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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 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): Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 10-14(3): Legislative Initiatives to Deter Impaired Driving**

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week a national organization, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), published a report on provincial and territorial motor vehicle legislation across Canada intended to deter impaired driving. The MADD report card gave the Northwest Territories a failing grade of "F".

Mr. Speaker, the MADD report card serves to support the position of this government in that there is an urgent need for legislation to address the high numbers of impaired drivers in the NWT. This is a complex social problem and true prevention also includes calls for positive measures in public education and awareness.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation has been working with the Departments of Justice, Health and Social Services, the RCMP, the Stanton Hospital Board and the two Yellowknife School Boards to develop its Strategy to Reduce Impaired Driving (STRID). The Strategy to Reduce Impaired Driving is a comprehensive approach to the problem of impaired driving. Its many recommendations cover legislation, enforcement, public education and rehabilitation.

A little over a month ago, I proposed to the Executive Council that amendments be made to the Motor Vehicles Act to implement the legislative recommendations of the Strategy to Reduce Impaired Driving. Cabinet has requested comments from the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development on this important initiative. On receipt of standing committee comments and the direction of the Executive Council, I expect to introduce, in this House, a Bill to amend the Motor Vehicles Act with respect to impaired driving.

Mr. Speaker, I believe our legislative agenda with respect to impaired driving is well in hand and proceeding in an orderly fashion. Hopefully, future MADD report cards will reflect better grades for the NWT. I would like to say again that legislative change is only one of a number of initiatives that will lead to the kinds of change that we all agree are required to reduce the incidence of drinking and driving to make our roads safer for the travelling public.

-- Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement on Training of Aboriginal Northern Nurses**

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to speak on the issue of the training of aboriginal northern nurses. I talked to the Minister after the House and hoped this would be a matter that was taken care of, but it appears that it has not.

I understand the Minister did call the constituent in question, but the assessment I received was that it was friendly but non-committal comments.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is not just a personal, detached situation. This is a very important issue involving someone's life. I come into this House with this issue as a last resort. We have worked with the department and the officials to try and bring a satisfactory resolution to this particular issue. I raised it yesterday and hoped that at that point, it would be taken care of.

However, I was told to do what I will, and that was basically the response I received. I stand here again today to point out that the department has lapsed \$800,000 in the recruitment and retention program. The Minister indicated yesterday, and I quote from the unedited Hansard, "I am not certain as to what kind of latitude a Minister has to reprofile and reallocate funds."

Mr. Speaker, the Minister will be appearing before this House with a \$170 million budget. I would hope she would get the kind of orientation she needs to be able to make these assessments. This is a small issue compared to the multi-million dollar budget we are talking about.

The Minister does have the ability and latitude to deal with this issue. It is clearly a retention issue. I asked many weeks ago in writing to the Minister, how many aboriginal nurses receive such support? I have not received a response to date.

I raised it in the House again yesterday. Once again, the Minister put me off.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, in this House, it has been pointed out that the human resource policies of this government are in disarray. Health and Social Services, in this instance, seems to be suffering from the same malaise.

Mr. Speaker, given the response I have received in this House, it would almost appear that, when it comes to recruitment and retention, the Department of Health and Social Services has obtained public money from this Legislature under false pretenses.

I think it is a sad commentary, Mr. Speaker, on the government's stated commitment on retaining and training northern aboriginal nurses. I will be asking the Minister once again if she can resolve this issue. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Maximizing Employment Opportunities From Economic Development Initiatives

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the potential for the unprecedented economic prosperity that is at our doorstep, and what our obligations should be to ensure our people have the benefit of that opportunity.

The magnitude and the details on how it can be achieved have been well articulated in the non-renewable resources development strategy. Since releasing the report in early May, the Premier, the Ministers and the GNWT officials have been criss-crossing the whole country selling the idea. It has awakened the interest of many interested parties in the south, who must become our partners, including the Prime Minister, the federal Finance Minister and the Minister of DIAND, not to mention the aboriginal and business communities in and out of the Northwest Territories.

I must add, Mr. Speaker, I am a fan of this strategy. It is comprehensive and clear about the challenges and opportunities ahead for the Northwest Territories. Most importantly, it gives every interested party something to work out of.

However, Mr. Speaker, I think there is an important question that has not been asked. If it were to happen that the federal government and the private industries were to buy into this strategy and make the financial investment, are we ready to take it on? More precisely, do we have the human infrastructure in place to take on this challenge?

When we demand that the mega-companies hire our people, do we have the labour pool that can take it on?

Mr. Speaker, it should be made clear that ultimately, the biggest stakeholders for this strategy are the people of the Northwest Territories. It is our people who need to work the jobs and reap the benefit. Do we have a clear picture of where our people are at? Do we have empirical evidence on how many jobs are going to be created to support these industries? What sort of jobs will be created, whether it be engineers, geologists, miners, heavy-equipment operators, labourers, et cetera? Not to mention all the other sectors in the economy that need to support it. Social workers, teachers, administrators, nurses, doctors, accountants and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

Where are these people located? What is their education level? What are their interests in pursuing these fields? What is the

extent of their mobility? What is the interest in training to take on these jobs?

I would think this is the minimum level of information the government needs to have to support the industries. This is the kind of information the government must have in order to face head-on the task we will have to become the major player, as well as the beneficiary of this development potential.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Member for Range Lake is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may continue, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to conclude by saying that as I see it, we only have about 43,000 people. Given the general demographics, there is only a certain percentage of people who are employable or trainable. With the discussions in committee of the whole yesterday, I am not sure if the government has a comprehensive and clear picture of what the job requirements are, where they are located and how we can match the people.

I urge the government to look at cleaning up our house and getting our house in order so we are ready when the federal government brings us the money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Realignment of Budgets to Reflect New Land Claim Areas

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last week, there have been three full-page newspaper ads placed by the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, stating the Dogrib self-government negotiations are stalled by the lack of commitment from the Government of the Northwest Territories Cabinet.

Land claim and self-government talks have been going on for years in the Dogrib region. Originally, it was hoped that negotiations would finish this August. Now it is not known when they will conclude.

We do know, however, that the relationship that exists between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Dogrib region will change. I am concerned that preparations are not being made to recognize the area formally, particularly through the budget process.

As the representative of the North Slave region, which consists of Rae, Rae Lakes, Wha Ti and Snare Lakes, I find it confusing that in the budget, money is allocated to the North Slave, yet ends up being spent on items outside my area, whether it is on a highway in the Fort Smith region or a park in Yellowknife.

Work could begin now with the aboriginal governments and the House to ensure that realignment of the budget occurs with the claim area.

I urge the government to take a proactive approach to realigning the budgets to reflect the new claim areas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Congratulations to Deh Cho Region Graduates

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, on behalf of my constituents, I would like to congratulate the graduates from the Deh Cho region. First of all, congratulations to Ms. Tina Gargan and Ms. Terry Landry from Fort Providence, who are both graduates of Aurora College, where they studied introduction to diamonds.

-- Applause

Ms. Gargan is now employed with Deton'cho Diamonds here in Yellowknife. Also, Delmer Bonnetrouge of Fort Providence graduated from a security course he took with a company called SecureCheck here in Yellowknife. Mr. Clifford McLeod recently graduated from a two-year recreation and community service diploma program at Lethbridge Community College. Mr. McLeod is currently working on the completion of his practicum for the Hamlet of Fort Providence.

From the Hay River Reserve, Mr. Philip Fabian Jr. graduated from Grade 12 at Diamond Jenness High School. Mr. Allisdaire Lieshman just completed a two-year aircraft maintenance engineering program from Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to formally acknowledge Allisdaire's mother, Ms. Margaret Lieshman, for the great job she has done. Margaret is also the mother of Mr. Ian Lieshman, who recently graduated from the Marine program, and is now a captain on the Merv Hardie Ferry. I am glad to see that all her support and dedication is paying off.

Congratulations to the graduates from Enterprise: Melinda Mercredi, from management studies; Brett Clarke, from first year mechanics; and Lianna Clarke, from grade 12.

History has been made by the following two students, and they have received a lot of publicity. I would like to congratulate the Kakisa Lake students, Melanie Simba and Jennifer Simba. These two students received all of their education in the community of Kakisa and are the first to graduate from the new school that was recently constructed there.

I would also like to congratulate Lory Fabian from the Hay River Reserve, who completed her first year at Fairview College where she took a transitional vocational program.

Mr. Speaker, all of these graduates have generated a great deal of pride in their respective communities. These graduates have demonstrated to their communities that receiving their diploma is something special and achievable. Mr. Speaker, the people of the Deh Cho are very proud of all of these graduates, and we wish them much success. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Energy Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today is on the issue of energy strategy in the Northwest Territories. Energy requirements and environmental concerns are issues which impact us daily, in ways such as the significant increase in gasoline and home heating fuel costs that we are now experiencing. We are also undergoing significantly warmer temperatures that have an impact on both the human and wildlife populations of the Northwest Territories.

It is too bad, Mr. Speaker, that generally, the population, especially in the Americas, is not interested in changing its consumptive lifestyle to any significant degree. We will suffer the negative environmental impacts of lifestyles and developments well beyond our borders. From an environmental perspective, we do not feel the negative impacts of development until many years in the future.

Our own experience is evidenced by the environmental legacy here in our own backyard, Mr. Speaker, Giant Mine and other environmental problems. Global warming is an undisputable fact, evident in the significant temperature increase and thinning of the polar ice pack.

However, we have evidence, Mr. Speaker, that we can make a difference. The Minister responsible for the Power Corporation has drawn to our attention the Corporation's improvement in its environmental record. A major achievement was the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of almost 14 percent from 1990 levels.

These reductions have been achieved through hydro development, more efficient diesel use, natural gas and wind energy use. These measures have resulted in a reduction of our diesel fuel consumption of more than 50 percent in the past five years. I applaud these efforts by the Corporation and the government.

Forecasted economic growth in the mining and oil and gas sectors presents additional opportunities to make a difference. Our efforts at energy conservation and environmental protection may be insignificant in a global context, but we should demonstrate leadership in the Northwest Territories.

In conjunction with the opportunities before us, Mr. Speaker, attention must be paid to environmental concerns and responsibilities, and we can press this point. We need a clear, integrated policy with regard to energy development and management so that our children are not paying for our economic and environmental mistakes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Funding For Teacher Training Programs

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have concerns with the money that has lapsed in the area of training for the public service. The area I have concerns with is the teachers in our communities. Many aboriginal and northern teachers have gone through the TEP program, where they have taught in our classrooms for several years and are still making a career of it.

Now, the government demands that these teachers have to go and get their bachelor's degree in education, or even their masters, for them to be able to continue their pursuit of teaching in our classrooms. Yet when it comes to allowing the teachers to take education leave and giving them the opportunity to upgrade by going to university in southern Canada to get this degree, there seems to be a lack of resources. Also, there is a lack of dollars to allow these teachers to continue their education and advance themselves so they can obtain the tools to make them more ready to deal with the changing technology and programs we have in the North.

I have had concerns raised by constituents in Aklavik and Fort McPherson where teachers have asked for education leave and been turned down on the argument that there is not enough money in the system to allow them to do it. They are getting frustrated, feeling they are challenged with teaching in the classroom without assistance for the required additional education. They will not meet the requirement of this government which is that teachers have to have either a bachelor's or master's degree in education to allow them to continue to teach in the North.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister responsible questions on this matter to see exactly why there is a lack of resources and dollars for teachers to continue their education and continue to live in our communities. To make a career of education, without worrying about the lack of money for training to better themselves to teach our students. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Transition to the New Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk today about the transition from the old Student Financial Assistance Program to the new Student Financial Assistance Program. Yesterday in committee of the whole, we made various points to the Minister to let him know we were very concerned that students who were currently in the system were not being extended the same benefits as someone just coming into the system. We see this as a major oversight.

The department has cited a simple lack of money, and said it would be too costly, too expensive, to allow these students to receive the same benefits that new students are getting. They suggested it would cost us anywhere from \$1 million to \$1.5 million this year to allow the 200 students whose benefits ran out and were in school last semester to continue.

This is only 200 students, Mr. Speaker, out of a total of 1200 who were in school last semester. I would also like to suggest that most of these students would not be able to go back to school, and are perfectly happy and employed now. I do not really think we are talking about \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

Also, given the fact that last year, the department lapsed \$900,000 in student financial assistance, I do not see this million or half million dollars as being an onerous or an exorbitant amount of money to expect the department to be able to come up with. The department explained that this \$900,000 lapse was due to 80 students, give or take, up or down, in enrolments.

Mr. Speaker, I think one of the important things to realize is that we are asking that the students in the system be extended additional semesters so that they can get their masters level, or go on to become doctors and lawyers, professions we desperately need northern people to be trained for.

It seems to me that the people who are already in the system and have proven successful in getting some level of education are our best bets for higher levels of training. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to this government that they can pay now for student financial assistance, or pay later down the road and continue to import the talent we need here in the Northwest Territories. I believe it is their choice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Measuring the Success of Youth Programs

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start today by speaking on the issue of youth. As I do that, I would like to send greetings back to my wife and children.

Mr. Speaker, youth in the Northwest Territories have proven to be very resilient in the issues that they have to deal with day to day. At this time of year, they are looking forward to the last days of school. I know in Inuvik, the schools are out on the 29th of this month, tomorrow. They are looking forward to spending time with families and friends out in the camps in the Delta, as well as some travelling south on holidays.

Mr. Speaker, we in government have spoken a great deal to youth in the Northwest Territories. I think this year, we have shown that we have done some positive things by putting more money into the budget of Education, Culture and Employment. We have heard a number of times that to have a positive impact on our youth and children of the Northwest Territories, we have to start at a young age.

I would like to raise the issue a little higher here, more than speaking of what we need to do, but to speak of what we are doing, Mr. Speaker. We can say we are putting more money towards something, but if it is not in a controlled manner with expected outcomes, are we truly doing the youth a service in the Northwest Territories?

They are the largest part of our population, and growing from 15 and under in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. We need to pay more attention to what their needs are and hear from them. We have heard a number of times in this House the Minister responsible for Youth speak to the issue and travelling to many of the communities to hear their concerns. Hopefully, from all of this, we will hear at some point some recommendations going to other Ministers in this government as to what they can do within their budgets and controls to try to bring more success and results to the youth of the Northwest Territories.

With that, I will be following up with questions to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment later on. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement on Recognition of Girl Guide Volunteers

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to follow up to my colleague for Inuvik Boot Lake. I wish to extend my appreciation and formally recognize a number of women volunteers across the Northwest Territories who have spent countless volunteer hours every week serving as Girl Guide Leaders. These individuals serve as guide leaders for Sparks, Brownies, Guides and Pathfinders.

Throughout the North, young girls and women are once again preparing for summer camp experiences, which marks the end of the guiding year for members of the NWT Girl Guide movement. Membership across the Northwest Territories includes almost 1,000 girls and women ranging from the age of 5 years old to adults. There are active guiding units in 14 communities throughout the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the Girl Guides in the NWT are fortunate to have a corps of dedicated volunteers who ensure that all girls take part in healthy, educational and fun activities. I am honoured to recognize a number of women volunteers from the town of Inuvik: Juanita Bourque, who is the district commissioner; Mary Beckett, who is treasurer; Lillian Hvatum, a Brownies leader; Val Robertson, a Brownies Leader; Greta Sittichinli, a Brownies leader; and Sandy Nikiforuk, a Sparks leader. I wish to thank each of them for all the time and effort they personally committed to make Girl Guides a success in the town of Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Congratulations to all who were named. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement on Appreciation for Support of Family, Staff and Hay River Teachers

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to say a special thank you to some very important people back home in my constituency. Today is the last day of school. When we, as MLAs, take up work in this Legislature, we leave family and friends behind. I would like to thank the principal, teachers and staff at the Harry Camsell School where my daughter attends for the wonderful work they do.

Especially Mr. Bob White, my daughter's teacher, for making her school experience happy and rewarding. I would also like to thank my constituency assistant, Wendy Morgan, who has gone through some very trying personal experiences lately, but continues to represent me in my riding very well, keeping me well-informed everyday of my constituents' issues and what is happening in town. Today, she is getting a float ready for the Canada Day Parade on Saturday.

All of us know that we could not do this job without the support of our families and partners. It is not Valentine's Day or my wedding anniversary, or any other special day, Mr. Speaker, but I would also like to thank my husband for holding everything together at home, really doing double duty with holding a full-time job, being a super Dad, working with youth in the community and just being there to cover off all of those areas when I am not there. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 50-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Payment Options

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Michael Miltenberger on June 26, 2000, regarding student financial assistance payment options.

The department deposits funds in the bank accounts that students specify they are using for the school year. We electronically deposit the funds into student bank accounts using the major banking institutions located in the Northwest Territories, including the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the Royal Bank, the Bank of Montreal, the Toronto-Dominion Bank and the Bank of Nova Scotia. The capacity to link with smaller financial institutions such as trust companies is not yet available.

Students who do not have accounts with the five major institutions which I have named are advised to open an account with one of those institutions to facilitate the ease of electronic transfer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two returns.

Return to Question 32-14(3): Increasing the Number of Aboriginal Managers

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Nitah, MLA for Tu Nedhe, on June 22, 2000, regarding whether public service career training dollars that lapsed in the past fiscal year would be used to develop aboriginal people in management.

Funding from the previous fiscal year is no longer available. However, the government is committed to increasing the representation of Northerners, including aboriginal people, in the public service including management positions. As part of that commitment, departments will ensure that funds available for training and support of affirmative action initiatives are used for that purpose.

Return to Question 35-14(3): GNWT Staffing Appeals

Mr. Speaker, my second return is to an oral question asked by Mr. Roland, MLA for Boot Lake, on June 22, 2000, regarding information on the staffing appeals process.

An unsuccessful job candidate who is:

- (a) eligible for priority consideration under the Affirmative Action Policy; or
- (b) an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories;

and has applied on a position included in the Union of Northern Workers bargaining unit, is able to appeal the results of the competition.

Appeals are heard by a joint committee consisting of a government representative, a Union of Northern Workers representative and an independent chairperson. The decision of the appeals committee is final. There is no further step in the appeals process.

When the appeal is completed, a copy of the Staffing Appeal Committee Report is sent to labour relations and compensation in the Financial Management Board Secretariat. In reviewing the appeal package, if labour relations and compensation identifies issues that need to be addressed to improve the staffing or the appeals process, this will be identified in writing to the executive director, corporate human resources.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize someone I had the opportunity of working with back in the early 1980s, when I first became involved in aboriginal politics, Mrs. Cece McCauley, who was the chief at the time in Inuvik, who is now an honorary chief for the band in Inuvik. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Cece McCauley. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too, on behalf of the MLA for Sahtu, and being a former resident of Inuvik, would like to recognize a privileged guest here this afternoon, Cece McCauley. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent, Mr. Bill Burles. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a very special guest in the gallery, Mrs. Speaker, my wife, Elaine.

-- Applause

Everyone else who has taken the time to visit us, I thank you and bienvenue to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 77-14(3): Enforcement of the Business Incentive Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Last Friday during committee of the whole, Mr. Krutko questioned the Minister about the BIP and the Northern Manufacturer's directive. The Minister confirmed the Business Incentive Policy remains in force, complete with the directive, and the departments and agencies must follow the policy. The Minister noted at the time that it was sometimes difficult to police the policy, since his department did not find out about infractions until after the fact sometimes.

My question for the Minister is will he undertake to remind all departments and agencies that they must adhere to this policy?

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

Return to Question 77-14(3): Enforcement of the Business Incentive Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes I will. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 77-14(3): Enforcement of the Business Incentive Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer. Will the Minister continue with that proactive approach? Will he get his department to embark on a process to let all departments and agencies know how to interpret the policy and the directive?

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 77-14(3): Enforcement of the Business Incentive Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, there is a committee of deputy ministers that is responsible for providing direction to the policy and the implementation of it, reviewing any issues where there is conflict. Through that committee, every department continues to get advice on how to interpret it. If there are problems, then we want to deal with them. I will ensure that the chair of that committee is notified. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 77-14(3): Enforcement of the Business Incentive Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for that positive response. Mr. Speaker, during the review of the Business Incentive Policy scheduled for later this year, will the Minister commit to involve

stakeholders like the Northern Manufacturers' Association in a meaningful way during the review process?

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 77-14(3): Enforcement of the Business Incentive Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I have had a number of inquiries from interested stakeholders. We intend to make this a very collaborative approach with all of the stakeholders. We will certainly involve them in the steering committee, or if we cannot do that, at least ensure we have thorough consultation with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 78-14(3): Teacher's Education Leave Funding

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question relates to my statement regarding what a teacher who wants to improve their skills has to do to further their education.

I have had complaints from teachers in my riding who have applied several times to get leave so they can go back to school and get their bachelor's degrees.

Can the Minister tell me what funding is available for teachers who want to improve themselves by going back to school to get their degrees in education?

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

Return to Question 78-14(3): Teacher's Education Leave Funding

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I may have to take this question as notice. I am not familiar with the process or with the particular case the Member has raised. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: May I just seek clarification, Mr. Ootes? Are you taking it as notice? You said you may have to, but are you?

HON. JAKE OOTES: I take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Minister has taken that question as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 79-14(3): Budgeting for Regional Commitments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Joe Handley. Within the government departments, there is a lack of coordination of dealing with land claim issues, as each department has different areas of responsibility.

During question period in March, the Minister committed to working with the aboriginal governments and the Members of

the House to realign budgets to reflect settled land claims as soon as approval is given to do so.

I appreciate his commitment, and I wonder, what specific direction has this government given to the various departments to prepare for land claim settlements and the changes to regional budgets? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 79-14(3): Budgeting for Regional Commitments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the departments are very aware of the commitment that we have made and continue to make. At this time, I am waiting for an opportunity to meet with the Ordinary Members to discuss the whole issue of regional reorganization, regional capacity building. Following that direction and advice from the Members, we will undertake the exercise.

Up to this point, nothing formal has been done. Departments are very aware of it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 79-14(3): Budgeting for Regional Commitments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I look at the main estimates now, I still get confused when a project says North Slave, various, I wonder if some of these funds are for the North Slave riding or the Yellowknife area, since we are in the same region.

I would like to ask the Minister if the department can separate the projects by using community names in the future, until they change my riding name to an aboriginal name. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 79-14(3): Budgeting for Regional Commitments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point, when the budget documents refer to North Slave, it is talking about the whole of the government's North Slave area, which includes the Dogrib area as well as Yellowknife and so on. Generally, that is the way the departments are operating. There is some variance between departments.

The suggestion the Member is making is a good one, and one I think we could look at as we do the review of regions and organizations, capacity building and so on. Thank you.

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

Question 80-14(3): Funding for Nurses' Training

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department

of Health and Social Services. Yesterday in this House, as we talked about trying to get funding for an aboriginal nurse to get her bachelor of education, she indicated she is not certain about what kind of latitude a Minister has to reprofile and reallocate funds.

Having had quite a few hours to research this issue, and using the free-wheeling style of the Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, in his budget, he presented Ministers with the ability to move and mix and match funding. Could the Minister indicate whether she now is clear on the authority she has? Would she have the authority to reallocate the paltry thousands of dollars that are required to send this nurse to school? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I sensed two questions there. The Minister may answer whichever one she chooses. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has budgeted \$80,000 per year for education leave for health care professionals. During this fiscal year, the department actually overspent this by \$25,000. This happened because there was a total of five employees who obtained education leave, all of whom are returning students. It is difficult when we provide funding and students start back to school, not to be able to continue once they get there. There was a need for additional resources.

Employees within the department and the boards who are unsuccessful in obtaining education leave are granted preference on the next round of consideration for education leave. Funding for this program during the fiscal year has been committed. We cannot go back on the commitment we have already made to students.

Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I agree in principle with the Member's concern that we could not accommodate his constituent. However, Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that Ministers proceed with caution and we do not make hasty, ad-hoc decisions without all of the relevant and pertinent information we need to do that. We have to consider fairness. We have to consider how many other people have applied for this.

When applications are assessed, there are many different criteria which are taken into consideration. That is why I told Mr. Miltenberger I would look into the prospects of additional funding. I did take the initiative, as he mentioned, to contact his constituent directly, who had previously written to me, and encouraged her to be patient and thank her for her interest in pursuing her education and reinvesting that in the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that response. Unfortunately, it had nothing to do with the question. The question was is the

Minister now clear on what kind of authority she has to reallocate and reprofile funds as a Minister within her department with a \$175 million budget? 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 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Miltenberger keeps referring to the Minister's ability to reallocate funds. He also keeps referring to this funding that was lapsed. He may also know, having been a Minister once, that it is the Minister's responsibility to ensure the overall parameters of the budget are not overspent. Although it is possible to transfer and reallocate money from one activity to another, although it may appear at times there are funds lapsed in one activity, the responsible thing is to look at the overall spending in the entire budget of the department to make sure we are within the confines of that.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate Mr. Miltenberger's encouragement and permission as the chairman on the Standing Committee on Social Programs, to grant me the latitude to make these kinds of decisions for a \$250,000 transfer in my department without any consultation. I thank him for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I would just caution Ministers about referencing previous positions of Members. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister considers that permission, it would probably be the first time Cabinet has ever considered the need to get permission to move bags of money as they look after their various ministries.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the Minister is how does the retention program to keep northern nurses tie into sending nurses out to get upgraded? Are you telling me they are mutually exclusive and never the twain shall meet?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I think the question was how does this tie in with your program. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did have difficulty understanding Mr. Miltenberger's question. I think he is talking about our department's commitment to sending nurses out to extend and expand on the skills they already have, and coming back and working for us again.

Mr. Speaker, the education leave is not the only resource available to employees who wish to upgrade their training. There are many other programs and sources of funding as well. When I spoke to Mr. Miltenberger's constituent today, I did

commit to send out information and application forms for other types of funding. I am happy to announce today, Mr. Speaker, that we also have a new program within the department, which has an allocation of \$70,000 for employees who wish to receive financial support to increase their training. It is called the Northwest Territories Professional Upgrading Assistance for Health and Social Services Workers. It is somewhat different than education leave, but I do have application forms here. This is one more initiative our department has taken to assist our employees in increasing their education. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a demonstration of government at its best. You have an oversubscribed program with no money, and you create a new one instead of adequately funding the one you have. What is the relationship, once again, of the Retention and Recruitment Program to the Education Leave Program? Both have the same focus, to retain northern staff and northern nurses. What is the relationship?

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

Further Return to Question 80-14(3):Funding for Nurses' Training

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, education leave is something that has been available prior to us getting into our difficulties with our shortages here in the Northwest Territories. As the Member can appreciate, there are only certain fundings available under different programs.

I have committed to him, and I will commit again today, I will evaluate the necessity and the subscription and the uptake on the education leave program to determine if we need to add additional dollars. Thank you.

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

Question 81-14(3): Aboriginal Self-Government Negotiations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine. It is in relation to the statement that was made on Monday regarding Treaty 11 Council advertising.

For three decades, Mr. Speaker, the issue of land claims has been pursued vigorously. This government will soon have seven different negotiating tables. We are dedicating significant resources for it, but yet it remains elusive.

The Minister, in his statement, indicated the goal of the GNWT and Cabinet, and I quote: "The GNWT and Cabinet are committed to negotiating self-government agreements that can be successfully implemented." My question, Mr. Speaker, is what are the criteria the GNWT and Cabinet would consider be

required for a successfully implemented land claim? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 81-14(3): Aboriginal Self-Government Negotiations

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you all know, the negotiations have been going on for some years now. We have some on the verge of starting, in the case of the Akaitcho in the Deh Cho. We, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, are involved at these different tables.

Once everything has been negotiated by all sides, we would like to have these different agreements implemented successfully. Saying that, for an agreement to be implemented successfully, it should clearly spell out the jurisdictions of the First Nation governments. There should be enough information or detail on the extent of powers and jurisdiction, so it will be very clear what powers the First Nations governments have, through the creation of the agreement.

The agreement should also spell out what kind of working relationship should exist between the First Nation government and other governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories. It should spell out this relationship. We are talking about harmonization of the different laws that are there. The delivery of programs and services which we currently provide has to be spelled out as well. We should know how much the new government will cost in order to operate effectively, which is key. In order to run governments, you need the money to do it. This is a very important point, what the cost factor would be to operate effectively. We should also know where this money is going to come from. That is very important as well. We want to ensure there are practical details on how the new government will be established. That has to be very clear.

The practical details on how these governments will be established must be very clear. The changeover, once the implementation begins, the transition to this new government is structured to be as smooth as possible.

In the meantime, we want to keep our level of programs and services we currently have, so there is no disruption to these programs and services during the implementation phases. These are some of the criteria. These are common-sense criteria we use to determine whether a self-government agreement can be implemented successfully. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary to Question 81-14(3): Aboriginal Self-Government Negotiations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a very extensive list. In trying to achieve all of these, is it the objective of the government to indeed have an extreme level of detail in these plans, or is it more to look at the structure and the framework for how each of these areas would be tackled in later negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 81-14(3): Aboriginal Self-Government Negotiations

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has to be some level of detail when you start talking about programs and services. Generally, the structure and the intent is there. It is a long, very complicated process that takes a number of years to complete. During the negotiation process, there are three parties to the process.

There are positions tabled by the different parties on each issue. That is discussed at length. Once the negotiation is on for 45 days or ten days, a number of different issues are dealt with. They take it as far as they can at the table, and they try to come to an agreement as they go along. There is a fair level of detail that is worked out at this level. We want to make sure that, at the end of the day, things work and there is money for it and so on.

Most of these negotiations in self-government, we have not concluded any of them yet, most of those that are in force are dealt with. The general structure is dealt with, but there are a lot of details that are worked out as we go from negotiation to negotiation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 81-14(3): Aboriginal Self-Government Negotiations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, detail, as we find in our work in this Assembly, is a critical factor, in the realm of land claim negotiations. If the Minister could give us a sense, are we delving into too much detail at these tables? Is the detail factor a potential cause of the most recent frustration at the Dogrib table? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 81-14(3): Aboriginal Self-Government Negotiations

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier in the Session, regarding trying to clarify positions in the government with respect to the Dogrib negotiations, in this case, all of the tougher issues are left to the last. This is what we are encountering right now.

The negotiations are on track. According to the agreements we had, there are years of negotiation sessions. I think we are on track here. There are different positions tabled on different issues to be discussed. There are opposing views in most cases. The intention at the negotiating table is to try to come together, a meeting of minds. There is a waiting aspect.

The federal government is involved. In this case, we are waiting for them to table some of their key positions. We, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, are also working very hard at some of the key issues. I think we are making some progress. Thank you.

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

Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment launched a document called Towards 2010, A Strategic Plan for Education, Culture and Employment. They then followed up with a strategic plan update.

Mr. Speaker, in the Finance Minister's budget speech, he talks about investing in our youngest residents, so we can ensure that our children begin the school year ready to learn. There are a number of other areas discussed about a well-educated population.

What I would like to know from the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, is how does the strategic plan update fit into the plans of the 14th Assembly and the document Towards a Better Tomorrow? Or are we going to see another update to the update? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has a number of programs that it is responsible for. As well, it has a number of areas it is working on. The Working Together Program is a \$1 million program to employ youth in the Territories and provide subsidies for employers. There are other programs that are available, like the Schools North Apprenticeship Program, Certified Occupational Training, and post-secondary support through the Student Financial Assistance Program.

Ongoing development is there for career and labour market information. There are handbooks such as Youth First and Give Youth a Chance and Career Scapes, which is an annual youth publication.

On the national scale, Mr. Speaker, there is also an effort to try and coordinate with the federal Ministers. There is a forum of labour market Ministers and western Premiers where there are ongoing efforts to enhance the employment situation for youth. There is a best practices document on youth being produced.

Those are all particular thrusts that the department is involved in. To address another area, and that is the coordination between departments and the interest, there is a thrust by the department to ensure that there is collaboration with other departments, specifically in the social envelope, Mr. Speaker. The social envelope departments are working towards the development of a youth planning document, which will set the direction and determine priorities for youth. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us if, in fact, this new planning document that he just spoke of will have some measurable results and goals in there? Will we actually see something accomplished? A percentage of higher graduates by 2003, something of that nature, rather than just putting out another document that says "yes, we need to do more with our youth." Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the messages that the Members are speaking of on an ongoing basis is achievement levels and measurable accomplishments. I take the Member's comments very seriously, as that too is our area of concern, to ensure that we have improvements in our graduation rates for students, that we improve the programs available within the limitations, of course, that we have with our resources.

It is important for us to continually address this whole area. I hope to be able to refine this whole area over the next short while. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has not informed me if there are some results we are going to hold that he wants to improve on. I have seen a lot of that in my time so far as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

At least with this new area in which they are doing work, are there going to be some solid results that we can look to and say that we have achieved? That the Minister can stand up and say he has achieved as the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment during his tenure? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. As I said, we are working towards the development of a youth planning document, and I think in that we can identify the programs that are in existence, and start to put figures as to what our goals and objectives are on that. Also, what our accomplishments are expected to be in that area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Minister can clarify for me. He is speaking of this planning that is being done, but we have heard earlier from the Minister himself and the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services that the agenda for children and youth is done. Is that the case? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 82-14(3): Departmental Strategic Planning

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is working in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services on an early childhood development program. That is a strategy that we are working on. We hope to have that together in the next several months. I believe that is the one that the Member may be referring to. Thank you.

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

Question 83-14(3): GNWT Swimming Programs

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Speaker, the statistics for the Northwest Territories tell us there are a high number of drownings in the North every year. Most of our communities are situated by bodies of water, and there is a great percentage of people in our communities who do not know how to swim.

I am also aware that historically, this government has had a swimming program that provided funds, an above ground swimming pool program and assistance for operations and maintenance and swimming instructors.

Can the Minister tell me if this program is still available, and if there are other programs geared towards swimming pools in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 83-14(3): GNWT Swimming Programs

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a program in a number of communities in the North that provide swimming programs. If that is what the honourable Member is referring to, yes, we do still have these programs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 83-14(3): GNWT Swimming Programs

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if that program includes construction of above ground

swimming pools or the replacement of above ground swimming pools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 83-14(3): GNWT Swimming Programs

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past years, this government did provide funding to build facilities in certain communities. In the most recent years, because of the budget restraint that we had, I think there are no facilities planned at this time. The program is still there. If there are requests for it, we will certainly take a good look at it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 83-14(3): GNWT Swimming Programs

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the communities that I represent, I think there is only one program that is still running, and it is in dire need of replacement. My question to the Minister is, if there is no replacement program to construct facilities for swimming pools, what is his plan to reduce the number of drownings in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 83-14(3): GNWT Swimming Programs

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have to check with my department to see what is on the drawing board with respect to what the honourable Member is requesting here. I think it is a good program to have in all of the communities. It is certainly worth looking at, what we can do as a department to try and alleviate the problem that exists in terms of drownings that are occurring in the communities because people do not know how to swim.

Right now, because of the restraint, there are no plans to build any new facilities at this point in time. I certainly will look at that. Thank you.

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

Question 84-14(3): GNWT Addictions Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, and it is in the area of addictions. Mr. Speaker, when our Social Programs Committee was in Hay River a couple of weeks ago for the Northwest Territories Health Care Annual General Meeting, we listened with interest as the departmental representative told us that the department had an addictions strategy and have used that addictions strategy document in developing their business plans this year.

I am wondering if the Minister can tell us if indeed they do have an addictions strategy document? Thank you.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen, the time is going. The clock is ticking.

Return to Question 84-14(3): GNWT Addictions Strategy

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

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been taken as notice, Mr. Bell. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 85-14(3): Hay River Airport Fuel Tanks

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen. It is in regard to a matter in my constituency which is affecting all of Hay River. It has to do with the location of the fuel tanks at the airport.

In view of the fact that there have been concerns raised from the town and the airlines, are there any plans within the department to do anything with the fuel tanks at the airport? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 85-14(3): Hay River Airport Fuel Tanks

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the issue. I will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 86-14(3): Funding Assistance for Diabetic Medication

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. It is in regard to some of the concerns that my constituents have brought to my attention.

Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who is suffering from diabetes. He has to spend quite a bit of money every month on his prescription drugs. He was hoping that the government would make a direct payment available between the pharmacy and the government, so he does not have to put out the money up front. This is causing hardship on him.

I wonder if the Minister can tell us whether this is at all possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 86-14(3): Funding Assistance for Diabetic Medication

HON. JANE GRONEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, chronic conditions such as diabetes are covered

under extended health benefits. The process which is in place now is that the patient pays for the prescription, and is then reimbursed for the prescription under the program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 86-14(3): Funding Assistance for Diabetic Medication

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that. I think the Minister just stated what the problem is. These people, who have a life-long condition, have to put up \$300 a month or more, and it is causing some hardships.

My question is not if that is the case, because I know that is the case. I want to know if she is willing to change that to make it easier for people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 86-14(3): Funding Assistance for Diabetic Medication

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue was raised in a previous Session by another Member. We looked at it and we considered how this might be done. Unfortunately, it would require considerable change in the computer services and the processes by which this was done. It was quite cost-prohibitive. I could get the details of that research for the Member and provide that to her. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take it the Minister is taking that as notice. I look forward to her reply. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister did not take it as notice. She said she would get back to you, but that is not notice. I did not hear a question. I will allow you a supplementary, Ms. Lee. You have one more left.

Supplementary to Question 86-14(3): Funding Assistance for Diabetic Medication

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if she did not take the question as notice, please give due consideration to the people in my constituent's predicament. In her cost-benefit analysis, will she put more weight on the people who have to suffer hardship, rather than administrative convenience? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 86-14(3): Funding Assistance for Diabetic Medication

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it actually was not administrative convenience. It was administrative costs. We found the cost of changing the system was cost-prohibitive.

On the extended health care benefits program, I think we have a very comprehensive program for persons with chronic illnesses, such as Ms. Lee has identified. The coverage is very significant. I believe it is above and beyond what other jurisdictions provide. We try to make the reimbursement process as timely and expeditious as possible, so the cost of these medications do not become a monetary burden for the patients. Thank you.

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

Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. It is regarding the whole concept of assisting the business community, especially our manufacturers. We had an opportunity to meet with them a week and a half ago. Many of them were concerned they were not being fairly treated by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation when it comes to them having an opportunity to bid or having products they have produced in the North and are able to market them. Several projects did not have the opportunity to even apply on some of these initiatives, yet the specs for those items were purchased from southern Canada.

Does the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation support the Business Incentive Policy or the Manufacturer's Directive that this government has in place? Why are you not following it?

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

Return to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do believe the question is misleading. We have given every consideration to the northern manufacturers under the AMD. It is a requirement of this government and this department to adhere to those policies. We have followed those guidelines very closely. I would like to inform the Member that there is nothing that was done to contravene those policies. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, the project this government is involved with, regardless of whether it is in the Northwest Territories or Alaska, this government has invested in these projects. We have an investment in those projects. I would like to ask the Minister again. What is meant by:

"...this is an export project with no government funding attached. BIP does not apply. We will use northern manufactured products, providing they meet the contractor's specific subject to the interim manufacturer's directive."

If the BIP does not apply, what is meant by your department that you are following BIP? You are saying on one hand you are involved with this project, but you are not following BIP. That is my understanding of what this is.

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

Further Return to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I can respond to the Member's question from two points. One is regarding the Alaska project. Our legal analysis indicates...the question was raised in regard to whether products would be applicable under the agreement. Somehow, there is some uncertainty as to what the final outcome was.

In accordance to the policy as it applies to the Northwest Territories, we are obligated under the directive and the policy to adhere to those principles. We have worked within our organization to determine that. We found we have been following those guidelines very closely. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the issue the Minister made a statement about in this House about the Alaska project, he mentioned that project has developed opportunities for northern businesses and northern manufacturers. He stated that in his statement.

From the response he gave me, it does not apply because the BIP is not associated with it. On one hand, you have said the manufacturers are involved in this project, and now you are telling me they are not?

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

Further Return to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not infer that. I will restate my position, we are marketing all the northern manufacturers' products in all of our projects, whether they are in the Northwest Territories or the Alaska projects. All those things we did not see where the northern manufactured products would be a requirement under Alaska projects because we treat it in terms of international trade. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister file whatever information he has showing we are in

infringement of the international trade agreement, NAFTA or whatever. He is saying we cannot use BIP.

I understand central policies in jurisdictions that are in place before the NAFTA agreement was signed are grandfathered. My understanding is they still have a place to play in North America. I would like to ask the Minister if he could file that information with this House so we can see why our incentive policies are not relevant in Alaska.

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

Further Return to Question 87-14(2):Housing Corporation Adherence to the Business Incentive Policy

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am just trying to relate to the Member that we are trying to work with the Government of Alaska to develop greater economic ties and relations.

I believe we are still fairly new at this. I want to assure the Member we will promote northern manufactured products wherever we can in our projects that are being built up in Alaska through the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you.

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

Question 88-14(3): New Employee Training Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the request from my constituent, an aboriginal nurse, for support for upgrading to be retrained and retained was denied. Basically, in this instance, the departments reneged on their commitment to train aboriginal nurses. In the same breath, like Alice in Wonderland pulling a rabbit out of the hat, the Minister stands up and says she has created a new program. On the other hand, the original program does not have enough money. Could the Minister indicate if she would be prepared to table in this House the criteria for this program, to see if my constituent would be eligible? 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 88-14(3): New Employee Training Program

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course I would be prepared to table it in the House. Mr. Speaker, the new program for the Northwest Territories Professional Upgrading Assistance for Health and Social Services employees was a program developed to offer one-time financial assistance to some of the 13 potential applicants who applied under the education leave who were unable to obtain the education leave. There is a relationship between this funding and the other. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 88-14(3): New Employee Training Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to confirm then, will the Minister table that in this House today? 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 88-14(3): New Employee Training Program

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will table the outline of the program and the application form. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 89-14(3): Smart Communities Project

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I heard on the news this morning that the process of setting up the board for the Yellowknife Smart Communities demonstration project was started last night.

Mr. Speaker, this government has an important role to play in the success of this project, and could help maximize the number of federal dollars that come North, perhaps as much as \$5 million, Mr. Speaker, in matching federal funds. We need to commit our involvement. Mr. Speaker, Municipal and Community Affairs has been a supportive partner to date.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask if Municipal and Community Affairs will commit to becoming the lead department and becoming an active partner in the Smart Communities Project as it proceeds?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 89-14(3): Smart Communities Project

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has been involved in the way of being very supportive of this whole process since this federal department, Industry Canada, had initiated this demonstration project in February, 1999. Municipal and Community Affairs has contributed, I think \$25,000 apiece to Hay River and Yellowknife to put a bid in for it.

We are going to continue to support the City of Yellowknife, who were the successful candidates, to the tune of \$30,000 to help them get their initial start. The program calls for each of the successful communities who are eligible to receive up to \$5 million on a 50-50 cost share basis over three years. We certainly would like to be supportive of Yellowknife. I have not gone to that stage in this department to see what the honourable Member means of being an active partner in this initiative. As a department, we are not there yet. We would certainly investigate to see what it means. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 89-14(3): Smart Communities Project

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the department has shown a good amount of support and I appreciate the welcome news that they have now committed \$30,000 to the society to help them undertake the next phase. Mr. Speaker, part of being an active participant would be to ensure that they take every opportunity to coordinate the other departments of government to get involved in this project. Will the department take the lead to encourage other departments in this government to be active partners in this project?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 89-14(3): Smart Communities Project

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will coordinate the Government of the Northwest Territories' participation in this Yellowknife Smart Communities project. If that means taking the lead, then yes, we will be taking the lead in that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in the House knows, certainly everyone in the community knows, that we have a real problem with a physician shortage. The situation is almost desperate. We are at the point now where we need emergent measures.

I know the question has been asked before. I almost hesitate to ask the Minister what is being done, because I know she will decline to answer and discuss the fact that it is with the health board now and they are in negotiations. I respect that maybe she cannot answer that question. I am wondering if she has looked a little further down the road at the possibility of training Northerners to become doctors and looking at people who already have degrees and figuring out a way to get them into medical school, so four or five years down the road we are not faced with the same problem. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are trying to think of any way we can to attract doctors here. We are not unique in our shortage of physicians. I think I mentioned before that the province of Alberta is looking for about 330 positions right now. We think that about 15 to 16 would probably solve all of our problems here in the North.

We feel that the switch from fee for service to salary, where we can go out with the comprehensive package, which includes

benefits and time off and predetermined salary, are all things that will be helpful in recruitment to us.

As far as other measures our department is taking, we are looking at a bursary program to encourage either southerners or northerners who would commit to return to work here, assistance while they are receiving their training and university. On that, there is just one more incentive that we are looking at to try and attract physicians to the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. She did mention that we are trying to do whatever we can to attract doctors here, and, Mr. Speaker, I would say that that is certainly a band-aid solution to the problem. I appreciate that in this emergency, the Minister has to do whatever she can and obviously we are not going to be able to graduate northerners tomorrow.

I am curious about this bursary. Can the Minister tell me exactly what type of bursary they are looking at and outline the criteria that somebody would have to meet in order to qualify for this?

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

Further Return to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot give exact details on this because this is not something that I have at my fingertips here. I think the general intent of it is to, in a manner of speaking, sponsor students that are in their postgraduate work in medical school, provide them with financial assistance in exchange for them returning to provide those services in the Northwest Territories for a certain period of time. We hope that a certain number of people in that situation would put down roots and end up being long term residents and long term resident physicians in the North. I hope that that helps. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly think that we have to look at people who are willing to establish residency here and set up roots and I think that is the approach to take.

Is the Minister aware, though, that under Student Financial Assistance, even under the new program, which I admit is very good by Canadian standards, 12 semesters is what a northern student is eligible for. That does not get anybody into med school.

Has she taken this into consideration? Would this be over and above those 12 semesters?

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

Further Return to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, yes, I believe it would be and it would be in specific relation to medical school training as opposed to more general degrees in university. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to provide this House with an update on the bursary that she is looking at and table the bursary when it is developed? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 90-14(3): Training Northern Physicians

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The time for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions, The Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 3-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax and Payroll Information

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question to address to Mr. Handley, Minister of Finance. Please provide the following information:

1. The total amount of potential revenue projected annually by the proposed hotel tax;
2. The total number of bed spaces used in calculating the projected hotel tax revenue along with the number of operators who would be required to submit the taxes to the government as well as the community breakdown of the location of the operators and the bed spaces;
3. The average or/and range of the price of the room at retail, used in calculating the projected hotel tax revenue;
4. The total amount of the cost that will be involved in administering the hotel tax, including, but not limited to, the salary and benefits for any PY used, the cost of instituting and administering any information collection and computer systems, cost of office space and other incidental expenses, and cost of enforcement;
5. The total amount of revenue raised by the Government of the NWT by way of payroll tax, not hotel tax, for the last three fiscal years;

6. The total amount of the cost involved in administrating the payroll tax, including, but not limited to, the salary and benefits for any PY used, cost of instituting and administrating any information collection and computer systems, cost of office space and other incidental expenses and cost of enforcement;
7. The total number of employees from whom the payroll tax was collected in the last three fiscal years; and
8. The total number of employers through whom the payroll tax was collected in the last three fiscal years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. The Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS

Reply to Budget Address 1-14(3)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I noted the Minister presented the budget speech with a fair degree of optimism. I would agree with that optimism and I welcome that approach.

Mr. Speaker, in the North, we have tremendous potential. We have tremendous potential in our people, in our land and resources. With proper and careful development of all of those, we have a really bright future.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we face significant challenges, but we must strive to beat those challenges. I would like to say that I welcome the progress of the Premier and the Minister of Finance, who have appeared to have made, in building the partnerships necessary, to find the revenues we need to balance our budget and to make the important strategic investments that are needed to get our economy going.

As the Minister of Finance has admitted, there was not a lot of room for flexibility. This was pretty much a stand-pat budget, without much in the way of new initiatives. However, Mr. Speaker, while we have a tight fiscal situation, we should not let money become our only focus, or even our major focus. After all, without a strong government-wide commitment to a literate, healthy population, new money still only provides a band-aid solution. Even small investments can make a big difference in this area.

We need to see a strong government commitment. A real commitment to social well-being.

In the budget speech, the Minister spoke of four key areas identified for investment, and our territorial agenda for children and youth and to support for parents and families. Programs for expectant new mothers, early childhood care, and Mr. Speaker, literacy programs.

Mr. Speaker, the commitment to social well-being cannot just be a wish list, for it is not really a commitment.

In his speech, the Minister talked about, and I quote: "An early childhood development action plan." Then, Mr. Speaker, he

went on to say, " I hope that this government will be in a position to implement new initiatives in next year's budget."

Mr. Speaker, in all four of those key areas, we need more than just hope. If it is important enough to talk about in the budget speech, if it is important enough to develop an action plan, then there needs to be a commitment by the government to take action. That may mean that there needs to be a process to reexamine and reset priorities if necessary and that process should be set up, Mr. Speaker, so that the public understands how it will be done and how they will be involved.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister spoke about our fiscal situation still being tight. I am concerned that we still have the debt wall looming. I am concerned that revenues have grown from \$716 million last year, to \$751 million this year. Thirty five million dollars in growth and we are getting a onetime \$35 million payment from Nunavut, yet we are showing a cash deficit in this year's budget of \$28.5 million the same as we had in last year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, while we have every reason to be optimistic about reaching a deal to see more revenues, who knows how much we are going to be looking at and when those monies will start to flow.

I guess my question has to be, have we put all of our eggs in one basket?

The Minister told the House that we could hit the debt wall in 18 to 24 months. Knowing that, Mr. Speaker, we need to be sure that our spending is well targeted and that efforts are being made to bring spending growth in line.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was disappointed to hear the hotel tax initiative being floated in this budget speech. The Minister noted that he had outlined this initiative to committee. When it was first brought up in committee, I explained why I thought it was a bad idea.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is a high cost travel area. We need to look for ways to bring down the cost of travel, not for ways that are going to drag the cost up. The five percent will bring in only \$1 million net. It is hardly worth the aggravation. What about the drop in business? What about the potential impact on Northern employment?

We can pay lip service to regional capacity building, but what about the significant impact such a tax will have on travel for training? This tax will likely take more out of Northern pockets than it will out of the pockets of tourists, further driving up the cost of living in the North and, Mr. Speaker, the cost of doing business in the North.

I would be surprised if more than half of all hotel nights were not, in some way, paid for by the Government of the Northwest Territories, its boards, and its agencies. Mr. Speaker, that means that departments, boards and agencies might be paying more than half of the gross amount collected in this tax.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this is a hidden reallocation of funds from different departments to tourism.

I believe we do need to invest in tourism. We need to make a significant investment in marketing tourism. We need to do a better job, but the government could more efficiently reallocate funds by just setting new targets for departments.

Let us take the same amount from the departments that they will be spending on this new tax, and transfer it directly to the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development so that they can use it for new marketing programs.

The net amount will likely be very close to the net amount that will be received from the tax right now, and it would avoid the cost of setting up the bureaucracy and to administer the new tax, and it will not scare tourists away with the new higher costs for accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, I heard some rumblings that there might be consideration for a change to the payroll tax, and I have to say that I do think that this is one area where the Minister had some opportunity. I think he should have brought forward some ideas here.

I think that if government wants to look at a tax, it will have some important effect. Increasing the payroll tax is an option that needs further exploration. I think, Mr. Speaker, that we should look at, rather than a one percent tax, at increasing it.

With all of the economic activity that is talked about as just on the horizon, this has the potential to raise significant new revenues.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I say we use this new money. Let us use it to reduce the cost of living for Northerners. Our cost of living is notoriously high. Let us use these new revenues to bring down our cost of living by dramatically increasing the northern residents deduction on our income taxes. This in effect lowers our taxes, something that governments across Canada want to do for their residents. This will encourage more people to move to the Northwest Territories, rather than flying in and flying out for work, which would mean that this government not only collects increased tax revenues from people who live here, but a bigger grant from Canada, since we get so much of it based on the size of our population. Mr. Speaker, put together, these two initiatives would likely receive more support than the ill-conceived hotel tax, and have a much bigger fiscal impact in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, in his budget speech, the Minister highlighted the achievement of maintaining service levels, yet as we are all aware, funding cuts to municipalities took place. These will likely mean service reductions. It is hardly right to pat yourself on the back for maintaining service levels when cuts to funded agencies have meant that they will have to reduce service levels.

In his budget speech, the Minister complains also unilaterally about the \$55 million cut to our Formula Financing Grant imposed a few years ago by the federal government. Now, he and his Cabinet colleagues have done exactly the same to tax-based municipalities, unilaterally imposing cuts. Mr. Speaker, these cuts were imposed several months after these municipalities have set and approved their budgets.

Mr. Speaker, this is the wrong way to do things. We want to see responsible decisions made, and that requires long-term funding stability. Other jurisdictions have been able to guarantee municipalities from one to three years notice of funding changes. It is time that this government made the same sort of commitment to our municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned about cuts in the area of capital. In the 1996-97 fiscal year, capital made up 15 percent

of our total expenditures. In this budget, Mr. Speaker, we have cut capital to seven percent. That is less than half as a proportion of the spending in the 1996-97 budget. With cuts like this, Mr. Speaker, we are putting off a day of reckoning to solve a cash problem. I am afraid that this will lead to much higher repair and replacement costs down the road.

I think it is also important to remember, Mr. Speaker, that there is a social cost this year for these cuts. This will reduce the number of jobs in communities in the North. In many places, our capital program is the largest job generator. This means we are going to drive up the costs of income support and dependents in our communities.

It is also causing a problem for northern business. We have used the Business Incentive Policy to encourage growth of business. New cuts in spending, or now these cuts in capital spending will put some of these businesses at risk. We need to address this problem quickly.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Minister on not having responded to the fiscal pressure with drastic cuts. That would not have been the right way to deal with them, and it would not have been acceptable. I do recognize that we have limited flexibility in our fiscal situation, and I appreciate the government response in some areas that Ordinary Members have highlighted to date, such as the response that we start funding in the student and youth employment programs, and the most recent announcement of partial restoration of funding for the Skills to Work Program.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have seen some positive responses from this government, and I congratulate them for that. There are areas that can still be improved. I hope that this government will continue to be responsive as we go through their budget in committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 10, replies to budget address. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Reply 3-14(3)

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have had the opportunity to hear some of the plans that are put forward in the 14th Assembly by the Finance Minister and his colleagues. We have, as Members of the 14th Assembly, worked together on the document called Towards a Better Tomorrow. There have been many comments made during committee review of the departments to-date. There will be more as we go through it. Unfortunately, we have not had a chance to go through the whole thing before we could do this, but with the information available, I would like to make a few comments.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard many positive messages being sent out to the people of the Territories, to the businesses of the Territories, and the businesses in the southern jurisdictions. Now I understand the need for the positive message to build on the business opportunities of the Northwest Territories. However, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to put a touch of reality into our good news message we are trying to get out there.

Mr. Speaker, in the Finance Minister's Budget Address, he speaks of the substantial development that is out there, and he says we are on the brink of substantial development. In fact, that may be the only light on the horizon, Mr. Speaker. Right

now, besides some shuffling of the deck, as they say, and redoing of the numbers, we still have a deficit budget. Although in his budget, he talks about a \$12.3 million deficit, when we take all the numbers together, in fact we are at a cash deficit of \$28.5 million at the end of this fiscal year. That is including a \$43 million increase in the taxation.

Mr. Speaker, what are we going to do the next fiscal year, when these one time funding amounts are no longer there for residents of the Northwest Territories?

Now, I am not saying we should have come in as a 14th Assembly and do what was done in the previous Assembly. As a Member of the 13th Assembly, I was not happy to go back to my constituents to tell them of more reductions. At the same time, I was not prepared to saddle the future generation with a debt of today's government. If this picture does not brighten on the horizon, we will indeed find ourselves as a government looking to more reductions.

I was hoping that in the time we have had together, we would be looking at changing the way government does business, not necessarily reductions for the sake of reductions or meeting targets. We have seen that. We have seen that in capital. We have seen that in job reductions of the people that we had under our employment, but we have not seen that in the red tape. Today, the duties and responsibilities for employees are still there. We just have less employees to do the work. Work that was done by two people is now done by one.

Mr. Speaker, if we are going to do something, we have to look at ourselves in the mirror and say are we doing the right things? Now, I am not saying that we go back and look at strategies, because that does not work. I, myself, Mr. Speaker, have spoken in the previous Assembly against doing more strategies, and more plans and updates because there have been many of those done before. It is time to put things into action.

Mr. Speaker, on page 7 of the budget speech, we talk about investment in early childhood development. We talked about the Healthy Children's Initiative. We talked about a territorial agenda for children and youth, and an early childhood development action plan. We have talked about how we have called for the full restoration of the CHT funding. Mr. Speaker, all this tells me is that we are going to do more plans. I think yes, the Healthy Children's Initiative is a good one, and there is some good work that is coming out of there. Let's follow up on it.

You have heard about the territorial agenda for children and youth that is being developed. In response to my question earlier, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment talked about working with his colleague from Health and Social Services on children and youth. Are we going to positively come out with some measurable results, or are we going to sit down in another year's time to talk about the further initiatives and action plans we need to develop?

It is time to quit developing these action plans and implement them. Let's aim for results. If we need to look at government structures as they exist today and say maybe we do not need as many departments, then that is something we have to seriously look at. We cannot continue to talk about government expenditures and we look out from government, and not look in.

Something I stand by is if we are going to lead, we have to lead by example. As a Member of the 13th Assembly, I chose to do that. The example, Mr. Speaker, I was one of the many Members who supported reducing the pensions of Members of the Legislative Assembly. One of the first things we did, as well, is we took a seven percent rollback in wages and benefits. That was leading by example. To date, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly, we are leading with press releases. We are talking about how good it will be. My concern is we have put a lot of our eggs in one basket, that one basket being the federal government and royalty revenue sharing. Yes, I agree we need to pursue it. However, I am concerned we have put too much emphasis in one category in one area.

I believe that development will happen, Mr. Speaker, because the aboriginal groups are now ready to take on that development. As I heard when I was in Fort Liard from Chief Deneron, as he spoke to the people and to the guests that were there, he worked on an initiative for about ten years without the support of government. It was not until the last year, two years that this government was able to start helping out. Now that is not a good record.

We talked about trying to increase education of those so they can be employable. In fact Mr. Speaker, in the Delta next year, we are going to have great demand for people in the seismic area, and businesses are going to start building up once again. Are we ready? Are we investing? We have heard the Finance Minister say that we need to make investments. I agree. They need to be calculated investments. One of the areas I saw and have much disappointment on is knowing that the Aurora Campus facility in Inuvik, one of the first things this government did was pull that off on the capital plan side, just when we need to develop our infrastructure to try and take advantage of the situation we have. People will be hired and working by the time we get this facility up and going. They might help take it down, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as government, we have heard it said, and I have said it myself as a previous Member, the government cannot be the engine of the economy. That leaves us in a really difficult situation, and I agree we need to at least supply the fuel. That is the assistance, when it comes to the aboriginal groups or to the private sector, as they look at developing businesses in the Northwest Territories.

We have already heard of the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. Will we be able to stand up at the end of this term, or the end of this year in this budget and say to anybody in the Northwest Territories we have helped them to be able to sustain themselves in the communities? We have seen the price of fuel go up, gas, because of the cuts to the municipal communities, taxpayers in municipalities are probably going to see a tax increase. So it is not getting any cheaper to live in the Northwest Territories. What are we going to do about that, Mr. Speaker?

Well, I think we have to create an environment. How we might create an environment...unfortunately, it looks like the idea of taxes is being bounced around. We need to do more consultation with our communities. Those are the ones that are going to be doing this and explain it to them how it will either benefit them or how they will pay. I have yet to see a government introduce a tax that is tax neutral or revenue neutral. There is always a gain for government. Knowing our situation with revenues it is hard not to agree with some form of

increase in revenues, and whether it be in taxes one way or another, because we just cannot afford to do what we are doing.

One of the first things we did in the 14th Assembly is we gave an increase to teachers and to support staff in the school. Yes, it is a critical area to invest, but as I said earlier to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, is there in fact going to be something we can measure at the end of this, or is this just money on top of other money? What are our outcomes? We have heard about the graduation rates. We have heard about the quality of education. Are we setting goals to correct those, Mr. Speaker?

Now not to be totally negative, Mr. Speaker. I have to give some credit to the Finance Minister for continuing to trudge on and give the good message and go to Ottawa and say we have to have control of northern resources in the Northwest Territories. Nobody here would deny that we need to do that, but I also encourage my colleague across the floor that he needs to spread out a little bit of the planning, plan B if this does not come forward.

Previously to the budget being tabled in this House, the Finance Minister replied to me saying that in fact we had a ten month window before we hit the debt wall, our borrowing limit. He came back and responded to my colleague, Mr. Dent, and said in fact now we have 18 months to two years before this happens. It was interesting to see that \$35 million dropped out of Nunavut's basket into ours to help this one-time situation. He did not hear anything about it beforehand. We had this one-time increase in corporate taxes, which hopefully will not be totally gone in the future years, especially as we see development happening in the Northwest Territories. So how are we going to take advantage of some of the situations that are there? Whether it comes to increasing corporate taxes, not by increasing percentages, but increasing opportunities and building on business in the Northwest Territories.

The Business Incentive Policy talks about helping establish businesses in the Northwest Territories. The fact is, companies from southern jurisdictions can still do work in the Northwest Territories and beat business in the Northwest Territories, although not as badly as they used to, we must admit. Our companies have fought hard and well to establish themselves in the Northwest Territories and compete. However, it is not without some form of subsidy, whether it is front end or back end that we have to put in place to keep the businesses surviving.

Where do we go from here? Do we continue these, even though we can really measure the results of those, like the Business Incentive Policy? Are we going to do another study? I believe that I have heard that mentioned a couple of times. We have to look at it again. How many studies have been done and nothing comes out of them? If we do not intend to change anything, let's not study it, Mr. Speaker. That comes not only from Business Incentive Policies, it comes from any policy within the Government of the Northwest Territories. If in fact the decision is already made that we are not going to change things, then do not study it. I believe that we can find somewhere in the area of hundreds of thousands, probably millions of dollars in the area of studies and plans and evaluations. So I would say that if you do not plan to change it, do not study it.

We have heard from the people of the Northwest Territories that this government does not function properly and does things that are high cost, ineffective, and duplicate. We have some of our own examples. Our first response is yes, we agree with that and we need to put a plan together and strategize how we are going to do this.

Unfortunately, our time is running short, Mr. Speaker. Can we strategize even more? Can we take a year to put another plan together? Hopefully the Minister has had some time and his staff, who have been running ragged, as we hear, have had some opportunity to put plan B together or start to structure a plan B. Because, Mr. Speaker, I will not be very happy when it comes to the second budget of the 14th Assembly and find out that I have to bring more bad news to my community and that things are not proceeding as they were planned.

Accountability, Mr. Speaker, is something we are going to see come up time and time again in this Assembly. Because that was one of the key features of this 14th Assembly and it will continue to be, until we are done in our time here. How will we be accountable to the people of the Northwest Territories? Not only does this Cabinet need to be accountable to this Assembly here, but in fact, we are all accountable to the people in the Northwest Territories for our decisions. How are we going to measure accountability?

We have heard in this House the shifting that can happen from one department to another. It goes back to having rules in place, having areas where we can say that there is a structure that is solidly enough in place that if somebody goes outside of those lines, they will be called up on their activities and they will be held accountable for those activities.

We have heard some news come from the other side of the floor in some of the questions about accountability, about how there seems to be a lack of measurements in there when it comes to our Ministers and deputies. I know that at the end of the day, the Minister is accountable for his department and the action of his department. That is the way I see it.

During our time going through this, we have heard questions and we will continue to hear questions about how Ministers will hold their staff accountable. It is no good, Mr. Speaker, to give me a document, give me something that I can read and read to my constituencies and not have something measurable after the time period.

We know that we cannot change the results of education overnight. We cannot change the business atmosphere in the Northwest Territories overnight. But I think that if people notice that we are doing the best we can and we are giving them the goods up front, straight forward, that they will be able to buy into us, and buy into the story that the Northwest Territories is a place we can invest in and we can achieve positive results. It is no good to put a story line down and before you close the book, it all falls apart because you could not bind it together, because it was all on one story line and the story fell short.

At the end of the day before you could say they lived happily ever after, the author came along and said it is time for a rewrite. Being the federal government, Mr. Speaker, ultimately, they hold the big hammer. We do not even hold a comparable stick to fend off the actions. We have heard much positive news, and I hope and pray that the work this government is doing in Ottawa will benefit the people of the Northwest Territories so we will see positive results. Mr. Speaker, come

the second budget of the 14th Assembly, if we have not achieved measurable results on what has been put forward, I guarantee the Minister of Finance, I will be in his face. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 10, replies to the Budget Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 13: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act, and wishes to report that Bill 6 is ready for consideration in committee of the whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 15-14(3): Package of Letters Regarding the Giant Mine Pensioners Situation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table three letters in regard to the Giant Mine pension workers. The first letter, Mr. Speaker, is the one that you sent to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, dated March 30, along with the motion that was passed in this House. The second letter, Mr. Speaker, is from the Prime Minister's office, a special assistant for correspondence to your office, dated June 13, 2000. The third letter, Mr. Speaker, is from the Ministry of Indian Affairs, Minister Robert Nault, to your office dated June 19th, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Tabled Document 16-14(3): Yellowknifer Newspaper Advertisement Entitled "Self-Government in Jeopardy – Solution"

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table an advertisement from the June 28th issue of the Yellowknifer regarding land claims and self-government. It says:

"Self-government in jeopardy. Solution - the Dogrib invites the Government of the Northwest Territories Cabinet to meet and finalize the Dogrib land claims and self-government agreement. The Dogrib leadership has the political will. Do you, the Government of the Northwest Territories Cabinet Members, have the political will? Let us do what is right for the people of the Northwest Territories and finish this historic agreement."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a third in a series of which I have tabled previously. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Tabled Document 17-14(3): Northwest Territories Professional Upgrading Assistance Application Form

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, I wish to table the following document entitled, Northwest Territories Professional Upgrading Assistance Application Form. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Tabled Document 18-14(3): Letter from Canzeal Enterprises Ltd. Regarding the Marketing of Energy Wall and Building Products

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter that I received from Fiberglass North. It is in regard to a letter that was sent to them from the Housing Corporation about the Alaska operation and why they were refused preferential treatment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the 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. Lafferty in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would like to call the committee to order. We have some items from yesterday. Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, and the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 1, and committee reports 1, 2 and 3 concurrently, specifically to continue with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment budget. Should we happen to conclude that, that we commence with the budget of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Does the committee agree with Mr. Dent?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): We will proceed after a short break. The Minister will be in then.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I will call the committee to order. We are on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Does the Minister wish to bring in witnesses?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in. Mr. Minister, will you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Mark Cleveland, the healthy deputy minister for the department. On my left, Mr. Paul Devitt, my manager of corporate services. I am very pleased to see Mr. Devitt has recovered from his three weeks of illness. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we spend a lot of time sitting here talking about how we are able to generate revenues and about the jobs we can create from the renewable/non-renewable sector.

I think the one thing that we really have to be aware of is the cost to this government when it comes to the other aspect of our society. When you talk about the health care costs, you talk about the cost in the area of justice and incarceration, where it is costing this government somewhere in the range of \$80,000 a year to house an inmate in jail facilities.

Yet when we talk about students and housing students in other facilities, we are talking about \$40,000, which is half the cost of what it costs to incarcerate an inmate. I think we have to change the concept that we have about the society, and the have and have-not cultural groups we have in the Territories.

I, for one, feel that unless we bring the standards of education and drop the statistics when it comes to illiteracy, a lot of our communities in my riding, in the population aged 50 years and over, it is 36 percent. That is a high percentage of people.

You talk about the unemployment rates in some of our communities. In some cases, we are talking 40 to 45 percent, compared to the national average, which is eight percent. We start looking at statistics and we start to wonder what is wrong with this picture. I think a lot has to do with we have to do more in the area of education by making sure the resources we do have, in regard to the \$167 million that is in the department, is being spent in a way that we are earmarking where the problem areas are.

We see there are higher graduation rates in the larger centres. We see they have good standards in regard to where we are

going in terms of job rates, where the unemployment rates are low in the larger centres, but very high in the aboriginal communities. Just by using those two statistics for literacy, unemployment, this government has to do more to focus its educational programs and services to those areas so we can see different statistics. That is telling us there is something wrong.

Yet year after year, we come to this House and we talk about the problems. We continue to raise the issues, yet we continue to do things the same way. I feel we have to change the system so it is flexible and we meet the challenges we have in front of us. We are talking about taking advantage of the opportunities we have in front of us, especially with regard to generating jobs through oil and gas or the diamond industry.

We have a large portion of our population that is illiterate, that do not have anything more than a grade 9 education. They will not really benefit from these large scale economic opportunities. I believe I raised the question in the House last Friday on the statistics, especially in my riding, where you have the population 50 years old and over who have less than a grade 9 education. In the community of Tsiigehtchic, you have 39 percent. Fort McPherson is 35 percent and Aklavik is 38 percent, with a Mackenzie Delta average of 36 percent.

Those averages are too high. I would like to ask the Minister how he intends to deal with this statistical problem? On one hand, we know it is a problem, but on the other hand you are cutting the ABE programs. You are doing away with those programs in our communities where people who are on income support, their only other alternative is to go find a job or take training. A lot of these people on income support cannot even meet the requirements to go to adult education because of the literacy rates. They are also not to fill out the appropriate applications to get into these courses. I would like to ask the Minister, what are you doing for those people in our society who need more than what is there right now? Are you looking at any new incentives so that we can deal with these large percentages in our communities?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to cover a number of areas in this, to address some of the concerns of the Member, he speaks of unemployment rates and he also speaks of literacy rates.

It is very true that there are approximately 2,025 that were identified in the 1999 labour force survey who were looking for work. Most of those are below the grade 9 level in education. What that says, because they are at that level, there is a literacy problem for many people here in the Territories. In order for them to gain employment, there is a need for programs to address that. There are opportunities arising here in the Territories, potentially through resource development. We have to partner with industry to address this issue. We have to look to more than just ourselves to solve the problems of getting people into jobs.

The industry, I believe, is very interested in ensuring that the youths of our labour force are there and can potentially be developed. We do have some programs that are delivered through the College and some programs that are delivered at the community level, Mr. Speaker. Are they adequate? I do not believe so, but we have to live within the resources that we are provided. One of the areas we have identified as a possible

solution is the Non-Renewable Resources Strategy. It is one of the areas, as perhaps the years go by, that we can utilize to address this problem. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel we can do what we are doing right now, which is not much, or we can pay for it tenfold down the road when it is going to cost us ten times as much as what it is right now if we do not deal with this problem.

We have to break the cycle where we have a lot of people who cannot get into basic adult education because of the literacy level they are at. I think this government has to take more of an incentive to deal with this, where we look at statistics, especially in our aboriginal communities, where the one thing for sure is that if you are illiterate, there is a direct relationship with the crime statistics. A lot of the people within our jail facilities are illiterate or do not have the education to allow them to improve their lifestyles or get a better chance at getting a job.

The question about not having the basic education requirements to get a job creates poverty for those people with children. Then you talk about unemployment. A lot of the statistics we see in our communities, you are talking about 40 percent. Then you talk about the health problems in our communities. Many of those are associated with illiteracy.

You talk about financial income support. The average income for people in our small communities is \$17,000 a year. For the Minister to make this statement that we do not have the resources now and we have to work within our means. That has to change.

The government has to realize that we have a national problem here in the North, just as we see across Canada. When it comes to First Nations people, they are on the lowest scale of residence in Canada. Their health expectancy is lower than any other cultural group in Canada, and yet we can sit here and say, well, we do not have the money right now. We already have it allocated. It is a cop out.

Is the Minister going to do anything to change the problems that we have in our communities when it comes to people that find themselves illiterate because they do not have an education? We spend millions and millions of dollars on those that do, but we are not meeting the goals that we set. What are you going to do for those people?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We recognize that we have an under-educated population, and the need for literacy and basic upgrading has been identified over and over again. We understand that. We do have some programs in place that are targeted to address this.

We have funding allocated to Aurora College and to non-government organizations to offer services. The issue of literacy is one that we are well aware of. It has to start with areas such as early childhood development. I spoke yesterday about the need to look at programs like the Aboriginal Head Start, which is having tremendous impact for children to be ready for school.

There is a thrust by two of our departments to come up with a policy on early childhood development. There is also starting to be awareness that we need to address this in education itself. We are looking at the potential of how to tackle the literacy levels in the schools, and then we get into the career development programs that are in place.

We have programs such as access programs for teacher education for nursing. If we are going to see the kind of resource development we have in the Territories, it is critical that we get the support from other areas in developing our human resource areas, and that does address the issue of basic literacy. The Non-Renewable Resource Strategy has to be tied in with both resources from the federal government and from participation by industry. I think industry is interested in working on this.

For example, Diavik has developed a module system to train people. They are looking for partners in that. We are discussing that with them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell, general comments.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In reviewing the department, one of the things that came to light, and one of the main concerns that this committee had was the fact that so much money, I think it was \$400,000 last year, was lapsed in apprenticeship training. There are various reasons for this.

Certainly the low levels of literacy and adult basic education contribute to this to some degree and in some factor. Simply, people do not have the basic reading and writing skills to be able to get into apprenticeship programs much of the time. So it is important for us to develop skills and trades and apprenticeship programs. We know this. We know we are sorely lacking qualified trades, yet we cannot get people up to that level or over that hurdle, so they can get into these programs we offer. For that reason, and various other reasons, some of this money was lapsed last year and was not accessed.

In this year, to the department's credit, they have come up with half a million dollars for oil and gas training. That is good to see, and I think everybody on our committee was waiting to see the details of how this money was going to be spent.

When it was brought up to the committee, we were given a cursory glance at it, but did not get any time to analyze the detail, and the clock is ticking. We are waiting to see this information. I am not sure if the government had reviewed the information or has now, but our committee would certainly like to get a hold of it.

I think we are concerned that there may be, or has been in the past, a focus on short term types of jobs, especially in something that will see a boom, like oil and gas, and possibly the construction of a pipeline. We want to make sure that this government has people who are in a position to take advantage of jobs in the industry, not just catering, Mr. Chairman, and not just some of the labour jobs required, but some of the skilled positions as well, because that is where we see we can really make a difference.

It seems that in the past, the government has focused too closely on short term benefits and has not looked at the bigger picture. We would like to get a look at the oil and gas training

they are proposing, the \$500,000, and see how that fits in with what we would like to see.

Especially, Mr. Chairman, given the comments that Mr. Handley made the other day about the fact that setting up socio-economic agreements with oil and gas companies is going to be altogether a different game than it was with the diamond companies. We simply do not, maybe, have the same ability or pull to insist that these companies hire North, or use Northern businesses.

I think we are all concerned that if we cannot hold them to this, what is the sense of training people for some of these things that the companies may or may not be required to hire?

If Mr. Ootes could respond to some of those comments, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the lapse in the funding on the apprenticeship program, late in the year, we received an agreement from Human Resource Development Canada that we could charge some expenses to the Labour Market Development Agreement, which gave us \$200,000, that went into the apprenticeship area.

So that is part of the reason why there is \$400,000. We really came into \$200,000 extra. We realize that there needs to be work on this. We are looking at having the CUR centre here in Yellowknife, free up some staff to do a more effective job of addressing the issue of allowing employers to access this funding.

With regard to the oil and gas strategy details, I apologize that information was not provided to the Members. It is an oversight on our part. We will provide that to the Members, Mr. Chairman. I agree that short-term jobs should not be our only focus, or should not be the large focus. Short-term jobs also sometimes play a part in development of people because it is a step process. People get a job for a short period of time, get training and then are able to access a more permanent position.

There is a need, naturally, for people to move up the ladder into more skilled positions. That is our ultimate aim and we do that through apprenticeship programs and career development programs.

Individuals that have no experience whatsoever sometimes need the short term jobs in order to get the skill and some of the training. I believe that addressed the Member's concerns. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I heard the Minister say that he would provide us with a copy of the oil and gas training plan that the department embarked on. I just want to ask him, has that been completed now? Is that final? We are out of the draft stage? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it has been completed, but we are redrafting as we discuss matters

with industry. We keep it fluid so we can adjust the program accordingly.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. Certainly I would agree that it needs to be done in conjunction with industry. I do not think it makes any sense for us to go out and have a strategy that industry does not buy into or train people for positions they do not require.

Certainly, I think Mr. McLeod and Mr. Krutko and Mr. Roland and some of the people who will be more directly affected because they are close in proximity to pipelines, would be very interested in seeing this before we complete the department. I know I would, as would anybody who thinks their constituents might be able to get in on manufacturing and other types of development and projects in this industry.

We are all very concerned that this is going to be a one-time thing and it is going to come on us so quickly that if we are not ready to react and they are waiting with trained people, we will miss the boat.

If the Minister would provide that to us, we would like to look at it before we conclude the department, so we can see exactly how the department is proposing to spend these dollars to make sure that Northerners are best ready to take advantage of the oil and gas boom when it does come. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will get copies to the Members, hopefully this afternoon. Certainly tomorrow morning at the latest. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister is that under the development scenarios we have in the North, we have the potential of quite a few jobs in the area of the Beaufort Sea gas project. We are looking at some 1,500 job opportunities. In the Sahtu area, we are looking at about 1,200 and in the area of the diamond industry, with Diavik coming on, you are looking at 450 jobs. These are just some of the key areas. We are talking about the possibility of a pipeline, you are looking at 1,000 jobs.

What is the Minister doing to ensure we have the ability to generate expertise in the different sectors, so we are able to take advantage of the oil and gas industry?

We know you put quite a bit of money into the diamond industry in regard to the training dollars that were put into it and also infrastructure money to assist in the secondary industry. However, in the area of the oil and gas, it has been quite some time since we have really seen a surge of opportunities, especially training opportunities for people to get into so that they can take advantage of the opportunities and the jobs that will come from the oil and gas industry.

You talk about the opportunities working in the seismic drilling operation, camp attendants, equipment operators, maintainers of facilities and also contractors who will be providing services to these different industries, regardless if it is drilling or seismic.

I am just wondering if the Minister could tell us exactly what has been done to date. What is he doing to ensure we are ready to

take on these major projects and that we are trying to find ways to have people trained in the different areas? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department has developed an oil and gas human resource plan, and there is an opportunity there for many people to hold long-term jobs. The plan is a systematic plan that will help ensure maximum employment and training opportunities are there for Northerners.

The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is leading an inter-departmental approach to the oil and gas development here in the Northwest Territories. The work of the project team is focused in eight areas; research, analysis, communication, project infrastructure and so forth.

Our particular department is involved in the human resource development area. The task there was to project the types and volumes of jobs expected, that could be there during exploration, what the process of construction and operation of the pipeline and processing plants would be.

It identified the types of careers that would be available for Northerners. So, like the diamond development area, which Mr. Krutko is very familiar in, there are value-added areas from time to time, and spin off businesses created.

In the case of the value-added, we were able to develop a training program for individuals through Aurora College for pre-employment training for mine work. As well, some assistance for career training for people in the cutting industry.

Similar activities will present themselves as opportunities in the oil and gas area. Our proposal identifies a three-year schedule of activities to promote human resource development. The department is working with the federal government industry and aboriginal organizations, and we are looking at establishing an oil and gas training committee.

The first meeting of this is planned to be later this year, possibly in August, and it will involve the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council, who are hosting this particular meeting.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, the majority of the jobs that are going to be developed are going to be in the Beaufort Delta region and the Inuvik region.

I am just wondering if the Minister has thought about this? There is the expansion that was supposed to take place with the Arctic College facility that has been put off. Because of these changing conditions, it is important that you reconsider that decision and that you reinstate the resources that were allocated for that College.

Most importantly, the Aurora College in Inuvik has to play an important role and be able to be involved in a deliberation and discussion with the Minister's office, along with the aboriginal groups involved in the developments and activities that are going to take place.

I would like to ask the Minister what role has the campus in Inuvik played with the developments that are taking place? They want to have a say in how they feel they will be able to administer different programs and services. What is the possibility of developing the college so it is more catered to the oil and gas industry?

Can the Minister tell me what has been done on that front?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is an opportunity here to provide training through the college system. The Aurora campus has been working with our regional superintendent, as well as other organizations.

There is also the availability of the PIPs program, which is run out of Alberta, NAIT and SAIT. We need to take a look at what they are offering and see if some of those programs are applicable to be delivered here, to see what we can do in terms of building our capacity here in the North.

Our interest is to ensure we build our capacity through the college system through other methodologies, if possible. I am meeting with the board of directors of Aurora College tomorrow morning. This is an area I had planned to discuss with the board to see what can be done to address this issue of the potential that is out there, to enhance the delivery of programs through the college. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other question I have is in the area of teacher retention and making sure we have the teachers to be able to fill the number of vacancies and ensuring we have northern teachers in the classrooms who are there for the long term. They live in a lot of our communities.

I would like to ask how much money does the department have to allow teachers to go to university and obtain their degree in education?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Cleveland to answer that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are several funding sources for teachers who wish to continue their education and complete their degrees. The first is through the Professional Improvement Fund, which is available through the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association. That fund provides money to teachers who wish to complete their bachelor's degree. It is on a competitive basis, and it is available.

Secondly, teachers can also apply for education leave through their professional association for the purpose of completing their degree.

Third, the Student Financial Assistance program is also available. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me, is the money allocated strictly based on each divisional board of education? The Beaufort Delta, the Sahtu and the different regions. Does each one have so much money they can spend on training for teachers in the different ridings and regions?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it is a broad fund that is managed for teachers. With regard to the SFA program, they can all access that. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought as part of the collective bargaining agreement, there was a specific amount of money identified for education leave for teachers to take different courses as part of their bargaining unit. That was something that was agreed to. I am wondering how much of that money goes to specific geographical areas.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a detail that would best be answered by Mr. Cleveland.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for not being very clear on that. The professional development fund has two elements. One is long-term funding, which makes up about 60 percent of the money. That is held in the centre and allocated based on a committee decision and based on applications from teachers.

The remaining 40 percent is allocated to the regions. That generally pays for shorter term funding for individual teachers, such as things like principal certification, that sort of thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following with interest the discussion of preparing a workforce and skills for the anticipated activity in the oil and gas field, it was also something that came up during some business meetings some Members had with various companies, national companies that will more than likely be involved in the construction of a northern pipeline, specifically the meeting we had with the Trans Canada pipeline people. One of the issues we discussed was workforce mobility, if you will. Major construction projects of this nature tend to be very concentrated and very rapid in the way they are constructed and built.

That means enormous numbers of workers are brought into a place for a short period of time in order to get the job done, then they are gone.

We experienced some of this during the building of the Norman Wells pipeline early in the 1980s, where there was a surge in workers brought in. Some information I had really illustrated how ill-prepared, not only in terms of our workforce skills, but in our ability to absorb the magnitude of what was coming down.

A potential pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley will be a project many times the size of that. One of the things the Trans-Canada people impressed on was the enrolment of these multi-national contracting companies, major union organizations, and the issue of workforce mobility across provincial and international borders.

The question I would like to ask the Minister is, in looking at this potential development in years to come, because we can anticipate there will be spur lines, there will be associated activity, has the department been as proactive as to start up some discussions with these potential contractors involved, the unions involved, with either provincial and perhaps national officials to find out how we can be better prepared for what will be, we hear from the Trans-Canada people, a pretty complicated network of labour migration? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Before we go to the Minister, I would like to recognize two members of the South Slave Tribal Council, Mr. Paul Harrington from Hay River and Mr. Gord Villebrun of Fort Smith.

-- Applause

Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To address the question directly, discussions have been held with some of the producers with the pipeline companies, not yet with the unions. I think Mr. Braden's point is certainly a good one. We do need to focus on it and pay some attention to it. The anticipation is that it will be about five years from now. The planning, if a pipeline were to be built, it may be about five years from now.

In the interim, of course, we have a lot of exploration work and preparation work that is out there. Even though there will be a surge of workers in this, I think there will be ongoing potential, as Mr. Braden stated, the spur-line potential, the ability for workers who may work on pipelines and welding, and those in vehicle operations, whatever it may be will probably be able to transition to the other activities that are going to take place on an ongoing basis for some time here in the Northwest Territories. Alberta was a good example. Once oil was struck, it is still being struck all over Alberta. That is a major industry for that particular province and can continue to be for our northern Territory. Even though there will be one pipeline, the activity associated from that will continue to be substantial. There may be a potential to connect communities to a gas pipeline by way of example. Can there be an oil pipeline down the road? Can there be a transportation corridor? The potential goes on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I concur with the Minister's observations and the direction that I think, and from the little bit of knowledge I have gained so far, I see this going. The example of Alberta, which has had an industry going for more than half a century now, is a very good example where a workforce is prepared and trained for the kind of activity that will continue on an ongoing basis in its home territory, if you will.

-- Recording Difficulties

MR. MILTENBERGER: ...as I indicated, cultural and linguistic ties in the South Slave to the Chipewyan people that are part of that community, that language community.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I cannot answer that question here now. I am going to have to get some information on that for the Member. We will have to get back to him as quick as possible. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I had breakfast this morning with Ms. Sabet Biscaye, who is doing some work for the Akaitcho territory with the Chipewyan language initiative and plan that they are putting together. It was she who raised the issue to me. I must confess this was an issue I was unaware of, but when I look at the letter, it is very clear the reference is to registered Indians and registered Inuvialuit. I would like to ask the Minister, given the fact that we are passing this budget and that formulas for aboriginal languages have been allocated based on a formula that seems to have a flaw or gap in it, an omission, how long would it take to get a response? Will it be before we deal with this budget? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: As I say, I am not familiar with the issue, Mr. Chairman. We will get an answer for the Member tomorrow morning on this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: This is a million dollar plus issue, so I would appreciate a response. I know that the people putting together the plan for the Chipewyan language community would and, I am sure, so would the Metis people of the South Slave.

I do have a further question, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is, once again, looking at the numbers, that the available proportional funding by population is \$908,000 for all the language communities. My recollection is there was an agreement signed with the federal government for \$1.9 million. I was wondering if the Minister could elaborate on where the other \$1 million would be? This was a May 2 letter sent to the language community and signed by the assistant deputy minister, Ms. Gordon. They wrote the formulas and proportion.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are other areas that we provide funding for. This is the amount that is used and transferred to the aboriginal language communities. The funding has contributed to such areas as aboriginal language broadcasting, teacher education program, geographic place names, interpreter translator program, language planning, resource development and promotion, and teaching and learning centres. Those are the types of areas it goes to.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate if that level of detail is available in the business plan? I do not recollect seeing it in the budget. I thought that level of detail would be there. Would it be possible to get a list of all the monies allocated?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, we can get the Member the information we have here. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I would ask a question now that we are on the issue of languages. The Language Strategy, which has been in the works for quite some time now and is a critical component to the survival and the enhancement of aboriginal languages. I looked at the documentation provided to me in regard to the Chipewyan Language Strategy. Their own assessment of the state of the language in the South Slave region was, to say the least, somewhat bleak.

In the community where I live, there are maybe twelve to fifteen percent of the people who speak the language. The number is somewhat higher in Fort Resolution and marginally higher again in Lutselk'e. In the South Slave for sure, we have a very significant situation with trying to preserve and enhance a language that is at the stage of being considered endangered.

This Language Strategy was supposed to bring together all the pieces with the Official Languages Act, including the role of the Language Commissioner, all the funding for aboriginal languages and French, what the department does, what the communities do, how we come up with a strategy to make sure the focus is on the communities and the families to ensure that the languages and culture are passed on from birth. I would like to ask the Minister for the status of that particular strategy and when will we see a finished product? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is important to have the strategy finalized in this whole area. I did meet with the language communities several months ago to discuss this whole area. The work on the strategy is continuing. We expect the strategy may be fairly close to completion, certainly before the end of summer. We hope to have that much before the end of summer, being the end of August, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, one of the accompanying strategies that was talked about yesterday in the House, and that the Minister made a commitment to, was the issue of a comprehensive strategy on literacy, which has very clear ties to language. Given the fact that they are starting out from two different points, the Language Strategy will be complete in the next number of weeks. They are just in the process of initiating a comprehensive Literacy Strategy. Could the Minister indicate how does he see linking the two to make

sure that they are compatible and complement each other and are as closely linked as they have to be? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The item I spoke about yesterday this was literacy and Adult Basic Education Directive. From there, we want to develop a comprehensive Language Strategy. I think there needs to be a tie-in between aboriginal languages because it is as important as the Literacy Adult Basic Education Strategy. I do not have the answer as to how that will fit together until we have an opportunity to look at this and see what we can do to ensure there is an intertwining of the strategies.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A concern I had from my constituency, especially the ones taking the AV Program, is that the funding that they receive is inadequate in most cases, especially if you are a single mother and have to find babysitters and what not. The funding they do receive is not even close to what other people get in other programs because you are exempt from the Student Financial Assistance because it is not a caseload. Also, a lot of people take different programs because they are on employment insurance and what not.

I am wondering if the department has done anything to evaluate those programs to see exactly how they can streamline them so they are more reflective of each other, that one program is not better off than the other. All these students that we do have are on income support but they do not have the ability or the resources for babysitting and what not. Has the government done an evaluation to see why the students are being treated differently? Is it because of the different programs they are involved in or because of the social and economic situations they find themselves in, either on income support or employment insurance? Has the department done a review on that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a range of support programs. Some are territorial, some are federal. We have the Student Financial Assistance, which is only for post-secondary education. There are differences in the programs, but that is the way they were designed, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there anything in the works for the department to consider increasing the amount of the contribution for the Adult Basic Education Program? I see in your statement that Tree of Peace received about \$95,000 of that each year, yet the amount that has been identified is \$390,000. That leaves \$300,000 for the other 16 or so communities. Because the amount is spread out among that many communities, it does not really add up to much, especially to do justice to the problems we are seeing in the communities with literacy and the importance for upgrading of those students who are on income support. What is the department doing to improve that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are proposing to look at this and submit it to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, to look at re-establishing the Community Skills for Work Program. We are proposing \$650,000 for that particular program. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Just a question for the Minister and the department. What special programs are out there for single mothers or the children so that they can take care of the expenses they have incurred, especially for babysitting or transportation, et cetera? Is there anything in the budget? Can they access funds from other sources if they are on adult basic education?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have programs through income support and child daycare subsidy programs. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do the individuals have to apply for that? Is that a regional program or is that based out of Yellowknife?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: All are regional programs, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. After the election, I met with the students in Fort McPherson who are attending the upgrading program and the ABE program, and they had problems accessing the information. That is why I am asking the question. I would like to ask the Minister if it is possible that the department develop a pamphlet identifying all these sources of funding, categorized to the different programs, ABE, upgrading, post-secondary education, or even scholarships so they have an idea of where to go to access this funding. I think a lot of these students get frustrated having to call all these different places because they do not really have an idea of who to hone in on, instead of phoning Yellowknife or the Department of Education, or their MLAs. People should have access to that information, know that it is accessible, that they do have the right to apply and that they are able to use that as part of their education.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have one and it is a good suggestion that we make one available, and make sure it is available in the communities and all centres. We do not have one that covers all areas, but we do have specific ones, like Student Financial Assistance, for example. Just to address the Member's issue and concern, yes, we will do one for the ABE.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the other areas that the department should consider looking at is mature students that find themselves going to university. A lot of them

need assistance. They hire tutors, and there is funding available for them to do that. I am wondering, with the problem that we see, especially in our small communities with the high number of people who are illiterate, and who are trying to make an attempt to get into these different programs, such as ABE and adult education. Would the government develop a program for communities or interested groups to have funds available to hire local tutors in the communities to assist people with bringing up their grades so that they are able to have a prep course? That is where people seem to get bottlenecked. For them, just to get into the courses is a problem. Once they get in there, I think they will put the effort into doing the work.

I think a lot of them are not getting past that first stage. It would be nice if there were individuals identified in the communities as tutors to help these people who are on income support, so they can get the basics of the math, reading, and writing. So that they know this is the basis for them to get into these courses. I think that the investment that this government is going to make will be beneficial in the long run.

I would like to suggest to the Minister if he can possibly consider looking at it as an initiative for those communities with high illiteracy rates, and that we are able to assist students and people who are on income support to take on that challenge. We should make sure that they are able to get on with life and also take advantage of these programs that are in our communities so that they can make life better for themselves and their families. Would the Minister consider looking at that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We try to build in life skills as part of the program. I think that addresses a part of the concern that Mr. Krutko is speaking of. We also cooperate with the aboriginal human resource development organizations that are out there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. General comments. What is the wish of the committee? We are on page 9-9, directorate, administration, total operation expense, \$4,154,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I noticed that on the activity description there is some discussion of the Digital Communications Network. I know that there is some concern among members of the committee just how adequately this network fulfills the expectations of the government and the departments when it was brought in. We have talked a long time about the importance of distance education and being able to use the facilities of a Digital Communications Network in bringing down our long term costs. Yet I am given to understand that there may be a problem with the bandwidth available to the department to ensure that there is a really good facility here that we can use for distance education, and for things like tele-conferencing. Could I find out from the Minister just what the situation is with the Digital Communications Network, and what they mean by "they will continue upgrading and improving the delivery and management of Education, Culture and Employment programs using that network"? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make some remarks and then I will also ask Mr. Cleveland to deal with the detail of what exactly what is happening with the DCN.

As the Member well knows, we held a pilot project out of Norman Wells to deliver distance education. It was a northern studies program, which was very well received. From that, we were in touch with the Calgary school board and signed a memorandum of understanding. It gives us access to 34 more programs that will be available in communities. We are working to ensure that our educators will be able to get up to speed to receive those particular programs and to supervise those students who may wish to take it.

It presents the challenge of do we have the bandwidth capacity on the network? For that, perhaps I can turn it over to Mr. Cleveland to address that particular part of the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: In terms of the delivery of distance learning programs, as the Minister indicates, our experience to date has been quite positive. We are monitoring, however, the bandwidth issue because we have similar issues, simply to say that we want to make sure that schools can effectively access the courses the Minister outlined. At this point in time, we are fairly confident that is the case. However, we are continuing to work quite closely with the divisional education councils on the issue.

We have had some performance issues in terms of speed. Those have not been so much with the distance learning, but we have found them as we institute our management systems, which are referred to in the directorate description. If I could, Mr. Chairman, I would just speak briefly to the reference in this description, which talks about the replacement and the updating of our administrative systems, which we use to manage the programs. We are instituting many of those on the DCNs so that our staff at the community level and at the regional level can have direct data input and get direct information input from those systems. That work is proceeding quite well and the implementation is proceeding quite well. We have experienced some speed problems, but they have been worked out as time has passed.

We are examining with the DECs a number of options as well to reduce the pressure on the DCN. Caches in communities, and that sort of thing are currently being considered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had heard rumours that speed was a problem, as was bandwidth. What about the price? Is the price that is costing the department coming in as expected when we were looking at this project?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chair, it is coming in at the price that we expected it. It is \$1.4 million for next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. \$1.4 million. Is that from all education contributions, or is that from the department? Will divisional education councils contribute on top of that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We pay the whole cost. There is no cost over and above the \$1.4 million to the boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that a change in approach? I had believed that the intention was that the money would be included in the formula of funds handed over to the DECs, and there would be expectation that they would pay for time as they used it on the network.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you Mr. Chairman. We have not moved to that yet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you Mr. Chairman. When is it then the intention then to go out to a user-pay system? In other words, to basically have the DECs that are taking advantage of the system paying for their portion and the department paying whatever portion it keeps as a residual user.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We need to get the experience of the system and see where it stabilizes before we can move into a formula system, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have some concern about the Digital Communications Network and whether or not it will in fact deliver the value that was once promised to this government. I would hope that there would be an assessment that will be done by the department and report back to our committee. Just on the value for money that they see in receiving from the Digital Communications Network over the course of the next year as they get into testing it out with the number of programs being developed with their agreement from Calgary.

If I can, because I am running out of time, Mr. Chairman I would like to move to an issue under the activity description. The department also talks about the need to strengthen departmental accountability and improve their reporting framework. I think that this is something that the Members of the committee were very anxious to see an improvement in the reporting framework and in accountability, setting benchmarks and achieving them.

I would note that in the business plan, we saw some definite targets. I think that is important to see. Targets like the improvement in the graduation rate of four percent per year. I think that is an allowable target. Or talking about improvement in the reduction of student unemployment or youth unemployment figures of five percent. I think these are the two targets that I remember from the business plan.

However, one important target I do not think we have seen set specifically is the goal to reach a representative population in the teacher force within a certain number of years. I would

again like to question the Minister as to whether he is prepared to publicly commit to a date by which he and his department will strive to achieve the goal of a representative work force. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly the issue of targets was discussed with the standing committee. In our business plans, the standing committee did point out that they wish to have this addressed on a better basis. So we are well aware of this area of concern and to look at targets.

I believe I stated at the time that if we are going to look at setting targets, we must be realistic. We have to take certain areas and perimeters into consideration of how and are the targets achievable.

With regard to the teacher levels, to try and reach a 50 percent or a representative work force in the teacher education program...basically, what is being said in the goal is that we will have 50 percent aboriginal teachers in our schools by the year 2003.

Last night, I did some calculations on this, Mr. Chairman. I discussed it again with my officials this morning. There is certainly a good objective here that we strive for and we will continue to strive for that objective. That has been set. Can it be achieved? If it cannot be achieved that particular year, what year can it be achieved? That is a big question, because we have to take into consideration, where we will get the graduates to move into the system. If today, for example, I believe our figure may be around 23 percent. Then it means that we will have to increase our teaching force by approximately 200 hundred aboriginal teachers. Can that be done in the next three years through the teacher education program? That is a very high objective, Mr. Chairman.

I need more time before I can commit to say that it will be in place by 2003. Not to diminish the goal that we are concentrating on, and to ensure that we continue to address the need to achieve that goal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have a number of questions on this particular activity. I would like to start with the Digital Communications Network.

Mr. Chairman, from the very start, I had some significant concerns dating back to the 13th Assembly with the Digital Communications Network that it would not be able to handle the load, that it was already undersized by the time that it was finished. The feedback I had heard was that in fact what we were doing in a lot of cases was just helping NorthwTel upgrade a lot of their old equipment and infrastructure, and then paying a significant premium, as the Minister indicated.

One of the things the Minister indicated is in terms of bandwidth and capacity, that some of the systems we have make it too much to carry. Can the Minister indicate, are the DECs on Peoplesoft? If they are not on Peoplesoft, does that have anything to do with the capability of the system to handle the amount of bandwidth requirements for this program? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, the DEC's are on Peoplesoft. We just cannot speak upon the fact that it clogs the system. We just do not know.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Minister to repeat the last part? I did not catch the last part of his comments.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: The DEC's are on Peoplesoft, but I cannot speak about whether the usage of that is contributing to clogging problems on the system. I do not know.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, if that is the case, could the Minister explain why, with all the human resource statistics that we have received and the numbers of positions and such, health boards and the DEC's are left off? That is a significant number of employees. If in fact they are on Peoplesoft, then that information should be accessible. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have the employment figures for the DEC's. It will take me a minute here to find it, Mr. Chairman. We did provide the chair of the committee with a letter on June 2nd. We can provide the letter again with the breakdown of the figures. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would appreciate the information. The concern I have is when we receive the government roll ups for Peoplesoft information, the divisional education councils and schools, that whole component was not included in the information. I am curious to know why that is.

If they are on Peoplesoft and it just affects the numbers, the numbers that the government gives us has little a qualifier on the bottom that it does not include health boards and school boards, which are hundreds upon hundreds of positions.

There are over 400 teachers in the Northwest Territories alone, not counting the DEC's staff and related administrative support that may be there. From a process point of view, since it has come up, could the Minister indicate why those numbers are not included in all the education numbers? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They are considered as separate bodies. They are separate from the territorial government. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, are teachers not considered Government of the Northwest Territories employees under a collective agreement negotiated with this government? Especially the ones outside of Yellowknife in particular, not the ones in Yellowknife, where there are school boards, but the 400 or so teachers outside of Yellowknife. Are they not considered Government of the Northwest Territories employees under the Government of the Northwest Territories negotiated collective agreement?

They were on strike. They struck the government. They struck the schools. It was the government that negotiated the agreement, so could the Minister clarify for me what their status is in the mix of things? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. By the collective agreement, they are, but they work for the various boards and district education councils.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will save any further questions on that particular area. I just want to point out that it is a significant gap in the government information to leave them out. When, in fact, they are funded by the government, they are government employees. They have a government collective agreement and it makes it very difficult to have an accurate figure. When I was comparing active positions in government and government funded positions, it is a huge gap. If the two schools were not in Fort Smith there are dozens and dozens of government jobs. I will be looking for them to be included.

In regards to the Digital Communications Network, Mr. Chairman, I would like to support the comment made by my colleague, Mr. Dent, in terms of the need for an assessment of the Digital Communications Network. Could the Minister indicate how many years are left in the contract with the Digital Communications Network at this point? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Financial Management Board Secretariat holds the contract on that. We believe there are about two more years on it.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, given the significant problems with the Digital Communications Network, the premiums that we are paying, by our recollection is, Education, Culture, and Employment is an anchor tenant, and pays a million dollar plus premium. There is a relatively short time in terms of the scheme of things for these kinds of systems. Would the Minister consider and commit to as, the Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment, before they look at any kind of possible extension, that they will in fact be pushing their Cabinet colleagues to do a thorough assessment of this

particular system to see whether it is adequate. If it is not adequate, how do we deal with it? As we move into the 21st Century, the speed of technological change is very fast. It seems to me that we have a system that is not capable of matching the speed of technological change.

I would like to ask the Minister, as the Minister practising good business sense, would he commit to ensuring that as far as education is concerned, he will be pushing for an assessment of the Digital Communications Network?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a government-wide initiative and we are part of that initiative. Naturally, as the renewal of any type of contract comes up and as we move along in this, we will start to do analysis and monitoring and ensure that we get value for our money. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister in regard to establishing goals that this government is trying to meet, I believe that one of the goals that this government should try to meet or surpass is bringing down the high rate of illiteracy especially in our constituencies. I would like to ask the Minister, do you have a specific percentage that you are trying to meet, say within the year 2003 or 2005, to where you see the percentage of illiteracy? Because right now in some regions, it is up to 40 percent. I would like to see a decrease in those figures. So I would like to ask the Minister, what are you doing to bring down the illiteracy percentages, and what are the goals you are trying to set for yourselves, or trying to surpass or meet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko, I might just mention that what you are getting at there might be more in line with the next area that we are going to, capital operations expense, \$4,154,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister tell me how many individuals or people he has involved in self-government negotiations, who is representing the department in those negotiations, and what is the cost of that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have two individuals who serve in this, but it is not a full time role for these individuals. They simply serve as leads, and we bring other individuals in as required.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a cost associated with these two individuals being involved in this, or are they paid through a separate arrangement?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They are members of staff and their time is devoted to other functions, and then as required for the self government negotiations, they devote time to it.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Yes, thank you. The two individuals you mentioned, is there one specifically designated to the Beaufort negotiation and one to the Dogrib negotiations?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: No, Mr. Chairman. They deal with both.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you have any idea or statistics on how much time they spend at these negotiations in a year, or the amount of time they spend away from the office?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have that information at hand here. We do not track it, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a way that you can track it? You probably have an idea how many negotiation sessions there are. Usually these events are scheduled well in advance. I believe you should be able to track it knowing that you have to pay for the travel of these individuals, the accommodation and what not, so there should be a method of tracking it. I would just like to ask the Minister, is there a possibility of getting that information?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we know that there is a substantial cost involved to this time and so forth. We can develop a costing for the Members. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice there is a major decrease of about \$700,000 in other expenses. Could you identify what the decrease is for? In what areas has there been a decrease in funding?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a transfer of systems cost to capital.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, could you elaborate a little bit on systems cost to capital? I thought that is coming under, I am not too sure, but I believe that is a new O and M expense. Could you elaborate a little more on what you mean by the deferral?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We used to budget that in O and M, and now it has been transferred to tangible capital assets. It has just transferred to another area of reporting.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am still not clear on exactly what the \$700,000 was for. Was it peanuts or buildings? What is the \$700,000 for?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was for systems development cost that is now reported in another fashion.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The systems development cost, is that associated with the Ardicom contract to put computer systems and hookups in all the schools in the territories, when you talk about system expenses? Could you elaborate a little more on that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it is not. It is associated with student records and a whole range of operational matters.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also have some concerns about the DCN, and how the department ties its programs in with what appears to be a flawed setup. I guess intentions were there at the beginning, and it did seem to make a lot of sense, but I do not think we are getting the performance out of the system that we had hoped we would.

Mr. Ootes indicated that we certainly had to look at the performance of the system as we go forward and continue to review to see if we are getting value for money, but by all indications, he has also indicated that right now there are speed issues, and bandwidth issues.

I think there are concerns that there have been incorrect setup of sessions over the DCN. I guess the setup would be by NorthwesTel. There have been connection problems, been problems with image quality, and I think the department has taken these concerns to NorthwesTel and received some assurance from Ardicom that remedial action will be taken to fix these problems, but I do not think there has been any action taken.

I am wondering what the department is doing to insist that Ardicom fix the problems. It is one thing for the department to have these intentions to upgrade the programs they are delivering internally, but if the system is flawed, it is pretty much out of their hands. So I am wondering what they are doing to work with Ardicom to ensure that Ardicom actually does something about this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned, we are watching the concerns about bandwidth and speed, but we do not manage the system. That is done for us by the Financial Management Board Secretariat, and management board services. We deal with them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Surely as an anchor tenant and one of the key users of this service, you have to be concerned when it appears that groups like the Power Corporation are choosing to opt out of this DCN and instead go out and create their own infrastructure, and jump off this sinking ship, as I see it. Does it not make sense for the department to bring their concerns up with the Financial Management Board Secretariat and insist that this thing be fixed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should state that at the moment we are using the system fairly effectively. I mentioned that we are watching the potential problems with bandwidth and speed and so forth. We will continue to do that, and we will certainly pay close attention because it is a system we rely on very heavily for services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. The Minister has indicated that there are speed and bandwidth issues and they are aware of them and presumably have brought them up with the Financial Management Board Secretariat and with Ardicom. I am wondering what Ardicom is proposing to do to alleviate some of these concerns.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address this.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a couple of elements with the operation of DCN. The department works directly at the technical level with the technical staff in a number of other departments with Financial Management Board Secretariat in the lead to identify and address issues.

During the course of the contract, there have been a range of different kinds of issues that came up, and that is not unusual. With respect to the speed and the bandwidth issues, our staff have been working with the Financial Management Board Secretariat and have identified issues as they occur.

We think some of the issues are of our own making. We are addressing those issues as they develop. We have had some success in that area. We have also found that on occasion, we initially felt that some of the issues were related to the DCN. In fact, some changes in our own protocols actually made a difference. We will this year be working very closely with staff and schools and with the DEC's to monitor this matter.

Certainly, if we experience issues with speed or bandwidth, we will be taking them up through the technical committees with the contractor. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: This may be a technical question, but maybe Mr. Cleveland can answer this. It is my understanding that there have been problems with image quality over the DCN, which I assume would affect delivery of educational programming and in some more technical areas.

Given that the department is proposing to hook up with one of the Calgary school boards and deliver programs in the smaller communities, I am wondering if these image quality problems

are directly related to bandwidth and if that is something that will hinder the delivery of programs?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I am not sure that I can address the Member's question directly. I am personally not aware of particular image issues. Most of our work, to this point, has been text-based material as opposed to image work. We will, as the Member points out, be using more image work as we move into the delivery of distance programs. We will be monitoring that. I am sorry I cannot give a more specific answer at this point. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. It might be better for the Members to address DCN issues when we are in committee of the whole with the Financial Management Board Secretariat because they are the lead department for that. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: I guess we will address the issues with Mr. Handley when he comes before us, but I would just like to state that I like what the department is doing in setting up this MOA with the Calgary school board, but I hope they are not getting ahead of themselves. I think, they have the best intentions. They have the right idea to start delivering programs to some of these smaller communities. Again, two or more years ago, when this thing was conceived, there were a lot of expectations. It seems that we are being let down continually. It seems to be a veritable black hole, just sucking up money and not really giving us much in return.

As we try to deliver more and more programs, the deputy has indicated that a lot of the things they are delivering now are text based. Certainly we are going to get into image based programs. I hope that we have seen this coming, planned for this, and ensured that these programs will be deliverable. Otherwise, it makes very little sense for us to go out and do all this good work, if, in fact, we will not be able to provide the goods.

This is just a comment and I will bring that up with Mr. Handley. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Chair recognizes Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to ask some questions. I will take the Chair's direction in terms of the DCN itself, but in the activity description, on the third paragraph, the reference is that the department will continue to work on the major project of replacing all departmental computer systems with the new case management administration system.

When you talk computer systems, does that include all the programs as well, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The systems replacement replaces the programs that operate our student records system, our system that we use for the income support program, and the system that we use for student financial assistance. This department operates a broad range of systems and the CMAS system provides an integrated approach to those systems for the department.

We needed to replace a number of the systems because of Y2K and also because a number of them were simply outdated and not very functional in terms of recording data or analysis. That is what this project is doing. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister elaborate on this case management administration system, from the perspective to provide comfort, at least to myself, given the experiences that I have seen with the PeopleSoft system and its shortcomings, huge expense, and the fact that it shut down. It is a single-use system for the most part. Have the steps been taken to assess the system to make sure that it is affordable, that it is going to do the job, that it has the capacity to expand, and that it will be an effective, efficient and economical system and not a burden on the department? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member's concerns were concerns that the department had as well. Our experience with the project to this point, is that it has gone quite well. In fact, better than I personally expected. The timeframes for delivery of various elements of the system have been good. We have had some cases where it has been a little long and some where it has been shorter than expected, and the costs have been quite manageable with this project. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a strong interest as well across government on the informatics strategy. I am assuming that this whole area of discussion would fall under the department's informatics strategy, which in turn would link into the broad government informatics strategy.

I would like to ask the Minister for an update on their informatics strategy. Where is it in the completion process, or is it already complete? If it is, when would we get a chance to look at it, given the significant number of different systems, as was pointed out, that the department does have and the need to be able to integrate with other colleague departments as much as possible, like Health and Social Services and such? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get Mr. Cleveland to address that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department does have an informatics plan, which I believe is in the back of the business plan the department presented. We have been quite active in maintaining that informatics plan to ensure that we effectively develop and use our systems. We have, as the Member identified, also worked with other departments about the potential for our system to link to systems they may have. I would speak specifically about some of the work that is going on with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation over the last couple of years.

There certainly is room for expansion of that work. Again this is a question you may want to ask the Financial Management Board Secretariat. The Informatics Policy Committee, made up of senior managers, is working together on a broader strategy to look at government management of systems and knowledge materials. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That suggestion by the deputy is one that I will take. I will defer any further questions. I would just like to point out, on the record, that the government informatics strategy is a planning process with no apparent end. I was with the government for almost 20 years, and I think half of that was trying to come up with an informatics strategy. I have been waiting for the government to come up with an informatics strategy for five years as an MLA, and we are still waiting.

Mr. Chairman, I would just like to touch on two other things on this particular area. First, I had some concern with a comment the Minister made about making sure we set our targets low enough that we can reach them. This is a comment that we have heard from other departments in the social program envelope as well. This causes me some concern, in terms of quality.

I think it was Milton who said, "our reach should exceed our grasp," and I think we have to extend ourselves as a government, as individuals, as a department. This was in reference to the issue of targets for teachers. I just wanted to say that I think we should set ambitious goals for ourselves. If we do not achieve them but we do a fine job trying and we are making good progress, then we can stand up when it comes to accountability, and say that we had very fine aspirations and they are still goals. We are not there yet, but by God, we are going to keep plugging away at this.

Would the Minister reassure myself and my colleagues that, especially within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which is a key department, a role model, he will continue to instill values that will speak to this issue and set goals in this department like we want our students and people to do? We are going to set goals for ourselves that are going to be lofty, but are good ones. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure if I said that we need to make our targets low enough to be achievable. I believe what I said was that we need to set targets that are achievable, and I was speaking about the Teacher Education Program and the target that has been set. The target was set, of course, some ten years ago, and we are nowhere near getting to that target.

I firmly believe that target can be achieved, that it should be achieved and that should be the aim in this particular program. The question in my mind is can this be done by 2003? I have to be realistic. I am not going to suggest that we can set all sorts of lofty ideals. If they are not achievable then we are perhaps setting our sights on something that people will aim for perhaps to the detriment of other work.

I think targets need to be set across the department and we have to ensure that they are ambitious but also within the

possibility of achieving. That would be my approach, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This would be an interesting point of debate and probably not in this forum. It may speak to some of the lack of success with some of the government initiatives.

My final question is in the area of interdepartmental cooperation. This is fundamental as we move into this Assembly and the Minister has a department where it is critical that he works hand in glove with housing harmonization, Health and Social Services, with healthy children, and youth.

A clear demonstration of this is working together on a regular basis and not just on an ad hoc piecemeal basis. This, to me, is going to be more and more fundamental, and the need for a possible, even joint business plan. I would like the Minister to speak to this issue as my time runs out. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have a clock up front here, so we cannot see when the Member's time is cut off. So I have, supposedly, all the leeway in the world, since I do not have a clock.

-- Laughter

However, Mr. Chairman, that is an area that we are very involved in already. It will require a continued concentration on our part to ensure that it is there and because we have a number of areas here that are coming to the fore on a territory wide basis. We speak about the need for programs in the early childhood development area. That is an area that Health and Social Services is very involved in.

We speak about the need to address the whole area of employment and development and human resource development. We are working with and we are part of a committee, with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. We are working on the harmonization of income support in the housing situation. There is a multitude of programs like this that we are involved in. Our officials are involved in discussions with each other. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have been listening to some of the discussion, the questions, and the answers that have been back and forth here. I must say that if we compare this to setting up for a race, it sounds like the Minister is happy just to finish the race, never mind gold, silver or bronze as targets. There is one thing to be said about finishing the race, but to quit running before you actually cross the line is something we need to really look at as a government. I do not think anybody should be afraid that because we aim our goals high that Members would use it as an opportunity to further bash the government.

I think that we would have to accept some of that not being able to meet the goals because we are pushing those goals higher. If it shows a significant achievement in that area, then I

think we must be ready to accept that we have made good strides.

But to say we have made good strides when we are just set to finish the race is applaudable in that sense. We definitely need to be, I think, aiming high and coming in. Even if we come in at average, it is better than aiming just to finish the race and coming in dead last. I think that is something every department needs to focus on.

If we are going to push to set our goals high, then we also need to put the resources into training. That would also help us to achieve our goals. I know this is one of the departments that has been fortunate enough to get a fair bit of resources added to it when everybody else is squeezing a little tighter and some departments have lost. We should look at that and again, my statement earlier, speaking to the budget address, is that we need to see results now and not plan to try to achieve results. We need to start putting things into action somewhat differently.

Now, a little further on that, I have a question that is straightforward. Under the directorate administration, it talked about the departments involved. Its mandate covers strategic planning. I would like to know from the Minister what areas of strategic planning is the department involved in?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department did have a strategic plan that covered it for a period of 15 years. In December, we issued a strategic plan update which covered many areas. We have this publication that is available. This identifies the areas that are being addressed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, that one strategic plan is all the department is involved in? It is not involved with, as the Minister stated to me earlier in the House during question period, that there is work going on, a plan going on with Health and Social Services? It involves children. Is there not a plan to work with the Housing Corporation on income support and housing authorities and how you look at the streams of revenue and deductions allowed and so on? Can the Minister further elaborate? What other areas? It might not specifically be just Education, Culture and Employment. Who are you involved with, if you are part of a study, part of a plan? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, many of the areas that thrusts are going into fall under this strategic plan. For example, with regard to the early childhood development initiative, we are working with the Department of Health and Social Services in that area. We expect to have a plan together by the end of summer. We are working with the Housing Corporation on the harmonization of the income support and housing. We have an oil and gas plan together and labour force development. There are a number of areas like that which all fall under this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a final question. Is the department fully involved with some of the other departments in the plans that involve children, youth and education? I know the Tobacco Strategy was out there. There was some work, but it seemed like the Department of Health and Social Services was mainly going on their own, with some consultation with the department. When you say you are working with other departments, is it a real team effort? As a member of Social Programs in a previous Assembly, we pushed continually to have the envelope work together, not only on the committee side, but also with Ministers. We found that was a rarity. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, certainly on the deputy's level, they meet on a consistent basis on this. On the Ministerial level, we have met on individual areas. We have met collectively, we have met as well on individual areas.

As the Member well knows, our timeframe to meet has been somewhat difficult in the last several months because of travel and other developments, like meetings. I think there can be improvement in that area. There is no doubt in it. It is not as though we are not paying attention to it. We certainly are.

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to touch on percentages. In the Northwest Territories, we seem to have a lot of percentages, especially in the aboriginal community. We have a high percentage of drop out rates in school, a high percentage of unemployment, a high percentage of health problems, high percentage of illiteracy. These are all areas that are very important.

Then we go to the other side, which is still very important. We have a very low percentage of high school graduates, a very low percentage of university graduates. Those are all concerns of mine. What is even a bigger concern, Mr. Chairman, is the very low percentage of aboriginal speaking people in the Northwest Territories. We are failing at educating them and we are failing them on preserving and enhancing it. A lot of that responsibility lies within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

I would like to give some suggestions for possible remedies to these problems. One of the areas I would like to ask the Minister about, and I will suggest a solution, if he gives me time with his quick answers. I have a table here that speaks to the aboriginal communities funding levels for language development. It is broken down into Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, North Slavey, and South Slavey. It gives a percentage of the population based on census. They then compare it to another census. They give you a percentage of the total population and funding accordingly. I sure would like to see the French people moved out and be put in this table. If I could get that by tomorrow, it would be nice. Can the Minister commit to that for me please?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in answer to that, the funding for French languages is provided by the federal government. It is separate funding from the aboriginal allocation for funding.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you. That is good to know. I would still like to see that information.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can provide the Member with the funding that we receive and administer and where that goes.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you. That will be nice. That will be a good comparison. I think I stated in the last session that there is \$1 million for francophone language and \$1.9 million for aboriginal languages, which works out to about \$1,000 per francophone and about \$100 per aboriginal. I would like to look at it differently from another table. I do not think that status has changed.

In the Akaitcho territory, there is a language strategy that has been developed. Mr. Miltenberger and I had met with Sabet Biscaye this morning to discuss it. Some of the information that was given to us was kind of disturbing. There was a letter that Mr. Miltenberger referred to earlier in the day, signed by Pauline Gordon, assistant deputy minister, Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Some of the words she used suggest that the funding is going to be reduced. There is no encouragement that funding is going to improve. We need funding to save our languages. The language is the key to culture. The culture of the Dene people is based on language. It is disturbing to see this. I will give you an example. I will read one quote;

"Where a reduction in funding is required due to a revision of the population estimates, 50 percent of this revision will be applied to next year's budget and full reduction will be applied to the following year's budget."

They are anticipating the budget being reduced, not increased. When we talk about the language community, what do we mean by that? Do we mean people that speak a language and it does not matter where they live? Or is it the community where a language is predominantly spoken? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there are two parts to the question. In terms of the allocation formula, what was done was the allocation, as I believe the letter points out, was based on the population statistics in the Territories. The population statistics could go up or down. I think the Member is correct to point out that in fact they could go up in a region as well as they could go down. We simply wanted to be clear in the correspondence that if there had to be an adjustment, it would not happen all at once. It would be phased over time. That would be true if it was reduced. That was the

intention, I believe, of that clause. As the Member correctly points out, it could go up as well as down.

With respect to the second part of the question, when we discussed the matter with representatives from the various languages, before we set up the allocation formula, they pointed out to us that the relative health of languages differs across the Territories. They suggested that we allocate the funding based on the number of people in the aboriginal communities as opposed to who spoke the language or did not speak the language. That is why the percentage by population was used as opposed to language speakers or the other. We expect that language activities will vary between groups simply because of health of language or the appropriate language activity. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague, Mr. Miltenberger, touched this a little bit earlier. It is to deal with the Metis contingency. There does not seem to be a recognition that Metis people do speak aboriginal languages. Their ancestors have spoken the language for generations. I am sure they would like to continue speaking the language for generations, but they do not qualify under these funding arrangements. Why is that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that we had committed to get back to the Members on that specific question. It was asked earlier by Mr. Miltenberger. We were going to address it back to him. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Aboriginal language has been such an important ingredient in preserving aboriginal culture. It could be in Wha Ti. It could be in Yellowknife. It could be in Hay River. It could be in Inuvik. It could be in Lutselk'e or Fort Resolution. It does not matter. That they hire language coordinators on a full-time basis to work with established groups that are working on the preservation and enhancement of aboriginal languages. I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit his department to achieve or undergo a serious look for funding to address this very serious problem in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a Canada-Northwest Territories Cooperation Agreement, and that is a five year agreement that was just signed very early in the year. It ties us to a five-year commitment from the federal government to provide this funding, to provide some solidity to it. I am not sure if the opportunity arises, naturally, we will do what we can in order to renegotiate that. At the moment, I cannot say that that particular agreement can be opened. If that opportunity arose, we certainly would. We do monitor the agreement.

With regard to working with the language coordinators, we are doing that now. The department does work with the language coordinators in the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I would like to remind the members there is a section coming up on education and culture, 9-17. The Chair recognizes Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following up on the questions asked by Mr. Nitah in regards to languages. One of my areas of concern is that we do not allow enough flexibility in our classrooms, or within the aboriginal communities, to allow the aboriginal children to speak their first language instead of imposing English on them as the only language to be spoken in the classrooms. Because of that, we are putting restrictions on the abilities of these children to feel comfortable enough so they are able to learn or speak their own language within the classroom. In the Deh Cho, they are considering the possibility of having a program that allows the school to deliver curriculum solely in the South Slavey language. I think we see it in areas in the Dogrib region, in communities such as Deline and in other communities where children still have that ability.

I think we have to do more to ensure that we are not blamed for putting these barriers up because of declining numbers in official languages. I would just like to ask the Minister what is he doing to ensure the curriculum in the school reflects the cultural makeup of the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko, I would like to remind the Members that we are on detail. There is a section coming up on education and culture. Keep our questions on the topic. We are on section 9-9, directorate and administration. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Just a point of clarification. I do believe I am talking on the matter. We are talking about education across the North. I am talking about a specific method of educating people. There is a whole component in this clause that talks about teachers, teacher certification, and making sure that they do carry out their responsibilities. This portfolio of the directorate is responsible for administration of the whole department, to ensure that the whole department is doing what it is mandated to do. I believe that they are mandated to develop curriculum for the particular schools. That is where my question is coming from. I am not talking about the cultural aspect. I am talking about the delivery of programs within the education system.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I think if you went to 9-16, you would see that the topic that you are addressing would be better addressed there. However, if the Minister would like to address that here. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the question of how we support languages in the school system, we provide the Dene Kede program, the Inuuqatigiit program. We also provide to the DECs and DEAs the ability to offer a choice of aboriginal first language within the schools. There are a multitude of areas in how we address this. First of all, the DEAs and the DECs are local people elected and appointed from the communities. They have a direct input into the curriculum development and are able to input into the curriculum. We are looking at increasing our aboriginal numbers of teachers, and we have language specialists in the schools.

Our school contributions to aboriginal language and culture is \$5.6 million, Mr. Chair. We have teaching-learning centres, and classroom assistants, and cultural programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We have kept the Minister here for quite a while. We will take a short break. We will come back in ten minutes.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee back to order. We left off with total operations expense, \$4,154,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 9-11, advanced education and careers, operations expense. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday when we were talking about the Skills for Work Program, the Minister had offered to advise the House today whether or not that \$650,000 was to be added to the base of the department. I was just wondering if he had that answer yet.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is in base funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I think that is marvelous and I am glad to hear that. Mr. Chairman, each year, according to the business plan that was presented to our committee, more than 500 people move to the Northwest Territories and take professional and highly skilled technical jobs because our labour force cannot fill them at this time.

We also discussed in committee the fact that we do not have very many northern grown college instructors because very few Northerners have masters degrees which are necessary to teach college courses.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this is a very strong argument. Both of these areas provide strong arguments for the sort of transition measures to the new Student Financial Assistance program that the committee has been punching for. Because we need to see more people with higher levels of education.

If we are seeing 500 people come to the Northwest Territories with the unemployment rates that we have among Northerners now, it means we are missing a tremendous opportunity. We are going to continue to miss that opportunity until we start supporting our students for the time that it takes to get a graduate degree.

I hope that, given that this information is coming right from the departments business plans, that the Minister has had a chance to reconsider the transition issue and is prepared to commit that we will move to address this issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no doubt that the number of individuals that have been coming into the Territories to fill positions have been in the range of 500. I am not quite sure what particular positions those are.

With regard to the Member's concern with transition under the Student Financial Assistance, just to background this, we have to reflect back to how the program was established and the many changes have been made to the program.

We had extensive consultations on this. As a result of the consultations, the program was redesigned to fit the priorities. We had to make some choices about the various aspects of the programs, and we believe the choices that were made fit the priorities that were set, Mr. Chairman. Students that are going to school are going to have more money for tuition, books, and living allowances.

There will be pressures on the system because of the increased graduation rates that are potentially there from high school level moving into the system. So we will probably face a lot of pressure in the coming years for more funding to allow students to reach the graduation level, yet alone the post-graduate level. We will need money for the graduate level.

When we built the program, we took into consideration the client files and we looked at what the cost would be under the old structure. Then we did a new structure, and we did it a number of times with different permutations. We had to make sure the new program fit within the fiscal parameters that we have available to us.

As Members know, when we met in March, we also addressed the issue of the taxation of the Metis and Inuvialuit students. We added \$500,000 to this particular program.

What is being asked is that we now increase the eligibility of students who already used up their entitlement in the past, and would we make those changes. As I mentioned yesterday, this program in the initial look that we have had at it and we continue to look at it, is expensive to do. It will be in the range of \$1 million to \$1.5 million, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not argue that we have a very generous Student Financial Assistance program. No question it is the most generous one in Canada. I think we do a pretty good job of supporting students who want to get into post-secondary education.

In information the department has provided to the committee, they told us that 500 people a year are moving to the Northwest Territories to take highly skilled technical jobs because our population cannot fill those jobs. In the meantime, we have hundreds, thousands of people in the Northwest Territories on income support because they do not have the tools, the skills and the training to take those jobs. We have an opportunity here. We have young people that are in the system that are learners right now. We have an opportunity to encourage them to keep going. It may take a little bit more money than what we had counted on, but this is an investment.

The Minister talks about the pressure that is going to be on the system because of increased graduation rates. That, Mr. Chairman, is a good news story. That is the sort of pressure that we want to hear about. That sort of forced growth is welcome. That kind of forced growth is the kind that we must be able to find the support for.

However, I have trouble understanding why we cannot take a bit of a risk on this one. After all, the department lapsed

\$800,000 plus last year in post-secondary student services. We do not know what the outtake is going to be. Obviously, we cannot predict within a million dollars or close to a million dollars what it is going to be already. I say let us take the chance. Let us find a way to move on with this and take the chance. If the department has to come back for supplementary funding, then let us deal with it at that time, but let us deal with it as a good news story, one that deserves some support.

Mr. Chairman, since the Minister has not indicated that he is not prepared to agree to that yet, I would like to present a motion.

Committee Motion 8-14(3): Additional Semester Entitlements Under Revised Student Financial Assistance Program (Carried)

Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment direct that access to the additional semester entitlements under the revised Student Financial Assistance program be ensured for all eligible students who had received assistance under the old program.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion being circulated. I think everyone has a copy of the motion in front of them. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of questions under this particular activity as well. I would like to start on a very specific area. There is a mine training, or there was a mine training committee that existed that worked with industry and education to develop such programs as the mine tap course they delivered at the college to get students, young Northerners ready to take apprenticeships.

I was wondering if the Minister could indicate what his plans are for that committee. I think it was a very successful venture. I am also wondering, given the fact that it met its mandate, it had a positive role to play. With the expansion of oil and gas, is he anticipating any kind of similar forum with the oil and gas people? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the mine tap was delivered at the College. It is a committee that works with the College and we are envisioning a similar setup in the oil and gas. I spoke about that earlier, the work being coordinated with the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, and the Liard all the way down the Mackenzie Valley. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister outline the vision he has transmitted to this committee, which basically works for him? These committees, both are for the mine training committee, what has he sketched out for

them? What would he like to see them accomplish in the next few years?

With the oil and gas committee, could he indicate what vision he has left out for them, the course of action he would like to try to accomplish in the next three and a half years? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have not had a chance to meet with any of these committees yet, but the staff are working with the committees and proceeding with the direction that was provided before. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister just share with us his thoughts on when he meets with these folks, what he would see as a Minister at this point, having had six months to get his mind around some of these issues? What does he see as some of the key areas he would like both of these committees to work with?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly how we can link industry with employment and the role that the committee can provide, in terms of providing areas of employment potential, and then linking it back to how industry can participate with our areas of training, literacy as part of the training, with the development of modules that may be delivered for employment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Could the Minister indicate when he anticipates he can have his first meeting with these committees? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working with industry, for example, we are working with Diavik. The one committee has not been established, the oil and gas, but I cannot give the Member an answer as to when I might meet with the particular committee because I am not sure what the availability of the committee itself might be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: I would just like to switch the focus of my questions. I have questions regarding monies that were lapsed in apprenticeships and the public service training program. Given the discussion for the need to work with industry, the shortage of 500 skilled workers a year, as Mr. Dent indicated, I see there is a Mine Tap Access Program starting October 23, 2000. Could the Minister speak first to the issue of the apprenticeship budget and what the plans are to make sure that it is maximized, that industry is fully involved, and that these apprenticeship funds are used to the maximum benefit possible? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Member is addressing his question to the lapsed funding, and what do we intend to do about it. In the apprenticeship training,

there was a lapsed amount. We received an agreement from Human Resources Development Canada late in the year to charge some expenses to the Labour Market Development Agreement. That was about \$200,000. We have the manager of the career centre looking at freeing up staff to work closer with industry to address the issue of apprenticeship training and the availability of the funding there. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a critical area. Trades are in short supply across Canada. Could the Minister indicate, are there sufficient resources in that budget in his opinion, should NCPC come on board and say they are willing to take on ten apprentices? If there is increased uptake on demand for apprenticeships, is the department able to meet that demand and be able to do the necessary work to support them? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we feel there are adequate resources there. We had about a ten percent decrease last year. We feel that if the increase is in the area of ten percent, we can handle that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Could the Minister speak, as well then, to the Public Service Training Program, which lapsed a significant amount of funds? I have heard that it is under-subscribed because it is so complicated and difficult to access that they just stay away from it, the same way that they used to stay away from trying to access the VRDP money because it was so difficult on the administrative side. It made it not worth the pain and aggravation. Could the Minister indicate the plans for that particular program area, given that they just put \$250,000 into a staff retention policy? The issue of training staff and human resource development has been very dominant in the Assembly here since this Session started. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Until 1996, the program was funded 100 percent for trainees' salaries. This was reduced to 50 percent of the subsidy, with the remaining amount to be funded by the sponsoring departments. Because there has to be a provision of 50 percent of the salary provided by the sponsoring department, and also there has to be a guarantee of a position in the department, interest has weakened. It should not be forgotten that we have some successful cases in this. We are going into discussions with departments about how the program is structured and if there are more effective ways of delivering this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Quickly, with my remaining four seconds, does the Minister recommend that there should be no lapse of funding next year, that everything should be fully subscribed? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going to monitor this very carefully. It depends, of course, on the uptake, and it is provided on a regional basis. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: There are a couple of areas that I would like to touch on, and one of them is in the Student Financial Assistance Program. Having been around for a number of years and having four kids going through the education system, it appears that every time one of my kids come to post-secondary education, there is a different set of rules applying to how they receive funding. I still have two outstanding issues with student financial assistance, and I have not had time to go through that whole booklet. Maybe my particular situation has been addressed, but I am going to ask a couple of questions in that area and get specific answers to what I am looking at. Maybe it will help me understand part of it at least.

When my son finished high school, he went to a post-secondary institution in Calgary called the Rye. They had a different system than university, whereby they had three semesters a year with no summer break. When he applied for student financial assistance, he could not get funding for the three semesters a year because the department said they could only pay for two semesters per year. My son took four years of education in a matter of three years, but only collected financial assistance for three years. At the time, I was to understand that he still had one year of financial assistance left through the department. I would just like to ask the Minister, with the changes in the policy, what funding would he be able to access now? Does it change his funding in any way? Does it increase it or decrease it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Without seeing the details of that particular file, I would not be able to comment on what that particular student may still have available. We moved to the semester system, whereby for 12 years of schooling, the individual would earn 12 semesters of schooling. At this particular time, it could be used for three semesters per year, providing the courses are for a minimum of 12 weeks at a recognized institution.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not quite get what he said on that particular situation, but I was not specifically referring to that case. I was using it more as an example if we have somebody in that situation. They have been out of school for two years now, but at the time they still had one year's funding left, like two semesters left of funding, that they had not accessed. With these new policies, does that change that at all? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Cleveland to answer that.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to be a bit unfair in my response, simply because I have the book in front of me. On page 52 of the book, there is a chart which illustrates the entitlement of students under the new program. It outlines what students would be entitled to if they had not yet used their complete entitlement. I think it will answer the Member's question. If it does not, then we would be happy to walk through it with him. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: I know the page number now, so if I cannot make it out, I will come back to the department for an explanation on that one. Another question I would like to touch on is that there was some talk about students who have gone to school for a number of years in the Northwest Territories, and then took maybe the last two years of schooling outside the Territories. I would like to ask that particular question, and I will use one of my family members as an example, because it could happen. Let us say I have a daughter or a son who goes to school for the first ten years here, and then goes away for the last year for high school. Would she still then be entitled to student financial assistance from the Territories? Her home address is still in the Territories by the way, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the parents remain residents of the Territories, yes, the child is still considered to be a resident of the Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for clarifying that for me, Mr. Minister. Another area I would like to touch on is the area of teachers in the Territories. I know we have been talking about a target for teachers, if I am not mistaken, to have 50 percent of the teachers in the Territories aboriginal. I am wondering if the department has any figures as to how many northern teachers we have? They may not be aboriginal, but if we know what a Northerner is, how many do we have?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have some percentages here. Long-term Northerners make up seven percent of the teachers in our system. I do not have the numbers, but it is seven percent.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Delorey.

-- Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, it is 28. It would represent 28 teachers.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that somewhere along the line, the trouble we are in with teachers and nurses, and doctors, and the shortage in the labour force, somewhere we are going to have to put a lot of emphasis on keeping people in the North, regardless of whether they are aboriginal or long-time Northerners. I have a daughter who went to school for quite a number of years. As a matter of fact, about eight years, three of which were financially assisted by the government. The field that she was in was supported by the territorial government, but when she became fully qualified in that field and came back to the North with a great desire to work and live in the North, she was told outright that she would never have a full time job in her field in the North because of who she was. That creates a great problem for me. If we are going to encourage people to work in the North and to live in the North, we have to start thinking a little bit differently along those lines. I am all in favour for aboriginal advancement in

jobs, but at the same time, I represent a lot of people who are not aboriginals but consider themselves Northerners. I think that we have an obligation to support and look after them as well. I would just like to hear the Minister's opinion in that area.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We want to attract and retain all teachers, aboriginal or non-aboriginal. They are very important to our system. The turnover that we have has been fairly high and we are trying to address that whole area. I believe that there are opportunities for educators, be they aboriginal or non-aboriginal. My position is that they should be welcomed and we should do what we can to retain those individuals in the Territories. One of the areas that we have worked on, for example, the Teacher Education Program is open to aboriginal and non-aboriginal, short-term and long-term Northerners.

We have introduced a Teacher Induction Program to retain teachers in our system. It is a start on a system to ensure that the turnover is reduced, and that new teachers are made to feel comfortable in their new settings. That is meant for new teachers, be they new teachers from the south or teachers from our own education program. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by saying that I was pleased that the Minister recognized the need for training in the area of oil and gas. However, I was fairly disappointed that the amount placed in that category is fairly low, and does not seem to reflect the actual needs in terms of training for the Northwest Territories. It is probably a drop in the bucket of what we need. I asked this question to the Minister, but I would like to get reassurance that this is going to be an ongoing program on an annual basis and added to the base.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This funding is in the base funding, \$500,000. I certainly agree with the Member that with the potential that is out there and the need that is out there, this will not address all the issues that are of concern to us and need to be addressed. We do have a proposal that is being worked on; the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy, in which we have identified funding to address the areas on a more comprehensive basis. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. As I indicated earlier, the amount of \$500,000 is not going to address all the issues. I am wondering how the Minister plans to disperse this money to all the regions in the Northwest Territories. How is this money going to be made available?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we discussed earlier, the oil and gas funding is being developed based on consultation with industry and also with our regions. We expect that the majority of the funding will be allocated through our regional offices and that the regional offices will work cooperatively with communities, industry, and the College to define and deliver the training. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Over the last couple of months, we have heard a lot of discussion on the potential development of a pipeline. There are a number of aboriginal groups that are very seriously looking at the concept of a pipeline. Is there any type of strategy being developed to try to deal with the training that would come with such a project or are the dollars currently earmarked as part of this \$500,000?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is where we are dealing with the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy to address those specific needs.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In recognition that the whole sector of oil and gas is becoming a real focal point and there is a lot of training that is required, I think this government has recognized that. Looking at what is done in other areas in terms of training and incentive for teachers and nurses that have been provided incentive grants, is that something we can count on looking for in the near future for students that are planning to take post-secondary courses in institutions?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have any incentive plans. We have support programs to have individuals take training. I believe that is where the Member is concerned that we provide the training in those particular areas. For example, at Aurora College, we have the Pre-Diamond Training Program. Perhaps that is the area of concern that the Member has, that we develop programs in that area.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was more geared towards any funding over and above student financial assistance. I understand that there were dollars put in place at one time for students in the Teacher Education Program, to offer that extra incentive. I was wondering if that would be something that this department would look at in order to attract students to take university courses in the area of oil and gas.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: I do not believe we offer such extra funding anymore, Mr. Chairman, if it was offered at one time. I do not believe there is any such extra funding now.

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

MR. MCLEOD: I will take that as he is not looking at offering incentive grants over and above Student Financial Assistance.

One final concern I have is in the area of training and earmarking certain sectors. I will use diamonds as an example. Most of the courses were held in Yellowknife. Many of the people who live in the community did not take full advantage. I think we had maybe two or three people from the Deh Cho take these courses. I do not really have a problem with the courses being held in Yellowknife. As it is, it is right in the area where the activity is taking place.

However, when it comes to oil and gas, I would like to see some of these courses housed in the communities themselves. I am hoping that they will be community-based and more accessible to the people in the communities. You have to realize that a lot of these people are unemployed and, at this point, do not have the ability to travel and live in other communities. Is the focus going to be in the area where the activities are taking place, such as the Beaufort Delta and the Deh Cho?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no doubt that there will be courses offered at campuses, but many of them will be community-based. We are trying to develop relationships with industry itself, to work with industry and to provide the training in communities, close to the areas where the actual activity will be. I will give an example. Going back to Diavik, they are working in Fort Rae with individuals and training in Fort Rae. I believe that as we develop our relationships with resource companies, this will be their preference as well. Certainly that is our preference, to ensure that we do it within the communities. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: One more question. I had recent discussions with some of the leaders in the Deh Cho over the last couple of days. There was a strong indication that the Deh Cho First Nations are very interested in assuming some of the programs that may flow down through some of the training dollars and even going as far as looking at transferring the position for the regional control of advisors over to them. Would the Minister consider looking at allowing or transferring some of these training dollars to some of the First Nations tribal councils to administer oil and gas programs?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We intend to work cooperatively with all groups, including industry and aboriginal organizations, in this. At this point, without being specific, I cannot say how we will involve both industry and aboriginal groups.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question is around the area of literacy. I know we asked a few questions on it earlier and I was basically directed to raise my question in the context of advanced education and career development. What I would like to know from the Minister, has the department established any goals that they are trying to strive for with regard to what the literacy rate should be, say in the year 2003 or 2005?

In some cases, the information we have from 1996 or 1997, we are talking about 40 percent in some communities. Are there any goals in place for the department to strive for so they can have some real results? So we know that this government has a game plan, knows where they are going, and exactly what we are doing as a government to bring down the large percentage of illiterate people, especially in the small communities, so that they can take advantage of these developments? What is the department doing? Does it have a game plan on how we are going to get there?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we mentioned before that we have an under-educated population and a need for literacy and basic education upgrading. The programs that we have available are delivered through the college system and through the NGOs and community organizations. We have not specifically addressed a percentage change, if that is what the Member is asking for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the government have any specific set goals that we are trying to meet? Do we have goals in place that this department is striving for? So we can say in a specific year, this is the intent of the government, that we will try to totally wipe out illiteracy in the Northwest Territories, or totally wipe out poverty, or totally wipe out the problems that we have instead of just reacting to them year after year through a budgetary process? Does this government have any such goals in place for any of that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working on a directive for adult literacy and basic education. We are working on a strategic plan. I think that is important for us to put into place, but we need to get the directive finished first, and then work on the strategic plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I raise this is because from looking at the budget, when you talk about adult basic education, literacy, they have \$257,000 in the budget for that particular item. It has come down from 1998-99.

I feel that in order to deal with the problem we have and in order for us as a government to give people the tools they need to be very productive in their lives and to get somewhere in their lives...we know the facts. People do not have a high education. The percentages are there. The people who do have grade 12 or go on to university, their chances of getting a job are that much greater.

Yet in order for us to get out of that rut, we have to do more to increase those percentages, especially in our smaller communities where the problems seem to be. I would like to ask the Minister, are there any plans in place to increase the amount of money for adult basic education and literacy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do have a proposal for Community Skills For Work to add \$650,000 to this particular budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. Maybe the Minister could elaborate a little more on how that \$650,000 is going to tie into the \$257,000 for adult basic education and literacy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I can ask Mr. Cleveland to elaborate, but we have identified for adult literacy and basic education the following funding: for departmental base funding for Aurora College, we have \$2.5 million; we have the Tree of Peace in Yellowknife, for \$95,000; and then Teacher Education Program; Access, Health and Social Services Nursing Program, and that is \$350,000. The National Literacy Secretariat is providing \$165,000 and then \$40,000 for each of the three regions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are you saying there is now going to be some \$900,000 in the area of adult basic education and literacy?

That number that is in the main estimates right now is \$257,000. With the \$650,000 increase, that is \$900,000. So is that the amount that is going to be inserted into the main estimates?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Should the committee consider and approve, it would increase the budget by \$650,000 and that would be in the Community Skills For Work Program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good news. We would definitely support such an initiative, but the area of concern I still have is those people that are trying to get themselves into the different programs but need help and assistance to be able to access the program you mentioned.

In order to do that, you have to have a certain grade level, the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. I was just wondering, what is the criteria that is going to be used for people to be able to access this new program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The needs, as I think the Member points out very well, are different from community to community. We expect that we will have different types of proposals within this program from different communities based on their individual community needs. We are expecting that we will have a bit of a range of entry criteria, if you will. But those entry criteria will come from what we hear at the community level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will the dollars be allocated by each... you mentioned there will be different criteria, but I would like to know if it will be equally distributed between the 17 Adult Basic Education programs we have in place in the 17 different communities right now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intention is to focus on communities without adult education programs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Bell, general comments.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to discuss some of the concerns the committee had in the area of student financial assistance for disabled people. I think in the Northwest Territories, up until recently, there was no additional funding for permanently disabled persons who wanted to attend post-secondary school and receive funding.

Additionally, since there was no funding, there were no requirements for the numbers of courses they might have to take in order to access funding. Now we see that there is a program, and disabled people are eligible for up to \$5,000 a year to help them offset tuition and books, and other additional expenses they might have.

I am wondering if the Minister can talk about how that program came to be, and how it is working so far. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is not meant for tuition or books. That is part of the Student Financial Assistance Program. This is available to students with permanent disabilities, and the amount is based on an assessment of need up to \$5,000 per year.

Mr. Chairman, it may be used to cover a tutor, interpreter, for transportation, attendant care, and special equipment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you for that clarification. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us if he feels that amount of money from the consultation he must have done is adequate. Is \$5,000 enough? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are definitely going to monitor this, but at the moment we feel that it is fair. There may be cases that far exceed this requirement. We feel that it is fair for the moment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Can the Minister tell us how many students have ever approached the department to access this funding this spring?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has just been introduced with the new Student Financial Assistance Program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that, but I am sure students are already filing their applications and are applying. I know the deadline is the 15th of next month. I am wondering how many applications have come in thus far. I am sure the department is tracking them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: We do not have that detail here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. One of the concerns we have is that disabled students might not be aware that this money is actually available for them this year. Mr. McLeod raised a concern in committee about a constituent of his who the community was basically doing fundraising for because that was the only way for this person to get to university.

She was not at all aware that the \$5,000 was available and we had to look around. So we have concerns that possibly a lot of students may not be aware of the funding or may have to wade through a hundred and some page booklet to find reference to the funding.

I am wondering how the department is advertising the fact that this funding is available. How are they contacting people? What are they doing to get the news out there? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have been talking to the non-governmental organizations and the schools and the college system to attempt to make individuals aware of the details of the program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. I thank the Minister for that response. Another concern we have is that permanently disabled people do not have access in the Northwest Territories to a pension that would ensure a basic level of income for them. This is common place in other jurisdictions. In Alberta, I believe it is called the AISH program, and we are concerned that the Northwest Territories does not have any sort of funding like this in place and being one of the only jurisdictions in Canada that does not, we have to ask why, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are aware that clients and some advocacy groups have asked that the Government of the Northwest Territories consider a program

such as the one mentioned by the Member. They have asked that a policy and program be made available. At the moment, our provision, Mr. Chairman, is we provide disabled benefits of \$175 a month beyond the other benefits that are provided. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us how long that \$175 a month has been available and if, upon the review that the department has done of that amount of money, that has been adequate. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is provided through the income support. I am not quite sure. I would have to check with Mr. Cleveland to see how long that has been in position. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the \$175 figure was instituted with the reform of the Income Support Program, which occurred four years ago, I would say. In terms of the Members question in respect to adequacy – we have had some discussions with NGOs, particularly with various levels of funding. I would not suggest that this is either adequate or inadequate. I think there certainly has been some interest in raising the number in some quarters. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. Given the concern and the push by advocacy groups, I think we can assume that this amount of money is deemed to be, in most quarters, inadequate. The committee is concerned about this when we see other jurisdictions in Canada. I believe all of them except Nunavut have disabled pensions that ensure a minimum level of income for permanently disabled persons. The fact that advocacy groups in the North have been insisting for a number of years that this be instituted, I think this committee feels strongly that something has to be done. It has been a few years. Nothing has been done over this time. This is not a new concern. This is something that has been raised in past budgets, and has been continually discussed. Given the time, and given the lack of action by government, the committee would like to move a motion in that regard. I will move that motion now, Mr. Chair.

Committee Motion 9-14(3): To Recommend a Model to Ensure Minimum Level of Income For Permanently Disabled Residents (Carried)

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in cooperation with the Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services, develop a model and ensures a minimum level of income for permanently disabled residents, and an assured level of health care benefits. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is being circulated. I think the motion has been circulated. Everyone has a copy. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. The Chair recognizes Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of questions for the Minister regarding the ABE in the communities. Some of the other Members have touched on it, but I know in my region we have one community that has a 70 percent illiteracy rate. A number of years ago, one of the other community's funding was taken out of the community and given to one of the boards to administer and to bring the program into the community. By doing that, we lost the ABE program in our community. I am just wondering where Mr. Cleveland spoke of how they were going to fund these different communities for ABE or the skills and careers. How is the department is going to control the spending? How do they know the money is being spent on what it is being given for? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Community Skills for Work are based on proposals that are submitted from the communities, and that is the check on the system. With regard to block funding, that is based on programs that are identified for that, and there is some flexibility for those organizations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. The Minister did not answer my question. The flexibility is there. The concern is are they giving us the services that the funds are there for, and the question is how do they control it? How do they monitor it? Are there any reviews on how the money is spent? Is it giving us what we want? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get Mr. Cleveland to clarify my comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department, about two years ago, established what has been called an accountability framework for divisional education councils. We have a similar type of arrangement with the College. Under that accountability framework, the councils are required to do a number of things. One is their requirement to submit a budget for the Minister for review. Secondly, they are required to submit a program plan in how they plan to deliver the programs, and third, they need to report on results at the end of the year. We use those to monitor performance, and it does provide the councils with some flexibility in terms of how they do it. We want to ensure that the results from the work are appropriate to the plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on the ABE, again, so there are some communities without ABE for a couple of years. I am just wondering if the Minister, with the \$650,000, will he be going to the councils or the boards, whoever the funds are going to and try to bring the programs back so we can educate our adults, so they can go into the mining field and the oil field?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of the funding is through the College, but the other funding is through the regional offices and proposals are submitted to those regional offices from the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I was saying was that maybe the department can look at the statistics and say that this is needed in this community. We know that you brought us our proposal, but the criteria in there must change. We must have ABE. We need to train our people. We have to educate them. If we do not educate them, they cannot read the safety manuals and they cannot get jobs. That is what the mines are saying. The oil pipelines will be saying the same thing as well.

We have to have our ABE. I do not know what they do in some of the regions, with some of the boards, what kind of training they do, but I think we have to look at it very closely and pinpoint where we have to spend our funds in ABE and training our adults. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also believe that we need to focus on communities that need the program and benefit from these particular programs. Thank you.

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

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

Committee Motion 10-14(2): To Defer Advanced Education and Careers in ECE 2000-2001 Main Estimates (Carried)

I MOVE that this item, advanced education and careers in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2000-2001 main estimates, be deferred.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is motion on the floor being distributed. The motion has been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. This item, advanced education and careers, is deferred. We will go on to education and culture, 9-17, operation expense, total operations expense, \$105,737,000. Mr. Dent

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are on page 9-12? Sorry, I thought we were going over to the next page, 9-17. Mr. Chairman, one of the goals that the department presented during its committee presentation on business plans said that the department wanted to develop and implement a departmental action plan for children. I am wondering if I can ask what would be in such a plan, what areas the plan would encompass, and when we could expect to see this plan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are looking at an early childhood strategy that we are working on with the Department of Health and Social Services. There are a number of components we are looking at developing in that area. Some are related to health and some are related to education. The strategy is in development work at the moment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not really get a clear understanding of what sort of things might be included in such a plan. Clearly there was no answer as to when this plan will be completed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The work done to date was to define the strategies vision and draft some principles. We have identified four key areas as possible to develop: parenting and family supports; pregnancy, birth and infancy; early childhood care and learning; and community supports. With regard to the timelines, we are looking at developing a three year action plan. We hope to have that together this summer. We want to have stakeholders consultations and hopefully have an official launch of this strategy this fall sometime. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was there any tie into family literacy in those key areas that are to be identified? I had thought this was what I saw in the budget speech. One of the four key areas there was a tie to literacy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there is an intent to tie this to family literacy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it is important that we support families in order to give children the best chance of success, so I will be watching with some interest to see what the department develops in terms of an action plan. I look forward to the updating that I hope will come to committee on a regular basis, so that this does not come as a fait accompli, but that we are involved in the process leading up to the announcement of the new strategy.

Speaking of strategies, Mr. Chairman, in the presentation of the business plan, there were a couple of strategies that caught my eye. One was to implement new day care subsidy guidelines. I was wondering if we could get an outline of what sort of changes we might expect in these guidelines?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I will ask Mr. Cleveland to answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chairman, over the last few years, we have had a number of concerns raised with the department by clients of the day care subsidy program, as well as by day care operators. They raised issues with us primarily regarding timeliness of payments, but they had a number of suggestions for other parts of our guidelines that could be improved to streamline our program and make it more effective.

We have taken that advice and are making a number of adjustments to the policies and procedures. We are in the process of implementing them now. They include specific

elements with respect to processing of payments. We have cleaned that up. We do not believe there is quite the same blockage as there was previously. Secondly, we have cleaned up some of the areas where there was particular contention, such as areas around determining how the subsidies were paid during holiday periods.

Generally speaking, I think the guideline changes have been very well received, judging from the comments we have had during the drafting process. It has been a process, Mr. Chairman, for some issues that have been underway for several years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the other strategies that I noted was a strategy to increase community based support services for parents. What does this mean? What sort of programs are we looking at when we talk about increasing some community based support services for parents?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the update of the departmental strategic plan and the public consultation, we heard from a number of communities, as well as from teachers, from parents and others, that one of the things that could strengthen our school programs was for parents to be more actively involved in their student's education.

The strategic plan update outlined a series of activities and our subsequent discussions through the Ministerial forum outlined a series of activities that could take place to strengthen parental involvement. They included everything from parenting to how to more directly involve parents in the schools so they were more familiar with the education of their children. There was quite a range of different activities.

We are, with the divisional education councils, going to start that process in a focused manner this year. The chairs of the divisional education councils have brought that up in discussions with the Minister, and they are quite keen to strengthen the linkage, if you will, between the education system and parents. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What about ties in this area to Health and Social Services programs? Is there any cooperation between the two departments in terms of developing these services?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there certainly is. Generally speaking, I think the view is that it is critical at the community level for Health and Social Services staff, education

staff to work cooperatively together to address a number of these issues.

We have seen several recent examples of that kind of activity, including some of the cooperation that is taking place with respect to residential school recovery, just as one particular example of some of the activity that has been carried on jointly at the community level, as well as at the territorial level. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is in regard to the aboriginal language funding. A lot of these language groups have a lot of communities they are associated with, rather than just having some money to administer. Especially if you look at the Inuvialuit, they have six communities they have to serve for that program. The same with the Gwich'in, where they have four communities which they missed their program.

So I am just wondering, has that been taken into consideration in the calculation of how the dollars are allocated? It should not just be based on the assumption that it is per capita, but also the realization that the cost to serve the communities by the language groups has to be factored into the cost of administering and delivering this program. You are delivering it not just at a regional centre, but you have to serve your communities.

I would like to ask the Minister, has that been factored in with regard to how the money has been allocated? Could you give us an actual breakdown of how much of the \$5,591,000 has been distributed by the different cultural groups?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The allocation of the funding, and we are dealing there with the funding for the language communities, which is different than the breakdown that the Member had requested, but the allocation for the funding for the aboriginal language communities is done by a base amount plus an amount for population. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: I was just wondering if the Minister had some more information to add to that, because I believe he was looking at something else.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Devitt to answer that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chairman, the \$5,600,000 is the funding allocated to schools. It is allocated under the school financing formula. It is for language specialists, classroom assistants, which are allocated based on the number of aboriginal students in each jurisdiction or school.

As well, there is funding for the teaching and learning centres and for cultural programs and for interpreter-translator services. It does take into account the cost differences. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What happens in the case of, say, the community of Aklavik or Inuvik, where you have two distinct cultural groups, like the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in, who make up almost 50 percent of the aboriginal population?

Are there two separate lumps of funding for the two groups, to ensure they are able to carry out the different criteria you mentioned?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The allocation is by jurisdiction and not by language groups, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The concern I have is that, in the case of Aklavik, I know for a fact that the groups did not really get the amount that was allocated for their language programs, and the money was used by the education council, in which they used that money for other things than what it was specifically earmarked for.

So what kind of controls are in place to ensure this money is actually spent on the teaching of the language programs in our classrooms, and being used to pay for an extra teacher or counselor within the school, rather than having an actual person teaching the language in the school?

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

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding that is transferred to the divisional education council is then allocated to the communities, and the council does have the ability to make changes and adjustments in their allocation.

One of the reasons we have instituted the accountability framework I mentioned before was to ensure that DEC's, in working with their communities, are reflecting the overall priorities as it relates to, for example in this case, aboriginal language delivery.

So that is one of the general reasons behind why we have put the accountability framework in place, although we do leave some flexibility for the DEC's working with their communities to make adjustments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another area of concern was the actual wages that a lot of these people were paid. They have gone out, have been trained to be in the logistic areas where they are able to speak the languages and teach the languages where they are certified.

Yet, they are not paid the same as teacher's assistants in the classrooms. In some cases, they are paid less than caretakers in the schools. A lot of them are frustrated that they do just as much work as teachers or teachers' assistants, yet they get paid much less.

Why is it that they are not certified under the same criteria as teachers or teachers' assistants?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I will get Mr. Cleveland to address this question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe this issue came to our attention late last fall and around the Christmas period. There are a couple of points that are important. One is that we certainly encourage education councils and DECs to use a consistent manner and a consistent approach to treatment of staff.

Secondly, and this seems a bit contradictory, but it is the case, both divisional education councils and education authorities can hire people directly, and sometimes that does cause a bit of a difference in benefits.

This matter was brought to the attention of the DEC and the DEA and we have asked that it be resolved. I am sorry that I am not aware of the most recent events, but it is an issue we are tracking because of the concerns.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you are saying that the majority of the aboriginal funding under aboriginal languages, \$5,591,000 is used, I would like to know what the \$1,258,000 is for, which is there for the aboriginal community funding. What is the difference between that funding and the \$5 million? Does that come out of the \$5 million?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, the \$5 million is used by schools and the other funding is for direct funding for the language communities. It does not come out of the \$5 million.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a number of issues under this activity. I would like to start by thanking the Minister and his department for the work they have done with the museum in Fort Smith, trying to resolve their situation there. It is greatly appreciated by the community.

I also fully support the work being done with libraries. I think the arrangement made with the Gates Foundation is a good one. We will provide support to community libraries which have faced their own funding crunch over the years. Mr. Chairman, I do have some questions. I do not think this one has been touched on, but it is an issue of languages.

According to the figures provided, there was a lapse of over \$300,000, almost 40 percent of the language bureau. I was wondering if the Minister could elaborate on the reason for that, and indicate the plans to deal with what is going to happen in the coming year to ensure that all these language funds are spent as the money is voted. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a delay in signing the agreement that made it difficult for the Government of the Northwest Territories and non-government organizations to fully spend the allocations. The government successfully negotiated with the federal government an agreement to carry over the anticipated surplus from 1999-2000, some \$600,000 was approved as a carry over for the next two years, and \$75,000 was approved for a one year carry over in the French language area. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since this area covers the schools as well, I have some questions with regard to the curriculum. Specifically in relation to math 10, and the issue with the very many shades of math 10, between pure and applied, math 14, math 16, math 20. A whole host of math 10 configurations, and the problems that it was causing. Could the Minister indicate how that issue is coming along in terms of trying to resolve it, so it is not such a complex course, making it very difficult for delivery, and confusing both the students and the staff?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is information I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member points out, there have been a number of issues raised since the implementation of the change. The math curriculum, just for the benefit of the Members, is part of the curriculum package from the western provinces and territories, we work cooperatively with the other jurisdictions around standardization of curriculum. Math was one area that was selected. As a result of the issues that were raised over the last couple of years, there has been a very aggressive program underway between the jurisdictions to sort out a number of the issues that were identified.

That information was recently transmitted to representatives from each of the DECs. In fact, the curriculum specialists met and discussed the math situation. They developed a specific outline for implementation, a schedule for implementation. My understanding is that folks were quite happy with the detailing of the implementation at this point in time.

I think it will still present some challenges in terms of making sure that our resources keep up and our staff development, or in-service training for teachers keeps up. Now that we have identified the course schedules, now that some of the adjustments have been made to some of the programming and the course structures, I think we are in a much better position to effectively implement it. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Could the Minister or the deputy indicate in a more quantifiable way what that means? How many variations of math 10 will we end up with?

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

MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chairman, I do not believe I brought that information with me to this Session. I would be happy to provide it to the Member.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: I would appreciate the information. I guess the point being that we have gone from a time of two different types of math 10 to so many that the department has trouble keeping track of the courses in math 10, which in itself is part of the problem.

I have some questions as well, Mr. Chairman, with regard to this SPAR Committee and the work they were doing, specifically in relation to the pupil-teacher ratio, funding and the student special needs, student support funding, and the work that is being done. Given the money that was voted by this Assembly to do the work, I would like the Minister to speak specifically about the two commitments. The commitment to lower the pupil-teacher ratio and, more importantly, what kind of formula and how is the work progressing in terms of the formula for special needs?

I have seen some letters. One is from the Autism Society, where they outlined their concerns very clearly. This is a very difficult area, identified as the most critical area in terms of pressures on the school systems. I would appreciate an update. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The pupil-teacher ratio is legislated, and therefore we have targets on that to bring it down by a certain percentage every year, until we reach the 16:1 level. With regard to the special student needs, the survey is nearing completion. The data is being collected and compiled.

Once the data is together, then recommendations will be made. The data will be reviewed by the SPAR Committee and recommendations will be made to the Minister as to the allocation of the funding. It will be worked out, and perhaps I could ask Mr. Cleveland to give some details as to further work on that area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to provide a bit of detail in terms of actions by the committee and this information has been reviewed by the chairs in cooperation with the Minister.

The allocation for the pupil-teacher ratio changed from 18:1 to 17.5:1, has been instituted. It essentially means about a 3.5 percent increase in the number of teacher-person years for the 2000-2001 year. In the area of inclusive schooling, the SPAR Committee looked at allocations just for the 2000-2001

academic year. Recognizing the survey was coming, they felt it was important simply to make the allocation for the upcoming year and then revisit it with a three year plan as soon as the survey data was in.

They have allocated money in three areas for the 2000-2001 year. The first is an increase of about \$500,000 for staff development in the schools to assist with the inclusive schooling activities. The second was direct program assistance to students with the allocation. We raised the allocation for the full-time equivalent for each student, from \$260 per student to \$370 per student. That is allocated to each council on a per student basis. The third area was they set aside additional funding for minor projects and equipment. It is a relatively small amount of \$77,000 but they felt it was important to ensure the DEC's had additional monies for that purpose for the 2000-2001 year. The intention of that committee is to meet again after the student survey is in and provide a three-year plan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope that it is appropriate to address the area of culture under grants and contributions. In going through the main estimates, Mr. Chairman, and the business plan that was presented to committee, I regret I did not take the opportunity to sit on the committee's briefings with the Minister. There is very little, perhaps a few words, perhaps a few lines, that covers the activities of the department in the area of culture. I have a couple of issues that I would like to explore, but I would just like to confirm with the Minister, especially in the area of support for cultural organizations. I have identified four areas on page 9-19 and 9-20, that would seem to lend support for cultural organizations.

It has cultural projects at \$61,000; northern performers, \$36,000; the Northwest Territories Arts Council, \$140,000; and finally, Mr. Chair, cultural organizations at \$259,000. That adds up to just under half a million dollars. I would just like the Minister to confirm, are those essentially the areas that could lend themselves to supporting cultural organizations? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, that is correct, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I would specifically like to focus in on the diminishing level of support for a territorial institution that started in 1982. It was a unique partnership among the government and several of its departments, education, public works, were involved in there. Southern media, I believe it was the Globe and Mail that was very excited and enthusiastic about supporting the start of a northern culture facility. We now have a 330 seat performing arts facility, the only one of its kind in the Northwest Territories. Its mandate is to serve the Northwest Territories as the premiere performing arts facility, and to foster Northwest Territories traditional and performing arts.

A foundation of its creation in 1982, or 1983, was that the Government of the Northwest Territories made the commitment to provide the overhead for the physical structure itself, but also a level of core funding that would enable it to continue to foster

these goals and objectives on a continuing basis. The folks over at NACC have advised that the \$100,000 annual contribution has diminished to about \$20,000 a year. It is arguably, the lowest of its kind in Canada, for a facility of this kind and its role as a territorial facility.

NACC has continued to survive, if not thrive. It has a budget including services in kind and donations and revenues from activities of about \$190,000. However, the organization has recently made it plain, and not in a complaining or threatening way, but in a very factual and constructive way, that its long-term future is in jeopardy without the territorial government restoring, not increasing, not adding to, but restoring that original commitment to the success of this facility. I would like to ask the Minister what plans he has to reconsider this very realistic and very necessary request. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I met with the representatives from NACC, the board, and the executive director. I am familiar with the situation that the organization is facing. It is correct that the funding has been reduced substantially over the years and the organization has relied more and more on fund-raising processes.

They presented a budget to me to point out their concerns to me about the funding requirements that they have, and the shortfall that they have. Part of the budget deal was not just the restoration of operational funding, but also in regard to improvements to the facility.

I am still in a position of looking at this. I do not have an answer for the organization as of yet. We do provide the facility and the space to the organization so that there is no cost involved. It is made available for students to access the facility from the schools for various purposes. Certainly, Sir John Franklin makes good use of the facility from time to time. To answer the Member's question, I am still at the stage of having to look at this, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, over the years the government has made a substantial investment, not only in the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre, but in other cultural organizations around the Northwest Territories. What I am concerned about is that over time, as our support for these organizations and these facilities erode, we are basically watching the value of our long-term investment erode. When we are dealing with volunteer organizations, of which NACC is certainly one, and there are many others, I think there comes a point where even the most committed and passionate volunteer is going to lose heart and say where is the partnership and the will to forge on and maintain these very valuable assets.

In my mind, Mr. Chairman, they are not options. They are not nice frills that we can have only when we can afford them. They are part of our infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. They are part of our lifestyle. They are part of why we are here. They give us a point of pride and focus for our visitors, and they deserve our support. I would ask the Minister to go back into these programs. There is a half a million dollars in funding. That is not a lot.

I would ask them to seriously consider how this money is profiled and how we are going to get the best long-term value

for continuing and restoring our investment to cultural organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too recognize the value of the organization. It is unique and it is an organization that provides a great contribution to the arts scene here in the North. It is an important element. I will certainly have a look at what we can do at this end. The budget funding is very limited in this area, as the Member has pointed out. The whole budget area in arts and culture is very limited. It is one of the unfortunate situations we are facing these days. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have some questions related to SPAR and the PTR that I would like to get clarified. Could the Minister indicate, with the work being done and the money being invested in pupil-teacher ratio, which is actually a funding formula, will there be a decrease, however marginal, in the class size in those communities, in those schools that have classes that are above the ratio?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Mr. Chairman, it is probably a little early to tell, until we know what the enrolments are in the fall. The funding that was allocated was allocated for teaching positions, so we would expect that there would be some change in the overall class size. A lot of it is going to depend on the particular mix of students in the various communities.

Certainly, the point the Member raises is exactly what we are monitoring. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to special needs, one of the concerns I have heard was the methodology, in terms of doing the survey, which was, I believe, some type of random sample which in some cases missed entire segments of the special needs community, if I could call them that.

I would just like the Minister to elaborate on how the methodology was done. Is that an issue? How do they offset that kind of missing of special needs students? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a committee of five individuals who did direct interviews in schools with a population over 150 students. It was on a three level basis. It was done with the schools, the teachers as a second level, and the third level was the classroom level or the

school level and directly with the teachers. It was done by telephone for schools with a population smaller than 150 students. That is from K to 9, and it was sampled at the high school level. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister elaborate when he says surveys were done in schools over 150, how many students K to 9 in each school would be surveyed? There was a survey as well in the high school. I would be curious to know how that sample was chosen.

The other question would be about the phone surveys. Were you talking to students, or just asking the teachers and principals to identify where the needs were? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get Mr. Cleveland to elaborate on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the K to 9 level, all teachers and all classrooms were interviewed about all children, so it was a comprehensive work.

At the 10 to 12 level, the sampling was done using the stats bureau to help us select the sample to make sure it was representative of the group. The difficulty with sampling at the high school level has to do with kids moving from class to class, which is somewhat different than you have at the K to 9 level.

The work that is now being done is the compilation of data and the statistical analysis of that data, so we have valid information to base some of the judgements on. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, could the deputy minister elaborate on some of the concerns that have been raised by the autism society, who wrote a letter and copied it to all Members in terms of the concern by the sampling. I am assuming that at the high school level, there was a miss of certain segments.

Is there a way to offset or accommodate any kind of gaps that may be there as a result of the methodology and the way the survey was done? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, I believe the question the Member is addressing concerned the questionnaire and whether the questionnaire used an earlier practice where it provided a level one, two or three terminology for identifying categories.

The department moved away from categorical funding on disabilities, Mr. Chairman, so that there would not be labels and over-identification of needs when funding is attached.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have another question on special needs, but I would also like to get the Minister to comment, in case I run out of time. I want to put this question in early.

With regard to the College, I have concerns that the heavy equipment program has been seriously undercapitalized over the years and we are running a fleet of equipment that is ancient and very expensive to maintain. I would like the Minister, after he answers my next question, if he would come back to that one. Because it is an issue and I am going to shortly be out of time.

The special needs issue, Mr. Chairman, and the level one, two and three. How you categorize special needs students is very significant. The question I would have is, how do you determine the students who are most in need?

The concern was that if we moved to per capita kind of funding arrangement, that the bigger you are, the more you get, regardless of the special need requirements, may not be the fairest, most equitable way. How do you determine, in each school, in each community, how many special needs students require an aid full time as opposed to just some modest support at the SNA?

That is a fundamental issue. If you define special needs wide enough, everybody has a special need. The thing is to try to bring a frame to it. At the extreme end, how are you going to define that? Thank you.

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

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of how to define needs and then how to allocate funding is one that is being dealt with right across the country right now. I had the opportunity to sit with Ministers of education at the last Council of Ministers of Education meeting and discuss this particular issue, and it is an issue which each of them is grappling with.

Most of them, in their discussion, indicated that their preference would be to move in the direction that the department here has moved, but they also very clearly said that the identification of need for individual students is very important. So that, at the divisional level, there can be effective planning and support put in place.

That being said, I think that when we complete the survey, we will have a good sense of what the needs are and, certainly, at that point, the intention is to review our allocation structure and see if it is suitable, or whether it needs adjustment. That is the intention behind doing the survey, to make it possible for us to have a good discussion of that. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to quickly flip over then to my heavy equipment question with the College. There is, I believe, about \$136,000 in the budget which is about enough to buy a set of tires for one of those big pieces of heavy equipment. I am very concerned about being

able to provide a quality program with equipment that is very old. It costs almost as much to maintain as it would be to arrange some sort of purchase of some new equipment.

They have not had any capital funding for quite a few years and they have only a very modest amount. I would like the Minister's feedback on how he intends to address that issue. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have asked the College to provide us with an evaluation of both the equipment and the program. This has been looked at in various ways. One way that it was looked at was the possibility of leasing equipment. That became totally unfeasible because the three pieces of equipment came to something like \$160,000 for a three month period. So it is of particular concern.

I was down at the College and toured the College several months ago at the opening of the P.W. Kaiser School, and I had an opportunity to talk to the College director and we went through the facility and there is no doubt that this is a concern.

We talked about the possibility of partnering with industry with various organizations that could supply the equipment, allow the training to take place on the equipment.

However, as I say, we have asked the College to look at reviewing this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. We are on page 9-17, Education and Culture. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in this area, I asked a question earlier on, or the Minister did, about the new funding that the department is getting in this area and it is going to student support services, as well as to teachers wages. I would like to get some information from the Minister as to, whether this funding is targeted.

We know that if we are going to positively impact students, we need to start at the young ages, so is there going to be any guidelines at all attached to this, to say that it should be going first of all to teachers, or teachers in lower grades or anything of that nature? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The PTR, as I mentioned earlier, is a legislative matter. We have set targets to be met each year to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio. On the student needs, I will get Mr. Cleveland to address that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we indicated earlier, the change in the PTR will increase the number of teachers by about 3.5 percent in 2000-2001. The funding for the inclusive schooling activities is focused in three areas for 2000-2001. Those three areas were identified as priorities by teachers and administrators at the divisional level and they are in the staff training and development area.

Secondly, to increase the funding, specifically for programming for student needs.

The third was the identification of additional cash for equipment and facility modification that might be needed to meet student needs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time, I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable. All in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will rise and report progress. I would like to thank the Minister and his staff for appearing before the committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, the committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, Committee Report 3-14(3), and would like to report progress with three motions 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 Member for Hay River South. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schuerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development at 8:45 a.m. tomorrow morning. A meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 9:00 a.m.

Orders of the day for Thursday, June the 29, 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. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act
 - Bill 8, Justice Statutes Amendments Act
 - Bill 9, An Act to Amend the NWT Power Corporation Act
 - Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. 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
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned to Thursday, June the 29th, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:00 p.m.