is an issue I pursued and posed questions of earlier. If the government bases its budgeting on volume, then you might as well start bussing people into Yellowknife because it will continue to burst at the seams. In fact, I have worked with the elders in Inuvik to try and pursue some help for establishing a seniors' facility. They are willing to put their own dollars up front.

We know across the Northwest Territories, seniors would rather be staying in their homes and communities close to family, rather than having to be moved out into the larger centres. We know that Yellowknife is the largest centre in the Northwest Territories and it will have large numbers. Hopefully, the idea of building and maintaining a strong Northwest Territories will have some impact on the planning through the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to answer one part of the question and turn the other part to the president of the Corporation.

We acknowledged in a meeting with the Inuvik seniors that we will endeavor to work with them over the next three years to help them reach their objective in terms of their own facility, similar to the Aven Senior Centre in Yellowknife. The critical problem we are having in Inuvik is not the matter of constructing a facility. The land is the big question, if I am correct. I do not see us having any problem in terms of dealing with the seniors' request, as well as Tuktoyaktuk's request.

In terms of numbers, I am going to ask the president of the NWT Housing Corporation to address this, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. The president of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The numbers of seniors that are requiring housing is not a major factor in determining where senior' units are built. We use a percentage because if we did not use percentages, the Member is correct, all the units being allocated would be going into larger centres because there are just more people there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point, it is good to hear that response. If it could be pointed out within the information provided, what area would seniors look to for receiving some funding if they were able to put a program together? Is it through the capital expenditures side? I am not sure. There are fairly big numbers here and they are not broken down.

For example, I am aware that there is a program which is between the Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services that builds two units a year. That is two units of fourplexes that will not go very far. I just wanted to know where in this information would we be able to find that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to ask the president to speak to the context of some rearranged financing as it pertains to seniors' housing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The president of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the capital projects that are targeted to the seniors' independent units, the Member is correct. It was scheduled for eight units. However, in three of the communities where we have discussed the possibility of constructing seniors' units, we are leveraging funding from the local development corporations where they would provide the up-front capital and the corporation would purchase the unit back from them on a lease-purchase arrangement.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It sounds awfully similar to a P3-type process. Could we have further clarification there? Is it strictly a leaseback? It sounds, just from the information provided, very similar to a P3.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I would ask the president to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We did not consider the P3 concept when we discussed the financing arrangement with the local corporations. I am not 100 percent familiar with all the details of P3 at this time, but it is an arrangement that the community wished to discuss with us as an expedient way of providing social housing to their people in need without getting more capital funding from the government than they would normally get through the regular allocation process.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Housing Corporation should be commended for coming up with alternative ways of financing these projects, much needed as they are. Unlike the earlier department that I was discussing in the House where they like to defer things. On that line of questioning, I must ask the Minister here, and I am almost afraid to ask it, but I feel I have to knowing that we have had some surprises in other departments through the interim

appropriation. Are there any delusions or deferrals in your capital plan and operations and maintenance in this interim appropriation? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I will call upon Mr. Anderson to respond to that specific question as it regards financing. Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer to that question is no. The interim appropriation we have put forward to the government was based on our cash requirements from a historical perspective. So we basically asked for the money we need to operate at the status quo. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments or questions? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. I just have one question for the Minister. It has to do with employees representing the North Slave region. I was made aware of a non-Dogrib speaking employee going house to house in the North Slave doing a survey and also doing a native study. I am just wondering if the Minister is aware of it. If he is aware of it, would he look at putting an employee who speaks Dogrib in the North Slave region? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased the Member has raised the question because we have just come out of discussion about it. I would like our president to elaborate a little further and go into more specific details regarding the question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, specific to North Slave, the Housing Corporation has done an initial review of our organization. What we have done is we have taken four positions in the city of Yellowknife that have been vacant for some time. We plan to try to provide some Dogrib language service out of the North Slave office within the next few months.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Just further along with that, I had a letter arrive on my desk today. The Wha Ti First Nation was wondering, when we went to meet them, we talked about the Wha Ti Housing Corporation. They did not know who was on that board, or what the role of the Wha Ti Housing Corporation was. They wanted me to ask you who are the members on the What Ti First Nation Housing Corporation, because they are not aware of it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have the names of the individuals that we have been discussing housing issues with in Wha Ti at this time, but we will be able to provide the names to the Wha Ti band within a week or a couple of days, if necessary.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Any further comments or questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are on page 6, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, total Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, operations and maintenance, \$8,097,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving to the bottom of page 7, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, total Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, capital, \$9,789,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): At this time, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we report progress.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, and Committee Reports 3-14(2) and 4-14(2) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

-- Applause

It pays to be persistent. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Board of Management after adjournment this evening. Meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, at 12:00 p.m. of the Governance and Economic Development and at 12:00 p.m., also, of the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Orders of the day for Thursday, March 30, 2000:

1. Prayer

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>2. Ministers' Statements</p> <p>3. Members' Statements</p> <p>4. Returns to Oral Questions</p> <p>5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery</p> <p>6. Oral Questions</p> <p>7. Written Questions</p> <p>8. Returns to Written Questions</p> <p>9. Replies to Opening Address</p> <p>10. Petitions</p> <p>11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees</p> <p>12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills</p> <p>13. Tabling of Documents</p> <p>14. Notices of Motion</p> <p>15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills</p> <p>16. Motions</p> <p>17. First Reading of Bills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 1999-2000 <p>18. Second Reading of Bills</p> <p>19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minister's Statement 1-14(2), Sessional Statement - Tabled Document 14-14(2), "Our Communities, Our Decisions: Let's Get on With It!", Final Report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act - Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001 - Committee Report 2-14(2), Accountability and Oversight on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation - Committee Report 3-14(2), Governance and Economic Development on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation - Committee Report 4-14(2), Social Programs on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation <p>20. Report of Committee of the Whole</p> | <p>21. Third Reading of Bills</p> <p>22. Orders of the Day</p> <p>MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until March 30, 2000 at 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>-- ADJOURNMENT</p> <p>The house adjourned at 6:00 p.m.</p> |
|--|--|