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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, 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. Delorey. Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Recognition of House Pages From William MacDonald School

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take a moment to recognize students from a school in my riding who have been working as pages this week in the Legislative Assembly. The pages are grade 8 students from the William MacDonald School. Mr. Speaker, each one of these students was selected by a committee of teachers, based on their exemplary performance in school and their well-rounded ability as students.

I would like to express my appreciation of their dedication to their studies. Mr. Speaker, in order to participate as pages during this Session, and to gain the opportunity to learn more about the Legislative Assembly, the students had to give up some of their precious summer holidays.

I know this experience will further their education and understanding of our political system, and I appreciate their willingness to participate as pages, especially during the summer.

Mr. Speaker, they are doing a great job. I am sure their teachers and fellow classmates are proud to have them represent the William MacDonald School. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of us in this House, I would like to thank Nico Todd-Cullen, James Cracknell, Chris Fournier, Duncan Hamre, Leslie Miller, Andrew Silke, Noel Taylor and Louise Tumchewics. Mr. Speaker, although he is not from William MacDonald School, I would also like to recognize a young man who is no stranger to the halls of the Legislative Assembly, and who is also working as a page for us right now, Vital Manuel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Student Financial Assistance Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes today to talk about the Student Financial

Assistance Program. Mr. Speaker, I have said previously in the House that I consider myself the biggest beneficiary of the education system of the Northwest Territories. I had the privilege of having eight years of post-secondary education with the assistance of the government. I always thought we had a pretty good system. It needed improvement. I am glad I was part of the Assembly that revamped the program earlier in this Session.

Mr. Speaker, I guess we can always say that it can always be better. I am glad we were able to make the progress we did. We do have some problems, as other Members have indicated in this House earlier, there is a question about the grandfathering of the clauses and benefits.

I have met with the people other Members have met, and I am glad the issue was discussed. Another problem has to do with the administrative complications of it. I am hoping the Minister will address that question. What I want to deal with today is a very simple thing the Minister could change to make what we have even better. That has to do with the automatic payment portion of the program.

Today, I heard on the radio that the department is considering changing the payment plans, where the student loans will be paid monthly instead of in installments by semester. What I understand from the students is that they are really having a problem getting to the officers. I have a problem with the department doing it in a way that would take so much more labour. Why is it that when we have a wide available system of automatic payments, the department has to have someone going and depositing these cheques? Why is it that it cannot be done in a way that the payments can be deposited automatically?

I know this is possible, Mr. Speaker, because I still pay back my student loan and they know how to take the money out of my bank account every two weeks. I would think the system is available there to reverse that. I would urge the Minister to make it perfect and address this simple issue immediately. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Forest Management

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today concerns forest management in the Deh Cho. Mr. Speaker, many residents in my riding are confused by the policies and practices of the GNWT with regard to the issuance of timber cutting permits in Cameron Hills, through seemingly little

reliable information about sustainable forest inventory and how it relates to the annual allowable cut as calculated by the forest management division of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

Indeed, much of the information seems contradictory in nature. Yet despite these contradictions, many timber cutting permits were issued this winter, and many residents are concerned about the environment. Mr. Speaker, it is essential that the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development increase its focus on community consultation with regard to forest management issues.

These consultations should be meaningful, Mr. Speaker. By that I mean the department should give consideration to including communities in some kind of inclusive decision making with regard to forest management issues.

Mr. Speaker, the Forest Management Act allows for the development of forest management agreements with communities. These agreements, if structured properly, could allow for more meaningful community participation and decision making, as well as ensuring that benefits from forest management activity accrue to the communities in which the activity takes place.

Mr. Speaker, as the Cameron Hills is an area of shared traditional land use between the residents of Kakisa Lake, Hay River Dene Reserve and Fort Providence, I suggest the forest management division pursues a tri-community approach to forest management issues. Perhaps a comprehensive forest management agreement could be developed between the three communities. I further suggest that the forest management division not focus on jurisdictional issues and the retention of powers when considering policies and practices. Instead, it should focus on maximizing community participation in forest management. In doing so, it will help form a more solid base of community support for GNWT involvement in forest management issues as well as other resource management initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Training of Northern Nurses

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address a very important issue that has to do with northern nurses. We are all aware, and have heard very clearly from the Department of Health and Social Services, that there is a critical shortage of nurses in the Northwest Territories. It is especially acute when you come to northern nurses.

We have heard that affirmative action is not working that well. That after 12 or 14 years, affirmative action has not met its targets. It does not do the job it is intended to do. It has not addressed the key areas of the professions. We have heard that the government is giving millions of dollars through its recruitment and retention plan last year, and they request more money this year to recruit nurses from the south and to retain the ones we have in the North.

They have sent groups to the British Isles trying to find nurses. They have admitted they have come up with a short-term strategy, but in the long-term, we have to have northern nurses.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned. I have a constituent, a nurse with a diploma, a Metis nurse in Fort Smith, who has applied to go to school to get her degree. We have been told that all nurses are going to soon require a bachelor of science to practice nursing.

Mr. Speaker, this nurse was rejected. I am shocked and appalled that this department, which has voiced such concern and is spending millions of dollars trying to recruit nurses, will not spend the money to train and retain a northern nurse, especially since they lapsed over \$800,000 in their recruitment and retention plan last year.

The reason this lady was given was that there were insufficient funds to allow her to upgrade to the degree level so she would be able to provide a better quality of service as a nurse.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope the Minister will do the right thing. She has the flexibility to move funding to make the right decision to not only recruit, but to retain the nurses we have. We have a classic example of a northern nurse seeking to upgrade her skills so she will be better able to provide service to her patients. Later today, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions about this issue. I hope she would like to tell me that with this \$800,000 they lapsed and the \$3.4 million they will get this year, they will find a way to make sure we train northern nurses. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the issue I raised yesterday, the Inuvik Regional Hospital. Mr. Speaker, in questioning the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat and the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, then proceeding to the Minister of Public Works and Services, every response I received gave me more concern than the first.

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat said they will be moving along and delays should not be happening. It would stay on the same timeline that was proposed in the P3 project and it would be moving from there. In the last reply I received from the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, he informed me it would be going back to square one. That causes some concern, because I was informed when this was first transferred to a P3 project from a traditional tender project, that 30 percent of the work was done on the plans. I have a copy of that here, Mr. Speaker, that shows there is an actual footprint that is ready to go.

I would like some clarification today, once and for all, so we can put some assurances on this and I can let my constituency know this will proceed and proceed in a timely manner to which it has been committed. The clarification here will be very clear, so I will not have to raise this any further.

In light of all of the changes that have happened in my constituency since the forming of the 14th Assembly, I feel I need some clear answers on this project and try to bring some closure to it, and I can watch it develop on the plan of this government and reassure the residents in the region of Inuvik that they will have a new hospital that will stay current with all of the new methods of delivering health care services in the Northwest Territories.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be questioning the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat further. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Support for Northern Manufacturers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to recognize the initiative of the northern manufacturing sector. There is much talk of diamond, oil and gas exploration with capital intensive development and requirements for skilled, or at least a semi-skilled, workforce. In most economies, it is still the small businesses that provide the majority of jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Across the North, the arts and crafts cottage industry participates in the benefits of the tourism industry, and indeed we are making progress in the development of small northern manufacturers.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Northern Manufacturers Association which is promoting products manufactured in the North, made by Northerners, for our climate and conditions. The association also supports training through its involvement with the Skills Canada competition, which saw Northerners compete successfully in local and national competitions.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to acknowledge the success that Energy Wall and Building Products Limited has achieved through the certification of its Northwest Territories designed and manufactured wall panel system. They received this accreditation this week by the National Research Council's Canadian Construction Materials Centre. It is the first such certification for the North, and it means that the product can be used nationally in construction projects financed by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing mortgage insurance system.

There is also involvement, Mr. Speaker, by other northern companies, including Ferguson Simek Clark, who have been leaders in Canadian northern construction in the Soviet Union. I am also pleased to note the technical support of the Department of Public Works and Services and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. The efforts of my colleague for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent, are also to be acknowledged in furthering this venture.

This is an excellent example, Mr. Speaker, of public and private sector cooperation. I urge the government to further develop this type of support for northern manufacturers.

I should add, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister responsible for Housing for Ontario has authorized the use of such approved building material systems and designs for all of Ontario. I believe there are further ways the government may assist local manufacturers, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to raise questions on this issue later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Road to Resources

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Dogrib people from the four communities I represent have expressed an interest in having an all-weather road connecting them. With the winter road season growing shorter, an all-weather road would allow my constituents access to more affordable goods and services.

Every year, the government spends money creating winter roads which melt away each spring. It might be wiser to develop infrastructure and add on to the 30 kilometres of road that have already been developed in this area.

The benefit to the government would be that this road connecting the communities could be used as a road to resources. A transportation corridor which allows easier year-round access to the diamond mines. With the growth of greenhouse gases through the continued development of industrial activities in the North, we would be wise to have strategies that would reduce our gas emissions.

Currently, mines use diesel power generators. If we develop this road to resources, hydro power could be used instead by installing transmission lines along the new road. These lines could feed off of the hydro power generated by the hydro dams in the Dogrib region.

If a road to resources were built out of Rae, it would be a road that would benefit the communities even after the 25 year life expectancy of the mines. It would be a worthwhile investment with multiple benefits. If it were to be built out of Yellowknife, in 25 years when the mines are gone, the road will lead to nowhere. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Realizing Benefits From the Oil and Gas Industry

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring some emphasis to how important the oil and gas development is to Hay River. Hay River had a taste of the excitement that can be created by oil and gas development. In the early 70's, I was there for about five years, and indeed it was a busy time for Hay River. They had visions, Mr. Speaker, of Hay River growing to approximately 15,000 people. In fact, Hay River took steps to put infrastructure in place to support that population.

We all know what the Berger Inquiry did, and how everything was put on hold. I might add, Mr. Speaker, that Hay River had very little input into what was contained in the Berger Inquiry.

Since that time, Hay River has very little to celebrate. Yes, we have had the Northwest Territories Power Corporation move to Hay River, but the impact of that was reduced considerably by the fact that we lost NorthwesTel as a main centre.

When diamond mines were first introduced to the North, Hay River businesses spent a lot of money in attending meetings and preparing for what they could possibly gain from the diamond industry. A lot of those businesses came away empty handed because of their location.

I hear every day, Mr. Speaker, how well situated Hay River is for oil and gas development, how well it is equipped with infrastructure to support that development. However, Mr. Speaker, that infrastructure was taxed to the limit in the early 70's, some of which was in better shape at that time than what it is today.

When asked about funding for infrastructure in Hay River, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development stated that they cannot do anything on speculation. I am under the impression, Mr. Speaker, that oil and gas development in the North has gone beyond being speculative.

Speculation did not stop the Government of the Northwest Territories from spending millions of dollars in preparing for the diamond industry. The four advisory positions in the oil and gas sector that are being proposed by the government, one of which is located in headquarters, and one in Fort Simpson, does nothing to assure me that Hay River is being considered as a major point for the oil and gas industry.

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

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Hay River does have infrastructure that is going to be very crucial to the development of oil and gas in the North. I suggest that without the help of this government and some emphasis being put on Hay River, we could just as easily be bypassed. I would like to urge this government to take a proactive role in helping Hay River prepare for this oil and gas development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Summer Student Hiring

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk today about summer student hiring. The last time we sat in this House in March, my colleagues and I urged the government to do something for the students who were returning home from university and would be looking for jobs.

We suggested that if they did not do something quickly, we might as well meet the students on the tarmac and turn them around and send them down south for jobs.

To his credit, Mr. Kakfwi responded by setting up a phone line and a dedicated person in the Department of the Executive who the students could contact for summer employment. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, students have been reporting back to me and letting me know exactly what they thought of the situation this summer. It appears it is not much different than it was when I was going to university.

Unfortunately, what they are saying is that we simply have a receptacle for resumes in the Department of the Executive, and if you actually wanted a job, you had to go out to the individual departments and meet with managers.

The kids are not naïve, Mr. Speaker, and they know that trying to go to the Department of the Executive for a job was not the answer. Unfortunately, internally, the Executive only needs to know about the student once he or she has been hired, so it is reporting back after the fact. I do not think this situation is acceptable.

When I went to school, it was about who you knew for getting summer student employment. I hope that is changing. I now understand that corporate human resources is setting up a review to look at summer student hiring. I hope that they will include students in this process and I hope it is successful.

I do want to commend the Premier for setting up this review, because obviously he sees the problems that we see with summer student hiring. I hope he will fix it quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also have a concern with the Inuvik Hospital being built and replaced. Hearing that they are going to have to start from ground zero, I have many concerns. There has been a lot of work done on this. We were told in the 13th Assembly that this was to become a P3 project. A request for proposals went out. Money has been spent on feasibility studies and blueprints have been identified.

The federal government has committed to paying 64 percent of the cost of building this hospital. Mr. Speaker, 64 percent is in the area of \$16 million that the federal government is committing to pay as their share of the cost. The Government of the Northwest Territories' share is around \$8 million.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, this project that was signed through a transfer agreement back in 1988, in the Health Transfer Agreement, it is clearly stated under section 2.8 through 2.16 of the provisions. It boggles my mind as to exactly why it is taking this government so long to develop the infrastructure that is greatly needed for the regions of Beaufort Delta, Mackenzie Delta and Inuvik.

We have a major impact coming forth in the oil and gas industry, but the infrastructure that is in place is old, run-down, and needs to be replaced, yet nothing is being done by this government to ensure that project is being carried out. The comment from the Minister yesterday saying that they are going to have to start at ground zero upsets me very much. This was one of the projects I saw as being beneficial to the region and to the North. There has been a commitment from the federal government on this through the transfer agreement, yet this government is not living up to its obligations in that agreement.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services questions on this transfer. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Condolences to Giroux Family

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to apologize to my constituents and to my colleagues for not being in the House yesterday. Unfortunately, I was at a funeral for a respected elder in my constituency of Fort Resolution. I would like to send my condolences to the family of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Giroux. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The condolences do go to the family of the Giroux's. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Realizing Benefits From the Oil and Gas Industry

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak as an MLA for Nahendeh. Prior to this Session, I had the opportunity to hold a constituency meeting in Fort Simpson. A number of topics were raised. When the subject of oil and gas development in the Nahendeh area came up, there was a lot of debate, concern and support. I would like to speak about that today, Mr. Speaker.

In Fort Simpson, the village council, as well as the Metis local, the band council, and the chamber of commerce have formed an oil and gas committee. They got together because of the collective support for it to see what could be done in Fort Simpson.

They have made it known that they are very much in support of the proposed aboriginal gas pipeline down the valley. They would like to be considered a major player in that whole oil and gas development that has captured all of our attention here in the last few years.

They have asked me as their MLA to represent them more aggressively in this matter, and as such I would like to let the Legislative Assembly know that they would like to be considered as more of a player in this whole area. Fort Simpson is located right along the proposed route, alongside the existing Enbridge oil pipeline. The potential of gas in that whole area is very high.

However, there are land claims. The Deh Cho process has not been settled yet, so we have to make sure that the Dene and the Metis in the Deh Cho are considered and involved in any decision that takes place in that whole area.

So whatever gas development happens in our area, we must maximize the benefits so that the people in the communities and the regions in the North have the jobs, training and business opportunities. Thank you.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. At this time I would like to recognize one of our own, the honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden, has a birthday today. He has been trying to keep it a secret from us.

-- Applause

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as in my Member's statement and questions that I put to the Minister yesterday regarding the Inuvik Regional Hospital, I would like to seek clarification from the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. The last response I received yesterday before the question was taken as notice was that it would go back to the Financial Management Board Secretariat for direction or the hospital project would be brought back into the department for a final decision.

What direction was given when it was changed from a P3 project to a traditional tender project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once the decision was made by the Financial Management Board, we basically turned it over to the Department of Health and Social Services, the client department for this project. Any further direction is from the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, not me. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Minister initially informed me of this change in the project, he informed me of a certain number of processes and ensured me that it would not be delayed. Can the Minister clarify for me here, as he stated yesterday that this was going to be on time and would proceed from that point, is that the case here? Or is

it going back, as the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services said yesterday, to square one? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision by the Financial Management Board was to switch it from a P3 back to a conventional capital project. As I have told the Member before, there is no intention from the Financial Management Board to have any delay in the project. The intention was, an expectation under P3, the project would be completed in late fall or early summer of 2003. As far as I know from the Financial Management Board, that is still the intention. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 30 percent of the drawings are done, and I have a copy of those. Can the Minister inform me if that is where it is going back to? When it went back to the department, is it starting from the point where it has left off? The government has already paid well over \$1 million for some work on this facility. Can he inform me if that is where it is going back to? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly as the Minister responsible for Finance, and Chair of the Financial Management Board, I would like us to use our money as wisely as we can. If there is work that has been done, then hopefully that can be used.

The design of the facility rests with the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I cannot speak for her in terms of how the new building will be designed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responses are getting lukewarm. He says he does not want to waste money. The previous government spent money on this project. Was direction given, when this project was changed from a P3 to a traditional tender, to go back and use existing information that has already been done? The groundwork has been done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 64-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to be evasive. I am just trying to make sure I stay within my mandate and my portfolio as the Minister responsible for Finance and not tread into other people's portfolios.

Mr. Speaker, the direction and the decision from the Financial Management Board was to switch it from a P3 to a conventional project. There was no decision regarding how we were going to make use of the work that has already been completed. As I said before, that is up to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services as the client department. Thank you.

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

Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, and on the same issue. The Inuvik Hospital was constructed back in 1963, which is almost 37 years ago. Most buildings are pretty well obsolete or torn down in that timeframe.

There has been very little done in the way of trying to reconstruct or live up to the commitments this government made when it transferred Health and Social Services from the federal government to this government. I made reference to the 1998 Health Transfer Agreement. It clearly states, under section 2.8 to 2.16, the agreement deals directly with the Inuvik Hospital replacement. It is a direct statement to a particular hospital.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, nothing has been done to date. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services when can we see the construction of this facility?

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

Return to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, some of the questions directed by Mr. Roland to Mr. Handley would have been better directed to me. Mr. Krutko's questions have to do with Finance, but we will try and provide some answers here.

I think everyone knows, hopefully everyone in this House knows, the people in the region of Inuvik know, that there is a commitment on the part of this government to replace the hospital in Inuvik. We went a long way down the public-private partnership road that used up a lot of time and a lot of energy.

When it was determined that this project was not going to be carried out under the method of acquisition of a P3 project, it was a decision of the Financial Management Board that we would return to a conventional tendering, capital acquisition option. At that time, my department was instructed to prepare a submission to go back to the Financial Management Board for the funding required to place this project under the capital acquisition plan. That is in the process of being done now.

I want to assure the Member we are working on this as expeditiously as possible. Maybe more important than the start date is the fact that we are committing to the completion date and not changing that: completion in the year 2003. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me when we can see the tender documents being put forward so people can start bidding on this project? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the funding is approved through the Financial Management Board to return this to a traditional tendered project, it will then be up to the Department of Public Works and Services to put out proposal calls. I do not have a timeframe with me today. I have a chronology of the history of this project, the dates and the different things that were done on certain dates, but I do not have a projected timeline in great detail. I could get that and provide that to the Member once the Department of Public Works and Services has been given the go ahead.

On the previous question, as to whether or not we can use information that has already been compiled regarding this project, I believe the answer to that is yes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope we will not have any more delays when we go back to calls for proposals. This thing went through a rigorous process. It went through the P3 process and there were calls for proposals. I would like to ask the Minister what her department is doing to limit the timeframe to ensuring there will be an actual tender document prepared, so we do not have to go through the same process and we can make use of the information that is already compiled. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the lead up and the preparatory work that was done on the P3 project, the Financial Management Board Secretariat, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Public Works and Services worked very closely together on this. They were all parties to a P3 implementation team. Because of that fact, much of the information has already been shared. Now it is a formal process of turning the management and securing of this project over to the Department of Public Works and Services.

They have a lot of background knowledge, and they are also aware, and I cannot speak for Mr. Steen's department, but they are aware of the urgency and the desire on the part of the government to move this project ahead as quickly as possible. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in line with the cost of the hospital, which is \$25,440,000, I would like to ask the Minister what role is the regional health board taking? They are the ones calling us and asking us what is going on. Can the Minister allow the Inuvik Regional Health Board to take more of a controlling role with the replacement of this hospital? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 65-14(3): Construction of Inuvik Regional Hospital

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot inform the Member as to what formal process the Inuvik Regional Health Board would participate in, but I can assure you the Department of Health and Social Services will work very closely with the board to ensure the parameters of the project and what the health board recognizes as the needs, services and facilities to be incorporated in this project are met. Thank you.

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

Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen. It is a follow-up to my Member's statement. We have a situation where this government has spent millions on a critical recruitment and retention initiative for nurses in the North and northern nurses. Yet we find in my constituency, I have an aboriginal nurse who has been rejected and turned down for education leave to go back and get her degree. At the same

time, this department has lapsed \$820,000 in the retention plan.

I would like to ask the Minister if she would consider personally looking at this issue and making sure that, given the amount of money that has been lapsed, she would look at this particular situation and reconsider. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am familiar with the case the Member refers to, with respect to an applicant from Fort Smith who, as the Member says, has worked for the department for a number of years, is an indigenous aboriginal Northerner and precisely the kind of candidate we want to see expand on their training. People who will be investing their careers in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the funding that is available for nurses and professionals on education leave to enhance their skills does not come out of the recruitment and retention funding Mr. Miltenberger referred to as having \$800,000 lapsed. It comes out of the department's O and M, and there is a set, prescribed amount of money available under this program.

Unfortunately, for this particular applicant, the monies had already been committed for other candidates. I want to assure the Member that there are a number of other sources of resources for someone like this to return to school. We would be happy to work with Mr. Miltenberger's constituent to make them aware of these other avenues of resources. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the rigid attitude the department appears to be taking. If this is not a retention issue, I do not know what is. We have already had a case in Fort Smith where a northern nurse picked up the phone and was offered a job with a signing bonus down south because she could not get a job up here.

Mr. Speaker, they lapsed \$800,000. They lapsed \$400,000 in the public service training fund. They lapsed \$400,000 in apprenticeship training, and they tell me there is no money to train northern nurses. I cannot believe the department cannot find the flexibility. I will ask the Minister again, will she reconsider, given the amount of money that has been lapsed and the millions you are asking for to retain northern nurses, to look at this case? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not certain as to what kind of latitude a Minister has to reprofile and reallocate funds. We are talking about recruitment and retention, which is the lapsed funding Mr. Miltenberger refers to. I do not know how pleased Ordinary Members would be when they go through budget processes and are involved in allocation of funds if that kind of latitude was granted.

However, let me say that I do agree that if we have northern nurses, we want to expand on their skills, and, who are being rejected for education leave... the issue of the amount of money available in this fund does need to be examined so this does not happen again.

I also want to assure the Member that there are two times per year under the collective agreement when employees can apply for this education leave. Those times are in January and September. People who have previously applied are given priority. We would certainly encourage and invite another application from his constituent. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am getting the polite slag-off here in terms of being willing to look at this. This is a retention issue. This is a northern, aboriginal nurse. The government itself has defined it has a critical shortage in terms of the professional need. They have lapsed hundreds of thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

I want to inform the Minister that I will be extremely critical of the department's budget if that is the attitude they are going to take to training northern nurses.

I would like to know how many other northern, aboriginal nurses received funding last year under that one program? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do know that affirmative action rules do apply to this education leave program. I know the department had made a commitment to other students in this program. I do not know how many, and I can get back to the Member with that information. It is important that once they have begun to participate in this education leave, that we do not withdraw that support in favour of introducing other people into the program. I could find out how many applicants were accepted under this program in the previous year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister define what is covered under the retention part of the recruitment and retention program, given the fact that it has lapsed hundreds of thousands of dollars, they sent a crew of people off to the British Isles to look for...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Miltenberger, would you please ask the question?

MR. MILTENBERGER: What is covered under the retention part of your program? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 66-14(3): Nurses Training and Recruitment Policies

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are quite a number of categories under program delivery under recruitment and retention. I will just highlight some of them. There is a recruitment and retention steering committee that represents the department, boards, medical association, nurses association. There is a recruitment and retention unit within the department. There is a northern development program, which has programs such as a step bursary program. There are also career bursaries available. There is a professional development fund. There is funding for the recruitment of general practitioners, locum and long-term. There is a rural physician locum program. There is an advanced nursing skills education program. Temporary market supplement for nurses. There are nurse educator consultants. There are workshops that have been sponsored under this funding for workplace safety, health and well-being, and there is a website we have developed for recruitment. There is a foreign nursing recruitment program, which the Member has referred to. These are some of the categories that fall under our program for recruitment and retention. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 67-14(3): Decision on Road to Resources

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Finance, the Honourable Joe Handley. Concerns were brought to me from the community leaders of the Dogrib region regarding a May 23rd statement they heard the Minister responsible for Finance make about the Ingraham Trail.

When interviewed by CBC Radio about the road reconstruction occurring on the Ingraham Trail, the honourable Minister stated: "That road will continue to be the main route for all of the heavy traffic going into the mining area." Has a decision been made by this government about where the road to resources will originate from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 67-14(3): Decision on Road to Resources

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think there has been a decision made on where the road to resources would go. That is with the Minister responsible for Transportation.

Any new roads, as the Member knows, are the responsibility of the federal government. Our government's responsibility is with existing roads. I think the comments he is referring to are referring to work that is proposed to go ahead in future years on Highway No. 3, No. 4 and so on. I will not go into detail on that, but if the Member wishes, he can refer to the capital acquisition section of the main estimates. It outlines the projected expenditures there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 67-14(3): Decision on Road to Resources

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if the government has committed any funds towards the road to resources through the reconstruction of the Ingraham Trail? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 67-14(3): Decision on Road to Resources

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think you can call the Ingraham Trail the road to resources. The Ingraham Trail serves a recreation area and a number of people who live there permanently. I notice in looking back in the capital acquisitions in prior years, the government has spent almost \$1.2 million. There is a projection this year to spend \$494,000 there. It is proposed in future years to spend between \$2.8 million to \$3 million per year on Highway No. 4, which goes from the city out past Giant Mine and down to Tibbit Lake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 67-14(3): Decision on Road to Resources

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by reconstructing the Ingraham Trail and putting millions of dollars into this road, will the government, five or six years down the road, come back to us and say we have already put millions of dollars into this road, and there is no turning back? Will the government be saying that?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 67-14(3): Decision on Road to Resources

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am really on the edge of getting into the Minister responsible for Transportation's responsibilities. All I will say is that money that is spent on that road is spent there to serve the traffic on that road. I have no idea, Mr. Speaker, where the road to resources might go. I do not think that decision has been made. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I would like to remind Members not to ask hypothetical questions, or questions that border on the hypothetical. I do not know if the Minister is able to predict what the other governments are going to do. Please restrict your questions there. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Last Friday, I asked the Minister about the timelines for the development of a new Wildlife Act. He advised the House that he was hoping to see legislation at the most optimistic time coming in for the fall of 2002, more than two years away.

Mr. Speaker, as government brings in new legislation, there should be some philosophical underpinning to the development of that legislation. For instance, the primary purpose of a new Wildlife Act could be either to regulate harvesters or it could be conservation.

I would like to ask the Minister what is the primary purpose of the proposed new Wildlife Act?

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

Return to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the current Wildlife Act is very old. There has been a lot of change since that time, from an environmental perspective, a wildlife perspective, political change and so on. There are a number of purposes in the Wildlife Act.

One, and a primary one in my mind, is to update the Wildlife Act to accurately reflect this government's obligations and commitments to the land claims agreements, and also to recognize the rights those land claims agreements have. We also have self-government arrangements that are being negotiated right now. That has to be taken into consideration.

We have conservation measures that were developed years ago that may no longer be applicable. We have new demands and interest in wildlife harvesting, from a commercial perspective and from a traditional perspective. That has to be taken into consideration.

We have a lot more people living in the Northwest Territories than ever before. That has to be taken into consideration. Mr. Speaker, without getting into a lot of detail, there are a number of reasons for it. The primary one is to reflect our new political situation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat disappointed not to hear conservation being the first priority, and politics listed as the first priority. Mr. Speaker, will this legislation specifically cover both habitat and species? In other words, will it apply to all plants and animals?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Before I ask the Minister to respond, I would like to recognize in the gallery a former colleague, former MLA, former Minister, former Speaker, Ms. Jeannie Marie-Jewell.

-- Applause

Welcome back. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, the whole purpose of a Wildlife Act is conservation. How we do that is very dependent on our political system and governance and so on. I do not want to suggest that politics drives our Wildlife Act.

The Wildlife Act is being revised. At the same time, it will introduce legislation for species at risk. We have two main pieces of legislation coming forward at the same time.

The Wildlife Act will take into consideration all wildlife and habitat that is within our jurisdiction. Habitat includes plants, the earth, water and so on. Those and wildlife are very much interrelated. The primary focus is on wildlife and endangered species. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, much of the control of harvesting will now take place through bodies that are set in place through claims settlements and self government agreements. For those areas that are under this government's control, will the Minister agree that harvesting limits should be based on sound conservation principles only?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they should be based on sound conservation principles. Certainly. As we do that, there are other considerations that have to be taken into place. Those refer back to many of the land claims rights and responsibilities, traditional users...there

are a number of issues we need to look at as we get through this, not strictly conservation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, some of those other concerns will be addressed through claims and self-government. I would like to ask the Minister what conservation purpose does the two-year residency clause serve?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 68-14(3): Principles of New Wildlife Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that provision is an old provision that was in there a long time ago. It was set in the Wildlife Act at a time when there was a lot of, I believe it was during the period where we had a lot of oil and gas activity in the Beaufort Delta and a lot of mining activity, people going in and out of the Northwest Territories.

There was a need, and continues to be a need, to prevent situations where people who are here on very short rotations are able to come in and harvest as if they are residents. If we set it for two years, that is certainly a provision that will be looked at as the Act is revised. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation. The constituents in the Hay River Reserve are concerned about the condition of the access road to the reserve. This road was constructed through a heavy equipment program in 1970. This road is very narrow and winding and dusty, and certainly not up to today's standards. I would like to ask the Minister what his department's plans are to upgrade the access road to the Hay River Reserve.

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

Return to Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did have a meeting with the community last fall on this particular issue. The department indicated at that time that we have no plans to upgrade that road. They also requested we consider bridges across that particular river. We indicated to them the department had no plans to put in a bridge. The response to the Member, Mr. Speaker, is that at this point in time, we have no money or plans to upgrade that particular road. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, of all of the access roads, and I believe there are 13, which includes the Ingraham Trail, I would like to know where the access roads to the Hay River Reserve rank in terms of priority. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question of priorities and how the department arrives at priorities for different roads was raised last week. I responded we do not set priorities for maintenance of highways based on anything but to bring the highway up to safety standards, and to assure the highways are passable and safe.

From that point on, priorities for maintenance depends mainly on the amount of traffic flow, plus the weather conditions as to what is required to keep those parts of the highway passable. We do not have a priority rating, such as one, two, three, four or five as to different aspects of the highway system we have. We simply do it based on the maintenance schedules we have established to keep highways safe and passable. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not requesting information on the maintenance schedule. I am looking at an upgrade. If the Minister stated that safety is a factor, there have been a number of accidents on this road. Given that information, will the Minister consider the safety factor when he is looking at upgrading the roads? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, we do not establish priorities based on anything but allowing for the safe passage of vehicles. If the Member feels that his section of the highway serving the community of the Hay River Reserve is not safe and passable, perhaps we should sit down with him and the department, and come to exactly what is the concern. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary to Question 69-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take this opportunity to state that this road is not safe. I look forward to meeting with the Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. That was more of a comment than a question. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 70-14(3): Audit of PeopleSoft Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 31, 2000, in the House, I submitted a written question to the chairman for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Handley, regarding the ill-conceived, definitely misconstrued and certainly over budget PeopleSoft project.

There were various questions, things like the chronology, the history, list of positions, list of contracts, costing sheet, and to the Minister's credit, he gave me some detailed and good information.

In that information, Mr. Speaker, there was an amount of money, \$107,000, spent on an audit of the PeopleSoft project. I am wondering if the Minister can confirm an audit was done.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 70-14(3): Audit of PeopleSoft Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that an audit was done, or is in the process of being finalized. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 70-14(3): Audit of PeopleSoft Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am fairly certain the audit was done. I am wondering if the Minister can share some of the conclusions and recommendations of that audit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 70-14(3): Audit of PeopleSoft Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the audit conclusions with me. I would be happy to share that with the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 70-14(3): Audit of PeopleSoft Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for clarification, will the Minister commit to tabling the entire audit in this House? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 70-14(3): Audit of PeopleSoft Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Minister has taken the question as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my statement earlier today, the National Research Council's Canadian Construction Materials Centre has certified a wall panel system manufactured by a Yellowknife company, Energy Wall and Building Products Limited. This means the product can be used in construction projects financed by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Mortgage Insurance Program.

Now that this product has received this certification, and this is a requirement for use by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, I would like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Would the Minister consider changing the method of tendering for building packages financed by the Housing Corporation from conventional framing methods to this pre-engineered wall panel system, now that it has been approved by the national authorities? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to advise the Member for Great Slave that Energy Wall requested we consider their product, which was approved by the CMHC, but at this time, Mr. Speaker, we only consider it for block-funded communities, as well as EPAD clients, would qualify under the home ownership programs.

Mr. Speaker, there is more consideration given to this new concept, which we are presently evaluating. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue is that we now have a viable northern product. With the

corporation's ability to finance projects in the North, I am seeking a clearer intent by the corporation to actively incorporate this system into its tender packages. Can the Minister confirm that is the intention of the corporation? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have evaluated the tendering process as it applies to this particular product. Again, we see it being treated no differently than the normal, conventional tendering process. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to confirm, is the Minister committing that this new construction method will be considered and written into the specifications for the corporation's tender calls? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thought I had already confirmed my answer. It will be put under consideration and be part of the conventional tendering process. I have received the necessary information. We feel we can do that because they do qualify under the BIP policy and also the IMD. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to the corporation's involvement in the construction industry, what efforts might the Housing Corporation undertake to promote this product as a viable alternative for construction across the northern housing and construction industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 71-14(2): Housing Corporation Tendering Process

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not see us giving them any special preference, although when we talk about marketing northern products into the communities, I feel it will be part of our marketing strategy, allowing the communities to evaluate those products as they

come on the market and see if it conforms to their specific community needs. Thank you.

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

Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to pursue further the announcement that the payment going to the students will be paid monthly. Mr. Speaker, I am thinking about this, and it does not make sense to me. I think it is just a bad thing for students who have to wait for the cheques and look to see when they are going to get the money, but it also creates extra work for the employees, knowing cheques are deposited manually.

What is the rationale behind this? Could the Minister explain this please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cheques in the system are such that they will be monthly cheques deposited into students' accounts. It will be done through the banks as long as the bank is here in Yellowknife. In other words, the CIBC, Royal Bank, Toronto Dominion, and the Bank of Montreal. No doubt students can access one of those in the south, but not to the smaller operations like the Alberta Treasury Branch, because there is no direct link.

The students will be given their basic grant up front, which will cover their tuition for the term. The living allowance will be on a monthly basis and will be done by direct deposit. This is partially done by student request as well. We have received requests from students that this would be a better method for them. I know that contradicts with some of the other students who are saying that they prefer one lump sum payment. We did have students come to us saying that they prefer this system. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has been quoted as saying that students should learn life lessons by getting a monthly allowance from the government. Perhaps it is true that some students may like it this way, but having been a student myself, I think that when I go to school I would want to register, get started and not think about whether I am going to get my money every month and meet my payments.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the biggest complaint that we have received from students is that they are not getting quick service from the government. I know that we cannot be available with 24 hour service, but would the Minister not consider streamlining this

process, approve the loan and give the money out up front? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We feel that the monthly payment system is a proper way to go, Mr. Speaker. It provides students with consistency, and it will be there on the first of every month, deposited directly into their bank accounts. I do not understand what the complication for students at that end may be. As I said, we did receive requests from students to do it this way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The complication, Mr. Speaker, is this, the biggest complaint the students have is that students from all over Canada have to call whatever line it is and receive a voicemail message. They will be going through this every month if they do not receive their cheques. The complication is that the Minister is creating complications.

Yesterday, in responding to the Member for Thebacha, the Minister indicated that there was no automatic payment plan. Is he saying that everything is set, everyone will get paid on time, every month, through an automatic plan? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I did not hear a question there, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in response to the Minister's statement that there are no complications. My point is, Mr. Speaker, there are complications.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Other complications. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The system being set up provides the students with their basic grant up front, as a lump sum payment. After that, there will be monthly deposits on the first of every month into their bank accounts. I believe that is a system that is consistent with the demands that are out there from many of the students. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that the department has a system set up to do automatic deposits? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 72-14(3): Monthly Student Financial Assistance Payments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will ensure that it is in their bank accounts on the first of every month. I cannot confirm that there is a system there today to do that. I will confirm that they will have it in their accounts on the first of every month.

I realize that this may have been a problem in the past, but that does not mean...with today's systems, we all know that the capability is there to do this in a very efficient way. I do not think we should put down our own people to suggest that they cannot handle this, to put the money into the accounts. I understand it was there previously. I am giving assurances that it will be there, in students' accounts, on the first of every month. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 73-14(3): Oil and Gas Development Employees

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my Member's statement in regard to oil and gas and how it affects the community that I come from, Hay River, I would like to address the area of the four positions that have been created for oil and gas development.

For the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, I have been hearing why Hay River did not benefit a lot from the diamond mines because of its geographical location. Also, I have been hearing that Hay River is very well situated for the oil and gas development.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley, how he justifies a position for oil and gas in the capital, Yellowknife, but no position for the community of Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 73-14(3): Oil and Gas Development Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the effort was made by the department to put one position in each of the regions in the Valley; one in the Sahtu, one in Inuvik and one in the Deh Cho. There is one position that was kept in headquarters. That position works on the Mackenzie Valley development planning exercise. This is an exercise to attempt to coordinate input and issues from all of the departments across the Northwest Territories.

There is a deputy minister steering committee and a number of working committees that have worked to make sure everything we are doing is well coordinated.

We are still, even though there is oil and gas happening, we are still very much in a planning exercise as well. There is development going on in the Liard, but we still need to do planning in order to ensure that we do end up with a pipeline,

and if we do have a pipeline, it is what people are expecting in terms of equity and so on.

The position is in headquarters, Mr. Speaker, because that is where the planning for the Mackenzie Valley planning exercise is going on. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 73-14(3): Oil and Gas Development Employees

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look at it from the point of view that the government and headquarters have a whole department, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and also, the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs is quite involved and will be looking after the government's interests.

However, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that they have all of these positions in Yellowknife, would the Minister entertain moving that position to Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 73-14(3): Oil and Gas Development Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I would not move that position. I think that would make our central planning exercise very difficult. If there is good justification for another position in Hay River, a new position in Hay River, I could look at that, but not to move the current one. Otherwise, our whole valley-wide planning exercise is really hampered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 73-14(3): Oil and Gas Development Employees

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that the Minister would entertain the idea of putting an extra position in Hay River if it was justified. I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, has the Minister had any consultation with Hay River? I find it hard to believe that Hay River would not be pushing very hard for a position due to the involvement that they will have with oil and gas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 73-14(3): Oil and Gas Development Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has had a lot of contact with the mayor and council in Hay River over the past couple of years on a number of issues, including oil and gas. In fact, we have given some financial support to the mayor and council to look at these kind of issues. I think it was in the neighbourhood of \$30,000.

We have also continued to meet. Today at noon, we had a meeting with people from the Hay River Reserve who are planning a facility. So we continue to have an open door. We will look at any proposals that come forward and anytime people want to meet in Hay River, or want to come here, I am ready to meet with them. I think this is a tremendous opportunity and I want to work together with everyone on this. Thank you.

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

Question 74-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I would like to start off by thanking the Minister for her response to my colleague for the Mackenzie Delta. She provided informative information as to the process of where it is going.

My question to the Minister is, who is going to be involved in the next stages? She did mention that Public Works was going to be managing it, but the client department is either the Department of Health and Social Services or is it the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 74-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the parties that will be involved are the Department of Health and Social Services, the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board and the Department of Public Works and Services. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 74-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can she inform me as to who is taking the lead role in the work that is ongoing? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 74-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it depends on what phase and what particular activity we are involved in as to who is taking the lead role. At this time, the submission is being prepared by the Department of Health and Social Services. When it comes to preparing tender documents and going out for calls on the tender and so on, of course Public Works and Services will take the lead on that.

We will continue to be in consultation with the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board as we proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 74-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform us as the proposal is developed, and we go forward and complete the drawings of the building, will they indeed instruct Public Works and Services to reuse the initial plans that were put in place? I believe it is called the 30 percent plan. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 74-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, there is no intention at this time to deviate from the original plans which were developed. The Member is correct, they were developed to a percentage of about 30 percent, because there had to be something for the P3 proponents to respond to.

At this time, to the best of my knowledge, there is no plan to deviate from that original plan. Thank you.

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

Question 75-14(3): Training of Northern Nurses

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Given the fact that there is a recruitment retention plan that has lapsed money, and the government has said very clearly they are committed to training northern nurses, why are they refusing to send northern nurses out to get trained? The Minister said she has no flexibility, yet Minister Handley says the Ministers have tremendous latitude to move around money as long as it is under \$250,000 and is reported back to committee.

I would like to ask the Minister what she is going to do about the particular situation I referred to in my Member's statement other than to tell this nurse that she can reapply in January and take her chances in a very narrow, rigid program? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 75-14(3): Training of Northern Nurses

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Thebacha informally told me that I will be in front of committee of the whole for five days. I am sure we will have ample time then to discuss where we might reallocate money.

I totally agree with the Member that we should not have northern nurses also have a certain level of competency and who want to expand on those services and not have the ability to apply for and obtain education leave, in view of the fact that we are in such desperate shortage of trained nurses. Having said that, we will look at other sources of enhancing this funding. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 75-14(3): Training of Northern Nurses

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the discussion with the Minister on how we can improve her department. This is a very specific issue. While she is looking at how she is going to deal with this broader issue, there is a nurse asking to go to school who was refused. I am asking the Minister if she can use her Ministerial prerogative and look at this, given all of the money in her department that has lapsed in the area of retention and training?

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

Further Return to Question 75-14(3): Training of Northern Nurses

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to take that question as notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Finance regarding the decision to allow Public Works and Services to oversee the Inuvik Regional Hospital project. Was the Inuvik Regional Health Board involved in the decision to allow the Department of Public Works and Services to manage this project?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the health board, to my understanding, was involved. I am sorry, the Member is indicating the question is to someone else.

MR. SPEAKER: The indications I have is that it was directed at Public Works and Services, but the acting government leader has the prerogative of taking the question, and I assumed that is what he was doing. I will ask the Member if he will redirect the question. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health regarding the decision for the Department of Public Works and Services to oversee or manage the project, the construction of the Inuvik Hospital.

Was there any consultation with the regional health board on that decision?

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

Return to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the proposals came in, when it was still a P3 project, the proposal was evaluated by the P3 implementation team, which included a representative from the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of the change in the scope of the project, which is no longer a P3, I would like to ask the Minister exactly what role the Inuvik Regional Health Board will play on the construction and design of this hospital?

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

Further Return to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reference to this question previously, I said I was not aware of what formal mechanism would be set up to engage the involvement of the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board, but I will undertake to find out how that will be established and how that communication will be ongoing to receive their input. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is essential that the Inuvik Regional Health Board plays an active role in the construction of this facility. They know what is going to be needed in the new hospital. They have been working on this for several years. I want to ensure the department ensures the Inuvik Regional Health Board plays a full and active role in this construction.

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

Further Return to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member that this hospital is an old facility. It is being replaced. The facility which is established will be in place for many years to come. We want to make sure it

addresses the needs of the region as accurately as possible. We realize communication with the region is necessary to assure that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if there is a possibility the Inuvik Regional Health Board oversees the construction of this project?

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

Further Return to Question 76-14(3): Inuvik Regional Hospital Project

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if the Member was led to believe that the Inuvik Regional Health Board would be overseeing the project, if that is what he said. The Department of Public Works and Services will be carrying out that function on behalf of our department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The time for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, replies to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to budget address. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS

Reply to Budget Address 1-14(3)

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the opening address, I, for one, am glad to hear what I am hearing. After being here for five years, much of what we hear and what gets done are two different things.

MR. SPEAKER: Pardon me, Mr. Krutko. We are on item 10, replies to budget address. You stated opening address.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am dealing with the budget address. With the different areas, I feel we have the potential in the Northwest Territories, especially in our non-renewable sector, oil and gas, mining and also tourism.

I feel we have to do more to take advantage of these developments, especially in the area of making sure we have trained people and we allow the business community to benefit fully from these opportunities.

An area I have concerns with is the way we have seen the expenditures of this government in the last number of years, we have taken a lot of dollars and resources from human resources development. We are looking at health care cuts, cuts in the area of education. Now we are seeing cuts in the area of adult education in a lot of our communities. I feel there is no need for these cuts. If anything, we should take the challenge and consider putting more dollars in those different sectors.

We have to ensure we have the opportunities where we have the challenge of high unemployment, low-education levels,

social conditions and health concerns we have in many of our small, isolated communities.

Looking at the strengths and weaknesses we have, one of our strengths is the resource sector. One of our weaknesses is our human resources. I feel we have to bring them on par with each other to take advantage of it.

The other area I feel is essential that we, as a government, be open and honest, especially when it comes to the financial situation we find ourselves in. We may say we are sitting with a small deficit, yet that deficit can become very large, especially with unforeseen circumstances we find. We have to resolve the negotiations with the UNW. I feel there are a lot of resources that are going to be spent in that area, since we have set the precedent by settling the negotiations with the teachers. Many of the benefits they arrive at will be asked for by the UNW.

Regarding where we are going financially, I feel that as a government, we have to start taking new initiatives. There are avenues we can look at. One of them is tax revenues. I feel we have to seriously look at the tax regime we have and see how we can fill some of those loopholes by finding new revenues and resources that presently flow to southern Canada to the federal government.

We have a young population in the Northwest Territories, yet when it comes to the challenges, the education level of our population is very low. We have to do more to invest in that sector and ensure that we have trained, qualified education people in our workforce, so they can take advantage of these jobs and opportunities that come along.

The other area I have many concerns about is the capital infrastructure in a lot of our communities. We have seen what has happened with the water problem I have in my region, especially in Fort McPherson, and there are concerns in Aklavik about the water quality in those communities.

Much of the infrastructure that is in our communities was built back in the 1960s and 1970s, where they saw a large population growth in many of our communities. The infrastructure we have, schools, treatment facilities, utility systems, highways, roads and infrastructure in our communities, have outgrown or basically outlived their capacity and what they were designed for, which was a small population of some 300 to 500 people. Yet in many of our communities, we are having populations in the area of over 1,000 people. That has to be considered.

One of the areas I feel we have to do more in is considering the health needs of our people. I raised many issues in the 13th Assembly about the alcohol and drug programs in our communities. We talk about community wellness. We talk about healthy people. We as a government have to do more to ensure we assist in those areas for people to be able to make a decision that they do not want to drink and they do want a healthy lifestyle, but they have to have the resources and the ability to access these programs and facilities that this government is presently responsible for.

We have seen some downturn regarding closures of alcohol and drug facilities, family facilities, the TI'oondih Healing Society, Delta House in Inuvik and other areas where we have seen some major cuts. The alcohol and drug programs here in Yellowknife have taken a major slash in the last number of

years, yet the demand from the public for those facilities is still there, especially when it comes to the younger population.

We can see by the statistics that there is something wrong with the system. When we have the number of cases of family violence, the high crime rates, jails are overflowing, passing the capacity they were designed for.

The problems we are seeing with fetal alcohol syndrome, FAE and FAS, in the children who are in the different systems, and that is a cost to this government. In order to offset those costs, we have to make an investment to ensure the public and the people in the Northwest Territories are able to make good decisions, but have the resources there and the facilities in place to assist them when they make that change or challenge that they would like to move on.

The other area I have identified as an area of concern is how do we improve the social well-being of our people in the communities? One of the areas I have a lot of concerns with is the high illiteracy rates in many of our aboriginal communities. If you look at society in general, and the cultural breakdown between aboriginal and non-aboriginal, and a lot of statistics you can pull out of it is that people's abilities to get jobs, get a good education, get good health programs where you live... I feel that should not be a barrier on how we deliver programs and services.

By not seeing those results in the communities, such as the aboriginal communities where we have high illiteracy rates, very low graduate rates and very high health problems in our communities, especially regarding cases of sugar diabetes and cancers and what not, I feel it has a barrier on the lifestyles and conditions that those people are living under.

I think we as government have to take a good look at that and put more resources into making sure we have the services which are funded so that they are able to carry out what their responsibilities are. I think that is something that this government has to do more to improve.

The other area I feel that this government has to do more in is developing economic potentials that we have in all our regions in the Northwest Territories, not just the "have" and "have-not" regions. We have to look at areas where there is no economic potential but there is a real resource sector where people can depend on the wildlife, the caribou, the fish, the moose and also to be able to take advantage of the eco-tourism potential that these communities have. We have to do more to stimulate those economies, even if it means we have to establish special programs for those particular areas. We have to do more to encourage this government and the government departments to realize that there are differences between oil and gas and diamonds on the renewable side and the renewable sector, where people can make a living on that area if we promote it right, by doing more to stimulate that economy.

The other area I would like to touch on is the area of working with aboriginal First Nations and government to improve our relationships with the First Nations people of the land and the economy of the North, so we can clarify the uncertainty that is out there and start work to develop an economy, a government and a better life for the people we all serve, not just as government but as First Nations people.

We have seen the steps taking place with regard to the Aboriginal Leaders Summit. We have the initiatives by the

aboriginal groups to working together to find ways of getting the benefits that will be flowing from the economic development that are taking place with oil and gas, pipeline and the diamond industries.

Yet I feel there is still a real challenge out there from governments to really say what they mean and not just say it for the sake of hearing themselves say it.

I have been involved with the aboriginal organizations in the North for some 15 years. From the Inuvialuit Claim to the Dene-Metis negotiations up and down the valley, to being the vice-president of the Metis Association, to working with the land claims groups with the Dene-Metis Secretariat, the Gwich'in Sahtu organizations. Yet through those negotiations, everybody was under the assumption that life was going to improve and that there will be a change in how things were done from the past where governments will realize that they have an obligation to First Nation's people, and they have an obligation to carry out responsibilities they have in land claim agreements.

The Minister responsible for Finance has made us aware of the potential that we have as Northerners, but in order to harness that potential, we have to realize we have some commitments and obligations under land claim agreements, especially the social and economic chapters that are in the agreements. We have an obligation to negotiate First Nations people in the Northern Accord. There is an obligation under the agreement to make amendments to the Wildlife Act. I have been waiting for some five years to see those amendments come to this House, yet nothing has been done to date.

I believe we have to harness those potentials but also realize as a government, we have some legal obligations that we must fulfil with the different communities and the different peoples of the North, especially the First Nations people.

I feel we have to do more in light of the potential we have. We talk about the mining industry, the diamond industry, where we were able to take advantage of the secondary industries and put money in place so that Northerners can invest and develop the secondary industries in the North, like the polishing, evaluation and also jewellery making in the Northwest Territories. That for me is the encouraging part of the potential we have.

I feel the government has to do more so we become self-sufficient in the future by developing the manufacturing businesses, enticing industries to develop in the North and promoting their manufactured goods in the Northwest Territories. We should be able to start importing something like 85 percent of the goods and services from southern Canada, but when are we going to start exporting some of the products that we produce in the North and become competitive with other jurisdictions across Canada? Then we will see exactly how as a nation we can play our role in Canada.

We have to do more for the oil and gas sector. I feel the only real economic spin we can give to this is that we will be able to take the dependency of government from people. For those who want jobs, want to be able to fend for themselves and also to be able to feed their families without having to depend on government, that is through the private sector, either through the business sector, the oil and gas industry, the diamond industry and be able to take advantage of those jobs and opportunities that are there.

We have to be ready for these developments. We cannot have a budget in place where we have not identified resources. The potential that we have in the oil and gas sector will outweigh the potential we have in the diamond sector.

Yet very little is in the budget for the oil and gas sector, and it is already on our door step. In the next two months, we will see how many oil companies are really interested in developing in the North through the opening of the oil and gas leases, which are going to be announced August 8th.

I have already been in discussions with the oil and gas industry to see what demands they are making on us. They are looking for Northerners, northern businesses and the northern people to develop the infrastructure for them. They do not want to be in charge of owning buildings or having to take care of taxes and having to train people. I feel that could be done by Northerners and the dollars and resources for those activities could be done here in the North.

We have to have something in place and the dollars allocated to assist the oil and gas business sector so they can take advantage of the opportunities when they come, either through the entrepreneurs who are going to be involved in the seismic activity or the rig operators. We are looking at people in the different catering businesses for catering the camps. Basically, we are ensuring the equipment is there on the ground for them to carry that out.

Right now, there is a shortage of equipment in the Mackenzie Delta region when it comes to seismic activity and also for cats, trucks and what not. There again I see an opportunity for Northerners to take advantage of the developments by not only investing in that particular sector, but also developing it so that it is a northern-based business opportunity which is developed in the North for the North by the people of the North.

In regard to the pipeline down the valley, I feel more than ever that this is the most critical time in our history, where we as a government and as a people can take advantage and have a say in how these developments are going to take place. We can be involved in the benefits that will flow from those developments, either through ownership, through partnerships or through the construction of a major pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley.

The other area I have had concerns about is the way the government is spending money, especially capital infrastructure dollars for highways. I feel we cannot continue to tell the federal government that while we need more money for highways, we are not making sure that we maintain the infrastructure that we have now.

By improving on the infrastructure, rather than just concentrating on one highway system, which is Highway No. 3, where we are putting somewhere in the budget of almost \$10 million into 100 kilometres of highway. I feel there has to be more fairly distributed dollars and resources to all major highways that we have in the North, regardless of whether it is Highway No. 1, Highway No. 2, Highway No. 3, or Highway No. 8. We have to fairly distribute those dollars. If we are going to the federal government with our hands out saying we need more money for infrastructure, yet we are not putting money into all of our highways, something has to be done for us to access federal dollars. We have to match dollar for dollar. I feel we do not have the flexibility to do that under the existing

budget because we have allocated too much money into one highway system.

On another matter in the area of infrastructure, we talk about decentralization and building regional capacity, yet we do not see it happening in our regions. We do not see any major increases in human resource positions in our communities. We do not see any major improvements in facilities at the regional centres, like the Arctic College facility. That has been put off. The Inuvik Regional Hospital is somewhere down the line, and we feel we need that.

In order for communities and regions to be able to take advantage and develop their regional economies, they have to have an economic base. In order to do that, they have to be able to take advantage of those things. They also have to have the resources and facilities to do them so that they are able to carry out the responsibilities they have taken on.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Your time for the reply to the budget address has expired. Item 10, replies to budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 13-14(3): Letter From National Research Council Regarding Evaluation of the Energy Wall System

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two documents. One is a letter from the National Research Council of Canada.

Tabled Document 14-14(3): Letter From Energy Wall and Building Products Ltd. Regarding National Certification of Their Product

The other is a letter from Energy Wall and Building Products Limited concerning the certification of their construction method. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 16: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 7: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act 2000

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 29, 2000, I will move that Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act 2000, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Bill 8: Justice Statutes Amendment Act

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 29, 2000, I will move that Bill 8, Justice

Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Antoine. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Bill 9: An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 29, 2000, I will move that Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Bill 10: An Act to Amend the Adoption Act

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 29, 2000, I will move that Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters.

Bill 1, Appropriations Act, 2000-2001; Committee Report 1-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Review of 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates; Committee Report 2-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates; and Committee Report 3-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates.

By the authority given to the Speaker by Motion 4-14(3), the House is resolved into committee of the whole to sit beyond the time of adjournment until the committee is prepared to report. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters, with Mr. Delorey in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee to order. We are reviewing the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, page 11-25. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that the committee continue consideration of Bill 1 and committee reports 1 through 3 concurrently, specifically resuming consideration of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Should we conclude that department today, we can move on to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will continue after a 15 minute break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee back to order. We are dealing with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, forest management, page 11-25. I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in some witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring in witnesses.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in? Mr. Handley, could you introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with me on my left is Bob McLeod, deputy minister for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. On my right is Jim Kennedy, director of corporate services for the department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are on page 11-25, forest management, operations expenses, total operations expenses, \$29,164,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. We will go on to forest management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. We are on page 11-28, active positions, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 11-29, lease commitments, infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 11-30, fur marketing service revolving fund. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to seek consent to go back to page 11-25.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): What page, Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO: Page 11-25, forest management.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko is seeking consent to go back to page 11-25. Does the committee agree? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My concern regarding forest management is the experience I have had in my region where the community of Fort McPherson and also Tsiigehtchic and Aklavik, they have these portable sawmills that they want to get into some sort of small-scale manufacturer of wood products. Yet nowhere in the department does there seem to be a real economic concentration on forestry as a potential business or industry like oil and gas or minerals.

Is there such a responsibility, or dollars available, to assist communities? Not only on the management of the businesses, but also having the resources or dollars there to assist people within that sector, especially in the small, isolated communities, to get involved in developing wood products in their communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are a number of programs through our business development program, the BCC, Community Futures and so on, where anyone wanting to get into any business, including forest operations, could apply for assistance.

In terms of professional or technical assistance, then we would provide it either through an economic development officer or, if necessary, through our forest management section. It is not laid out as being specifically in forest management, but there is expertise we can make available. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if you look in the budget under grants and contributions, there is \$100,000. I would like to know exactly...it has been there for several years. Maybe the Minister could tell us who has been accessing these grants and contributions regarding forest management.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the \$100,000 that appears in the budget is a holding figure we put in for disaster compensation in the event of a forest fire, someone loses a cabin or equipment. There have been a number of people over the years who have accessed it. If the Member wants to know who from the Gwich'in area, for example, have accessed it recently, we can provide that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have \$29 million in this envelope, but you talk about managing the forest, you talk about fire suppression...we are spending a lot of money fighting fires, but we are not spending any money on the potential or development that can come from the harvest of the forest. We are spending \$12 million a year fighting these fires, yet we are not getting any money back to come close to offsetting the cost of managing that forest.

I am just wondering if, maybe, it is a question about refocusing the responsibility of this department to seriously look at not only the management of the forest, but also considering the economic potential that forest has to develop jobs for communities and businesses and that it is done in such a way that it is done from the ground up where the small communities can take advantage of it.

We have a lot of costs associated with importing goods and services, especially wood products from southern Canada. Why can we not develop those products in the north in the communities and be able to market that product in the

Northwest Territories, rather than just taking the raw log and shipping it to British Columbia or Alberta and have it milled in southern Canada?

Can the Minister tell me if that is a possibility within the mandate of this portfolio?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is definitely a possibility. We will take it into consideration as we prepare business plans for the next year. I might say that we have been, even though we do not have a section of the department that provides that kind of support directly, we have done a number of things to help the Gwich'in.

For example, we have been working with the Gwich'in renewable resources board, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the community renewable resource councils to develop a forest management plan. That is underway now. We have provided training for the Gwich'in in scaling courses in Inuvik. We have sponsored Gwich'in to go to the First Nation Training and Forestry workshop in Winnipeg. We have cost-shared with Tsiigehtchic to send a community representative to a community protection workshop in Halifax. There is forest fire management as well, where we work with communities. There is quite a bit happening. I take the Member's suggestion seriously and it is something we will look at and see if we can coordinate with the department's business plan more. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider expanding the amount of money that is presently under grants and contributions for communities who want to get into manufacturing of forest products, either through portable sawmills or what not, so it will generate employment in their small communities and they can offset the costs of having to import a lot of these goods and services. Is there a possibility of increasing the amounts in grants and contributions strictly earmarked for economic opportunities in small, isolated communities so they can develop a small, secondary industry around wood products?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we would be pleased to look at how we could do that. Again, I just want to underline that the \$100,000 that appears here in grants and contributions is only for disaster compensation. There is money through BDF and other areas, but I will take the Member's recommendation and see if we can make it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the responsibility of the people in charge of forest management, we hardly see these people around. They are all based in Fort Smith at the forest fire centre, yet the forests of the Northwest Territories spread from the Alberta border to the Arctic Circle. I am just wondering, is there a possibility of redistributing the

human resources in the forest management area to all of the different regions, so each region can work with these individuals who have the expertise who are based in Fort Smith and can be more associated with the communities and the clients who may be involved in the forest management area, rather than having everyone located in Fort Smith?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have been going through the process of devolving responsibilities from headquarters in Fort Smith, Hay River, wherever, out to the regions. We have one position now in charge of forest management out of Inuvik, a fellow named Mike Gravelle. We also do regular visits from the forest fire centre to review last year's experience, to review this year's. We have a review team visiting Inuvik on July 10 and Tsiigehtchic on July 11. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I ask the question is because we are talking about regional capacity. I believe there are a lot of conflicts out there, especially between First Nations communities and the way the consultation has taken place with forest management.

This is a responsibility that was devolved from the federal government. There are certain obligations under different agreements, either regions with agreements or without agreements, there has to be more done to improve the consultation and the community concerns as to how this resource is going to be developed, and exactly how the impacts can be dispelled or brought to a minimum. I feel this department should be doing more to expand itself, like we are doing in the human resources sector, where we have officers in most of our communities. We have a regional human resource base that deals with the renewable resource sector, but with non-renewable, you talk about putting people in the different regions dealing with oil and gas. Can we expand that regarding the decentralization and the regional capacity, so we can see the forestry industry being developed in all the regions, not just one or two?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, we could do that within the resources available to us, and we will take the Member's advice. As we work on our next business plan, we will look to see if we have the flexibility to be able to increase our abilities in forest management. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair recognizes Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I have a question regarding forest inventories, especially in the Deh Cho. The Deh Cho has a huge potential in the area of timber and we have a number of sawmills in the region. There are plans for some of the communities to set up a log re-manufacturing plant on the reserve. A lot of the chiefs have voiced the concern that there is a lack of inventory in the region. It has been a problem that has caused concerns about the permits that have been issued

up until now. It is a problem trying to measure some of the economics for the future.

Some of the chiefs are reluctant to give approval until we know what our timber inventory is in the region. I know some work has been done in the Deh Cho, Cameron Hills and Red Knife areas. I would like to ask the Minister if there are any plans to complete the timbering inventory in the Deh Cho area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we are a number of years behind in our inventory work. We complete about one a year. They are very time consuming and very expensive to do. I agree that we need to do more. It is a stumbling block. At the same time, we are also being very cautious as we issue permits to make sure we are not over harvesting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHEAL MCLEOD: The possible solution that was discussed at a meeting on the Hay River reserve about a month ago was the idea of contracting out some of the timber inventory or analysis. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider that in order to fast track some of this work.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: We did have some expert advice, Mr. Chairman, that we used to do some inventory in the Cameron Hills area. We do as much of that as we can. It all costs money and we have to be careful how much we are spending in some of these areas. We are working at it as best as we can. I think the long term solution is that it has to come back to getting some sort of economic development agreement that will enable us to get some cost sharing from the federal government on these issues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHEAL MCLEOD: Thank you. The Minister has indicated that they are several years behind. Could he tell us when we can expect to see the Deh Cho inventory done? When does he anticipate that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will have Mr. McLeod respond to Mr. McLeod's question, since he has the detail on inventories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of the fact we have relatively little funds allocated for inventories in the Deh Cho, we have been working mainly in the Fort Liard area. More recently in the Cameron Hills, where we have undertaken timber supply analysis. So essentially, those are the two areas we have focused on. Generally, we focus where there is the most interest or activity. That is normally where we put our money. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHEAL MCLEOD: I was hoping the Minister would be able to tell me in terms of the number of years we can expect the inventory to be completed in the Deh Cho. Can I rephrase that question to offer that kind of answer?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would estimate that it will take us three to five years to get caught up in the Deh Cho. If you look at the whole Mackenzie Valley, we are probably in the neighbourhood of ten years behind. As Mr. McLeod has mentioned, given the interest in the harvesting activity, we will give this a priority.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHEAL MCLEOD: One final question, I touched on it a little the other day, I would like to ask for a more specific answer. It is in the area of consultation process for permits. I would like to ask the Minister to explain to me what that process consists of.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, whenever we receive an application for a permit or a licence to harvest timber, we go through a process of consultation with all of the affected communities, or communities that have historically harvested in that area. They have a period of 42 days to express any concerns they might have with the application. The responses we receive are taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to issue the permit. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHEAL MCLEOD: I want to ask if that means going in directly by having someone going into the community and talk to them. Who do they talk to? Or do they just put an ad up?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, generally the process is one where we will write letters to the community leaders advising them of the application for a permit. There may or may not be an actual physical visit to the community and a participation in a meeting, depending on the circumstances. We do go into the communities to go over the information we have on the timber supply analysis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have a concern, especially with the way we are managing our forests. I feel there are certain obligations already in place. Maybe it is spelled out in different types of legislation, especially when you talk about forest products.

There has to be more emphasis placed with the harvesters on the effects of logging and what not on aboriginal harvesters, especially when you are talking about people's trapping and hunting occupations, where it will have an effect on them down the road, but without consultation with the local renewable resource councils or HTAs.

Knowing there will be an impact, regardless of whether it is minute or large, there has to be that consultation. I think this government has to do that. I would like to ask the Minister how they are consulting with the affected harvesters, especially in the area of the Hunters' and Trappers Association?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, all our officers go to every community on a fairly regular basis. As well, as I mentioned earlier, we do work on forest management plans with the land claim groups, for example, or with the communities where there is not a land claim. It is our view that the most workable system is to have a forest management plan that all of the parties agree to and that will be our main focus in terms of trying to get consensus on harvesting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a process where a group can appeal a decision to the department if they do not like the outcome of a decision? They oppose it based on, say for instance it is an area that is sensitive because there are calving areas for species such as moose. Is there an appeal process for communities or organizations to follow if their timeframe is up?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, under the current Forest Management Act, there is certainly opportunity for all affected communities, or communities that harvest in that area, to express their concerns. There is no formal mechanism now for an appeal.

Under the Act, we have one of our assistant deputy ministers identified as the forest management supervisor, so it could be taken to his level. He could take the matter into consideration. As I said before, it is important we have forest management plans so our people know ahead of time what the concerns may be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if there is a review process in regard to the forest transfer that took place between the federal government and this government. Is there a certain amount of time where there will be an in-depth review to see if the transfer has followed whatever guidelines or the agreement was when it took place? Is there going to be a review of the forest management area, just like the wildlife review?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there has not been a review and there is no provision in the transfer agreement for a review to be done. The transfer was made for the federal government to the territorial government, and it is really up to us to manage it on behalf of the people as best we can.

There has not been a review of forest management as such. There certainly has been a number of reviews as a forest fire fighting component of it. However, the other side, we have not done a formal review on. I think the suggestion to have a review is a worthwhile one that the department can undertake if it has time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: The reason I say that is because for First Nations people, they use forest products. A lot of people feel they do not have to be paying stumpage fees if they are cutting logs for their own homes. If they are cutting wood that they are going to use for construction of cabins and what not, wood that they are using for traditional purposes. Yet the government tries to tell them they have to have a licence and they cannot cut these trees.

However, under treaty rights and also under land claim agreements, they have the right to harvest trees at no cost. Because there is that misunderstanding or people overreacting when they are trying to enforce it, they do not really realize that cultural history of the Northwest Territories where you have these different treaties, Treaty 8, Treaty 11, you have the different land claim agreements. You have the different political processes. I feel there has to be more done or something done to ensure that dialogue takes place. You only deal with the forest fire aspect of it. You also have to look at forestry as a renewable resource aspect for First Nations people who depend on it for their livelihoods.

I would like to know how far you are willing to go on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: For any use to be considered to be traditional, then there is no stumpage fee paid. People will get a timber harvesting permit that is free of cost. Certainly that applies to fire wood and so on for their own use.

The only time we would have a requirement for stumpage to be paid is if someone wanted to create a timber harvesting operation that harvested a considerable amount of timber on a commercial basis. Then, there would be a stumpage fee paid. There would also be a reforestation fee paid. That goes beyond traditional use.

Having said that, we do want to work within the spirit and intent of the land claim agreements. If there is an issue, we would be happy to deal with the land claim body on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I am not too clear on this transfer. Is there a different policy in regard to the forest management of the forest and the fire? I see there are two policies, one for the forest fire management policy. I am just wondering what is in place for

the forest? What rules and regulations do the people that harvest the trees have to fall under?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there is a Forest Management Act which provides the legal basis for any forest management activity. We have a policy covering the forest fire fighting responsibilities of the department. One is an Act, the other is a policy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Is there anyone in the department who does a thorough review of the different land claim agreements and the treaty aspects of forestry? Is there anyone there who has done that yet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not think anyone has done a comprehensive review of all the provisions but we do work closely with aboriginal affairs. We also have our own person on staff in the policy section who is responsible for taking into consideration and reviewing any concerns regarding implementation of the land claim agreements and our department's programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Could the Minister tell me what the process is for a review of the forest management area in the department? Is it done through a committee or does it have to come through the House for a thorough review of the forest management area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it could be done the way that we did a review of the forest fire responsibilities, that is, through a consultant. That was done at the direction of the Minister. It could be done and I am sure aspects of it are done on a regular basis throughout the department. At this point, Mr. Chairman, my view would be that it would be best done within the department, given our limited resources. However, we would be happy, on a continuing basis, to review our forest management practices and policies.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are on page 11-25, forest management, operating expense, total operations expense, \$29,000,164. Mr. Krutko

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Go ahead, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I move that the committee recommends that the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development not issue new licenses for the commercial harvesting of trees, and increases shall not be granted without the consent of the affected

communities and Hunters and Trappers Association for such a commercial harvest would significantly affect the harvesting of wildlife by the First Nations People.

And therefore, that the department review policies and agreements that affect land claims and treaty rights in consultation with the appropriate standing committee and members of the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We have a motion on the floor. We do not have any copies of it. We will have to take a short break to see if it is in order.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko, I would like you to read your motion.

Committee Motion 7-14(3): Recommendation to Issue Timber Harvesting Permits Only With Consent of Affected Parties (carried)

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development not issue any new licenses for the commercial harvesting of timber without the consent of the affected communities and the Hunters and Trappers Association, where such harvesting would significantly affect the harvesting of wildlife by First Nations people.

AND FURTHER that the department undertake to review any forest management policies and agreements that affect land claim or treaty rights in consultation with the appropriate standing committee and the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We have a motion on the floor. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

We are on page 11-25, forest management, operating expense, total operating expense, \$29,164,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a concern I raised in committee and that the department is going to look into is there is presently a 24 hour timeframe that allows the community fire response groups to fight a fire. Anything over 24 hours is the responsibility of the forest fire centre in Fort Smith. Has the department looked at expanding the timeframe from 24 hours to 48 hours, so the community can make an effective front to try to fight these fires when they are in the mature stage, where they just started?

I believe a lot of these fires that eventually get out of control are because of the short timeframe the communities or the regional fire response teams have to respond to these fires. If we give them a little more time, the communities and the regions will feel they have made an effort and the communities, when these fires become out of control, do not feel the people in our community and regions have not made an effort to try to fight these fires when we are leaving the decision to the fire centre in Fort Smith.

Has the Minister thought about that? Is there any possibility of extending that timeframe of 24 hours?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is no taking away the authority from the community after 24 hours. What we do is if the fire can be handled in the first 24 hours, then the community has the authority to manage it. After 24 hours, if it is still not under control, it is reassessed. Based on the assessment and whether or not it can be managed, what new resources have to be put in it, then a fire response plan is prepared. At that point, it takes consultation with the region and possibly with headquarters.

We do regular consultation with the communities. If people feel reassessment after 24 hours is not appropriate, and the process we use is not appropriate, we would certainly listen to what they have to say and take their advice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel 24 hours is not sufficient. We should at least give them 48 hours. Twenty-four hours is a short timeframe. To allow communities to take more control and feel the value, an acknowledgement that they have some say and an ability to react to fires without having to sit in the communities, waiting for someone in the fire centre in Fort Smith telling them when he should respond, or which fire is a priority over another...we should allow the communities more flexibility. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider expanding the timeframe from 24 hours to 48 hours? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, we would consider that in consultation with the communities and the local leaders. Again, in many cases, depending on the fire fighting situation, fires may be well out of control in 48 hours. It will vary from fire to fire and condition to condition, but we will consider it, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I feel with the situation that happened last year with the fire in Tsiigehtchic, I felt the communities, and the communities felt this as well, that they were not listened to. They wanted to go back and fight the fire, but were told by Fort Smith to lay off and that it would burn itself out. Look at the size of that fire, where a lot of private lands were burnt because of this fire. This fire burnt all summer. At the end of the day, it cost us more money to respond to it after it had become such a huge fire. The only reason we responded was because it was affecting the highway system and a tower owned by NorthwesTel.

Yet when the communities were saying let us get on with it and fight it, there was no one at the fire centre in Fort Smith who thought it was a priority. They would just as soon see the land burn all summer. I would like to make it clear here that I feel we have to allow the communities more say and more ability to respond to fires and give them the time to do it justice.

We have a lot of good firefighters in our communities. These people have trained for years to do that. As a government, we have to give them the benefit of the doubt and give them the time they need to do an adequate job and save this government money.

I would like to ask the Minister when will the changes be made to allow for this time to be extended from 24 hours to 48 hours?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier, we will do that in consultation with the communities and the leaders. We have a team who are going to Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic July 10th and 11th. At that time, they will discuss it and decide on the course they want to follow. As I say, it depends on the situation. Sometimes you do not want to wait 48 hours. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not know if the communities know there is this 24 hour timeframe. What the department says in these meetings is news to me. I have been here for almost five years, and this is the first time I have heard about it, through this review, and only when I asked a question.

I do not think people in the communities know their responsibility only falls within a 24 hour period. After it surpasses that, you have no jurisdiction, no say in what is going to happen regarding fire response.

We have been doing consultations, and I cannot make a decision until I talk to so and so...we have to get out of that mindset and do what is best for the people we represent. I am here representing the people in the Mackenzie Delta saying 24 hours is not sufficient. People in the government do not think we, as MLAs who are elected by people to represent them, are sufficient for this House, unless we have to pass motions and put it on the floor for debate, then maybe we will make some changes. Unless we do an in-depth review of the whole forest fire management policy, maybe we will see some real...I am asking for a simple change in the amount of time the communities have to respond to fires. Increase it from 24 hours to 48 hours. You can do it right here, Mr. Handley. Will you do it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I said before, we will do it in consultation with the communities and leaders. We have people out doing consultation all the time in the summer. If any communities want to review this immediately, we will let them know this kind of thing can be considered. We will do it as the communities and the leaders agree. I think it is better to do it that way and have their input into this change than for me to just arbitrarily do it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I feel that is not sufficient. I may be moving a motion that we either

put it in writing, so the Minister can see that I am serious, but I do not believe the excuse to say I am going to go out and consult is going to make any difference. I need a commitment from this Minister saying they will do something. Consulting is one thing, but doing it is a whole different matter. I do not think this is a big issue. The Minister has the ability to do it right here. Will he consider making an amendment to allow communities to have more sufficient time to respond to fires than just the 24 hours they are presently allowed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Just to be clear. We do not take the control out of the hands of the community after 24 hours. What we do at 24 hours is a reassessment of the fire situation. If the fire is not out, our people sit down with the community and decide what the process is going to be from there on. All we are doing is a reassessment. I am reluctant to wait 48 hours to reassess all fires in the Northwest Territories. In 48 hours, they could be pretty big fires, and we may have some huge fires on our hands. Before we do more than reassess it in 24 hours, I would like to meet with the communities and hear what they have to say. I do not think it is the same across the Northwest Territories.

This 24 hour detection, the whole plan here has been developed in consultation with the communities already. I cannot just start making changes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are still on page 11-25, forest management, total operating expense \$29,164,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell us when was the last review with the communities in regard to the forest fire management policy? When was there consultation on that policy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: If you are talking about a formal review of the forest fire management policy, it was originally done three years after the transfer. The last full comprehensive review of the policy was done about three years ago. However, on a continual basis, we have people out consulting with communities, and making changes and adjustments depending on the fire year for that season. To start making changes without getting back to the communities would be risky. I do not think they would be very happy with us if we started doing that. Nothing much has changed in the last three years. I do not think there is a pressing need for a review of the whole policy at this point. I think the process of community consultations is working well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It might be working well for the Minister, but it sure is tough to be an MLA when there is a fire in your riding and you are getting a lot of heat from your constituents. Basically, you go to the Fort Smith fire centre and you can talk to the head honcho there and his attitude is, "Sorry, we do not have the money, and we have better things to spend our money on rather than a fire up in the Mackenzie Delta." My view is that this type of attitude from the government has not changed.

Consultation to you is, "Oh, after the fire is over we are going to come in and say, what should have we done?" after the fact. That, for me, is not consultation. People want to be involved in the fire that is affecting their communities from the time the fire starts until it is put out, not leave a fire to burn for two-and-a-half months and then come back to the community and say, "Sorry, the fire is out of control, we are going to have to evacuate." Is that consultation?

My view is that because of the situation I found myself in last year with the forest fire in Tsiigehtchic, the fire burned for two-and-a-half months. The only time it became an issue to this government was when the Dempster Highway was threatened because they had to shut the road down, and the NorthwestTel Tower that was there. The people in this community who had to live with the smoke day in and day out, were not a priority with this government. For you to say that consultation took place, we do not want to do it again, is exactly the cop out that I am saying that this government has. They have to seriously allow communities to make decisions for themselves on issues that affect them.

Forest fires affect people in the communities, not people sitting in the forest fire centre in Fort Smith. They are the ones making the decisions. That has to change. You talk about forest fires, and sure, forest fires have happened. A large portion of these forest fires that have happened over these last couple of years, especially in the Mackenzie Delta, even in the Sahtu region, have burned large sections of lands that are privately owned lands under land claim agreements. The land claim agreements say that they can be compensated for the loss of forest items.

Maybe the aboriginal groups should consider filing a lawsuit against this government because you did not respond to these fires that affected the forest that stands on private lands. Under the agreement, you are responsible for that.

I feel that this idea that we have to go back and consult. It has been going on for years. We have some major costs to this government because of some forest fires that have basically reached a point where the cost of evacuating communities; it happened in the Sahtu, it happened in Yellowknife; it happened in the Mackenzie Delta region in the last number of years. The cost of that comes to a point where we depend on technology that comes out of Fort Smith, and not the people who live in the communities and on the ground. That has to change. I feel that the argument to say that, "Oh, we are going to go back and consult again", is that we did not do it right the last time.

I will ask the Minister again. Will he consider allowing the communities more responsibility with regard to forest management?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I would like to remind Members to direct their questions to the Chair. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman. I have said we will. I have said we are doing consultation. We are going to Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic. We are going to all the communities in the Gwich'in area, if you want, on July 10th and 11th.

We did have, a few years ago, a program that we called a Community Response Action Program, where we gave communities the authority to manage the fires in whatever way they wanted, whichever fires they wanted, within a fixed period

of time. I do not think any communities took us up on that. I am ready to revisit that, as well, if that is the direction, to give the communities the authority and accountability for the first few fires. They can choose which ones to fight.

The last time we had it, no one took us up on it. In terms of allowing the communities more autonomy, yes, I definitely will look at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell the House how much money communities are allocated to respond to fires?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have \$8.6 million in fire suppression, and that is not allocated out to the communities. It is allocated depending on the need, because it can differ. One year we can have lots of rain in the Delta and everything burning up in the south, or vice versa. There is \$8.6 million, and it is allocated based on the fire season and what is happening. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell us, of the \$8.6 million, how much of that is spent on the fire centre in Fort Smith, the water bombers, and the contract we have for aircraft?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The amount that I gave to the Member is the fire suppression amount. All of that is spent on fire suppression. None of it is spent on the fire centre or on the contracts. The contracts are separate from that. It is the actual fire fighting costs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister tell us exactly how much money is spent on the cost of water bombers for fire response?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I do not have exact detail on each contract, but there is \$5,744,000 for pre-suppression aircraft. That is for contracts for aircraft. In addition, there is another \$5,112,000 for the costs incurred by the aircraft involved in fire suppression. There is money for materials and purchase services that go along with the servicing and maintenance of these aircraft. The total amount for this activity would be roughly \$12 million for contracts and the operation of those aircraft. That is for both fixed wing and also for rotary wing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a good example of how almost half the budget for the fire suppression is spent on aircraft, yet not even one third of that is spent in

communities. I would like to ask the Minister exactly why is that? I know for a fact that the communities are only allowed a certain amount to be expended and they cannot exceed that amount. It is nothing near the \$12 million spent on water bombers and aircraft. If they do not have a fire season or any fires, they still get that amount of money.

You are talking apples and oranges here. I think, to be fair to the communities, you should say exactly how much those communities are able to spend in a particular year. It is not even close, if you break the \$8.6 million up, on all the 30-odd communities up and down the valley, that does not add up to a better compared to what you spend on aircraft. Can you give us a much amount than what you said?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, all I can do is say that there is \$8,608,000 that is for fire suppression. How that is allocated, I cannot break out by community because that depends on where the fires happen. The pre-suppression money, that is the aircraft contracts and so on, come to \$12,044,000 including everything. It could happen one year that one particular community will spend a million dollars. Another year they might spend zero, depending on the fire season. It is like running a city fire season. We have to spend the money and have the activity where the fires are. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are on page 11-25, forest management, operating expense. Total operating expense, \$29,164,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get an understanding of what the \$22,475,000 under other expenses is for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is a combination of the fire suppression, the \$8.6 million, plus the pre-suppression, the \$12,044,000. It includes those two plus some forest development money, which would make up the balance of \$2 million, or less than that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. Are any of those dollars in forms of O and M or in salaries that have been moved from one area to the other? Have any of those amounts moved? From what I can see, the numbers under forest management, fire management, and pre-suppression, is \$16,904,000, fire suppression is \$8,608,000, forest development is \$3,131,000, with a total of \$28,643,000, yet under the page I mentioned it is \$22,475,000, which is a different number than what is on forest management in program development in detail. Why is there a difference of almost \$6 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, to add up the amount, you would take the \$12 million that I mentioned already, you would then take the contract money, which is \$7,598,000, and

then there is other money for materials and supplies, purchase services, utilities, fees and payments for professional services and some other minor expenses that add up to 90 and 20.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister give me an amount for professional expenses? Can you elaborate a little bit on that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Sorry, I did not hear the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko, can you repeat your question, please?

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister give me the amount for professional expenses? Can you elaborate on what professional expenses are?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have expenses that result from our membership in the Canadian Inter-Agency Forest Fire Centre. There are license expenses. There are costs associated with some of the service that we may want in the regions. The total for professional services is \$177,000, most of which goes to the Canadian inter-agency Forest Fire Centre, and they charge us a levy. They do that for each province. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair recognizes Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to ask the Minister a question about the forest fire suppression. I represent two communities that are not regional centres. They are outlying communities managed by regional centres such as Fort Smith. Many people in my communities fight fires at one time or another. I started my working life at an early age fighting fires.

The tools you use in doing the job are very important. It is not an easy job. It is quite dirty. It is laborious and often dangerous. I have great concern when I have constituents coming to me with concerns and complaints about how regions divvy up equipment that is purchased new.

What often happens, according to personal experience and from what constituents tell me, is that regional centres buy brand new equipment and ship used equipment down the line to the communities for people like my constituents to use. I would recommend, and I hope the Minister takes this seriously, when regional centres purchase new equipment, they should also purchase new equipment for the communities, and not provide hand-me-downs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will commit that we will purchase the equipment as it is needed. If it is needed more in the outlying communities, that is where the new equipment will go. We will not retain it back in the regional centres. If there are examples of that

happening, and it has been an issue that has been around for years, I urge the Member or the community to let me know and we will take it seriously. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister just confirmed what I just stated. It has been happening for years. I think the department should have a look at it, especially with this new initiative of devolving responsibility to community economic development corporations. They have a hard enough time financially. They should not be burdened with having to compete with regional centres that are still government-run for equipment.

We are talking about the morale of the men and women working for these organizations. If they see one community having better equipment than they do, that is going to affect their morale. It is also going to affect the quality of the job they do.

I think it is a problem. I have been approached by one of my communities and have been told this is happening. I would just like to make the Minister aware of that.

Another issue of concern with fire suppression and emergency firefighters, I am wondering if the pay scale has changed in the last number of years. Can the Minister answer that for me? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, about three years ago, we made a major change to the pay scale to bring them in line with people doing similar work. Since that time, it has not fallen badly behind. It is a fairly reasonable pay scale right now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Forest management, operating expense, page 11-25. Total operating expense, \$29,164,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Page 11-27, forest management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Page 11-28, information, active positions. Page 11-29, lease commitments, infrastructure, information item. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, you were on active positions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 11-28. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this was an issue that has come up for several years, the affirmative action policy in the government. There has been a concern in the middle management area. I know the department has done great in increasing the affirmative action statistics, especially when it comes to aboriginal people. Most of those positions are seasonal positions because of the forest fire management area and the wildlife officers.

I would like to ask the Minister if they have implemented any programs or courses to assist aboriginal people or women within your department to take extra training, so they are able to get the skills needed for middle or senior management, so they are able to move into the higher levels of the government? What have you done to improve that incentives like taking courses or looking at apprentice programs where you train people and work them into different jobs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, two initiatives we have undertaken recently are, we have a training position in each region. A position which is there as a trainee. As well, we also consider, or encourage as many aboriginal people as possible to take education leave. The amount they would be eligible for would depend on how long they have been with the department and are in the training. We also have a practice of hiring students. We have 66 students on staff, to give them experience.

Also, we do a lot of direct appointment of people if we have aboriginal candidates for positions. We have supported aboriginal people in pursuing higher education. For example, we have one person who is working on his doctorate, Joe Dragon from Fort Smith.

We have been fairly aggressive in terms of wanting to improve our statistics at the middle and upper management levels. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for that. I would like to ask the Minister if it is possible for his department to give us quarterly updates on the statistics in the department, so we can see for ourselves that change is happening. We can track it through the Legislative Assembly or even as Members to see there have been efforts made and that we are seeing results and are able to follow that. Is that a possibility?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, we could provide that on a quarterly basis. We track it monthly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 11-28, active positions, information item. Page 11-29, lease commitments information item. Page 11-30, fur marketing service revolving fund. Page 11-31, detail of work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not really want to address the revolving fund per se, but what I would like to ask the Minister is that with global warming, and take into consideration that global warming causes different temperatures, if he sees a need to review the trapping season. Having been a trapper once upon a time myself, I know the quality of fur varies from month to month. November is the start of the trapping season. The furs you get in the month of November are not as good as you get in the month of December, and so on.

Would it be more prudent to start the trapping season later and finish it a little later as well? I was going to ask the same question about forest fires, but we will stick to the trapping. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Nitah, could you clarify what page you are on? Are you on page 11-30? Thank you. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, we will do that and we will do it more on a community by community basis, because it is different in different communities. We are open to committee's advice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Fur marketing revolving fund, information item. Page 11-31, details of work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, can the Minister tell us, regarding the different claimant groups, it says the funding is provided to the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to undertake activities for which it is responsible for pursuant to the implementation plan. Can the Minister identify what areas you are responsible for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: (*inaudible*)... remuneration for the Government of the NWT designate of the board. Under the Wildlife Management Advisory Council, we pay for the remuneration and expenses of the chair. General meeting expenses associated with the members appointed by the Government of the NWT. There is under the research advisory council, responsible for the operation and maintenance of a library, that was under wildlife management programs to carry out wildlife management responsibilities for establishing subsistence quotas for the Inuvialuit.

Under the Gwich'in financial agreement, there is a position in the region to deal with implementation. There is consultation funds of \$119,000, protected areas there is \$12,000, and there is about \$5,000 to help involve the Gwich'in and Sahtu participate in the development and implementation of an oil and gas accord, and development, if there are any expenses in that regard. Essentially, that is what makes that up, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: The reason I ask the question because under the land claim agreement it makes reference to the government "shall". Shall means that they are responsible to do something, and yet there are a lot of sections of the agreement that the government has not done what it states in the land claim agreement, where you are taking responsibility. You talk about forest management - you mentioned that you have been in consultation with the renewable resource councils, but then there are different sections that talk about the government "shall consult" in those roles where it has to be done.

The reason that you add these weasel words to these different agreements is that there are ways of stating the commitment of a different group or government, that they have to do these things. The Government of the NWT shall consult with the Gwich'in Tribal Council prior to establishing any territorial parks. There are all these different sections under the

agreement. I am just wondering, who in the department makes sure that these obligations are being followed by the government? Especially when it comes to the land claims agreement.

A good example is the Inuvialuit who signed their agreement in 1984. It was almost ten years before any of those sections were considered or put into effect. I am just wondering, can the Minister tell us exactly how are you living up to the obligations where it clearly states that the government shall do these things? Who is the one who follows that? Who is the one who makes sure you are following the responsibilities that you have in these different land claim agreements?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, to answer the first part of the question, the responsibility rests with me as a Minister. I delegate that to the deputy. In terms of how do we do it, we do it several ways, but first, let me say there is a tripartite implementation team, on which we have representation on each of the land claim agreements. It is primarily through that team. As well, we have meetings. The deputy has met and I, when I was there, met with the Gwich'in Tribal Council. I met with the renewable resource boards. If there is any concern about whether or not we are living up to our obligations, those are dealt with at that time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding their commitments, there are also joint commitments that this government has with different organizations. I mentioned that there seems to be a lack of research done in different areas about harvest allocations; how the statistics are compiled, where I tried to get information on caribou species.

The only aboriginal group I could get information on was the Inuvialuit and the Innu people from the east, but very little on the Dene people of the Mackenzie Valley. Again, there is another commitment that says there is a joint commitment between the Gwich'in and the government, who have committed themselves to work in cooperation of compiling this research. I am wondering, how are you accumulating this information and where is it being stored at the present time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the money for wildlife research that fits under the land claim, in the case of the Gwich'in, goes to the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board. They decide how it is spent. We do not have any direct responsibility for making those decisions. They are the board's. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another area that I have a lot of concerns about are the economic chapters of the different agreements, where they clearly state that this government, especially the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, in regard to programs that this

government administers - there is a preferential treatment with how these agreements will be enacted.

In the Inuvialuit agreement, there is a participation agreement with regard to how groups will be carrying out activities in the Inuvialuit settlement region. There are also the benefit agreements. In other agreements, there are references to the economic chapter, yet this government seems to be renegeing on its responsibilities to ensure that the First Nation groups will have some preferences, especially in their settlement regions. When it comes to government contracts or government programs that are being administered by this government, they are not held in the light. There are different commitments in different agreements.

I would like to ask the Minister, what is he doing to improve those economic sections of those agreements so the aboriginal groups are being treated fairly, under those obligations that are in place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I think that the issues that the Member is raising are good issues for the tripartite implementation team to make decisions on. The Gwich'in are represented there, as is DIAND, and our government. Those are decisions that are made jointly. If we are not living up to our obligation, then it should be raised to that committee and managed that way. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair recognizes Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am looking at page 11-31. Looking at the numbers. I am just wondering if there is a fundamental difference between the Inuvialuit implementation cost, the Gwich'in implementation cost, and the Sahtu implementation cost, because there is a difference of as much as \$2.6 million between the Inuvialuit implementation and the Gwich'in implementation. If there is, could the Minister inform me as to what the big difference is? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Inuvialuit agreement was signed in 1984, ten years or more before the others were signed. At that time, the agreement was that the department would provide a lot of services on behalf of the Inuvialuit people. That is why there is a large amount of money there. With the other later land claim agreements, the provision was that they would manage their own responsibilities in these areas through the wildlife boards. They have the money within their claim, so it does not appear here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are on page 11-33, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in economic measures, I will read a section of the Gwich'in agreement, 10.1.4, it says:

"where government carries out public activities in the settlement area, which gives rise to employment or

economic opportunities, the government elects to enter into contracts with respect to those activities."

Section 8 deals with the Government of Canada, but section B is for the Government of the NWT, which says:

"the Government of the NWT preferential contracting, policies, procedures, approaches, intended to maximize regional and northern local employment and business opportunities."

For me, that means that this government has an obligation to ensure those are achieved in some way, shape or form.

I am asking the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, who has a say in how expenditures take place and how the different programs are administered, what is the department doing to improve the obligations they have in these agreements? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: As I said before, there is a tripartite implementation team that we are represented on. It deals with any issues in regard to interpretations within the land claims agreement, and any situations where we are not living up to our obligations. We rely on that joint agreement between the parties who signed the land claim agreement, to advise us if we are not living up to that, primarily through that committee. In addition to that, as a government, we have other policies. We have a Business Incentive Policy. We have northern preferences and so on that apply in these situations as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There again, we are going back to either saying we have to go out and consult, or we have to go out to another group. These are obligations that are spelled out in black and white, an agreement that clearly states the Government of the NWT. That is where I have a real problem, is that the government has to live up to its obligations.

We are trying to work with First Nation groups on the Northern Accord. We are trying to negotiate self-government. We are involved in land claims negotiations, but it is just like the treaties. The treaties that people signed in Treaty 8 and in 1921, Treaty 11, there was understanding that people did not give up the land. They were told that we are going to take care of your housing, we will take care of your education, we will take care of this and that and the other thing. At the end of the day, a lot of people lost their homes, lost their land, their cultural abilities. When it comes back to the government, they say, "Well, that was our understanding."

This is a modern treaty to spell out what obligations governments have to First Nations people, and yet we are stepping back from the obligations made, and signed as a party to these agreements, where they had people negotiating these agreements. We are still sitting here today, talking about the Gwich'in agreement that was signed in 1991. That is almost over nine years ago. How much more time does it take? It took the Inuvialuit ten years before they could sort of get an idea of the implementation of their agreement, because the government was not living up to their agreement. That is why

there had to be these negotiations. That is why you see two-point-something-million dollars in that section, because there are obligations. The government never obligated the resources to carry them out. Now they have, because they had to negotiate an implementation agreement with the Inuvialuit.

The same thing applies to the aboriginal organizations that have agreements because of the experiences in the past with the Inuvialuit and other groups that signed agreements back in the 1980s. Now the modern treaties that are being signed, the implementation agreements have to be attached to them.

This thing about a tripartite committee, it is just like the apartheid group in South Africa, where one group tells you what is good for you, and they get all the wealth and benefits, but the people that really should receive these benefits are left out in the cold because somebody's interpretation is different than what it was.

Hopefully, this government will live up to its obligations when it comes time for implementation. I would like to ask the Minister again, when will they live up the obligations under these agreements, where it says the government shall take such measures to consult and ensure that they are carrying out their responsibilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have said we are committed to living up to the wording and the spirit and intent of the land claims agreement. As I have said, and I think the Member has said it as well, we cannot have one party going off and doing its own interpretations. This all has to be worked out jointly with the federal government, the Gwich'in people and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

On the economic measures chapter, that chapter is currently being reviewed. I understand the review is to be completed by January. If we are not living up to some obligations in there, those are going to be pointed out very clearly to us. At that time, we deal with them.

We cannot just arbitrarily start making changes ourselves, or we are very quickly going to get into trouble. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 11-31, details of work performed on behalf of others. Page 11-32, Page 11-33, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to revenues and recoveries, will we be looking at bringing our licence or fees that we charge for different aspects in line with the rest of Canada? Are we being consistent with the other jurisdictions in Canada?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as part of the Wildlife Act, all of the fees that fit within that jurisdiction will be looked at as part of the revision process. The same applies with other fees, whether it is in forest management or elsewhere. We are continually reviewing those to make sure they are competitive with everyone else. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 11-33, revenue, recoveries and transfer payments.

As committee members will recall, we had deferred page 11-9, 11-10, corporate management. We will go back to 11-9 operating expense, total operating expense, \$11.796 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I moved the motion to defer yesterday, and the Minister has provided the information in response to the concerns of compensation benefits and other O and M. I am satisfied at this point with the level of detail provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Page 11-9, corporate management, operation expense. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Financial Administration Act, there is reference that anything over \$250,000 has to be reported to either the committee or a Member affected. I see a couple of amounts. In one case, there is \$366,000. I am just wondering, has the department followed the guidelines in place in order to move money around which exceeds \$250,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, the department has followed the Financial Administration Act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Corporate management, page 11-9, operating expense, total operating expense, \$11.796 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was there a letter sent to the different committees in regard to the permanent salary positions, with regards to O and M which is \$366,000? Was there notice given to any of the committees?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Financial Management Board files a report on transfers over \$250,000. I believe that it is during each Session, and that has been done, or will be done, in the next report, in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. I was not too sure on the response, it has been done or is it going to be done? You said that it had been done or will be done, so when will it be done? Because it is under the Financial Administration Act, I believe that it is Section 43, consultation guideline. When will the Minister submit that either to this House or to the committee of the House so that we can see it, hopefully before we conclude this budget item?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think the Member is referring to Section 4.3, which is in reference to new capital

projects, and those having to be not done until the Minister has consulted in writing with the affected MLAs and so on. When it comes to other than new capital projects, then it is Section 32.2, which says a list of any funds transferred under subsection 1 exceeding \$250,000 must be laid before the Legislative Assembly by the Minister of Finance at each Session of the Legislative Assembly. That is where any transfers over \$250,000 that are not new capital projects would be included.

These ones I am not sure, without referring back to the last report, to know whether they are in there or they are in the next report. There will be a report filed in this Session. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Corporate management, page 11-9, operating expense, total operating expense, \$11.796 million. Page 11-10, department summary. Page 11-7, operating expense, total expense \$75.123 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to capital acquisitions at the back of the book, page 11-23, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, capital acquisition, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, \$1.619 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under this area, as I look down this particular page, I look for things that would affect the wildlife officers and their ability to do their work.

Over the last number of years, there has been a great deal of transfers handed down to wildlife officers in enforcing their jobs and so on. However, the only capital acquisitions I see here are the ones for parks, visitors centres, in that area, buildings.

So can the Minister inform us whether they feel that all the wildlife officers have enough equipment out there that they are well in hand and taken care of? That their snowshoes and back packs are good enough for them?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the capital acquisition items that are in here are items that have a total cost of more than \$50,000. So unless someone is buying a \$50,000 back pack, it will not show up in there.

Mr. Chairman, there is a total of \$2,427,000 in our capital budget, looking at the old way before tangible capital assets came into effect. There are a number of items here worth a total of \$1,186,000 that make up most of the mobile equipment, tools, things the officers use because the value is less than \$50,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Will the Minister provide that to the Members for the sake of reviewing this? We know the system has changed significantly, and the committee requested that as part of the information that was to be made available. We hope in future budgets that they will be able to review it somehow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have the page here. We can certainly provide it to the committee Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, capital acquisition plan, resource management and economic development, \$1,619,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Tab 24, total department, \$1,619,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing before the committee. We will move on to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Does the Minister have any opening remarks?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have opening remarks for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The mission of the Department of the Education, Culture and Employment is to invest in and provide for the development of the people of the Northwest Territories, enabling them to reach their full potential, to lead fulfilled lives and to contribute to a strong and prosperous society. This supports the vision of the Government of the Northwest Territories, as outlined in Towards a Better Tomorrow, that will guide the government over the next four years.

The vision document, Towards a Better Tomorrow, outlines four key goals:

- Healthy, educated Northerners making responsible personal choices for themselves and their families;
- Strong and effective aboriginal and public governments operating cooperatively with no reduction in program and service levels as a result of implementing self-government agreements;
- A healthy and diversified economy providing employment opportunities for Northerners in all communities;
- An effective balance between development of our resources, socio-economic impacts, and preservation and protection of our natural environment.

These goals fit in with the five overall goals identified in the department's strategic update. These are:

- strengthen and build overall knowledge and

skills of northern people;

- support economic development by preparing Northerners for all levels of employment;
- enhance and protect aboriginal culture;
- facilitate and contribute to community wellness;
- promote participation in community and territorial governance.

To work toward these goals, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment proposes to spend \$173,422,000 on programs and services for the 2000-01 fiscal year. These programs and services ensure that Northwest Territories residents have opportunities for life-long learning, beginning in early childhood and continuing on through the adult years. Our training programs prepare Northerners to take advantage of job opportunities in the resource sector and in the communities. Our income support programs help ensure a basic level of income for all Northerners, and our cultural and language programs help Northerners to retain their unique languages and identities.

The development of a healthy and educated population starts in the earliest childhood years. The earlier enrichment begins, the better prepared a child is for lifetime learning. The department is committed to developing a collaborative approach to children's programming which involves parents, the family, the community and other agencies and departments. To this end, we will work with the Department of Health and Social Services to develop and implement a territorial agenda for children.

In 2000-01, we will continue to participate in the National Child Benefit Program. As a result of increased federal funding in the NCB, an additional \$210,000 investment in the Healthy Children's Initiative will help children reach their full potential by beginning life in as healthy a manner as possible. The money will be available to community groups to design and deliver integrated programs for children up to the age of six.

The next step in building a healthy and educated population is the school system. A responsive and vibrant school system forms the basis of culturally, socially and economically strong northern communities. Beginning this year, the department will implement a plan that will, over the next four years, reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in the NWT from 18:1 to 16:1. This alone will significantly enhance the quality of education available to students in Northwest Territories schools. At the same time, funding for student support will rise from its current level of 8.5 percent of the school contribution budget to 15 percent. This will enhance our ability to respond to student needs. These two initiatives will result in an additional \$12 million investment in learning over the next four years. These changes were approved by the Assembly in legislation during March.

In conjunction with the increase in expenditures for student support services, the department undertook a needs assessment survey which is now nearing completion. The results of the survey will assist divisional education councils and school boards in identifying areas of greatest need and help ensure that the money being re-invested in education will reap maximum benefits.

For the last decade, the department has pursued a policy of

implementing grade extensions in Northwest Territories schools. Northern students can now complete Grade 12 in the vast majority of Northwest Territories communities. This initiative has improved participation rates and graduation rates. We are now challenged with increasing course options at the community level. As a result of a Memorandum of Understanding I was pleased to sign last month with the Calgary Board of Education, an additional 30 online courses will be available in Northwest Territories schools this fall. Mr. Chairman, I expect this exciting development to be enhanced in the years to come.

Post-secondary studies are also an important element in building a healthy and educated society. As a result of changes approved by the Assembly in March, I am pleased to implement the re-design of the Student Financial Assistance Program. The revamped program will support efforts to develop a skilled and professional workforce by putting more money into the hands of Northwest Territories students. The revolving loan fund has been increased from \$22 million to \$33 million and the budget for the program has been increased by \$500,000.

A healthy, educated northern population is an employed population. The career development directive, to be implemented in 2000-01, will ensure a seamless system of programs and services that allow individuals smooth and successful transitions from school and training into the workforce.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that this is a very exciting chapter in the history of the Northwest Territories. Diamond mining and a renewed interest in oil and gas development are both having a significant impact on the northern economy. The GNWT, in concert with the private sector and aboriginal organizations, is supportive of development in the non-renewable resource sector. However, the government has made it clear that certain conditions must be met, if that development is going to take place. These conditions include maximizing employment and training opportunities for Northerners. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will invest \$1.3 million in programs that will provide training for entry-level jobs for Northerners in diamond processing and in oil and gas exploration and production.

One of the major challenges we face in preparing Northerners for employment is that many lack the basic educational and literacy skills needed to participate in training programs. I was pleased to have discussions with the Standing Committee on Social Programs on this important issue, and the committee's comments assisted me in going forward to obtain additional funding. To address this, we propose a \$650,000 expenditure for the Community Skills for Work Program. This will be an amendment to the main estimates and I intend to introduce a motion to this effect at the appropriate time.

Youth employment is another priority of this budget. There is a \$1 million expenditure for the continuation of a program many of you will have come to know as Working Together.

This budget also includes significant increases necessary to meet the growing needs of existing programs. These include:

- \$3.1 million to fund pay increases in the collective agreement signed with our teachers;
- \$3.2 million for increased superannuation

payments;

- \$400,000 to pay for growth in income support programs;
- \$600,000 to pay for increased utility costs;
- \$600,000 to pay the lease for the student family-housing complex recently opened in Fort Smith.

Mr. Chairman, this budget reflects the commitment of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to further the vision set out in Towards a Better Tomorrow. The mandate of the department is broad, with programs that take a person through a lifetime. I am confident that with these programs and proposed expenditures, this department can do its part in achieving our common vision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Does the chairman for the Standing Committee on Social Programs have any comments on the review of the department? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment supplies a wide range of services. These include early childhood programs; school services; education, careers and employment for adults; income support; culture, heritage and languages; and the directorate, regional administration and information networks.

The Business Plan

During the review of the business plan, it was observed that, over the past three years, the department has had little consistency in its strategies, outcomes and outcome measures. This, compounded with the majority of the targets being vague, make it extremely difficult for the department, let alone committee members, to evaluate progress.

This is not the first time that the department has been cited for the lack of detail in the department's plans. In the committee's Report on the Review of the 1999-2002 Business Plans and 1999-2000 Main Estimates, the committee expressed concern regarding the lack of detail in the goals, measures, targets and strategies in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's business plans.

The 2000-2003 departmental business plans stated:

"The department's strategies and objectives have been updated in the 2000-2001 business plan to reflect the input that the department received in updating its strategic plan in 1999. They have also been updated to reflect linkages to the broad goals of the Government of the Northwest Territories as outlined in Towards a Better Tomorrow (page 55; 2000-2003 business plans)".

Again, the department was vague when stating their new targets and outcome measures leaving the committee unsure of what it was the department was trying to achieve. Further, in reference to the department's comment about the "2000-2001

business plan”, business plans are for a three-year period, yet the department is approaching planning as a one-year process. Over time, Ministers will change. Long range strategies and targets must be in place and worked toward regardless of Ministerial changes.

Outcomes and Outcome Measures — Aboriginal Teachers

Members noticed that the department did not supply a hard figure in the target for the number of aboriginal teachers in northern classrooms. The committee is of the opinion that the department must reinstate a target number for aboriginal teachers in Northwest Territories classrooms and this should be representative of the population it serves. Further, the committee expressed concern that Aurora College should also be trying to increase the number of aboriginal instructors in their programs.

Early Childhood Programs

During the review of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Minister stated that the department was working with the Department of Health and Social Services in a framework for the review of the Healthy Children's Initiative and the development and implementation of an inter-departmental territorial agenda for children.

In presentations made to the committee by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, differences in terminology and direction between the two departments were noted. Because of this, the committee wonders whether there really are meaningful discussions taking place between the two departments. The Members need to see demonstrable proof that the departments are indeed working together.

School Services - Student Support and Pupil Teacher Ratio

In March of this year, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories passed amendments to the NWT Education Act to supply additional funding for student support services. Subsequently, a student needs assessment survey is being conducted to identify the scope of individuals requiring assistance. The public and educators have identified student support as a critical area that needs to be addressed. The committee was disconcerted that the department had not identified student support services as a critical issue and failed to address it in their business plans.

Members are concerned that the pupil teacher ratio reduction accomplished by the recent amendments to the Education Act will not actually impact on the number of students in the classroom or provide any extra assistance for special needs. Members will not be pleased if these amendments result in more administrators rather than actual assistance in the classroom.

The department informed the committee that the School Planning and Resource Committee would be making recommendations for disbursement of special needs funding. The department further indicated that it did not see student support funding being linked to individual students. Recognizing the existence of magnet communities, the committee is concerned that a per capita only funding formula for special needs funding may be used.

It is the opinion of the Members that funding must match community requirements; per capita only funding would be unacceptable unless it can be proven to be fair.

Number of Grade 10 Students

The committee reviewed enrollment numbers for the past ten years and noted that there is constantly a “bulge” in the enrollment at the grade 10 level. There are consistently more students in grade 10 than in grade 9 in the previous year. It is also observed that there is not a corresponding increase in grade 11 enrollment the following year.

Committee members believe that the bulge in Grade 10 enrollment may have more to do with the lack of Adult Basic Education programs in the communities than any other factor cited by the department.

The department referred the committee to the departmental publication *Towards Excellence — A Report on Education in the Northwest Territories 99*. *Towards Excellence* cites a number of factors that contribute to the bulge: a proportion of youth re-entering the system who do not become part of a progressive group moving through the system; students who gained access through grade extensions; and students who decided to make high school their “productive choice” in order to access income support. The report also states that grade 10 reflects a shift in emphasis from placement to promotion as the basis for designating grade levels.

The department indicated that more analysis was being done on the grade 10 bulge. The committee agrees that there is a need for more analysis and looks forward to being appraised of any new findings.

Mr. Chairman, if I can ask my colleague, the deputy chair, Mr. McLeod to carry on with the report, please?

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Education, Careers and Employment for Adults - Apprenticeship Training

The department has identified a need for skilled trade persons in the Northwest Territories. The committee noted that over \$400,000 was lapsed in the area of apprenticeship. The department indicates that one of the contributing factors for a decrease in demand for apprenticeship was that many people do not have the education levels necessary to enter into the programs.

Committee members also understand that many companies are reluctant to commit to apprentice programs targeting Northerners because of the low education level of residents. The members of the standing committee believe that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment must work closer with industry in identifying and getting Northerners into apprenticeships. There is also a need for the department to concentrate on adult basic education so that Northerners can take advantage of the apprenticeship program.

Adult Basic Education and Literacy

In the area of support for adult basic education and literacy, the department has dropped the ball. The committee is concerned with the reduction in financial support for adult basic education programs. For a number of northern residents, adult basic education must be taken before they can access apprenticeship programs. How is it possible for people to move into apprenticeship training and trades if they cannot get upgrading?

The committee was upset with statements the Minister made regarding the value of adult basic education programs and the lack of statistical support for his comments. In order to make informed decisions regarding programs, the department must have data on the success rate and value of these programs; statistics that are presently not in existence.

Committee members have received correspondence, filled with statistics, from non-governmental organizations that contradict the Minister's assertion that statistics are not available. Regardless, committee members agree that there is a definite need for data collection and tracking with respect to the value and success of adult basic education programs.

The committee brought to the attention of the Minister that many adult basic education courses are only offered during the daytime hours. In such cases, some adults wishing to pursue upgrading are not able to maintain daytime employment. Members would like to point out that by only offering adult basic education during the day the department is in fact, encouraging residents to quit gainful employment and go on income support in order to better themselves.

The committee also noted that in some regions adults are returning to high school for upgrading. This may be due to the diminished offering of adult basic education programs. The department was requested to do a cost comparison between the delivery of upgrading through high school and through adult basic education programs.

Oil and Gas Training

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs were pleased to see that the government has placed some priority on this activity by identifying ongoing funding and providing it to the department as part of its base funding.

The Department of Education allowed some committee members a cursory glance at material that was produced in cooperation with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development for oil and gas training. Members would like to acquire copies of this material as soon as possible.

The committee holds the opinion that it is better to be proactive rather than reactive and encourages the department to move on this initiative now. Members caution the department that there is a need for identification and training for long-term job opportunities in the oil and gas sector, in addition to the short-term construction and exploration jobs that the proposed oil and gas training program seems to focus on.

Student Financial Assistance

Although the Student Financial Assistance Act was amended in the past Session, the committee feels that there are still some

parts of the program that need to be changed to suit the needs of students. The department is investing in distance learning so that individuals may access post-secondary courses over the Internet. Presently, no section of the Act offers support for learners enrolling in distance education courses.

Currently, the department has one central agency for the disbursement of student financial assistance. The department agreed to look at community control of SFA disbursements.

Committee members are being made aware of many problems with the regulations that implement the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program. The application form itself is bulky because of income information required to determine whether a student is eligible for the Millennium Scholarship Fund. Some members of the committee have questioned the ability of most people to comprehend the questions asked in the application form and whether it is necessary for all students to fill out the section that addresses Millennium scholarships.

Members are concerned that the policy covering disabled students and the funding available to them may not be sufficient to meet the needs of particular students. The Minister may need the latitude to increase the amount available to a disabled student. It is not clear to members that the Minister can make exceptions on available funding.

Members were also concerned with the Minister's reply to the committee on grandfather rights for eligibility of the students presently accessing the Student Financial Assistance Program. This was provided in response to the committee questions during the review of the proposed redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program.

Committee members do not believe that the department has the same understanding as the committee on what grandfather clauses accomplish. To committee members a grandfather clause would mean that a student would maintain their previous eligibility under the new system. Committee members are aware that the department's new eligibility definitions reduce benefits for students already receiving student financial assistance.

This was not the understanding that committee members had when they agreed to let the Minister provide details on continued student eligibility after Members approved the amendments to the Student Financial Assistance Act. To say that committee members are disappointed would be an understatement.

Members are sure that many more concerns about the new Student Financial Assistance Program will come to light over the next few months. The committee will work to ensure that the Student Financial Assistance Program will be fair and accessible for northern students.

Integration of Income Support and Disability Pensions

The members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs are aware of programs in other jurisdictions that provide medical and financial help to permanently disabled residents. This assistance is basically a set amount, or pension, which when combined with all other sources of income allows the individual to not fall below a prescribed income.

In Alberta there is the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) Program which provides medical and

income assistance to adults with permanent disabilities that severely impair their ability to earn a living.

People only receive AISH if they have exhausted all other possibilities for training, rehabilitation or employment. The current Income Support Program in the Northwest Territories as administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment makes no allowance for this possibility.

People with permanent disabilities are expected to make productive life choices, like other income support recipients, regardless of whether these choices represent any meaningful gain for the disabled persons. In some cases that members are aware of residents receive too much money from the Canada Disability Pension to be eligible for Income Support.

In Alberta, AISH clients are also eligible for medical benefits such as prescription drugs, glasses, dental work, medical travel and ambulance services. Committee members envision a similar role for the Department of Health and Social Services in an integrated service delivery model in conjunction with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, in co-operation with the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, develop a model that ensures a minimum level of income for permanently disabled residents, and an assured level of healthcare benefits.

Culture and Heritage - Languages Strategy

The committee is of the opinion that the government must revitalize and enhance their efforts to preserve aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories. The present approach is not successful. The department plans to release a draft language strategy in June 2000. A review of the Official Languages Act is to be carried out at the first Session in 2001. The committee encourages the government to assume a more constructive approach in the preservation of all official languages of the Northwest Territories.

Human Resources

The committee noted that the department lapsed over \$400,000 in the Public Service Career Program. This lapse is more than the \$250,000 identified for the recently announced Staff Retention Policy. Committee members are concerned that if the same conditions are attached to the Staff Retention Policy as are attached to Public Service Career Training Program they will be asking why the funding for the Staff Retention Policy lapsed during the next main estimate review. The committee will be monitoring the situation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Before I go on, I would like to recognize a Hay Riverite in the crowd, the brother to the distinguished Mike Miltenberger, Mark Miltenberger. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

-- Applause

We are on page 9-9, Education, Culture and Employment. Would the Minister like to bring in witnesses?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses in?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me are Mr. Mark Cleveland, deputy minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment; and Mr. Paul Devitt, director of management services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. General comments, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a point of contention that I have had with the department since becoming a Member of the Legislative Assembly is one that involves what some would call a social pass or a peer pass, something of that nature, where a student does not have to achieve grade level. They are moved along with their age level until departmentals are mandatory, which is grade 10, I believe. I think that has a direct correspondence to what we see as a dropout level of grade 9. You see a lot of students achieve grade 9 but drop out at that point.

I had discussed it previously as a member of the Social Programs Committee in the 13th Assembly. There are different bits of information used in justifying the method. I am glad to say that in the Beaufort Delta region, although it does cost a fair amount of money to administer, they do some tests at the different grades to check their grade level achievement. I think it is very important for parents to know how well their children are doing, instead of all of a sudden finding out they have a young man or lady in the family who is very disgruntled, realizing they just do not cut it when it comes to the grades they are supposed to be at. There is nothing more brutal than being in a peer group and standing out, either on the high end of grades or on the low end of grades. I think that is very difficult and it is something that needs to be addressed.

Along with that, we know there is a lot of information available that says if children, by the time they reach kindergarten to grade 1, have not developed the learning capacity at that point, then difficulties begin to arise throughout their education, right up to graduation. That has been pointed out a number of times. We know the 14th Assembly has put significant dollars and will continue to put more new dollars towards education of our residents. My concern here is how are we going to measure the impact of those new dollars going into the system? Especially since we know if we are going to have an impact and truly do remarkable things with our children, we have to focus on them at a very young age. How can we measure the dollars that are going into the different district education councils and authorities to ensure there is some method to ensure we are aiming at the right areas and not just going for an overall strategy?

Right now, we have special needs areas that go from kindergarten to grade 12. If all of our information states that if we are truly going to impact on the learning capacity of a child it has to be done by grade 1, why are we not focusing all of our energies on the special needs side at the early ages? Maybe

by that time we can avert some of the lifelong problems we will see develop, and that we do see today, of having to go through the whole cycle to graduation needing some form of special needs or finding out at grade 9 they just do not cut it.

Those are areas of general concern, Mr. Chairman. I will leave it to the Minister and his staff to see if they can address those. I think if we are going to make a real difference we have to attack the problems at hand at a young age, if we are going to truly impact that. I know some people will argue you cannot just change the system, but what about the group that is in the system now? As well, there has to be some concern there. If we are going to make a true impact and see some measurable goals, we have to focus on the younger generation.

At the same time, we have talked a lot about our education and the process of it. It goes to the area of high grades and high achievements. In fact, Mr. Chairman, we are finding out there are many people who would rather be involved in the trade sector or the construction area, but we find in a lot of our schools, we do not have that ability now. It is one general program. You cannot get the high end. For example, industrial arts, as they used to call it when I went to school. That broadened your horizons.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will turn the floor back over to the Minister for a response. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start with the issue of the social passing. It has been shown that students who repeat a grade, or are held back, seldom make significant academic progress and rarely catch up with their peers.

This is information that has been looked at by the department. Therefore, the system exists for having the social passing system so students stay with their age group. They are provided academic programs to their level. I understand what the Member is saying, but I think with the information the department is providing, it seems to indicate there is justification for having this particular system in place.

With regard to the level of competency of students, he is correct. There needs to be attention paid to the fact that from time to time, students need to be assessed as to the level of ability they are at. If they are in grade 11, are they at that level? There is no system of testing, to my knowledge, for the various levels, which may be something, depending upon the cost, of course, that could be looked at down the road as a possibility.

The early childhood education is a very important area. The department is working with the Department of Health and Social Services on an Early Childhood Development Action Plan. That plan is looking at identifying key areas that could be addressed. We know programs like the Aboriginal Head Start program provides significant improvements in children before they enter the classroom. I have talked with teachers and found their response to this to be very positive. These types of programs have a very good effect.

With regard to general programs in the school and the need for programs like industrial arts, the potential for much industrial activity like the pipeline, then yes, there needs to be some consideration given to that particular end. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Comments or questions? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is just amazing how the information continues to roll down the road. I heard the exact comments from previous Ministers when I raised the same concerns. I guess that just confirms that Ministers may come and go, but the staff continue on. That is a point of contention, Mr. Chairman.

There are a lot of arguments out there that can be used. Hopefully the department will look at updating its information. I see it myself, and he has not denied it, but I see a direct correspondence to the student enrollments from kindergarten, where you have high enrollments, and our graduation rate drops next to nothing.

I see a wall at grade 9 when most of the residents of the Northwest Territories achieve a grade 9 level, according to the statistics. We do not know that because there is no testing issued, to prove that you actually achieve grade 9. You are in year nine, as they call it now.

Mr. Chairman, can the Minister confirm that there is a direct correspondence to the fact that there is a high dropout rate at grade 9? Is that due to the fact that once grade 10 comes around, students have to write departmentals and find they cannot cut it and that is when we lose them? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is a drop-off level and throughout high school, there has been a drop-off level. There is no testing of students when they enter grade 9 or grade 10. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I have Mr. Bell on my list.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my colleague, Mr. Roland, raises some very interesting points. I think one of the most important things we realize is that the department either does not know or cannot know all of the reasons why we seem to have problems between grade 9 and grade 10, but I think the committee, after hearing some of the things the department presented as reasons in *Towards Excellence, A Report on Education in the Northwest Territories*, came to some of our own conclusions.

I think one of the things that seems very obvious to us is that we see this huge bulge of enrollment at grade 10. In talking to other Members from some of the smaller communities who tell us adult basic education money has been cut back so drastically in the last few years that they do not offer ABE in the communities anymore, or the waiting lists are so long that your only choice for ABE or upgrading is to go back to school during the day with the rest of the regular students. You could be 35 or 50 and put back into high school, back into the school system. I think this is one of the reasons we see this huge bulge at grade 10. It is also because in order to qualify for income support, the department makes one of the productive choices available to you, going back to high school.

If we do not offer adult basic education to adults with their own peer group, they have no choice but to go back to grade 10. We do not see them make it to grade 11, Mr. Chairman, and I do not think it is a big surprise. For the most part, they simply

are not capable of passing grade 10. They get stuck and go through grade 10 year after year.

The committee sat through presentations from various NGOs who told us it is not uncommon to see someone stuck in ABE and fail the ABE program five or six times because they simply do not have the basic literacy skills to get up to the ABE level and get some sort of meaningful education from that. I am wondering if the Minister can respond and discuss this grade 10 bulge, and let the House know if a lot of the reason is because ABE students are forced to go back to high school, especially in the small communities.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the enrollments for grade 10, for our indication is that we have a total of 9000 students in the school system, but only 255 are over the age of twenty. I am not sure that the reasons for the bulge in enrollment is due to the lack of ABE. That does not diminish the importance of ABE. It may be that with the grade extensions, it certainly offers the opportunity for people to go back into the school system.

Of course adult basic education is important. Before that, literacy is extremely important, as Mr. Bell has stated. People do need to be literate in order to be able to participate. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister referred to grade extensions as being a possible reason for this bulge at the grade 10 level and age. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us how many years grade extensions have been available in most of the communities?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the grade extensions have varied in the various communities. I believe in Tulita, for example, it is two years. Others have had it longer. Some are still introducing grade extensions.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the point is that grade extensions vary from community to community. Some have been around for six or eight years, and maybe longer. I am wondering, with the recent cuts in various forms of ABE over the last five or six years, we have seen the budget that this government has jointly with the feds or on its own come from \$4.5 million for ABE, and that is a ballpark figure, down to \$1 million a year. I think we just recently started to see this bulge. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us if this bulge has been around as long as grade extensions have been around, six or eight years. Is this an ongoing trend?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that is correct, Mr. Chairman. The bulge has been there for some period of time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if this bulge has been there for a long period of time, and this is not something that is sudden, but is something we have been dealing with for eight or ten years, I am a little surprised the department has not been able to more closely analyze this trend and decide what they can do to move students from grade 10 on to grade 11 and grade 12 and ensure they are a little more successful, especially in the smaller communities.

Can the Minister talk about their apparent lack of success in figuring out the bulge?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been a discussion by the chairs of the DEC's to see what areas have caused this particular bulge. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: These discussion with the DEC's, I assume they have been going on for the last six or eight years, and it appears we are no closer to figuring out how to ensure students are more successful with the grade extensions. Quite possibly, we are not screening people properly.

If we are dumping everybody back into grade 10 because they now offer grade extensions, that leads me to ask what kind of K through 9 are we offering in some of these small communities? Is it up to snuff if somebody has had grade 9 three years ago, and have been out of the system, or ten years ago and try to come back to grade 10, it looks like they are totally unsuccessful because they do not seem to make it to grade 11.

As the Minister mentioned, they have had these discussions with the DEC's, I have to assume it has been for as long as the bulge has been around. I am wondering if they are any closer in these discussions to solving the riddle of the bulge?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The focus on this has only been addressed in the last two years.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to wonder what former Ministers have been up to then over the past six to eight years. Some of these guys have really dropped the ball somewhere along the way.

-- Laughter

I will not continue to beat a dead dog, as my colleague Mr. Nitah would say, so I am going to move on.

I would like to discuss student support and pupil-teacher ratio. I think one of the biggest achievements we have seen in this Assembly is finding more money for the PTR and for special needs.

It surprised us a little bit to see in the department's business plans, very little focus on special needs and PTR this time around. They did focus a lot on it earlier in the spring and since Christmas. We felt that it was almost as if they had said, "There, we threw some money at that, we wash our hands of this problem. Let us move onto something else, we have taken care of that."

It is going to take us some time to move from the 18:1 pupil-teacher ratio to a 16:1 ratio. One of the real concerns our committee has is that the department is going to throw some money at this and hope the problem solves itself. I do not think we are convinced. I think we want to see the department work very closely with the boards of education to ensure this money is being spent on what we had hoped it would be spent on.

I think the intent of the money was to put more teachers on the frontline and reduce class size, and focus on special needs so that students receive a better quality of education. And so teachers are not overwhelmed and frustrated and just throwing their hands up in defeat with large class sizes.

We do not want to see layers of administration and more vice-principals. We want to see more teachers. I think we would like to see the department work closely with the boards to ensure this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This matter is a legislated matter. First of all, there will be a requirement to meet the targets that have been set, for changing the pupil-teacher ratio from 18:1 to 16:1. That is a requirement that we have to meet.

Additionally, the change in the funding availability has been increased from eight percent to 15 percent. We are working with the school program and resource committee. I had a meeting with the chairs of the district education councils and of the Yellowknife school boards, along with the directors, and this was a subject of some discussion.

I believe we are paying attention to this matter. There is a survey being completed of the student needs. That particular survey involved a number of people to do extensive work around the territory on a multi-level basis, and that will then form the documentation for the SPAR committee on what recommendations can come forward in regards to student needs.

I feel there is work being done. It is not the intent to add more administration to the school boards, to the school itself. It is directed at a change in the pupil-teacher ratio.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Mr. Miltenberger, then Mr. Dent.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first I would like to address the broader issue of accountability and the amount of work that was done with the department in the business plan, trying to come up with targets and agreed to strategies, and such. Given the fact the department is before us with a budget of \$173 million, I would like the Minister to speak to the issue of accountability. On June 22nd, the Premier said there is no clear, measurable way by which to make this government's Ministers and deputy ministers accountable for not meeting targets.

I asked the same question to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and I would like the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment to speak to this issue, since we spent so much time getting ready for this budget. It is such a critical area of our program delivery. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The accountability issue certainly needs to be there and has to be there, in all areas of operation of this government. There is no doubt, though, that this department is working in that area.

There is a requirement under the Education Act for the DEC's and the DEAs here in Yellowknife to produce financial plans and operation plans. That takes care of the school end, which is a large area. I know, for example, I only use this as an illustration, not to pinpoint one particular one, because they are all working particularly hard at it; but the Yellowknife School Board No. 1 has been dedicating themselves and their board members to producing their annual report and their particular plan. It is to inform the public about their issues, goals and successes, and that relates to the school board.

In terms of the department itself, it produced the document, Towards Excellence. It is an extensive document that produces data on various areas within the school system, graduation rates, enrollment, and so forth. The department is also currently installing an integrated information system which will help to address this issue of accountability. The Aurora College is in the process of reviewing and updating its corporate plan.

I understand what the Member is saying. We need to ensure that those are all in place, but I think to suggest that we do not have any plan is not correct. We have to address these issues and we need clear and accountable results, and clear and accountable goals and objectives. We are preparing an action plan for the Early Childhood Development Strategy, for example. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: I will have to ask longer questions and get shorter answers, because it is my ten minutes.

-- Laughter

I would like the Minister to very quickly confirm to me that he is then accountable for his business plan and his budget, and the contents of it, and the goals and the strategies they put out, which they are going to try and achieve. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my responsibility, Mr. Miltenberger, just as you took that responsibility very seriously to ensure that direction is given to this department, to ensure that direction is carried out. There is importance being laid on the area of accountability, I believe, in ensuring we have a methodology by which we can measure results. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will not be stringent in time. I will allow Members to ask as many questions as they like, and you can put your hand up again. I will recognize you. Do not worry. Your ten minutes can be 20, 30, 40 minutes. Just keep your hand up and I will recognize you. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make some brief general comments about education. Very clearly, on a comparative basis, when you look at other

departments, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has been blessed in terms of resources.

Granted they have lots of social needs, and they had to endure cuts along with other departments, but in this instance, as they sit before us, they are the one department that has had money put back into it in a substantive way.

The goal now, the challenge of the task is to make sure that money is put to good use, and to meet the goals that have been identified in the legislation. The class size, and more importantly, the special needs issue.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to briefly but emphatically touch on the issue that I will be touching on with all the other social program departments as well. That is the very pressing need for demonstrable inter-departmental cooperation. It is still an unachieved goal. They may be making some efforts, but I would say they are quite cursory, and as we look at things like the Territorial Strategy for Children and Youth, or reviewing some of these shared initiatives such as Healthy Children, it cannot be done in isolation.

I would suggest that hopefully in the not-too-distant future there would even be, on these common areas, a joint business plan put forward that would clearly show the link and relationship and how the funding is pooled with the responsibilities that are identified.

As we focus on education, and as we look at special needs, we have to realize and continue to focus on the front end of working with families and children with the Department of Health and Social Services. This will ensure that children are born healthy and are brought up in good homes with parents with good parenting skills, so that the kids come to school ready to learn. Otherwise, we will never have enough money for special needs. It is going to be a losing battle.

The quality of education is something that we have to constantly focus on. There are concerns from small communities to large communities, from northern communities to communities in southern jurisdictions as to whether the quality is the same throughout, whether we can compete and meet standards. The concern that schools with grade extensions do not have the same choice and quality of education as students in larger communities, I think that it is an issue that has not been fully resolved as well.

Mr. Chairman, I have a couple other major issues that I would like to touch on. I will get back into more detail when we reach them in the budget. The issue of literacy is a broad one and we cannot just focus on adult basic education. But I think, like the language strategy the department is working on, we should also be looking at a literacy strategy, and a very comprehensive one.

That means not only English, but also literacy in the language of which you are born into and the languages you have been brought up with. It cuts across other departments, but clearly education has to be the main driver in any kind of literacy strategy. It affects health, affects employment, and affects any number of areas. It has impacts in justice. So when we come to that particular stage of the budget, I am going to be pressing, and hopefully all of my colleagues will as well, very hard on the Minister to commit to this endeavour, along with a language strategy. The two probably could be very clearly linked.

There is also a considerable number of SFA issues related to implementation. While the department is to be commended for bringing forward the long overdue changes and some new money, there are a considerable number of concerns brought to us as MLAs in regard to the regulations and how things have been implemented. For example, grandfather clauses, simple things like direct deposits and issues of that nature.

I will also be strongly encouraging the department to continue to work with the schools. Having them work with the college and the career centres and industry to make sure that we do have a continuum that is connected and that we do not have three separate components of Education, Culture, and Employment, but they are all part of the same long term process. They as well are working with the social program envelopes.

So those are my general comments at this point, Mr. Chairman. If the Minister wishes to respond, I would appreciate his comments. If he chooses to wait, I will revisit some of these issues. Some of them are very fundamental and more of process, such as interdepartmental co-operation, which is absolutely critical for the success of the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to address, for the Member's sake, some of the areas. With regard to the inter-departmental co-operation, there is no doubt that it is an issue that has to continue to be focused on.

I believe it has not been ignored, by any means. The Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen and I, are working on an Early Childhood Development Action Plan, which is an important area for us to be concerned about. We were at a meeting in Toronto with the provincial Ministers in regard to the National Children's Agenda. This particular program is of importance to us. There is also ongoing work between the three departments on harmonization of income support with the Housing Corporation.

With regard to the literacy strategy, we are working on an adult basic education directive. It is our approach that after the directive is finalized, we want to develop a comprehensive literacy strategy for the Territories. This will also tie in together with the Aboriginal Language Strategy. Again, this is an area that we are working on with the aboriginal language communities.

The issues related to the student financial assistance, there were and are administrative areas that need to be addressed. I have met with the department on those areas, to ensure we continue to refine this particular program, like all programs, and to ensure that any of the identified areas are brought to our attention and are corrected.

There is a necessity to work very closely with the college campuses and with industry to be a part of our process in the development of our human resources here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think Members of the social programs committee are pleased to see the Minister

make the commitment today to put some money back into the Skills for Work program.

He does not provide a lot of detail in his comments today. I was wondering if he could advise us a bit about the program. Will that money be dedicated to non-government organizations and delivered at the community level? Or will part of it be dedicated to the college? How will that program be structured?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I cannot remember the exact amount of the breakdown, but all of it will be for community delivery. Some of it will be done through the College and some will be done through the NGOs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Is there a commitment to make sure that the program is delivered in the smallest communities? For instance, we have 14 communities that have adult educators in them. Will there be some mechanism to make sure some of the funding is spent in communities where there are no adult educators right now?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intention was to deliver it in the smaller communities where there is no adult educator.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of a commitment to adult literacy, the department has funded workplace literacy programs in the past. I am hoping we will see these as we go through the budget, and that there is a continued thrust in that area.

One thing that has not been addressed is a commitment to family literacy. Does the Minister have within the department any funding that can be identified as tying into family literacy? Or can some of his Skills for Work money be targeted in that area? Would programs that featured family literacy as part of their thrust be considered in the Skills for Work program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intention was that the money would be for the Community Skills for Work, but part of this with the NGOs is to look at proposals from NGOs and they would be administered from the regional level. In there, there could be consideration for family literacy programs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome that commitment that family literacy will indeed have a place in the Skills for Work programs that are considered.

I think Mr. Miltenberger mentioned this government needs to move towards having a broader literacy strategy. He responded to a question that you asked, Mr. Chairman, last Friday in the House about literacy. He responded saying that the department has been considering a directive on adult basic education and literacy. I would like to ask the Minister if there

has been any consultation with groups like the literacy council on the directive that is under consideration? Will this directive in fact tie a government-wide initiative together?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Education, Culture, & Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the literacy council was consulted on this. Although it provides a broad approach, it can be considered as applicable across the territory.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask when the consultation took place? I understand this directive has been in the works for in excess of ten years. It has been under development for a long time. Has the consultation been very recent? Will the Minister commit, before moving ahead with it, to ensure that there is some discussion, not only with the literacy council, but also with practitioners in the field?

I mean, in particular, practitioners who are working in the smaller communities, typically the NGOs, so that we are actually making sure the directive is tied to the real world, and not necessarily just to what people in academia might think is the right way to do it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can certainly consider circulating the draft. I am informed that there has been consultation with practitioners and NGOs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the committee would be interested in knowing, at least I would, when these consultations took place and with whom they took place? I would ask that be provided at a later date. I do not expect they would have that information with them today.

I have one other question about this program. Is it now in the base funding? Or is this a one year program? Will we have to go through this again next year? We had hoped to see a million dollars. \$650,000 is certainly better than the nothing that was there initially when the budget was brought forward. Is this just a short-term solution, or will the \$650,000 be in the department's base? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if we could confirm with the Member tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope that we will be able to have that information before we conclude the department's budget. I look forward to receiving that.

I would like to talk now about northern teachers. One of the things that Mr. Nerysoo started when he was Minister of Education was he set a target for a number of northern teachers we would have by the year of 2000. I believe that he

had set a target of 50 percent. I know we did not achieve that target in the North.

The government of the day committed to renew the attempt to reach that level, I believe it was by the year 2003. I would like to ask the Minister will he again commit and ensure that the department puts the resources necessary into the program to make sure that by 2003, or at the latest 2004, that we achieve the level that was set many years ago? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The target was set, I cannot recall the year, but it was 50 percent by the year 2000. I am not familiar with the fact that it was renewed. I see the former Minister set that target, so it was set as a target for 2003. Now, the question before me is can it be achieved?

I am not sure what changes took place in the last several years. I cannot commit at this time to be able to achieve that target by that particular date. There is certainly an emphasis within all areas of the system to ensure that people are able to go to the college system.

The Teacher Education Program that we have in place is starting to see increased enrollments. For example, here in Yellowknife at this time last year, the number of applicants was 24. This year it is 40. There is an increasing interest in the area of education. There is a promotion program that was initiated by us some time ago, and I think that is starting to have results. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have Mr. Nitah on the list. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start by quoting from the Northwest Territories Economic Strategy document called Common Ground, developed by a panel of our brightest from the Northwest Territories:

"In the year 2025, our communities are healthy and family life is strong. People have a strong sense of personal identity, respect one another, are proud of their cultures and speak their own languages. They are well housed, live independent lives, and have an appropriate range of services to help them when they are in need."

This was under the heading of vision and principles. These individuals are looking ahead in what they see. I say that education will be the backbone that will get us there.

In my campaign, subsequent readings and Assemblies with my colleagues of the House, we identified education as the number one priority. With the retention problems with our educators, and with our health professionals, I think education is that much more important. Especially in the small, predominantly aboriginal communities.

With cutbacks in adult basic education, and so on, and cutbacks in this and that, it is going to be more difficult to hire our own aboriginal professionals in this sector. We find problems in the communities where teachers do not stay long. There does not seem to be a relationship between teachers and students, which is very important to the development of individual kids.

It costs this government a lot of money in recruiting, transportation, et cetera. I think the department should very soon, or even during the summer break, develop a strategy that will make it easier on everyone involved at the smaller community level to be educated, to educate, or to participate in the educational process.

To that end, I would like to propose that the department develop a strategy of how that can be done in consultation with education authorities, parents, and teachers, both those who are present and those who are leaving.

Cross-cultural training is greatly needed in our communities for all professionals, especially educators. Many times, teachers leave because of frustration and not understanding the culture. Parents are not participating because they do not understand the western philosophies and cultures. We already pointed out that a large percentage of our population has grade 9 or less. That is going to contribute to that and it is going to continue if we do not do anything about it.

I think developing cross-cultural training that specifies the roles and responsibilities of not only teachers, but administrators of the schools, the students, the parents, community leaders. Once a strategy like this is in place, have a workshop during the first week of school. Lay out the whole year, come up with strategic goals for each class and each student, as some of the schools are very small, and I think we could do that, and set achievable goals.

Many of the problems I see in the area of retention for teachers have to do with finances. The cost of living in the communities, rent, et cetera. Many times it is not understanding the people in the communities. Students do not really get to know their teachers. When I was going through school in Lutselk'e, I spent a lot of time on the land. I was fortunate that there was an educator in the community by the name of Mr. Robert Biide, who was also an educator in Fort Simpson. It was his guidance and attention to my predicament and understanding of it that brought me along to a point where I was able to leave Lutselk'e and go to Akaitcho Hall and do well.

Now, I do not see the same teachers in the community year after year. I think there needs to be an innovative and proactive way of thinking, to try something different. The current system does not seem to work. In my community of Lutselk'e, five teachers have resigned this year. Some of it is for financial reasons, but mostly because of a lack of understanding and community involvement on all levels; teachers, students, administrators, parents. I think developing some sort of strategy to address that very fundamental problem would go a long way in the department.

I am willing to introduce a motion if that will assist you, Mr. Minister. The Minister could respond to this, or not. It is his prerogative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Ootes, would you care to respond to that?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the area that Mr. Nitah is speaking of is a very important one for all of the communities here in the Northwest Territories. It really relates to stability in the teacher system, and ensuring that teacher turnover is kept to a minimum. There is no doubt that has a great impact upon a community when we have a turnover. It affects the students, it affects the community all the

way around. Wherever possible, we need to ensure that turnover concern is addressed.

It was brought up during the Minister's Forum on Education and it has been on the agenda for the DECs and DEAs. There have been ongoing discussions. It is of great concern. There is certainly merit in what Mr. Nitah is stating about cross-cultural training. I know of the importance of that, not from a personal perspective, but rather from what I have been told, that the teachers and educators that go into the communities understand the local culture, the local desires, and the local wishes of the people. Cross-cultural training is an important element of that.

I should mention that teacher turnover, while it was significantly higher several years ago, it is always unacceptable. It is above ten percent. This year, I believe it may be at 14 percent. It was at 17 or 18 percent several years ago. Where the turnover seems to be occurring, when I looked at this, was in specific pockets. There are various reasons for that: difficulties with such things as housing in a community, but also acceptance by the individual of the community and by the community of the individual.

Part of our effort has been to put into effect the Teacher Induction Program, which is a step along the way of what Mr. Nitah is speaking of. That is a program that has a multi-level approach. Number one is that the teacher is given information about the community, be it a teacher from the north or the south, where the teacher will be an educator in.

Upon arrival, the teacher is inducted into the community and introduced to people and vice versa, that people meet the teacher. From there, it is a professional development approach of the teacher ensuring that they participate in professional development conferences. More importantly is a mentorship program that we have introduced, someone who has been at the school that is assigned to assist the new teacher.

There is also, of course, that whole element of involvement in the community, that people feel a part of the community. I think that is the concern that Mr. Nitah is speaking of, and I think he has a very good point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Nitah, your time has run out, and I will put your name on the list and come back to you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to make general comments and ask the Minister some questions. Mr. Chairman, my question relates to how we go about creating or training more people so that they can be employable in this market that we have. Mr. Chairman, I think everyone knows we live in an unprecedented period of a boom all around the world, especially in North America. There is such a demand for trained people in all sectors. There is a float over to southern Canada, and we are experiencing that in Yellowknife especially, maybe not so much in communities.

I know in Yellowknife, it is not just the professional positions, while we have a shortage of doctors, and lawyers as well, nurses, teachers and engineers, we have a shortage of anyone with computer training. We have a shortage of people with basic office skills. I know small law firms have a hard time keeping anyone with any skills. I would even suggest labour work. Not to mention, Mr. Chairman, the shortage of people

trained to work in the diamond industry. We have not even tapped into oil and gas yet.

I would suggest our Territory is not ready. Our training capacity is far behind what may be necessary to fill these jobs.

I have also heard that BHP is in a position of having to institute a literacy program, because their employees are not functionally literate to do the work. The company probably does not want us to speak about that sort of thing.

Given that we know the population of the Northwest Territories is 44,000 people, and there must be some expert advice on how many people can be employable, because so many of them will be retired and so many of them will be babies, and everyone in between. I wonder if the government has the statistics on the labour force requirements out of that 44,000? Where are those people located? Where are the jobs located? I think we are very fortunate in having all of this opportunity. It is a good time for us to look at what we have. We insist in socio-economic arrangements with these massive project companies. Even in government, we are not able to fill some positions with as many affirmative action candidates as we like. There just are not people out there who could take the job. Some may disagree with that, but I think we live in such a boom-time, people are highly valued, especially trained people. Can the Minister provide any information like that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The whole area of human resources development is one that is coming to the forefront very rapidly because of various factors.

The mineral industry provided opportunities several years ago, and we started to capitalize on that. We were able to position people into that particular industry. We have the oil and gas activity increasing in the Mackenzie Valley. It is becoming very evident that there is potential in that area. We have just completed an Oil and Gas Human Resources Development Plan. We are working with Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development as part of that particular program.

There is no doubt we have a resource of people here in the Northwest Territories. If we can educate them and bring them to a level, there are opportunities for our people. Up and down the valley, there are some 2,000 individuals that have indicated they would like to work and have no work. Many of those have a grade 9 or less education.

The challenge here is to see that we get literacy programs, education programs, work with industry, which is a very important element in this whole thing, to ensure people receive training to potentially fill many of these up-and-coming jobs.

We do track where the jobs are in the territory. As I say, we have done a human resources development plan for the oil and gas industry, but in other areas as well, when there are jobs, we track them and make people aware they are available. We make people in the high schools and colleges and the public aware of those particular programs.

We are working on a draft of a career development directive here in the Northwest Territories. We hope to have that completed. Some of the areas, we do provide work in is the labour force development. We have our post-secondary programs at Aurora College, which provides nursing and

teacher education programs, pre-employment training in the mining. We have the labour market development agreement and we provide our student financial assistance and income support for people, but they have to make a productive choice which allows them to go into a study area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe that education has to be something that has to be done in partnership. I fundamentally believe that a government has a responsibility to produce trained people, or at least trainable people, but then the individuals themselves have to come halfway as well.

The worst thing that could happen to a person is to be forced to be educated for something they do not want. There has to be a massive buy-in. These people have to want to work in the oil and gas field and so on.

The Minister indicated there is some sort of plan, but I think it should be very specific and focused and narrow. You have to do a really good study. Mr. Chairman, I am also aware of the fact that the diamond mines, as well as some of the other businesses in town, are prepared to enter into a training arrangement with the government. I have heard the figures are upwards of \$2 million to train people. These companies will do anything to have trained people so they can hire them. By and large, they want to hire Northerners, especially aboriginal people.

Can the Minister tell us if there is anything going on in the department to work with the industry in a close way? Not just consulting or meeting together, but having a very targeted and focused program with something as detailed as saying we are going to have this many people from these communities in these jobs by this time and they need these programs, and they have to go to school for six months and have a bullet-proof plan that also has buy-in from the people up and down the valley or around Yellowknife.

I think it is time. The opportunity is here and we really have to be focused on finding those people, who can be trained and who should be trained and target them and give them the focused resources we need so they are going to be ready when the pipeline comes in or when the second diamond mine comes in and De Beers comes in and on and on. This is a very important area, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Lee is correct in that we should be working closely with the major employers and others that may become employers out there. It will be part of our success down the road if we do that. The corporations and those who are employers are the ones who know what the requirements are for people in the jobs. They will also have a direct interest in ensuring their employees have the qualifications to do the jobs that are needed. I will give you an example. I do not mean to concentrate on the diamond area, but the example is one that will be and can be applied in any kind of area of major development, such as oil and gas.

Diavik is a company that is looking at developing a training module program of 16 modules. They are working with the Dogrib people to hire a certain number of people and put them through these training modules. They are looking for partners

in this and want partnerships. We are discussing things with them, and that is the kind of thing that Ms. Lee is speaking about, to ensure that we follow up with.

We have to do that, because with this kind of potential major development that is on our doorstep, it will hopefully carry through, and we have to do those types of things. We cannot do this alone. We cannot develop this fast enough to meet the requirements out there. The companies themselves are looking at our population as being a potential resource. They are interested. It is a matter now of can we also provide the resources to be able to do that, as there are financial restrictions for us at this particular time.

That is where the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy comes in very importantly in our whole thinking and thrust. We have to continue to concentrate on that. We cannot, and I must emphasize this, only do major industry. There is also a need to do it for those who wish to work outside of the industry, people in the communities. We need to ensure we do not concentrate solely on one aspect, because there are potential opportunities in the communities for people to gain employment.

If people do become employed with the major industries, chances are that these are people who are already there with some expertise. They will leave positions in the communities, the small businesses in the communities, the community corporations will require replacements. I am not saying that is going to happen. I am saying that is a possibility that could be there. We need to work on that whole human resource area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. We are dealing with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We are on general comments. I have Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Bell and Mr. Nitah on my list. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to get back to an issue raised by my colleague, Mr. Dent, regarding the targets set by northern teachers and aboriginal teachers in the Northwest Territories, 50 percent by 2003.

I was not quite sure; was the Minister backing away from that target, or that is no longer a target? May I have some clarification please? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is the target that was set, and we are focused on that. I just want to make mention that we have enrollments for the fall. This initial enrollment for the fall for the Inuvik Campus is 19 individuals, who are all aboriginal. For the Yellowknife Campus, it is 39, with approximately 50 percent aboriginal. For the Fort Smith Campus, 15, 12 of whom are aboriginal.

It looks like we have a total of 70 individuals who are aboriginal and entering a program this year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ootes, do you have something to add?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Last year, our enrollment was around 40, Mr. Chairman. We have significantly higher enrollments happening. I think that is a very good sign.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate where we are in terms of progress and percentage towards meeting that target? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will take us a minute to look up, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Maybe in the meantime, Mr. Miltenberger can ask another question and you can get back to the answer on that question. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question I wanted to follow up on is the question on the literacy strategy. The Minister indicated they were working on a directive, which I see as significantly different than a strategy, but it would be linked to the language strategy.

I was wondering if the Minister could elaborate on his vision of a comprehensive literacy strategy, and the component parts, how it would tie into the other areas within the department as well as link inside and outside of government; the NGOs, the communities, and to the other sectors of our society where literacy is such a fundamental issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister, did you get this last question? Are you ready to respond to the one previous? Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the last question, it is early in the development of this. The directive is nearing completion, but we feel that it will require some work to link it to other areas that are of importance, such as the aboriginal language strategy. We can focus on that, but it is not there yet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, have you or your colleagues had the opportunity to collect the information for the question asked previously?

HON. JAKE OOTES: No. We do not have that information here, Mr. Chairman. We will have to get that information for the Member.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate what the intent of the directive is? The literacy strategy that is being talked about is very critical. You need to have a very clear sense of the broad frame that you want to develop the literacy strategy within.

I am not sure what the intent of this directive is. It sounds quite narrow and process-based, and focused more on government. If the Minister could elaborate on that to make sure we are both going down the same path here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This literacy directive defines the roles and responsibilities of who will do what and who is responsible for various programs. I believe what Mr. Miltenberger is aiming towards is a strategy. That is the next step in this whole area, that we move towards a literacy and adult-based education strategy that can tie into the various programs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister elaborate then on this directive in terms of what exactly does he mean? Or could he give examples of what he means when he says it will define who will do what? Is that within the department? Is that tiny NGOs? Given the fact that it has been in construction or design for some time, and it will be the only document until a broader strategy is done, I am very interested to know a little more detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly can pass on a copy of this to the Member and to other Members. When we deal with roles and responsibilities, it is really looking at areas such as the department itself - what it does, what the College does; community groups and agencies; quality of programs; curriculum and standards; accountability; and program standards.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The development of the adult-based education and literacy directive grew out of discussions with program deliverers, practitioners, as well as departmental staff who felt it was important to describe what the basic elements were of the system and the program.

Historically, this government had what was called the Continuing Education Policy that was passed in the same time frame that Mr. Dent spoke to earlier, about ten years ago. That policy was deleted a couple of years ago because it was simply out of date, given the changes and developments related to the college and the department.

This directive will essentially replace and refine the information necessary. It is focused on those elements. It certainly, as the Minister indicates, could be an important part of a broader strategy related to literacy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say for the record it is good to see Mr. Cleveland upright and in the saddle alongside the Minister, in a relatively healthy state of being.

Mr. Chairman, I had one other question in regard to teachers and the target of 2003. Given the fact that the Minister does not have the number, the percentage of northern aboriginal teachers that we currently have, I would like to ask, is the Minister of the opinion that 2003 is still a realistic date in order to achieve the 50 percent target? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The strategy is there, and we are concentrating on it. As I have just mentioned, we have seen an increase in enrollments. It is predicated upon that. Can we continue to increase enrollments through the college system? Can we continue to have teachers trained at other institutions fast enough to fill those positions?

We also have to ensure that the teachers we have remain within the system. It is a very good objective, and certainly a strategy we want to keep on. I certainly hope we can, but can I guarantee it? My intentions are there, but I am not sure it can be... it is a lofty ideal to perform in two-and-a-half years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think what the Minister meant to say was that the former Ministers did not leave him much time to reach the goals they had set. We will leave that alone.

I want to get back to the literacy strategy. We have heard the Minister and the deputy say that this is part of the overall bigger picture. Mr. Miltenberger has asked some questions, and basically asked what kinds of programs would this tie into? Would it involve departmental staff and resources, or NGOs and other service deliverers?

I am wondering if Mr. Ootes can lay out the bigger picture for us as he sees it - give us his vision, as it were, of a literacy strategy and leave us with something to go forward with. I know this is the early stages of this, but I am just wondering if he can give us a broad picture of what he thinks a literacy strategy would encompass.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The literacy strategy that needs to be addressed in the Territories starts at the early childhood level. We have to develop, and I am speaking hypothetically, because it will require resources to implement any kind of strategy, but let us speak in terms of looking at early childhood to start with.

We need programs such as the Aboriginal Head Start program in all of our communities to prepare children to be ready for school. In the school system, we need to address the whole issue of the literacy levels of our students. Are we achieving appropriate levels? If they are at a grade 9 level, can they read at a grade 9 level?

I do not know whether this can be instituted, but certainly we can start looking at the potential of doing some piloting, perhaps, of having students be at the level they are supposed to be at. If not, then we can address that issue and perhaps look at a grade 3, grade 6, grade 9, and when they move into the high school level.

Then we need programs outside of that to support those who are no longer in the school system. That may be through the college, or it may be through the delivery in communities by NGOs.

Tying literacy together with the culture of the North, we have to address the whole area of aboriginal language retention and aboriginal language promotion. That is another area of concern, of course, because there is a tremendous loss

experienced in the last number of years, of people being able to speak their aboriginal language.

We need to address that in the school system. It is there partially, that we have some mechanisms in place to do that. We need to continue to look at programs like Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit, and the development of aboriginal programs, because they also address the whole literacy area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Nitah): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Ootes for that answer. He raised some of these in his answer, but one of the things our committee wants to ensure is that when we do have this overall broader literacy strategy, we are not just talking about school years in the school system. There are broader issues in the North that we have to look at. There are health issues.

Obviously, people without basic levels of literacy cannot read instructions on prescription medication. They cannot fill out an application to rent an apartment. They cannot do a lot of things. They cannot function in our society. They are unable to find gainful employment.

I think we would like to see the focus be at a really broad level, and tie in and work with and concentrate on families, not just individuals. I think it makes a lot more sense to focus on the family as a unit and help the family learn as one.

The Minister mentioned head start programs. We think these are critical and it is an obvious and logical tie-in to literacy and family, as is work place literacy at the other end. We have heard in committee briefings from organizations like BHP, who are now faced with the reality that in order to get people up to speed and able to work at their mine, they are going to have to spend considerable money on training, basic literacy and numeric type of things, so these people can be employed.

Certainly the department has to be working with them and understanding what sort of things they can do. I think the focus for us has to be broad. It has to involve families. It has to involve the workplace and it has to be tied into head start and early childhood education.

I think this committee looks forward to seeing the work the department does in this area. The Minister may have already committed to providing us with this, but I would like to get a copy of the literacy directive the Minister was discussing earlier. If possible, could he also supply that to our committee?

I would also like to talk here if I could about student financial assistance. We did get some assurance from the Minister that he was going to look at some of the issues. He realized there were ongoing concerns and he was going to deal with them expeditiously, I believe he said in the House.

There are two real concerns I would like to get back to here. There are many concerns with the way the program is being administered, starting from the hundred and some odd page booklet. However, the two key things for me are this issue of grandfathering and the issue of transition to the new program.

I think the committee feels that our concerns were not heard when we discussed this with the Minister and the department, or not understood. Because we do not feel they were reflected in the new regulations.

With grandfathering, we are concerned there are students who were formerly told they would receive levels of funding, and now with the changes, they will no longer qualify. I use the example of residency versus years of schooling. If I was a resident and I was in my second year of university and I had my high schooling in the south because my folks lived here but sent me out to boarding school, I used to be able to get grants. That is no longer the case.

I could be two years through a degree now and with the way that the department has chosen to interpret this, be left out in the cold. It is simply not fair and it defeats the purpose. We have already spent some money to get these people to this level. We do not understand why we are now going to turn around and hang them out to dry.

As far as transition, it also does not make sense to us that if you used up three or four years of your funding under the old system that you are now eligible for lesser funding than if you have used up one or two years. The argument was made, and Mr. Ootes will make the argument again, that it is a matter of money and he did commit to the transition and ensuring that the benefits would be there for students currently in the system.

However, it has to be done in a cost-effective manner, and there were cost considerations and it was deemed to be too expensive. I do not think this committee accepts that. I do not think we are talking about a large number of students. We do have the deputy here today. I am certain when they ran the projections on the new program, they knew exactly what it was going to cost to allow continuing students to receive the new level of benefits.

I would like to hear today from the Minister with his staff exactly what kind of dollars we were talking about to extend the new program equally for everybody, and ensure that everybody had the added benefit of the new semesters, in dollars, please. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will go back to literacy for a moment first. Mr. Bell spoke about the need to make literacy broad across the territory and broad across the government, which I totally agree with. It cannot be narrow and deal only with schools.

We need to also have areas addressed such as family literacy, workplace literacy and health literacy, and on and on it goes. He is absolutely correct. Workplace literacy to me means that you may have individuals who know how to drive a truck, but they do not know how to read the manual. There may be people that have medication. And he is correct, It is important that people have the ability to do that.

On the issue of the student financial assistance, I believe, and I will just double-check that with regard to the residency matter of students, parents who are resident here and have children who have gone out, they are still considered a resident here and still part of the system. What you said was not correct, Mr. Bell.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Please direct the Chair. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can accept that possibly I am mistaken and there is not an issue here of

transition in students who were formerly eligible for benefits because the criteria was residency and now is years of schooling.

I would like some clarification from Mr. Ootes, because we do have students who have been told they will not be eligible for funding now because they attended high school in the south, although their parents were residents the whole time.

If they are being told that by the department, and Mr. Ootes has a different understanding, then we need to work this out.

The second thing I wanted to reiterate is that I believe Mr. Ootes and the department know exactly, probably to the hundreds of dollars, how much it would cost to extend the new program and new eligibility of semesters to all the students currently in the system, and by in the system I mean anybody who last year was in their fourth year of university or less. That is the excuse we have been given for not extending these added semesters to all the students in the system. It is a matter of money. We are asked to consider that excuse and that reason because these are tight fiscal times, and we do realize that they are tight fiscal times.

However, we would like to see exactly how much money we are talking about here. If we are only talking about \$500,000 in additional new money, how much possibly could we be talking about for extending these semesters to students in the system? I believe we want kids to go on and get a masters level of education.

I do not want to ask any more questions here. I do not want to compound things, but if I am mistaken about residency and years of schooling, then we will have to get the students to come back to the department for new information. I would like to hear dollar amounts as far as how much it would have cost to extend the additional semesters to students in the system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the residency matter, I can have Mr. Cleveland meet with Mr. Bell to discuss the particular students who may be under that impression. I think that it is important we ensure the correct information has gotten out.

With regard to the other issue Mr. Bell is speaking of, the exact cost, we have looked at this and spent some time on it. We estimate that it could cost anywhere between an extra one million and one and a half million dollars for the first year, in order to do the program Mr. Bell is speaking of. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Minister Ootes. We now have Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up on earlier suggestions that I made by reinforcing the need not only for cross cultural training for teachers that are coming into the community, but also for parents about the importance of education, their roles and responsibility in supporting their children in learning.

The other area I would like to touch on is the area that has been touched on by my colleague, Ms. Lee. It is the education for work. It is great to have Arctic College and Aurora College

doing training, but I think we have to start earlier. I think that we have to start in junior high.

We all know what our economic base in the Northwest Territories is. We have a document that has been developed by all the people in the Northwest Territories in one form or another. I think you should be able to take this document and try to incorporate some of the information into the education system.

We should start teaching our children about tourism, about marketing, about geology, about different mine methods, how you take it out, et cetera. I think that will help students get motivated at an earlier age to tie their education to a possible job at the end.

We want to get devolution happening from the federal government to the North, but there are no guarantees. I think if we start incorporating our economic base into the education system, we may find that we retain more people in the Northwest Territories, people who come back after school and stay and work in the areas I just mentioned.

We could develop the curriculum in partnership with industry, communities, et cetera. I thought that would be a good suggestion. I am sure a kid in grade 8 would love to learn a lot about diamonds or tourism. It is something that is real. It is something you can take to a higher education. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The document Mr. Nitah is referring to is the economic report by the panel that was set up a year ago. It is an extremely important document. I have had a cursory glance at it and have not studied it in-depth.

One of the principles that the individuals that headed this up, Mr. Nerysoo and Mr. Bealieu, who were the co-chairs of this, emphasized the need for attention to be paid to the human resource development of the territory. Specifically, they have recommendations in this report with regard to what areas this education can address.

I think it is worthy and will require us to really work on this. It provides us with a challenge to incorporate a lot of this, as Mr. Nitah suggests. To incorporate into this particular department in part and parcel of the workings of this department, which I think he is correct in.

We already have some programs, and I should mention those, that we have technology studies in schools. We need to work on this as our resources become more available.

We have the Schools North Apprenticeship Program for our students. If I recall correctly how it works, they get credits for being out in the workforce and they gain experience. Again, an example which I can relate to in our community is the Bridges Program offered by St. Patrick's High School that provides students a working opportunity in a particular business. There needs to be that tie-in in all areas, from industry into schools and schools into industry. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make this my last comment. I am not sure where this issue is at in our curriculum, but throughout Canada, there is a shortage for trades people. There used to be work experience in shop when I was in high school. I am not sure if it is still there. I have not seen it in the communities. I think it is very important we continue in that area. Not everybody wants to sit in an office. Not everybody is going to do their commerce through the Internet and what not. There are going to be individuals who want to go out there and hammer nails for a living. We have to give them that opportunity.

That is one of the strongest economies in the Northwest Territories. For an individual to live in the small community, a lot of them have to expect to fly to work and spend several weeks there. Those are just basic skills that get taught in shops. It could be wood-working. It could be machinery, welding, et cetera, but those are introductory to trades. Once you get through high school, it might get a little higher, and then into the college system.

Maybe the Minister can answer that question for me. Is shop still being taught in school? The areas I mentioned, carpentry, welding, electrical, et cetera. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, shop is being taught in some schools, but not all. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the statistics we have in education where grade 10 seems to be the wall that many of our students are hitting, they are having a hard time getting beyond that. Our financial situation is cutting back our ABE budget by a large percentage, I think it is important that this kind training and education, the basics in the trades, are taught in junior high. That is where it should begin. If students are not getting beyond grade 9 and these are only taught in grade 10, they are not even getting that. They are really getting short-changed throughout.

The Minister responded to a question raised by my colleague, Mr. Roland, who stated that it seems kids are being pushed to the next grade level even though they do not qualify to keep in pace with their age and they are hitting the wall because of that. Mr. Ootes replied by stating the exact opposite.

The fact remains that grade 10 seems to be the wall that a large percentage of our population is hitting. I think it is important that junior high is used to a greater extent in the areas of trades training. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have started to talk about career planning with students in junior high. I think it is an important area for us to start looking at. It has been introduced, if I understand correctly from the department, but it certainly is an important area, the area of trades and what we can do. As I mentioned earlier, there are some areas such as technology studies in schools, apprenticeship programs, but it does need ongoing surveillance and attention. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question is about the quality of education we are providing in many of our small communities. I have seen very few graduates in the riding I have represented for the last five years.

Is it a problem with the system or is it a question of the lack of resources? I think the answer is both. If you talk to parents and students in the different communities, it takes them a lot longer to go from grade 9 to graduating from grade 12 than other students in the larger centres. One of the reasons is because of the curriculum that is being developed and having the resources to deliver different programs, especially when you are dealing with the math 30s, chemistry and biology and those types of programs, which are not available in many of our small communities.

In some cases, the students are the ones who have to put together or develop their curriculum or course loads. They have to go out and find the materials themselves so they can try to graduate. The frustration you hear from parents in these communities is why is it that it takes a student in the smaller communities somewhere from four to five and a half years to graduate, yet in the larger centres, it is only a matter of three years?

Much of it depends on the number of credits that are needed to be able to graduate from grade 12 and get the course load that you need to go on.

I believe that is one area that has to be looked at. Do you have any statistics regarding the number of graduates and where they are graduating? Why does it take so long for a student from a small community to graduate compared to a student from a large centre?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there were several questions there. On the statistics on graduates, we have those and we can make those available to the Member.

With regard to the question as to why it takes longer in the communities, we do not have a quick answer on that particular one.

On the variety of programs available in the communities, I understand what the Member is saying. We have been working on the distance education system. It was piloted this past spring with a pilot project out of Norman Wells. It has proven to be very successful. It had the teacher in Norman Wells delivering a northern studies program. There were a number of students who participated in that in various communities. I believe, and I could be corrected on this, but one was in Aklavik, Yellowknife, Hay River, and I cannot remember the others.

The feedback we received was that it was very successful and well-received. From there, we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Calgary school board to develop and deliver a possibility of 30 more programs. The curriculum accessibility for students will increase as time goes, and will be more available as of this fall for some students.

This summer, we are training ten teachers to be educator supervisors, and we will continue that training program throughout the year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the department looked at schools that may be having problems? Especially where you see communities who may not have had graduates since the establishment of the high schools in the smaller communities, yet no graduate has come out of those different schools.

We do put money into allowing teachers to teach in the high schools in a lot of our communities, but if we are not getting results at the end of the day and we are not seeing graduates coming out of these schools, especially for grade 12, there is something wrong with the system.

Has the department looked at the different communities that have seen this problem, where students have to go away to graduate because they feel they will not be able to do it in the smaller communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have looked at this in conjunction with the DECs, the district education councils, and there has been some experience that when students leave their home community, they have not been that successful. There is a desire with grade extensions to have students stay at home.

I can give the example of Holman as one, where students were attending school in Kugluktuk. There was a tremendous drop-out for the past several years. Each time the school year started, we experienced a drop-out rate of substantial proportions. There was a desire on the part of the community to have grade extensions in that community. The success rate in the communities is starting to improve. One of the communities that had ten enrollments, I believe it was two years ago, this year had 30 enrollments. It is an example of the type of interest that is starting to show in the whole area of having grade extensions in schools in communities.

With regard to the success of that, in some areas they are more successful than others. Some who have had recent grade extensions are going through some growing pains. There are some areas that need to be addressed, but we feel that those that have been established longer are starting to have some success. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not believe the Minister answered my question. My question was have they done a review of those high schools that have not had any graduates from the people in the classroom for a number of years? Have they looked at that to see if there is a problem in the way the curriculum is developed? What is the reason for not seeing any students graduating in those schools? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Cleveland to answer this one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Nitah): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: By way of information for the Member, we did undertake a review a couple of years ago of high schools in general to examine what caused student success and student difficulties.

That led to the identification of several areas where it was felt that student support should be enhanced. Examples would include access to more courses, as well as the issues of counselling support for the students.

I would also say, Mr. Chairman, we have not done a comprehensive review specifically of just those questions where we have not seen success. As the Minister indicates, we do work directly with the division education councils when particular locations are identified as being an issue. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to go back to the issue of student financial assistance. Did I understand the Minister to tell Mr. Bell that in fact a student who was not schooled in the Northwest Territories, even though his or her parents were resident here, who was sent out to boarding school, would qualify for assistance under the new program?

I do know of a student who was told by student services that she would no longer qualify for remissible loans and grants, and that she would only qualify for the repayable needs assessed loans because now the system is tied to years of schooling rather than to years of residency.

Maybe I could start with some confirmation that we can send this student down to the department, with Hansard in hand tomorrow, to show student services that she is in fact able to qualify for remissible loans and the grants that she would have qualified for in the old system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. If we can get the name of the student, we would be most pleased to pass that on to the director of the program to ensure the student is taken care of. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make sure that gets passed on very quickly. I appreciate that. That does, in fact, cover the grandfathering issue, if this is going to be looked after for all students. I think it does cover the grandfathering issue that we had talked about in committee.

Another issue we were concerned about was transition. I also heard the Minister say, in response to Mr. Bell, that it was going to cost something in the area of \$1.5 million to offer the kind of transition to the new program that the committee had asked for.

Could we get an indication of the statistics? How many students who complete their undergraduate degree, in other words, complete four years of study, go on then to take two years of university within the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Cleveland to respond to this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chairman, given the complexity and the confusion on this matter, I will try to state how we arrived at the number. Hopefully, that will clarify it for the Members, and confirm for us that we are actually talking about the same issues.

What we did was examine the number of students who have used up their entitlement and who would have a different and an enhanced entitlement under the new program. We examined not simply people who had taken and passed in this past year, for example, but some people who had been eligible previously for three years or two years or one year. We examined what the cost would be to, as I mentioned, increase their entitlement over and above what they were entitled to and what they used in the past. The number for that comes to between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. It is about 200 students, plus or minus.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is then, assuming I understood the explanation just provided, that every one of those students who qualified for that funding were to take it.

I think it is important to remember a good number of people who would qualify for two extra years, who may have completed four years may plan on working before going back to grad school, or may not plan on pursuing anything further than an undergraduate degree. I think it is still essential for us to assess what is the level of continuation. How many people who complete their four-year entitlements carry on to years five and six?

That sort of percentage could then be applied across the board. I am just wondering are we looking at a worst case scenario with the \$1.5 million? Is it more likely we are talking about a significantly smaller amount? Because in all likelihood, not everybody would apply to use the funding that they might now qualify for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will defer the question to Mr. Cleveland.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chairman, we recognize there will be some students who will not continue on. That is one of the reasons for the range between \$1 million and \$1.5 million. We have examined this. Given the data that is available, and based on the history we have in the data bank, we think those are reasonable numbers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Did that number include only those students who were enrolled in this most recent semester?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman. It was based on the most recent semester data.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland, can you please repeat that?

MR. CLEVELAND: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. The answer to the Member's question is yes, it is based on the most recent data that we have available from the past semester. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could we get some indication of the makeup of the population that accesses student financial assistance? For instance, what proportion are aboriginal? What proportion are accessing assistance to go to northern colleges? What proportion are in undergraduate degrees? Do we have some base statistics of the people who are in the student financial assistance program right now? Who has been using it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The makeup is about 1,244 full-time students. Of that, 29 percent are Dene, 362; 10 percent are Inuit, 114; 12 percent are Metis, 154; and 49 percent are non-aboriginal, for a total of 614. That gives a total of 1,244 students.

We can give the Member a rough breakdown of the north to south attendance. It will take half a minute, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent, if you have another question, you can use it. Your time is still running.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the clock was going to tick through as they were doing their math.

I think from what I have heard so far, it appears that the makeup of the population using student financial assistance is actually representative of the population in the territories, or fairly close to representative. I think that is a good sign.

It means we have people from across the territories accessing the program. I, Mr. Chairman, would like to encourage the department to take a real good look at rewarding success, for those young people, and some not so young, who have been successful in the system, who have gone out and shown the initiative to undertake higher learning.

I think we should be willing to take the initiative to help them go on and complete their course of study. If that means giving them an extra two years of grant and remissible loan support to help them get to a graduate degree, or if it means that somebody will qualify for four years of funding instead of two years at that level of support, then I think it is important. We need well-educated people to come back to the Northwest Territories to take on some of the job opportunities that we are going to have open up here in the not-too-distant future.

I would really like to encourage the department to take another look at these numbers. I am not convinced that as many people would follow on as they believe would. There is probably room to extend this program.

For instance, when we were going through the department business plan, in committee, we pointed out that there has been a significant amount of money lapsed in student financial assistance last year. We were told that was based on 75 to 90

students, a variance, and therefore there can always be this kind of variance. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars that were lapsed last year.

If there is that kind of variance here, I suspect the department is being overly cautious when they present the numbers. I would really encourage them to relax the rules. If that leads us to a situation where they have to come back for supplementary funding, then let us talk about that at that time. Because if we are in fact rewarding success, I think Members of this House will be inclined to agree that is the way we should be doing business. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will take Mr. Dent's comments as comments. I recognize we need to ensure we get people into education and the workforce. There is a pressure starting to come into the system because of increased enrollments.

We are going to see increased enrollments in the schools. We are going to see an increased need for student financial money to support those students to carry on either to college or university. I appreciate what Mr. Dent is saying. We did spend considerable time looking at this to see how it could be handled. I appreciate Mr. Dent's comments. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to follow up on something that I had discussed earlier, but before I do that, I just wanted to ask a question on student financial assistance, further to Mr. Dent's question.

I wonder if the Minister has figures on what the rate of students who return after their post-secondary education, and after having received student financial assistance? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that with the aboriginal students, the majority returned. That is, a very large percentage of returns. The percentage of returns from non-aboriginals is about 65 percent. Those are rough figures. We would have to check those, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that information. I just want to move on to something that I was talking about before. I was talking about having a database of information on human resource needs and capabilities so we could address it better. The Minister made reference to the human resource system that is being undertaken. I was wondering if the Minister could tell us who is doing the system, how long it has been going on, and when will it be ready?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the human resource development plan that I was speaking of and Ms. Lee is referencing is for the oil and gas industry. I can get her the books that we have available on that, as a matter of

fact. It is a quite extensive and very detailed publication. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Minister Ootes. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, so this information is only on the oil and gas industry, and not on anything else? What I was talking about, Mr. Chairman, was if we are going to really address the need to train employable people – I am not talking about people who want to go and study for academic purposes or anything else, but to respond to the demands we have in the Northwest Territories for trainable people to work in industries such as oil and gas and diamonds.

Just to have our own people work in the jobs that we create within this industry, I think we would have to know what is out there. What are the numbers we are talking about? Where are the jobs? We need to know the number of jobs on one hand, and then know how many people out there are trainable to fill those jobs. Is there anything going on in the department in conjunction with Stats Canada or anywhere else that the department could get the information from? Do we have an understanding of what the labour needs are? What the capacity is? I do not know if I am making myself very clear here, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand what Ms. Lee is speaking of and what is desired. What is in place at the moment is that there is no single system that addresses that. First, let me state that we work with the Bureau of Statistics to get information from them. We collect it, then, we have programs that address specific areas. As I mentioned, oil and gas is one area. We address it through other strategies that we have. There is no single particular system, and I believe that is what Ms. Lee is speaking of.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to ask this question again. I wonder if the Minister could commit to provide the House with information on what the department has, as to its understanding of what the job requirements are, and where does the government see the people coming from? Where will we find these people? I do not know. The best that the department could provide. I do not even know how to word it, but I think he knows what I am saying. We should know what we are dealing with. How many jobs are out there? How many of our people could fill them?

Mr. Chairman, I would like to move on to my next question. This government has been talking a lot about the diamond and oil and gas industries. The Premier and Ministers have been going south, telling the people, the business community and the federal Cabinet Ministers, that there are so many resources here, that all sorts of things are happening here, and to come and invest money in us.

At the same time, is anyone going to the communities? What are we doing to have a buy-in among our people? Is it safe to assume that everyone in the communities is as excited as we are in this House about what is going on in the diamond and oil and gas industries? Because I do not think a program is worth anything, any educational program or training in the best

universities in the world, even adult education classes in the communities, it can only be achieved through individual initiative.

If the individual wanted to have it, they have to want to work in these diamond mines, in the pipeline, or an office, or go out and hammer the nails. I was at a reception and there were booklets on how to work in the service or oil and gas industry, so I am assuming that there is some work going on by the department to promote some of the opportunities that are available.

I am wondering, if we had more of a focus...are there dog and pony shows going into the communities to say "This is what is happening. Take advantage of it."? What are we doing about it to get everyone as excited as we are? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will provide the information that we have available that we use for our planning purposes for Ms. Lee. On the question of not everyone in the communities wanting to work in the oil and gas industry, or want to work in the major industries that are out there, I had mentioned earlier in our human resource planning that we have to undertake that.

As I mentioned earlier, we require resources to be able to do the kind of extensive human resource planning that needs to be done. Part of our effort in that end is going to be predicated upon the success of obtaining resources through the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. If we can obtain those resources, then we can set in motion the kind of program that Ms. Lee is speaking of, whereby we can consolidate, identify and do community consultation work.

The program of human resource development has to address all of the areas, not just the big resource areas, but also the needs in the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to clarify that I do not want to look at those booklets. I do not want to be provided with information on... I do not want to know what is available in the oil and gas industry and so on. What I want to know is what is the department doing? What is the government doing to go to the communities and tell the people about this?

It may be that they all know about it, and I am the only one who does not. What programs are there? What kind of promotion are we doing? Is there a campaign going on to let them be aware of the opportunities out there and to generate interest?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have worked through the career centres and they have various publications and booklets available on different sectors. If Ms. Lee is speaking about consultation in communities and so forth, it requires resources to do that beyond what we have at the moment. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): There is a motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister Ootes, and your staff. We will see you tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, and Committee Report 2-14(3), and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at 11:00 a.m. of the Standing Committees on Governance and Economic Development and Social Programs.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 28, 2000:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001
 - Committee Report 1-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 28, 2000, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

