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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PRAYER</b> .....	<b>1265</b>
<b>MINISTERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>1265</b>
64-14(3): DEH CHO LEADERSHIP APPROVES MILESTONE AGREEMENTS (ANTOINE).....	1265
<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>1265</b>
CONNECTING DOGRIB COMMUNITIES TO THE HYDRO ELECTRIC POWER GRID (LAFFERTY).....	1265
SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN MANUFACTURING (BELL).....	1265
SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST SERVICES IN HAY RIVER (DELOREY).....	1266
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (DENT).....	1266
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (MILTENBERGER).....	1267
REAPING BENEFITS FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA (KRUTKO).....	1268
COMMENTS BY OFFICIALS REGARDING THE MACKENZIE RIVER FERRY CROSSING (MCLEOD).....	1268
FUEL REBATE INEQUITIES (LEE).....	1268
CONSTITUENCY VISIT (ANTOINE).....	1269
SHORTAGE OF DAY CARE SERVICES FOR WORKING PARENTS (NITAH).....	1269
<b>RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>1269</b>
<b>RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY</b> .....	<b>1270</b>
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>1270</b>
<b>TABLING OF DOCUMENTS</b> .....	<b>1281</b>
<b>NOTICES OF MOTION</b> .....	<b>1281</b>
<b>FIRST READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>1281</b>
<b>SECOND READING OF BILLS</b> .....	<b>1282</b>
<b>CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS</b> .....	<b>1282</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE</b> .....	<b>1329</b>
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b> .....	<b>1329</b>



**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2001****Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, 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):** Orders of the day, Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 64-14(3): Deh Cho Leadership Approves Milestone Agreements**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** (Translation) Mr. Speaker, phase one of the Deh Cho Process has been underway since September, 1999. I am pleased to report that on February 14<sup>th</sup>, the leadership of the Deh Cho First Nations authorized their chief negotiator to initial the Deh Cho First Nations Framework Agreement and Interim Measures Agreement. This approval marks an important milestone in the Deh Cho Process. Over the next few weeks, our government will complete its review of these documents in order to approve them for initialling and signing by the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is my understanding that the federal government will also review the two agreements prior as part of their approval process for initialling and then signing.

Mr. Speaker, the framework agreement sets out the purpose, approach and process for negotiating an agreement-in-principle and final agreement and it identifies the subject matters for negotiation. It also provides for the full involvement of the Government of the Northwest Territories in these negotiations.

The interim measures agreement, Mr. Speaker, will serve to protect important areas of the Deh Cho while negotiations are underway. For example, this agreement provides the Deh Cho First Nations with an enhanced role in the review and approval process of land use in the Deh Cho. It will encourage economic development and provide economic opportunities in the Deh Cho territory through negotiation of an interim resource development agreement between the Deh Cho First Nations and Canada. These interim agreements will be replaced by the final agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the initialling and signing of these agreements will pave the way for the three parties to begin phase two of the process; the negotiation of an agreement-in-principle and a final agreement.

Mr. Speaker, upon approval of the Deh Cho framework and interim measures agreements, a formal signing ceremony is expected to take place this spring in a Deh Cho community. I look forward to inviting you and my colleagues and MLAs to

attend this important event. (Translation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Lafferty.

**ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS****Member's Statement on Connecting Dogrib Communities to the Hydro Electric Power Grid**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in many northern communities, power is supplied by the use of diesel generators located in the centre of town. This is both unhealthy and expensive for the residents. The generators have affected traditional activities such as drying meat and fish. People are also concerned that they cannot hang laundry outside to dry as it gets exhaust odours.

In the Dogrib region, we are blessed with clean electrical power through the Snare hydro dams. One of the main goals in constructing the hydro dams along the Snare River was to meet the electricity demands of customers in the North Slave.

The result of the hydro dams has given Yellowknife and Rae-Edzo a cleaner and more affordable energy source, but to date the remote communities in my region still rely on diesel-generated power stations located in the centre of town. In order for the communities within my region to have clean power, they need to be connected to the rest of the hydro system. By putting hydro power into the communities, we will eliminate fuel emissions that lead to greenhouse gases and also minimize breathing and skin problems. At the appropriate time, I will have questions responsible for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Déclaration des députés. Item 3 Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**Member's Statement on Support for Northern Manufacturing**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to again make the case for the support of manufacturing in the North. I think it is a good time to be looking at this, considering our current review of the Business Incentive Policy. We know that the underlying philosophy behind BIP was to level the playing field between northern and southern businesses looking to do work in the North. I think it is obvious to all of us here that northern businesses provide both employment for Northerners and also make investments that stay here in the North, Mr. Speaker.

I know some people have asked why our government should be considering incentives for manufacturing or tourism, for example, when we have oil and gas or mining. I think it is important to realize that an additional job in mining is not the same as an additional job in tourism or manufacturing for a couple of reasons. The first reason, Mr. Speaker, is diversification. I think it is critical that we look to diversify our economy. We do not know what is going to happen with commodity prices and it makes a lot of sense not to have all our eggs in one basket and be too reliant on any sector in our economy.

The second is self-sufficiency, Mr. Speaker. We have to look to replace imports. We are not alone here. I think all countries strive to be self-sufficient. There are examples in the news continually. Some examples we may not agree with. In the United States, exploration for gas in Alaska is very controversial. They are looking to replace Saudi Arabian imports and I think this just highlights the fact that this is going on all over, Mr. Speaker. I think that if we can agree that diversification and self-sufficiency are important, then I think we have to agree that we need to support northern manufacturing, Mr. Speaker.

So now it is up to our government to work with the manufacturing sector to determine two things. Number one, what is our definition of northern manufactured products? We tend to think of things like auto manufacturing, but in the Northwest Territories, it can be anything from fibreglass power poles to tents and canvas bags or even clothing. I believe the Premier was sporting a moose hide vest made last week in the North. It was a beautiful vest and I believe even his mother did some value-added work in the form of embroidery on that vest. I have to say we were all very jealous of the vest on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The second thing we have to ask is how we can best support our northern manufacturers. Can we do more than give preference on direct Government of the Northwest Territories contracts? What about employment subsidies or other tax credits? Mr. Speaker, I think it is very timely to consider this given that we are under...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your time is up, Mr. Bell.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There being no nays, Mr. Bell, you may continue.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that northern manufacturing is very valuable, and I think it is very timely to be talking about this now considering our review of BIP underway. To ensure that we recognize the value of a diversified economy, I would like to urge all Members of this House to lobby the government for support for northern manufacturing. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Speech Language Pathologist Services in Hay River**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an area of great concern to many parents and educators in Hay River. Mr. Speaker, the issue I would like to address here today is the lack of a speech language pathologist for Hay River.

Hay River has been without a speech language pathologist since August of 2000. Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough that this time period is critical in the formative development of a child. Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in this House would agree with me that our children are our most valuable resource.

Mr. Speaker, prior to 1997, the delivery of speech language services was done through the Stanton Regional Hospital. At that time, the South Slave communities of Hay River, Hay River Dene Reserve, Enterprise, Kakisa, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith only received a maximum of 30 days per year of service. In 1997, the Hay River Community Health Board initiated a speech language program. This program offered assessment and treatment services to the various South Slave communities. Mr. Speaker, there were a number of positive outcomes as a result of having a speech language pathologist. This program has dramatically improved the social and intellectual development of our children.

Mr. Speaker, the Hay River Community Health Board has determined that one speech language pathologist cannot handle the workload placed on them in servicing so many communities. Mr. Speaker, the normal caseload for a speech language pathologist is 35, and they can only adequately see 75 patients on a consultation level. Mr. Speaker, in the South Slave area, the case load was 191, of which five percent were adults and 95 percent were pre-school and school-aged children.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that the demands placed on the speech language pathologist, coupled with the lack of funding, has led to the demise of the program in the South Slave region.

Mr. Speaker, at the proper time I will have further questions for the Minister responsible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

#### **Member's Statement on Code of Conduct for Government Employees**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the code of conduct that was announced in this House yesterday by the Honourable Joe Handley.

I would like to say that I believe that a code of conduct for our employees is a very good idea. I think that to codify the process for our employees so they understand what constitutes a conflict of interest and how they can avoid such a problem is a good idea. However, I would have to ask the question, did we get this one right?

Mr. Speaker, I believe the whole process started as a result of recommendations made by the Conflict of Interest Review

Panel in April, 1999. The panel noted at that time that senior staff:

"Often have access to much of the same confidential information as Members of the Executive Council, and often have more information than other Members of the Legislative Assembly. Consequently, senior officials are often placed in situations akin to those that represent prohibited conduct for Ministers under the Act."

Mr. Speaker, the panel went on to say that there are some restrictions on senior staff. I quote again: "Many of these restrictions are policies which do not have the same legal force as legislation."

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, from that we would expect to see legislation, but I am afraid that all we get regarding deputy ministers in this code of conduct is paragraph 48, which really leaves everything just as it is right now. Mr. Speaker, in order to fully protect our most senior staff and to be seen to be protecting the public interest, we need legislation to be changed.

Mr. Speaker, the impetus for this code came from recommendations that we clarify the situation for our most senior staff. However, the code that we now have in front of us leaves things pretty much the same for deputies and creates a very detailed system for all employees. Again, it is a good idea to codify the situation, to wrap up all the rules in one place, but again, did we get it right? I do not know for sure, but I think maybe not.

I am concerned that perhaps our code does not make the grade. The administration of the code is too closely tied to the deputy ministers and to Cabinet. The contract for the ethics counsellor would be administered by the secretary to Cabinet.

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there nays? There are no nays. Mr. Dent, you may continue.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, with the contract of the ethics counsellor being administered by the secretary to Cabinet, I think that this unfortunately leaves room for a perception problem. There is not enough separation from the deputies' table. The ethics counsellor prepares reports for deputy ministers.

I would like to remind members of government, Mr. Speaker, that the conflict panel report recommended legislation to protect whistleblowers, to ensure there were no reprisals in the work place that interfered with an employee's ethical obligation to report concerns about situations of conflict. Instead, again we have something that is covered only by a code under which an employee should report concerns about conflict to their deputy minister. How often will that happen if both employees work for the same deputy minister?

Mr. Speaker, a code does not accomplish the same thing as whistleblower legislation would. Mr. Speaker, our employees deserve independent advice on potential conflicts, and that

means independent of government. Just as Members of this House can seek advice from an officer at arm's length from government, our employees deserve the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Member's Statement on Code of Conduct for Government Employees**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to speak briefly to the issue of this code of conduct that we received in this House yesterday.

I share the concerns raised by my colleague, Mr. Dent, that this has not quite done the job I think it was intended to. The idea in principle is a good one, but I have gone through this and to me it looks very onerous. As my colleague indicated, it was initially for senior staff, but it has also snared all the other employees in what could very possibly become an intrusive process. The degree of disclosure seems to be equivalent to what we have to go through as Members of this Legislature when you are just an ordinary employee of the government, and not under the same strictures or expectations.

It gives deputies tremendous authority to put employees on the spot, or to put them through a potential meat grinder. We assume they are going to do this all in good faith, but the possibility is there.

There are some very interesting references to the territorial political parties under the political activity section. There is a reference to an unregistered party functioning in the Territories to achieve political aims as one of the definitions of political parties. What does this mean? What groups could be ruled out under this definition? It is very ambiguous and is of concern to me.

I see no reference under deputy ministers or restricted employees to chief of staff, a subject that is still before this House in terms of what is acceptable behaviour for that level of position.

Mr. Speaker, I also took the liberty today of phoning the UNW to find out what they thought of this particular document. They said -- after they tracked their document down this morning -- that they do have concerns that they intend to address themselves, but they share some of the concerns about this. What does it do? The appeal process reports to the secretary to Cabinet, the Ethics Counsellor reports to the secretary to Cabinet. Justice will not be done, or be seen to be done, with that kind of closed, incestuous kind of relationship. It should be, as my colleague indicated, at arms-length so there is fairness to all employees. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

### **Member's Statement on Reaping Benefits From Economic Development Initiatives in the Mackenzie Delta**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to send my congratulations out to the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Inuvialuit Development Corporation, Akita Drilling and Petro Canada for the official opening of the first gas field drilling rig in the Mackenzie Delta since the early 1980s.

Mr. Speaker, it is a point in history for the Mackenzie Delta to be back in the oil and gas industry, which is now thriving in the Mackenzie Delta region. It has been quite some time since the residents of the Mackenzie Delta have waited for this day to happen. They look forward to the economic benefits and opportunities that will flow from the oil and gas sector in the Mackenzie Delta region along with the possible future pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea region want to maximize the benefits, the economic opportunities and the jobs that can come from this development in our region, similar to other regions in the Northwest Territories, such as the ones for the diamond industry, where you can see that through planning, partnerships and development of economic sectors and looking at the secondary spin-offs that come from these developments, we have to look long term.

In order to look long term, we need to ensure we have the training capabilities in our regions and are taking advantage of the opportunities that come, ensuring we have adequate facilities in our region to take on this development, and also looking forward to the challenges ahead.

We as a government have to start doing more in regard to our responsibilities in the areas of the social and economic side. I am talking, Mr. Speaker, about training, ensuring the health and well-being of the people and residents of the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea are met, and also to ensure that we have the resources to partake in the developments that are happening, and to maximize the benefits and the resources to stay in the regions and stay within the communities to assist us in improving our economies.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important to understand that there is also another development happening in our region in regard to the community of Tsiigehtchic, where Devlin Resources has concluded drilling one well and are now into the second phase of drilling the second well.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Krutko, your time for your Member's statement is concluded.

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

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated, Mr. Speaker, there is also development taking place around the community of Tsiigehtchic, in which Devlin Resources, a small Calgary based company, has just concluded one drilling well

and are on their second, with the possibility of one more, of which they have also concluded seismic operations.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate that this government, knowing that these activities are happening, when making presentations on behalf of this government, recognizes that these developments are taking place. Also, in regard to brochures that this government gives out, that has to be in there. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister responsible for renewable resources some questions on this matter.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Déclarations de députés. Le député de la Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

### **Member's Statement on Comments by Officials Regarding the Mackenzie River Ferry Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the Fort Providence community leadership is looking into a feasibility study on the impact a Mackenzie River bridge would have on the community of Fort Providence. It is also well known that the community is investigating how they might be involved in the ownership of a bridge.

The study is aimed at determining if a bridge is environmentally and financially feasible. Once the study is concluded, the community will assess the findings and determine whether the proposed project should be supported or rejected in principle.

This is a serious venture for the community and has sparked interest not only from private individuals, but from leadership, the band council, the Métis Nation, the mayor and support from myself.

In the meantime, it is distressing to note the negative comments made in the press lately as they question whether there is a need for a bridge and the financial viability of this project.

Mr. Speaker, later today, I will be questioning the Minister of Transportation about statements attributed to his senior staff concerning traffic numbers at the ferry crossing and the media reports that the Merv Hardie Ferry is in such good running order that it will not need another overhaul for the next 20 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. Déclarations de députés. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

### **Member's Statement on Fuel Rebate Inequities**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up today on the statement I made yesterday regarding the fuel rebate policy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that I applaud the Minister for introducing this policy that would give help to many who would not otherwise get it. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, there are glaring gaps and inequities in the policy that have been brought to our attention by our constituents. These are

valid concerns that ought to be considered. Solutions to these need not be too complex or time consuming to bring about.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, high fuel costs for running our vehicles and buildings are hurting all of us in our pockets. If this rebate is meant to alleviate that burden for some of us, the basic criteria has to be that the money goes to those who are paying for the fuel bill. I would think that by any standards, this is a pretty straightforward and common sense suggestion.

If the Minister is suggesting, as he did in his answers yesterday, that this is meant to help the working poor as an income supplement, regardless of whether or not their rent went up or they are actually paying the heating bill -- which I will not deny anyone from getting -- this is not still a fuel rebate then. It should not be called as such. That only misleads the public into false expectations. We are receiving many calls from people who want to know how they are qualifying.

Mr. Speaker, I think the bottom line is that we are all hurting and we need a little break. We should also not forget about the commercial users who are running businesses or apartment buildings who could use a break like this, maybe something similar, and who is not necessarily able to pass it on to anyone and they are in a position of having to eat it, and it is eating on their profit, or most of them are running at a marginal level.

Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons, I would suggest two things could be done that would make it more simple and straightforward. They are:

- To bring down the NWT tax on the fuel a little across the board so everyone will benefit; or
- To increase the tax credit for everyone by a little, so that everyone could benefit.

I would think, Mr. Speaker, that this is simple and not complex. It would certainly be a lot more equitable than this rebate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

#### **Member's Statement on Constituency Visit**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (translation begins) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take advantage of the interpreter while I have one. The Northwest Territories is a large place. I as an MLA have many communities to cover. It is our responsibility to visit these communities. Recently, January 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, within five days, I left Yellowknife by vehicle and went to visit my constituency. I would like to say a little on that.

I left here for five days. I arrived in Fort Simpson. I went to Trout Lake. I went there by winter road. I also went to Jeanne Marie River and Fort Simpson, then I came back. Within five days, I covered 2,000 miles. I drove for 27 hours and I visited three communities. I missed out on three of the communities. February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> I went to Wrigley. I still have to visit the Liard and Trout River.

I would like to say that if I want to visit all of my constituency, I have to drive many hours and I have to cover many miles to go

visit my constituency. For the MLAS that cover Yellowknife, they can cover their constituency within half an hour. I just wanted to show you the difference. I am not complaining, but I am just showing you the differences between constituencies. When we visit our communities, there are so many days and only so many hours to cover those areas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

#### **Member's Statement on Shortage of Day Care Services for Working Parents**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to my fellow colleagues for not being here yesterday. I was in Lutsel'e on the invitation of the chief and councillor, Archie Catholique, who participated in a public meeting with De Beers Diamonds Inc, Canada. As Mr. Antoine, it takes those of us who represent communities outside of Yellowknife a long way to fly and it takes a long time. Once you are there, you try to cover as many homes and see as many people as possible, but there is never enough time, Mr. Speaker.

There was a good meeting in Lutsel'e, an initial discussion between De Beers and the community on the Snap Lake project. When I was there, something came to mind. It was very obvious again, Mr. Speaker. I covered this in the House in the last session, which deals with required daycares in the community. It deals with mining and it deals with employment and it deals with education and it deals with health. If you do not have the proper facilities to take care of your children while you are at work, then it is pretty hard to make it to work and it is putting pressures on the organizations in the communities to do a good job on behalf of their people.

A lot of people from the communities are working out of town and you may not have a lot of single parents, but there is a single parent-like atmosphere in the community where mothers or fathers are working in town and have a hard time with babysitters. I am going to be asking the Minister responsible for Education, Culture & Employment what he is doing about helping communities establish day cares so that people could get to work, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. Réponses à des questions orales. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation.

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

##### **Return to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. McLeod on February 21, 2001 regarding the Hay River Reserve access road.

The Member asked a question and a number of supplementary questions about the departments' traffic volume statistics, traffic accident statistics and maintenance expenditures for the Hay River Reserve access road.

The Member for Deh Cho pointed out that on July 7, 2000, in a statement to this House, I stated that over the past ten years, there have been a total of seven reportable motor vehicle accidents on the Hay River Reserve access road. The Member brought to my attention that in a report provided by research and information serviced in the last month, it indicated that there had been 15 reportable vehicle accidents on the Hay River Reserve access road over the same ten-year period.

Since last July, the department discovered that in some accident reports, the accident location was described as occurring on the Dene village road, which is actually another name for the Hay River Reserve access road. In the recent report the department generated, the accidents that had formerly been recorded as occurring on the Dene village road were included with accidents reported on the Hay River Reserve access road.

The Member further noted the department's traffic volume was published with the disclaimer that for 1999, the mechanical traffic counter on the Hay River Reserve access road malfunctioned and the data is unreliable. However, the department has historical traffic data collected from 1993 to the present that makes up for the poor data collected in 1999.

The Member referred to the 1998-99 annual maintenance cost per vehicle per kilometre for access roads in the Northwest Territories. The per vehicle kilometre statistics is a measure of the public benefit achieved by road maintenance expenditures. It is not a measure of the road maintenance effort performed. For this, the maintenance expenditure per kilometre is the appropriate comparative measure. The department's 1999-2000 maintenance expenditure of \$7,558 per kilometre on the Hay River access road is the greatest maintenance expenditure of all 13 access roads in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have another return to oral question asked by Mr. McLeod February 22, 2001 regarding the Mackenzie River ice crossing.

#### **Return to Question 363-14(3): Mackenzie River Ice Crossing**

The Member for Deh Cho asked me a question about the M.V. Merv Hardie's ice breaking capability.

The M.V. Merv Hardie ferry, which operates at the Fort Providence Mackenzie River crossing, is not an icebreaker and it does not have any ice-breaking capability. The ferry's operating procedures during freeze-up avoids any interaction with the heavy ice flows and shuts down periodically when there are heavy flow ice conditions.

A crawler backhoe is mounted on the bow of the Merv Hardie and with its bucket cuts and maintains an ice-free channel across the river until the ice crossing is ready for traffic. While the ice crossing is under construction, the ferry transits back and forth 24 hours a day to keep the channel open. The M.V. Merv Hardie is not an icebreaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. Réponses à des questions orales. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, mot de bienvenue aux visiteurs. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

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

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the grade 5 class from Weledeh School. I wish them much success in their school and grade 5 and in future years. I would also like to recognize their teacher, Mr. Allan Dunn. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you and welcome to the Legislative Assembly. It is always nice to see young people coming to observe their Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I would like to introduce a number of members from northern region headquarters from the Canadian Armed Forces with us here today. We have five members: Captain Vic Tyerman, he is command controller; Warrant Officer Andy Bishop, personal support services supervisor; Warrant Officer George Frampton, senior physicians assistant; Corporal Stephanie Smith, cashier; and Carla Harper, central registry clerk. They are here with Julia Heyland, our public affairs and communications officer of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Please welcome them.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bienvenue. Welcome. Réponses à des questions orales. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Ms. Georgina Rolt-Kaiser, the president of the UNW.

-- Applause

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

#### **ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Question 395-14(3): Hydro Power Delivery in the Dogrib Region**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi. In early February, an organization called Alternatives North sent a letter to the Premier and all MLAs commenting on the Review of Electrical Generation, Transmission and Distribution in the Northwest Territories.

When I read this letter, I saw that the concerns they raised were the same concerns that I have raised with my colleagues and the press about the need to provide adequate power to the communities and the mines to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I would like to ask the Minister, what plan does the corporation have to ensure that hydro power is delivered to the communities of Wha Ti, Wekweti and Gameti? These are the aboriginal names for Lac La Martre, Snare Lakes, and Rae Lakes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, the honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Return to Question 395-14(3): Hydro Power Delivery in the Dogrib Region**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a report that was given to Cabinet just before Christmas that was a review of power generation and regulations. This report was shared with the Members of the Legislature, and it is being reviewed. There are consultations underway presently with stakeholders, aboriginal First Nations governments as well as the communities and interested parties.

It speaks to the potential for hydro power in the Northwest Territories and how that might be brought to use to the communities and the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Power Corporation. It is always a question of how as a government we could facilitate bringing cheaper, cleaner and more affordable supply of power to communities and this question is always, I think, uppermost in the mind of the Power Corporation, as well as this government.

There is no quick answer to the question, but we know that Members of the Legislature will speak to the recommendations contained in that report and this Cabinet will address the recommendations in that report, probably some time in March.

The answer may come in bits and pieces, or it may come as a response to the recommendations. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 395-14(3): Hydro Power Delivery in the Dogrib Region**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the letter I noticed that it referred to the electrical generation review's subtitle, A Design for Tomorrow. There was no mention of linking the smaller communities with hydro power. I know we will be talking about this, but if it is not in there, we cannot deal with it. I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit to doing a feasibility study for the Dogrib Region on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Further Return to Question 395-14(3): Hydro Power Delivery in the Dogrib Region**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to look at the question and the request that the Member is raising. We should note that we are on the brink of perhaps addressing many of the global issues, national issues that are being raised in the governments and countries of North America today.

The United States believes it may be in a crisis for power and energy sources. There is talk of a North American energy policy that would address environmental concerns as well as a need for cleaner, more affordable, reliable sources of power, whether it is natural gas, diesel, hydro, or other forms of power.

How we will fit into that as a government, as a Territory, is something that I think we need to start working on, because otherwise someone else will answer the question for us. So we are prepared to look at that and always in the forefront is how can we ensure, whether we sell it, provide it, that power is then delivered to our constituents who elected us to make sure that they benefit from the generation of power and the supply of power that is affordable to them. Whether it is brought to their door as affordable, or whether we find a way to subsidize it in the way that we manage our other supplies of power. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 395-14(3): Hydro Power Delivery in the Dogrib Region**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the Arctic Energy Alliance, in a letter I received from them after asking questions on whether there was any consultation in the Dogrib region when they did their study, they said there was none, but if there was a need for a feasibility study, they were willing to do it. Will the Minister commit to getting a study underway soon? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Further Return to Question 395-14(3): Hydro Power Delivery in the Dogrib Region**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot make that commitment because I am not sure of what all was done. I know there has been work done in a number of areas by different parties over the years, so as I said, I will commit to the Member to look at it and try to respond to him in the next few days. Thank you.

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

**Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister of Finance. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement earlier today. Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday on some of the gaps and inequities in the rebate policy that is resulting in excluding a number of residents in our city of Yellowknife who could really do with a break on the fuel price.

Today I talked about the commercial operators who will be excluded from this, and the fact that, Mr. Speaker, I want to add that fuel tax in the Northwest Territories is the highest in the country, or one of the highest, and the GNWT is the biggest victim of that. It pays most of the tax.

My question to the Minister is whether or not, would he not consider giving himself a break and reducing the fuel tax? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to mention that we already do give a pretty good break to all of the residents of the Northwest Territories in terms of their heating costs. The GNWT does not have any tax at all on heating fuel or on propane that is used to heat people's homes. We recognize that heating costs are high and have been high for a long time. We have a long, cold winter.

When it comes to other taxes, we do have tax on motor fuels and non-motor. Those are at 10.6 cents for motor gasoline and 9.1 cents for diesel fuel. These taxes may appear to be high, they are not the highest in the country, I do not believe, but I think they are fairly reasonable taxes. Fuel taxes are one of our very limited sources of revenue. If we were to reduce this, then it reduces our flexibility to provide support in a lot of programs, including programs like our one-time heating rebate we are considering, our support to social programs and so on.

I do not believe that reducing the fuel tax, most of which is paid by large corporations, is a good way of helping people who are most in need. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am trying to be constructive in trying to deal with some of the inequities and gaps in this rebate policy that are becoming evident. I wonder if the Minister would consider then expanding, increasing the tax credit for every resident in the North to deal with some of this pressure from the heating costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in the budget address, the government is looking at an increase in the Northern Tax Credit. My department is working on that now. Certainly as we consider increasing the tax credit, we look at the cost of living in the North.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Questions supplementaire, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his positive response. I look forward to hearing the results of his review. My question now is whether or not the Minister would consider revisiting the situation I was talking to him about yesterday between a tenant and landlord scenario, where the tenant who is not paying for the fuel may benefit from this rebate and the landlord who is paying for the fuel will not. I wonder if the Minister could just make the commitment to revisit that scenario. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I appreciate the Member is wanting to be helpful and is putting forward some suggestions and talking with me about the way to make this a better program. I certainly support that. As I said yesterday, I will look at any suggestions that are coming forward and I welcome them.

We have to keep in mind though that the objective of this program is not to provide everyone with a rebate as it is designed, but rather to focus on those who are most in need. I really do not know that we want to compromise too much on the timeliness of this either. We need to get it out there quickly. There are a lot of people who are hurting in being able to pay their heating bill. We want to get this out fast.

There has to be a bit of a compromise between keeping this program simple and maybe having to do some broad categories of people, excluding some or maybe seeming to be unfair to some individuals, but dealing with our population in categories that capture those people who most need help. I am trying to balance this, keep it fairly simple, keep it timely and at the same time help those who are most in need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. La dernier questions supplementaire, final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister is constantly exercising a balancing act, but I just want to let the Minister know that I think the general sense I get from my constituents is that even if they are not eligible for this policy, they just want to be assured that it is done fairly. They understand that it has to be done quickly and economically. However, if they see too many situations where people who are not paying for the bill are getting twice a subsidy, one from...

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

**Further Return to Question 396-14(3): Reduction of Fuel Taxes**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I will ensure the House that I intend to be fair and take into consideration the needs of all people, try to keep to a very minimum those who may feel it is unfair to their particular situation. Most importantly, I want to make sure that this is helping those who are most in need and doing it in a timely way. Thank you very much.

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

**Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Financial

Management Board Secretariat and relate to the code of conduct that he introduced to us yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, the conflict of interest panel in April, 1999, recommended legislation covering deputy ministers because policies and employment contracts, and I quote: "only give rise to civil suits for damages or dismissal for breach of contract."

Mr. Speaker, why has the government not come forward with legislation covering deputy ministers to accompany the code?

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

**Return to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I again request the Member to be patient. We are doing this step by step in order to be able to implement the code as quickly as possible. We cannot get it all together all at once. I think this code is a good first step. I assure the Member that we are looking at bringing forward a legislative proposal that will cover deputy ministers. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Questions supplémentaire, Mr. Dent.

**Supplementary to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the government also bring forward legislation to protect whistle blowers?

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

**Further Return to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss the merits and the downside of doing that. It certainly has a great deal of implication for employees and I think also for employers. I would take that under consideration. At this point though, our intention is to have legislation for deputy ministers. With whistle blowers and maybe other situations, I would like to hear more about those and take them under consideration. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Questions supplémentaire, supplementary question, Mr. Dent.

**Supplementary to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by what date can we expect to see legislation for deputy ministers and perhaps for whistle blowers?

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

**Further Return to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I expect my department to have a proposal before me probably within the next couple of months. I think given their workload, I cannot ask them to do it much faster than that. That is with regard to deputy ministers.

With regard to whistle blowers, I have not made a commitment to do it yet. I want to know more about the circumstances around that one. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. La dernier questions supplémentaire, final supplementary, Mr. Dent.

**Supplementary to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the government change the administration of the code of conduct to ensure government employees can get independent arms-length advice by having an ethics counsellor report to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner or this House?

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

**Further Return to Question 397-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, of course we will consider any of those kinds of requests. I have to point out that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner for the Legislative Assembly reports to the Legislative Assembly. This is quite a different situation than is faced by employees who are covered under the Public Service Act. Before we do this, we would have to look very carefully at whether or not this was a wise thing to do or whether we are complicating the situation for the members of our public service. Thank you.

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

**Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes. It is dealing with the need for daycares in the Northwest Territories, specifically in communities that experience an up-turn in employment dealing with mining companies.

I just returned from Lutselk'e. Although there is still a lot of room for employment with the mining companies, there are a number of people working up there. Both men and women are working. That has identified a great need in the community of Lutselk'e. I imagine Lutselk'e could be a snapshot of communities that are in need. Does the Minister support employment within the mining industry, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Return to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, of course we do. As a Cabinet, we support that particular thrust. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister support the idea of people working in their own communities for their own organizations and for their own people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we support individuals wherever we can to obtain employment. We are working, as the Member knows, on opportunities to have individuals gain employment, both at the mine site and within the communities. We are working on some thrusts in that regard.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Questions supplémentaire. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the department and the Cabinet and government is working in that direction. It is badly needed. Is your department responsible for day care in the Northwest Territories?

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

**Further Return to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of programs that support early childhood development. We have a general early childhood development, which is \$867,000 per year, and a \$1.8 million healthy children's initiative, and a program daycare user subsidy for \$1.2 million per year, Mr. Speaker. All of those programs are intended to support the development of children and programs to allow parents to have their children develop appropriately. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Mr. Minister. Question supplémentaire. Your final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of programs the department is working on. I would say there is not much for capital cost for the people it is representing. Unless the

government is willing to do two years better than the federal government in providing time off for new parents, most kids qualify for Tinkering Tots and whatnot at age three, but there is nothing before that, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to the people of the Northwest Territories that his department will look into developing daycares for profit or non-profit business in communities that have a high rate of employment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 398-14(3): Requirement for Daycare Services**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt that people gaining employment may face some challenges, Mr. Speaker, with regard to day care usage and availability of babysitting services. Certainly we have kept that in mind as we are developing the early childhood development plan, which is being jointly worked on between the Minister of Health and Social Services and myself and our departmental officials. We expect that particular plan will see fruition within the next several months.

Additionally, we have realized some support from the federal government. It is not a lot, but through the Canada health and social transfer payments of approximately \$500,000 for the next six years, all of which will assist us in development and in improving our system.

As I said, I just want to repeat, we do have three programs in place, Mr. Speaker, that total \$4 million per year now. I am not suggesting that is adequate. I am merely suggesting that we do have some programs and we want to build on that to improve the system in all areas, of course, but we recognize that in growth areas where there are employment opportunities for individuals, then we have to look at that. Thank you.

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

**Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley. It is with regard to my Member's statement on the oil and gas development that is taking place in the Mackenzie Delta. I think it is important that we as a government do more to promote that industry and also promote all people involved in that industry, especially the smaller companies. Every little development opportunity really helps our economy.

With regard to the oil and gas industry in the Mackenzie Delta, I think it is important that this government takes on the more meaningful role as they did with the diamond industry. This government has put a lot of energy and emphasis on social economic agreements that they signed with the different companies to ensure that we have benefit agreements in place, guaranteed employment, training and also to ensure that the North benefits fully. I feel that this government has to do more to...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Krutko, may I have the question, please?

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the oil and gas sector, this government does not have any main policies by way of loan guarantees like they did with the secondary industry. Does the government have any plans to implement legislative programs, such as the loan guarantee program for the secondary diamond industry, for the oil and gas industry?

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

**Return to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, we do have a provision where we will consider loan guarantees. We will consider loan guarantees from any business in any field if they can show us that this is a reasonable risk for us to take. We have it in the diamond industry. We would do the same in the oil and gas if we had any applications brought forward to us and we deemed them to be ones that were good risks. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Les question supplémentaire. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what is this government doing to establish programs and different services to assist in the oil and gas industry with regard to his department?

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

**Further Return to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I think there is quite a long list of things that we are doing as a department to assist the oil and gas industry. First of all, we have done a lot of promotion of the oil and gas potential in the Northwest Territories. A lot has been accomplished in the past couple of years ensuring that that stays on the timetable. We have met with practically every company that is doing work or contemplating doing work in the Northwest Territories. We have talked to them about socio-economic benefits to the North. We have also cooperated in capacity building or training workshops throughout the North to ensure that our people have the benefits to it. We are currently reviewing our business programs to make sure that if our business community in the Northwest Territories wants to take advantage of opportunities in oil and gas, that they are able to. Hopefully we can streamline those programs.

We are working with the regulatory agencies and have been very instrumental in ensuring that all the various agencies get together and try to find a coordinated approach to doing environmental assessments and dealing with the whole regulatory environment.

We have also worked very closely with the federal government to try to keep this on their agenda. Part of our non-renewable resource strategy is on that. Common Ground, the economics strategy has a big emphasis on oil and gas.

So there are many, many things we are doing as a government and as a department, Mr. Speaker, to promote oil and gas. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to programs in the Mackenzie Delta region, I have been trying to work with the constituency I represent where there are very little resources in the regional office to assist companies or businesses getting involved in the oil and gas industry. Yet, Mr. Speaker, in the diamond industry, there were grants and dollars given to different companies to joint venture in that area. By way of programs and the economic programs we have in this government, what is there for the oil and gas sector for the people in the Mackenzie Delta?

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

**Further Return to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the same programs that were used to support the diamond industry are there to support people and companies getting involved in the oil and gas industry. I mentioned loan guarantees already. There is no restriction on those in terms of which industries can apply or be eligible for it. Everyone can.

The second one is our business development funds. We make that available and that has been widely utilized. That is why some of our regions have very little money left. Through the Business Credit Corporation, there are loans available as well. We also work closely with Education, Culture & Employment to help on the training side, and that has been a big help.

So we are proactive in trying to ensure we get maximum dollars invested into the oil and gas sector. I will make available to the Member a summary of all of the expenditures we have undertaken in the last year. I think it amounts to something in the neighbourhood of \$5 million that has gone into the oil and gas industry. As soon as that is updated, I will make it available to the Member and show him more detail on what we are doing. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I would like to see from this government, but not just going back one or two years. Let us go back four years when all the diamond development took place. I feel the oil and gas sector is not getting the same treatment as the

diamond sector did, where we put \$5 million into training, we developed a loan guarantee program for the diamond industry...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Your supplementary question, please?

**MR. KRUTKO:** With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he could provide that information on how much money was spent out of the different grants and contributions that this government has and divide it into the two sectors; the diamond sector and the oil and gas sector for the last five years.

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

#### **Further Return to Question 399-14(3): Supporting Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I will ask my department to try and do that kind of analysis and comparison. We have been assisting the diamond industry for the past six or seven years. I believe we have provided roughly \$12 million in support to the diamond industry over that period of time.

The oil and gas industry has only really been active for the last two years or so, and over that period of time, we have spent over \$5 million to support oil and gas. As much as we can, and as this important industry to us grows, then I am sure we will find, over the same period of time, a five or six or seven year period of time, we are investing as much or possibly even more in oil and gas than we did in diamonds, but...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The question has been answered. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat in regard to the code of conduct tabled in this House yesterday. Mr. Speaker, page 1 of the document indicates that these guidelines and procedures apply to all employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories in all departments, boards and agencies, except those employed by the NWT Power Corporation.

I would like to ask the Minister, what consultation has taken place with the NWTTA and the UNW in arriving at this document that was tabled, this 28 page document that was tabled in this House yesterday? Thank you.

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

#### **Return to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have all of the details of all of the meetings that were held with everyone with regard to this document. I can assure you that over a period of time, there was consultation with everyone who is a stakeholder in this process. That includes the employees, certainly. It includes our managers, it includes the unions, and

it also included opportunity for the public to have input into the proposed changes.

That consultation has gone on for several months. I realize that the document may not be perfect in everyone's mind, but it certainly is a good document and better than having the confusion that we have had in the past. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a year ago to the day almost that there was any last consultation, as far as I understand, with the Union of Northern Workers or the NWTTA. What the NWTTA and the UNW looked at was a ten-page document that had nothing in it to relate to ethics counsellors and appeal systems. It was ten pages. What was put on the table in this House was 28 pages.

I would like to ask the Minister, what steps is he going to take to allow the UNW and the NWTTA to have meaningful input in this document that affects every one of their employees? Thank you.

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

#### **Further Return to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, the door is never closed for people to have input into this document. If the Union of Northern Workers or the Northwest Territories Teachers Association or anyone else wants to meet with me, meet with the people who work on this in our departments, to give me written comments on it, then I am open to that. Consultation will be an ongoing process. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question that begs for me is, how could the government give the two employee unions a ten-page document that is substantially and significantly different than the 28-page one tabled in this House and call that good faith bargaining and dealing with the union? That is my question. What steps will there be, formally, to try to address this issue with the unions? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. There were two questions there, Mr. Handley, you can answer whichever one you choose. Mr. Handley.

#### **Further Return to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I was not clear on what the question really was. Is the Member suggesting the union is concerned because this document is 28 pages and the

other one is ten pages? I expect that is probably not the question.

I expect that the unions or other people may have some concerns with particular provisions in here. If they have some, then as I have said, I would appreciate hearing what they are. I am certainly open to listening to what they have to say. If they can convince me, then we can consider changes.

As I said, I am open to making this into the best code of conduct possible for our employees. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Monsieur Handley. La dernier question supplementaire, Mr. Miltenberger, final supplementary.

**Supplementary to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the key to this would have been if he would have been open before he tabled the final document, if he would have in fact taken the time to consult before he brought in draconically changed document.

My question to the Minister is will he sit down and contact the unions and address their concern, which I know they do have on this substantially changed document? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 400-14(3): Code of Conduct for Employees**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if we made draconian changes, maybe some people may view it that way. I think it is a good document. Certainly I am ready and open to discuss any concerns that the unions may have. I will, as the Member recommends, pick up the phone and call the heads of both of those unions and meet with them as soon as I have time to meet with them to discuss any concerns they have.

They have not brought any concerns to me yet. I realize that this was just tabled yesterday, so we have not had much time. Thank you.

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

**Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for Minister Handley in his capacity as the Minister for RWED. It relates to the Interim Manufacturing Directive established, I believe, in 1996. It provides preference for northern manufacturers on GNWT contracts.

What I am concerned about and would like the Minister to speak to is the new Business Incentive Policy. Will it look to expand preference for northern manufacturers so it is not exclusively on GNWT contracts?

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

**Return to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, that document on the Business Incentive Policy is still out for discussion. It is out in the form of a discussion paper. We are waiting for various interested parties to get back to us. A number of them have been in touch with me and told me they will be including the Manufacturers Association. I am waiting for their suggestions on what changes they would like to see.

In terms of its application to the private sector, that one becomes more difficult because it is very difficult for us to be able to tell the private sector which manufactured products they should be purchasing and where they should buy them. It is a more difficult one. If there is a way around that, then I would like to hear the suggestions from the manufacturers. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**MR. BELL:** Yes, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly we cannot force private companies to use certain manufacturers or certain contractors, but we could provide northern manufacturers with employment subsidies, tax credits, low tax rates, things that other jurisdictions do. Will the Minister look at this?

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

**Further Return to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, we will look at that. In fact, the discussion paper that is out there now for consultation does contemplate the possibility of decreased corporate taxes and so on to assist northern manufacturers. I also want to and encourage people to give me creative ideas on how we could provide other incentives for northern manufacturing. I agree with the Member on the importance of diversification and manufactured products being a big piece of that. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the current Business Incentive Policy in the current Manufacturing Directive, there is a committee that looks at northern manufacturers and decides which products are approved. The directive suggests that only manufacturers will be used when they are present. I am wondering if this directive is currently being adhered to?

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

**Further Return to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know of any cases where it is being violated. I will check into that with the department if any situations have come to their attention. I am not aware of any. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister is waiting for people to contact him, but I would just like to get assurance from the Minister that the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development will solicit response activity and work with the Northern Manufacturers' Association to make sure the Business Incentive Policy works for us. Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 401-14(3): Northern Manufacturing Directive**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, certainly that is our intention. That is the whole reason I undertook this somewhat difficult and a little bit daunting task of trying to revise the BIP because of all its implications for the industry. We most certainly will be looking at ways of involving everybody who has a stake in this one. Thank you.

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

**Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the statistics speak for themselves when it comes to delivering programs in the area of speech and language. No one is denying our educators are overworked. It is very apparent that addressing children's needs at an early age will have the greatest impact on improving communications skills. Would the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services explain what is currently being done by her department to assist in the staffing of a speech language pathologist for the South Slave area?

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

**Return to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under the strategic initiatives fund, there is \$81,000 that has been given to the Hay River Health and Social Services Board specifically for a speech language pathologist. It is my understanding that they have been unable to utilize this funding in the last while due to problems with recruiting someone with those credentials. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Groenewegen. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

**Supplementary to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in July of 2000, the community health board put in a proposal for an increase in their core funding to increase that program for a speech pathologist in the South Slave region. The health board had hoped to institute this program in September of 2000, but to date, Mr. Speaker, they have not had any consultation back from the health board whether their proposal has been denied or accepted for increased funding. Could the Minister indicate why her department has not responded to the request from the Hay River health board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have become aware that the Hay River Health and Social Services Board did put in a proposal to move funding for speech and language pathology to be a core part of their budget. They wanted core funding, not under this strategic initiatives funding. As to why this has not been responded to yet, it has been moving about within the department and I do apologize that a response has not been provided earlier. I will certainly look into ensuring that they get a full response to this request. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Madam Groenewegen. Supplementary question, Mr. Delorey.

**Supplementary to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Hay River Community Health Board proposed an increase in core funding, they indicated that a need for two speech language pathologists and two program aids to deliver programming for the South Slave region. Would the Minister indicate if her department would be prepared to provide funding for two speech language pathologists in order to adequately address the needs of the vast region of the South Slave?

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

**Further Return to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not able to answer that request until I have an opportunity to discuss it with the people in my department. It is interesting to note that the \$81,000 funding allotment and the strategic initiatives fund was not able to be utilized and not being utilized, we require it to be returned. That was due to the inability to identify someone to fill the position. But I will speak with my department, but I cannot respond to that request today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Last supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

**Supplementary to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that Hay River and the surrounding area has been without a permanent speech language pathologist since August of 2000. In view of that fact, I was wondering if the Minister could explain what her department is doing to help address the speech language problem in the south Slave in view of the fact that they have been without a speech language pathologist for that length of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Madam Groenewegen.

**Further Return to Question 402-14(3): A Speech Pathologist for South Slave**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, both the department and I feel that these are very beneficial services to have available. It is certainly unfortunate they have not been available recently within the last 18 months in the South Slave. I will commit to assist the board in trying to identify someone for this position under their current funding, perhaps through the recruitment and retention unit within the department. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Madam Ministre. Questions orales. Les député de la Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today again my question is for the Minister of Transportation. Recently the government was noted in the press as being sceptical about the financial feasibility of a bridge and a senior official from the Department of Transportation was quoted as providing confirmation that the traffic numbers were low. I would like to ask the Minister again today, where is he getting his numbers from? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with the part of the question that relates to comments from the department. However, the information as to where we get our traffic counts comes from the department's traffic counters.

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

**Supplementary to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has not given us an indicator whether or not he agrees with the statements that were made in the press. However, I

would like to. If the Minister would confirm, given all the information that his department collects, if the Minister would agree that the Mackenzie crossing by far is the busiest of all ferry crossings.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Monsieur McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I understand the question correctly, the Member is asking me if the amount of traffic we have there justifies the ferry crossing? I do not understand the question the way the Member phrased it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. That was not the question. The question was if you agreed that it was the busiest crossing. Mr. McLeod, if you would like to ask that same question again for the benefit of the Minister. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the Minister if I was not clear. There are five ferry crossings in the Northwest Territories. I am asking the Minister if he would agree that the Mackenzie River crossing is the busiest of those five.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. That is a proper question. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I understand the question correctly, the Member is asking me if the Providence ferry crossing is the busiest one of the five. I have to agree with that. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of his staff's comments in the press indicating the traffic volumes are down, and according to his information, I would like to ask the Minister to confirm that if he agrees that the traffic crossing has been growing. In fact, it has come from 179 in 1993 to 217 in 1999. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Chair is not sure of the question. Please rephrase that.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Minister to admit that he disagrees with the comments made by his staff in the media. In fact, the information his department has supplied is quite the opposite. We have seen an increase in the daily traffic crossings from 179 in 1993 to 217 in 1999.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I will have to rule that out of order because I am not sure whether the Minister should be commenting on what is or is not in the newspaper, as to its accuracy. The Chair will allow you one more opportunity to ask that question.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try again, Mr. Speaker. The Minister's staff has said that the traffic volumes were down this year. According to the Minister's own information from his department, in fact we can see that the traffic volumes are increasing. We have seen an increase from 179 in 1993 to 217 in 1999. I would like the Minister to confirm this.

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

**Further Return to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, what was said in the paper. I do not know what was allotted as my staff was having said. However, there is no doubt that I can agree with the Member that the traffic volumes have increased on our highways, in particular that section of highway. No doubt this is reflected in the increased need for a Providence ferry. The Merv Hardie obviously has to make more trips to respond to this traffic. The Member is correct. There is no doubt that there is in fact an increase in the traffic volume. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. La dernier questions supplementaire, final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the senior bureaucrats from the Department of Transportation had also stated that the Merv Hardie Ferry operates in cold water and we do not have to worry about rusting. In fact, the bottom of the ferry, from what I could gather, is replaced annually. Can the Minister confirm that the ferry operates in rough ice and the bottom has to be replaced every year?

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

**Further Return to Question 403-14(3): Traffic Statistics at the Mackenzie Crossing**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the damages to the bottom of the Merv Hardie Ferry are more related to obstructions on the bottom of the river, such as rocks, rather than the fact that they are using the ferry to break ice. Thank you.

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

**Question 404-14(3): Impact of Proposed Highway Toll**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for Finance. It is following up on the committee of the whole debate yesterday on transportation strategy. In answering my question, the Minister of Transportation indicated that the highway toll that is being proposed could be subject to a claw-back from the federal government. I would like to have that verified by the Minister of Finance, whether indeed that is the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 404-14(3): Impact of Proposed Highway Toll**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, that is a question that I do not have a definitive answer for except to say that all of our advice is that because it is a toll that is collected based on vehicles using a particular road, and because the revenues from it are being used for a specific purpose, it will most likely be excluded from a claw-back. I cannot confirm that today. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 404-14(3): Impact of Proposed Highway Toll**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is exactly in-line with my understanding of the difference between toll and tax. May I have the Minister commit to advise this House as best as he can whether or not any money raised from a highway toll would be subject to claw-back? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 404-14(3): Impact of Proposed Highway Toll**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as soon as I receive confirmation one way or the other from Finance Canada, then I will let this House know. Thank you.

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

**Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister identify where the \$5 million that he mentioned earlier has gone in regard to the oil and gas sector?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I assume that you are directing this to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Return to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, as I said earlier, I will make available to the Member an outline of the money that has been spent on support of oil and gas. It will be outlined in detail. I do not have that information with me today. I will provide it as soon as it is updated. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister have any plans to develop an oil and gas program to

assist companies in that sector, so they can access program dollars for starting up businesses and what not?

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

**Further Return to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, we do not have programs that are specifically earmarked only for the oil and gas business. I think as it develops, that is something that we will want to be considering. When we have the activity and the commitment from the industry to do increasing amounts of exploration, when we see gas being piped south, then certainly we will need to put a lot more emphasis than we do presently on that very important sector. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government presently has a loan guarantee program that is specifically identified in the diamond industry. That is what I was looking at. Is the government going to consider specialized programs or specialized treatment for the oil and gas industry, similar to how it is being dealt with in the diamond industry?

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

**Further Return to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, in considering our support for the diamond industry, we look at the number of jobs the industry could create, particularly on the value-added side. We will do the same sort of analysis and give it the same level of priority as we did with the diamond industry. Of course, as companies, if they come to us looking for loan guarantees, we will look very carefully at employment as being one of the main benefits to our government. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. La dernier questions supplementaire, final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the potential of the oil and gas industry, it far exceeds the diamond industry. I am just wondering why the department is not moving on this endeavour now, knowing the potential of the oil and gas industry far outweighs the diamond industry. I would like to ask the Minister how soon will he be bringing the topic to the House so we can have a chance to look at it and see how it will be distributed in the Northwest Territories?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

**Further Return to Question 405-14(3): Support for Oil and Gas Development**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, our oil and gas development is very much at the exploration stage. There is a lot of seismic work going on, there is some drilling happening, there is the consideration of a pipeline. I think that as soon as we get some confirmation that there is actually going to be a pipeline down the Valley, then we will see a much speeded up emphasis on oil and gas. However, at this time we are responding as quickly as we can.

I do not have companies coming to me now asking for loan guarantees and so on in the oil and gas sector, not very many. I think I have had one or two, and we are responding to those ones. As the industry develops, then yes, we will respond in the same way we did with diamonds. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Merci, Mr. Handley. Le temps pour questions orales est finis. The time for question period is over. Questions ecrites. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 110-14(3): Public Accounts, 1999-2000**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Public Accounts, 1999-2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

**ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION**

**Motion 18-14(3): Appointment of Alternate Member to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, March 1, 2001, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine, be appointed as an alternate member to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS**

**Bill 20: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 20 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

#### ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

##### Bill 20: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2001. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 20 has had second reading and is now moved into committee of the whole.

Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 19, Bill 20, Committee Reports 5-14, 6-14, 7-14, with Mr. Delorey in the Chair.

Before we go into committee of the whole, 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. Mr. Delorey in the Chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I would like to call the committee of the whole to order. The committee has a number of items to consider: Bill 19, Bill 20. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that the committee consider Bill 19 and Committee Reports 5, 6 and 7 concurrently, specifically to continue detailed consideration of the Department of Transportation, followed by Education, Culture and Employment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. With that, we will take a 15 minute break and we will be back.

--Break

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I will call the committee back to order. We are reviewing the Department of Transportation with Minister Steen. Would the Minister like to call in any witnesses?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Sergeant-at-Arms, bring the witnesses in, please. Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses, please?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my left is the deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, Peter Vician. On my right is Masood Hassan, director of transportation and planning.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked a question to the Minister in the House with regard to doing an evaluation about the possibility of having a bridge constructed across the Peel River. The Minister said he would look into it and get back to me. So I would like to ask the Minister has he had an opportunity to look into the possibility of doing a feasibility study to see what the cost of a permanent bridge across the Peel River would be?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we would be prepared to respond to this when we reach the section dealing with highways.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Krutko, are you prepared to wait until we get to the appropriate section in detail? Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, with regard to general comments, this government is doing tons of studies, strategies, highway strategies, we have looked at building bridges up the Mackenzie Valley, permanent bridges across creeks. So I think this is not something that is new. We have done evaluations in the past and I think under general comments, it is not too...to ask general questions to this department on things which are in the domain or in the responsibility of this department. This is not a new subject. This has been raised over the last number of years. Yet we hear this government talking about what the cost factor is. One time I heard it was going to cost \$30 million and the next thing we hear it is going to cost \$60 million to build a bridge across the Mackenzie.

Mr. Speaker, we are spending a lot of money in this budget with regard to the non-renewable resource sector, but there is very little money for improving road linkages to our communities and allowing the residents of the Northwest Territories to have better transportation links so we can travel without having to deal with ice crossings or ferry closures. I find it improper for the Minister to say he cannot answer this question until he is not responsible for building bridges or transportation. I am not sure who I ask this question to. Again, have they considered looking at doing an evaluation of these different bridges? I know Mr. McLeod has raised this question in the House about the evaluation by this government. I would like to know if the Minister will be answering that question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Krutko, the Minister has agreed to answer that question when we come to the appropriate section on the highway section. We are on general comments, so if you could keep your comments general and ask specific questions when we come to detail. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** This particular bridge is not part of the capital under that section. That is why I am asking the question now because it is not in that part of the chapter. I think it is important that we ask these questions now for information, so when we do come to that area, we are able to have the information we want to ask those questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. In order to try to bring some order to this, there have been many occasions to raise these questions in the standing committee and there will be, under the highways section. Whether this one is mentioned or not...I will give an opportunity to the Minister to answer, if he would like to address this.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, we are not trying to avoid the question. All we are trying to do is direct the question to the activity. I believe that the Member's concerns...he has referenced winter roads. He has referenced bridges and he has referenced access roads. They are all included in certain activities and we would be happy to respond to the Member's questions at that time.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, I am not too sure what the purpose is of having general comments if we cannot make comments on a particular department. If you are going to stifle us from asking those questions, why have it on the agenda? I would like to ask the Minister what is his department doing to ensure that the communities that are presently not on the permanent road systems have an opportunity to have permanent linkages to their communities, such as permanent highways to Aklavik, Wha Ti, Snare Lakes and all the other communities that are out there? That is my general comment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I would just like to state, Mr. Krutko, that we are here for general comments. The Minister's statement is well taken, that there are areas coming up within the next few pages that deals specifically with...your last question, Mr. Krutko, was more general. I would allow the Minister to go ahead and make comments on his last question. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, all the Members' comments that I have heard up to now are in fact related to activities we have listed. The concerns as he has expressed them, we will have an opportunity to respond to those concerns specifically. It is my understanding that general comments is for the Member to take the opportunity on the department's main estimates in general and save the questions for when we get into the details of the department. That is all I am suggesting here. If I were to respond to all the general comments like I was doing yesterday, I find myself repeating myself because many Members bring the same general comments up. I am suggesting that I will respond to general comments once and respond to questions in detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I do not think we want to get into a discussion on process. We have been talking about process for a while and we have been using a process, but I would encourage Members to keep their comments general and then deal with specific questions when we go to item by item. Mr. Krutko, anything further?

**MR. KRUTKO:** I do not know what I can speak on outside the budget, but seeing that there has been an increase in the budget, I would like to ask the Minister exactly, have they

considered relooking at the different strategies that have been done to include our roads to be constructed to communities that do not have access to date?

We announced a \$100 million initiative that this government has taken on, but yet there are communities out there that want to have permanent access. In my riding, in Aklavik, there was a petition filed in this House. Yet from the response to the petition, it seems like this department is not really interested because it does not benefit the non-renewable resource sector, it benefits the people of the North. I would like to ask the Minister exactly where is the priority of this government when it comes to the residents of the Northwest Territories overseeing the non-renewable sector?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will try to make my response short. The concern expressed by the Member, as I understand it, is that he feels his communities, because they are off the beaten path of the oil and gas activity and the main highways, he is feeling that the department does not have any program for highway or future roads that would serve his particular communities.

The department has always operated under the policy that new roads are the responsibility of Indian Affairs. That is simply because we do not have the revenue to do the job, and we have not been given the responsibility from Indian Affairs to construct new roads. However, we have been working with Indian Affairs to address some of the shortfalls in revenues through the winter road systems, through the bridge program that we undertook. We have entered into an agreement with Indian Affairs to construct some new bridges on the winter road in the Sahtu. We received funding from Indian Affairs for this.

To date, we have not received any funding from Indian Affairs for any new roads. The winter road, specifically, was not a new road. It was part of the winter road system. I hope that covers the Member's question.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the responsibility of the federal government versus this government, we as a legislature are responsible for the residents of the Northwest Territories. I for one feel that we do have an obligation to ensure that the residents of the Northwest Territories are able to move freely between the communities and also have the ability to drive. This year in the Mackenzie Delta, it has been a real problem just getting the winter road systems, and elsewhere in the Northwest Territories. I think that we as a government have to seriously look at the challenges we face in a lot of our communities. I think that sooner or later, we will possibly have to look at permanent roads.

I think the federal government, under its natural resources agreement that they are responsible for...we are not responsible for mining, we are not responsible for oil and gas. That is a federal responsibility. Why is it as a government we are the ones that are taking on these initiatives to build these roads to where those resources are, yet the federal government gets 100 percent of those dollars from the resource development and also from the different taxes that come from it?

I would like to ask the Minister exactly why is it that when it comes to a community wanting to have access to our major highway or road systems, we are not looking at them as a priority. It seems that we are trying to take on a responsibility that is not ours. You mentioned that it is a federal responsibility. Yes, it is a federal responsibility, but under the natural resources agreement, which is the Canadian federal jurisdiction, unless we get a northern accord, or unless we get the resources and revenues that come from those types of agreement -- whatever mining companies or oil and gas companies want to do, the buildings of roads and what not should remain a federal responsibility.

I would like to ask the Minister again, why is it that we are developing these strategies and looking at spending a lot of time and emphasis on these different strategies, yet there are no real areas within those strategies to deal with the residents of the Northwest Territories. We are looking at more of a federal responsibility, so why is it that we are not taking on these federal responsibilities instead of leaving it to the federal government?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, although it may look like we are taking on federal responsibilities, we do not feel that this is the case. What we are finding is that as the federal government approves more non-renewable resource activity, whether it be in oil and gas or mining, it is impacting our highways. We are responsible for those highways. We are also responsible for the winter roads. The winter road systems that we had in the past were initially just to service communities. However, the oil and gas activities are using these winter roads and impacting on those winter roads, and therefore we have to do something in order to counter this impact.

We have approached the federal government and we have entered into a partnership approach with aboriginals as well, whereby the federal government has agreed to some funding. As a matter of fact, it was a two to one on the feds' part for that winter road project. There were some conditions tied to it whereby we had to make conditions so that the aboriginals were the main beneficiaries of the projects. We have done that, and this in turn allows us to build these bridges on these river crossings, and reduces the impact on the environment and allows us to have the winter road open for a longer time.

It is not necessarily to address the needs of the oil and gas industry, but more to address the needs of the communities as well. The winter roads were opening later, so there was a very short time when they were operating. We tried to extend that, and this is what we are hoping we will accomplish.

The federal Minister, Mr. Nault, has expressed to me that he is not really interested in building new roads strictly for social benefits. He would prefer that these new roads address economic development as well, and we assume this is mining development as well as oil and gas activities, which would in turn increase the economic activities in the Territories for all residents. This is how we have been operating under. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Since the Minister said that he had met with the Minister, I would like to ask the Minister, did he just meet with the Minister to talk about the road from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk lately, within the last number of weeks?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, yes, we did discuss the road from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk with Minister Nault.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Is the Minister of Indian Affairs willing to fund that particular highway from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk with federal dollars at this time?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, at this time, we have nothing in writing.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Did the Minister give him any notion that they are seriously considering the possibility of looking at that as a possibility of finding funds within Indian and Northern Affairs to assist funding that portion of the new road system?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister did indicate that he was in favour of contributing towards the road project.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Did the Minister indicate where those possible revenues will be coming from? The funding we received for the bridges I believe came from an aboriginal funding pot for...I do not know if it was an aboriginal partnership, but it was an economic development fund which is funded through Indian Affairs. Is that where he was looking at those funds?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, no, the Minister never indicated directly which program this would come under. However, the program we approached him under was a program similar to what he had done and contributed to on the winter road in the Mackenzie Valley. This was the program whereby the feds fund two-thirds and this government would fund one-third, or in partnership with aboriginals. Under that particular program, the federal limit is two-thirds.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Highways activities is found on page 10-15, detail. General comments? Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would just like to ask a question of the Minister if he had a chance to talk to his federal counterparts, the whole area, the sort of defence shield we have in North America, especially the coastal line in the Arctic. I believe the federal government has cut back drastically in regard to their flights over the Arctic to monitor our coastline. I believe they were flying about 500 hours a year and now they are down to 40 hours a year. I would like to ask the Minister, has he had a chance to talk to his federal counterparts?

My concern is with the activity happening in the Beaufort Sea and the residents of the people who do use the coastline. The regular flights over the coastline are very important to ensure that we secure the public and that safety and secure our coastline.

I believe last year there was a cruise ship that pulled up into Tuktoyaktuk Harbour, in which the Canadian Government and the people in immigration were not even aware that this ship was in Canadian waters.

I would just like to ask the Minister, have you had a chance to talk to the federal government in regard to our coastline to ensure we are protected? Have you had a chance to talk to the government? There have been some major cutbacks in regard to the coastline protection we have out there.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I have to assume the Member is referring to the operations of the Coast Guard in the Beaufort. I will refer the question to Mr. Vician, as we have been in contact with them in regard to the reduction of service by the Coast Guard. It was referencing ice-breaking capability rather than defence, or in this particular case, the Member is referring to immigration. I have no idea what the federal government is doing in that capacity. We have only been talking to them in referencing their patrols with their ice-breakers. I will ask Mr. Vician if he can update us on that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will only add to the Minister's comments that we have had ongoing discussions with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in particular the Canadian Coast Guard branch of DFO, with regard to the presence of ice-breaker support in the Beaufort Delta over the past many years.

We understand at this point in time there is a commitment to ice-breaker services in the Beaufort Delta and continuing on with that ice-breaker support is the overall oversight with regard to coastal water, observation protection, response to emergencies that the federal government does continue to have responsibility for.

In that context, we continue to have discussions with the Canadian Coast Guard to continue with their support of protection of our coastal areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Again, I would like to caution Members to keep their specific questions to activities when we get to them. Mr. Nitah, general comments.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought we were on page 10-11. I wanted to go back there. It is dealing with airports, Mr. Chairman, and air transportation in the Northwest Territories.

As the chairman and the Minister would agree, air transportation is a major form of transportation in and around the North Slave and in and around the Northwest Territories, specifically to small, aboriginal communities.

I just returned from Lutselk'e this afternoon at one o'clock. By twelve o'clock, there were five planes into Lutselk'e already. I understand part of the responsibility of the department is to

monitor other government legislation by other governments. Further responsibilities overall trends in air transportation safety, infrastructure, technology development, change in opportunities, et cetera.

I just want to know if the department can tell me what legislation is out there to determine that a safety crew, a firefighter crew needs to be at ground level when there is a certain amount of traffic into one particular airport. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Nitah, would you be willing to hold your line of questioning until we get to the section on airports?

**MR. NITAH:** I am willing. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Do you have any further general comments for the department? Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** No, I do not have any general comments for the Minister. I think we will cover it through the detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Any further general comments? Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some comments. I referred to some of them yesterday, but I will just do a short summary.

I look at the studies and the strategies of the highway. I look at the highway toll, the \$100 million that they are putting towards it. By approving this year's budget, I see that we are going to start the process without any intentions or any future plans of the communities that are without all-year access. I do not agree with the budget the way it is, or with the studies and strategies that they have out there. It is hard for me to approve a budget that is leaving certain people out, certain communities out of the future plans of this \$100 million we are putting back into the Highway Strategy.

I see communities out there with only air service and maybe one week or two weeks of winter road. Some of them do not get winter roads at all. I see them paying extra freight and extra for all the food and deliveries. I know they get subsidized, but they are paying two or three times higher than people who are living in Yellowknife or in Hay River or in Rae. I do not think it is fair that we are going to make them pay for the extra cost, which is the result of a toll. Rather, I think we should be including them in our plans.

The plan that should be there is to make sure they have an all-year access road or even a feasibility study towards putting a road into these communities. The road can be called any road you want. Those roads that I am talking about could be alternate routes in case we do not have a winter road.

As you know, everybody all over the world is talking about global warming. We see it now. The temperature in Fort Providence today is minus two and this is February, the third week. That is not a normal temperature to have at this time of the year. The last four or five years, we have seen rain in February, rain in January. We are not looking at the future. We are just looking at the existing infrastructure. If we are going to charge a toll to these communities that are not connected by a road, then we should be giving something back to them. If we cannot give them anything back, then we should not be putting

a toll on anything which, as the result of the toll, will make them pay higher costs for everything.

All I can say about the strategies and the studies that Transportation has done since 1990 that I have seen, it all leads to making Yellowknife a lot richer. All the money is being put onto highways to campgrounds past Yellowknife. You see about \$3,000 signs along the Ingraham Trail. That money could be used for a feasibility study to put an all-weather road into Aklavik.

We were elected by the people to work for the people, not for industry or the campers at Prelude Lake or Cameron River. We were elected by everyone in the Territories. We have to make sure that they have road access. We have to make sure they do not have a higher cost of living. It says when we made our vow that everybody would be treated equally and fairly. Where is the fairness? Where is the equality? There is not any fairness and equality when I see a study by Transportation excluding people. There is no equality there.

It is not fair to ask them to pay extra for Highway No. 3 that leads to Yellowknife. Kakisa is not getting anything. Hay River is not getting anything. I see Aklavik is not getting an all-weather road. I do not see Wekweti getting a winter road next year. We were lucky to get one this year. They are going to be paying the extra costs because of a toll.

So I think this department must look at a future plan. You are going to put \$100 million towards a highway strategy, well, let us look at other roads. I know you are going to say it is the federal government's responsibility. In 1990, studies show that the federal government said they will work in partnership if there are resources at the end. Whether their resources are feasible or not, they will support putting a road in, in partnership with the territorial government. I was lucky to get that book today and I had about 15 minutes to read a little bit and I have not finished it, but if I had the time, I think I would have had a lot more comments on this.

If we are going to approve this, we are making a mistake. If we do not have a plan that reaches these communities, then it is not a plan. It is just regular O and M. That is it. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. General comments. Mr. Minister, do you want to respond to any of those? Mr. Minister.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, if there are no other general comments, I can respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Any further general comments? Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would like to know from the department, do we have engineers in-house that do different studies and strategies such as bridges, construction with regard to road construction. We have a lot of technical and resource people out there. I am just wondering why this government does not seem to have the information or the data that is there when it comes to making these decisions. They use large numbers like \$30 million for specific bridges or \$60 million to put a bridge on the Mackenzie. How do you come up with these numbers if you do not actually do a feasibility study?

You guys throw these big numbers around, but do you have any data to back up the information so when you do come out saying this is a \$100 million project, do you have actual valued reports that tell you how much it is going to cost to build a road or a bridge over a half-a-kilometre river?

When you make these statements with regard to the cost that is associated with some particular item where you are not able to carry out because the cost is too high, without having the actual valuation or study to get down to the logistical numbers...who within your department comes up with these numbers that you present to the committees and is able to justify those numbers that you use?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, again, this question is really directed to highways. I would prefer the question was redirected to us when we reach that detail or that activity.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I am not too sure if the Minister does not know the question or he does not have the answer. The answer is pretty specific. Do we have people within the department that have engineering skills that can actually value or come up with a number that is specifically stated in a budget or in a report that comes from your department, so they can back up the numbers? It is no big deal. You as a Minister are responsible for your department and the people in your department. If you are not sure what your department is doing or what people are doing within your department, I think there is something wrong with the department. Can the Minister answer the question because they should have people within the department? It is big enough. We are spending \$70 million. I would like to know how you justify the amounts that come out of this department.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. This seems to be a bit beyond one specific project. I would ask Mr. Minister to respond.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, as well as having engineers on staff, the department also uses consultants to do some work for us. We do not necessarily have to go through a full feasibility study in order to arrive at a conclusion. We do have historical data. We do have information before us that can give us a basic preliminary estimate of what a bridge would cost to put in place. We do have that information on hand and we do have those kind of people on side.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the cost of the bridge across the Peel River, the numbers you are coming up with is \$30 million. The \$30 million, what is that based on? Is that based on a two-lane bridge, one lane or four lane? How did you come up with the \$30 million for that bridge?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we are going to deal with the bridge, I suggest we direct the question to Mr. Vician.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the mid-80s, the department did a preliminary costing study of the Peel River crossing and at that time, the estimates were prepared for that crossing. At the same time, it was identified that the benefit cost of the bridge indicated it was not feasible and those estimates were presented in the summary report. The bridge is not identified in the department's long-range plan. However, it was identified in the recent highway strategy as one of the future needs for the Northwest Territories highway system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Regarding the strategy the Minister mentioned, I have been trying to get any reports or strategies from people in the department. I was not able to access anything. All I was able to get was a letter to the chamber of commerce in Inuvik which identifies that AESL -- it is an engineering consulting firm based in Edmonton -- were looking at rough numbers of a 700-foot crossing with a one lane bridge that would cost \$2 million and a two lane bridge was going to cost \$4 million. That is quite a difference between the numbers they are coming up with and your \$30 million that you are estimating out of a 1980 report. That is why I ask the question of how you come up with these numbers. Can the Minister tell me why there is such a gap between the evaluation of this engineering firm versus the numbers you are coming up with?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know where the Member's information is coming from. The only information that I am aware of that references the bridge is what the Member supplied to this House and table in this House, a suggested feasibility study done by the chamber of commerce in Inuvik and they put a rough price on the bridge of \$2 million. Other than that, I am not aware of any feasibility study or any cost analysis done on that bridge.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the deputy minister just mentioned there was a 1980 study, and that is how they came up with that information. So if the deputy minister is stating there was a 1980 study from the department and that is where your numbers are coming from, where is that study that you are talking about?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will allow my deputy to respond to that because that was some comment he made earlier.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My response was in reference to a Department of Transportation preliminary costing and the study work that we did in the mid-80s in preparation of the 1990 Transportation Strategy, which was previously tabled in the House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I would like to ask the Minister, is there a possibility of getting a copy of that study that was tabled in this House?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Can the Minister state is his department working in conjunction with the people of Fort Providence in regard to their feasibility study that they are doing to look at the feasibility of building a bridge across the Mackenzie at this time?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the council of Fort Providence did not approach the department before they approached Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development for the funding for a feasibility study. They did not approach the department. They did not get us involved. However, they are now approaching the department with regard to us supplying them information on their feasibility study. I would not actually classify it as working with the Fort Providence group, but we are working with their consultants in supplying them the information they asked us for. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments. Mr. Krutko, I will give you one more shot at general comments.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I want to ask a question with regard to the response I received from the Minister on a particular petition that was tabled in this House about the building of an all-weather road from the Dempster Highway to Aklavik. It was also in support of the road system from Wrigley to the Beaufort Sea. In the statement, the Minister basically states that they support the Mackenzie Highway, the Canadian North coast and also the cost of an all-weather road to Aklavik, but must defer until the Government of the Northwest Territories is in a much stronger economic and financial post. How long does the community of Aklavik have to wait until they get an all-weather road in response to the petition that was tabled in this House?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I believe we have advised the community of Aklavik in the past and we still hold the position that an all-weather road into Aklavik is \$100 million. At this present time, as I said earlier, there are two things we have to deal with first. One is the fact that Indian Affairs is responsible for a new road such as that one. The other thing is how do we convince them that Indian Affairs come forward with this plan?

What we have been doing is using similar approaches to the bridge program in the Mackenzie Valley as a possibility of convincing Indian Affairs to build new roads into communities. The response we have received, as I told the Member earlier, from Indian Affairs is there has to be some indication that the benefit for the construction of the road would not only serve the social aspects of the road or the need for the road, but also there would be some indication that there would be some

economic development benefits from this particular road. That is what we are facing with Indian Affairs right now.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** The Minister keeps referring to this decision from Indian Affairs. Is that a written decision in the form of a letter?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** No, Mr. Chairman, it is not a letter.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Well, is it written down anywhere that this is the federal government's position and they are not going to move on it? You are making it sound like this is what the federal government has said and that is the end of it. You referred to it a couple of times already. I am just wondering, is that through a written request? What kind of notification did we get on that? Was that a verbal statement or was that a letter you received from the Minister of Indian Affairs, or someone from your Department of Transportation to people in Ottawa?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, there are different ways of looking at this, I suppose. The Highway Transfer Agreement we have with the federal government says that the federal government is responsible for new roads. The approach we have been using with Indian Affairs is under the Community Aboriginal Economic Development Program. Really, this program is a program that is administered through the Department of Economic Development. We have been putting proposals to Economic Development as things to consider while we are getting funding from Indian Affairs towards our Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. That is the approach we have been using.

Another reason why they may come to the conclusion that Indian Affairs has no program in place which specifically identifies that they will fund 100 percent of any project. The only program that I have read, that I have seen from Indian Affairs suggests that there has to be partnerships, there has to be a certain amount of other funding rather than strictly Indian Affairs funding.

The approach we have taken is through the Community Aboriginal Economic Development Program. The program is open to any community or any aboriginal group as well. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I think this is something that we as a government have to seriously look at. We have to consider the safety factor of the residents we serve, but also realizing that the greenhouse effect we are seeing in the North is more drastic than we expected and it is coming on to us pretty fast. Even right now, we cannot get any heavy equipment on to the road to Aklavik because it will just not hold that weight. We are only open to light traffic.

From what we have seen in other areas, sooner or later we will have to take steps to deal with the public safety question. When people start going through the ice and eventually

people's lives are lost, we are responsible as a government, especially if those roads are our responsibility under the NWT Highways Act. It is the winter roads we presently have jurisdiction on.

I think we have to look at alternatives. We will have to look at alternative roads, for instance, or find a safer means for going from point A to point B. I would like to ask the Minister, have you looked at the possibility of having to reroute some of these existing winter roads that we have in place, or having to realign them so we are able to not deal with those sections of the road where we know it is hazardous? I am talking more in line with the Delta right now, because I know for a fact that the road to Aklavik has had some problems. Vehicles have gone through the ice. I think that because of not having the amount of snow this year, we are not able to get the heavy equipment on that.

Has the department looked at the possibility of looking at alternative routes than the one that is in use today, so that we have to take into account public safety when it comes to constructing these roads?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I understand the Member's concern. It is the same concern that was expressed by Mr. Lafferty from the North Slave. The department has had problems putting in the roads to some of the communities on the winter road system. We are working with the contractors to try to come up with ways whereby we can construct these roads, even though we have to still deal with the changes in weather patterns.

I would say it is very difficult to try and suggest a different route, whereby we are going to have different ice conditions when we are all talking about the same river. You cannot get to Aklavik on a winter road except by river. You have to cross a river somewhere.

I do not know if the Member is suggesting here that we are going to deal with different rivers or whether we take under consideration that we build a winter road over land. The department has not been considering that aspect of it yet.

What Mr. Lafferty is suggesting is in fact that the department may want to consider a land route as a winter road route. I believe he is referring to a route that used to exist at one time. I can assure the Member that if this is what we are going to have to do, then this is what the department will do. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Anyone else have general comments? Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad the Minister brought it up. It seems like it is a good plan that when we do our budget session, we put a certain amount of funds, maybe we might have to take it out of certain areas that already have good highway systems and do a study on roads that were accessible before. There has been a road alignment going north to Rae Rock Mine and also to Great Bear Lake. That is all land, winter routes which, if a feasibility study was done, it would take only one bridge to get to Wha Ti. We are putting about seven bridges up into the Mackenzie Region. Maybe a bridge over here, if we put this plan together, we can extend the winter road life by three weeks if we had an all-land route.

This route goes all the way to Rae Lakes, just north of Rae Lakes and it is all on land. It was once used before. It would be easily reconstructed to work for us in this time of global warming. As we are putting a really aggressive budget out there, I think we should also be aggressive in planning for the future for these communities and the global warming and greenhouse gas emissions. We can work together with hydro. We can do a lot of things.

I think this is where maybe Transportation should take the lead into working with other departments and maybe using the infrastructure that was there in the past and putting them back to working conditions so we can use them. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. General comments? That is it for general comments. Does the committee wish to proceed to detail? Mr. Krutko, are you on general comments?

**MR. KRUTKO:** I just want clarification on the point the Minister made in regard to a question I asked him earlier.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** In regard to the Minister's comments that he was not too sure which rivers or how he was going to get around it, in regard to the road to Aklavik, there are two dry back channels people go through, the Schooner and the Bombardier Channels, which are the two channels they seem to have real problems with because it is sort of a fast moving creek and you are not getting the ice that you need. That seems to be where a lot of these instances with vehicles going through have taken place.

When I talk about looking at alternative channels or routes, or having to go over land or have them make a trail through a cut line or what not to get through these different sections...we are talking about just two channels here, but that is where the majority of the problems we are having on these winter roads are, especially from the road to Aklavik.

I am just wondering, as the Minister is aware of these areas, those are the type of problem areas I mentioned. Due to the narrowness of the channels and the fast moving water through it, you are not able to build ice in those channels, or that seems to be the area where you have the most overflow.

I am just wondering from the Minister...where I was coming from is that I think we should consider, in areas such as that, looking at different scenarios or strategies, is there a possibility of going around these areas? Is there a way of going over land because of having this problem on these different channels that we will be able to take into account that public safety has to be our number one priority when we realize that there is a risk associated with these two areas.

Will the Minister look at the possibility of these two particular channels to find an alternative or safer route for the public to travel through?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The short answer is yes, we will definitely work with our contractors to improve our routes so that we can have the roads open earlier and to heavier traffic.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Does the committee wish to proceed to detail? We are on page 10-9, Department of Transportation, corporate services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7,560,000. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to corporate services, could the Minister tell me exactly who does the evaluation or come up with the decision that certain projects are feasible or not feasible? Who within corporate services is responsible for coming up with these numbers and doing these evaluations?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Within the corporate services activity, a portion of that section and budget is associated with strategic planning for all transportation activities. The strategic planning then, of course, relies on the skills that are present in each of the other activity areas' -- highways, marine and airports -- specialists in the other parts and branches of the department. The strategic planning group coordinates that overall planning for transportation feasibility work and prepared the summary reports that have been previously tabled in this House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** The Minister mentioned that once in a while because you do not have the expertise, they use consultants. Where in the budget does that amount show up? If you do not have them within corporate services, what is the arrangement? How do you pay them? Do you pay them through this \$7.5 million?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding for specific consultant work depends on the nature of the work. For example, over the last many years, the department proceeded with a comprehensive strategy to look at specific highway initiatives in the Northwest Territories. Funding was specifically identified to the department through the capital plan in that case, and funding was provided as a capital budget.

Ongoing strategic planning is part of the corporate services budget. In a small sense, there are funds set aside under O and M other for strategic planning, but again depending on the nature of the work. If it was with regard to airport planning, there are funds within the airports activity. If it is with regard to highways planning in a large sense, where it is an engineering project, for example, that would be within the highways activity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** In case of a preliminary study on a bridge or what not, who within corporate services would be responsible for that?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In corporate services, the strategic planning is done by the transportation planning division. In the case of a specific bridge crossing, they would use the resources within the highways division, the bridge specialists that are resident in that part of the operation, and

presumably also our environmental group, which is also part of the corporate services area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Does the deputy minister have a name for who the bridge specialist is?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, we have a bridge engineer on staff. We are currently staffing the head of the structure section, which was recently vacated, so we are in the process of changing that person. We also have on retention a number of consultants who are assisting during the interim. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you. The Minister mentioned that they had a bridge specialist on staff. That is why I asked the question. From Mr. Vician's reply, it sounded like that position is not filled at the present time. How soon will that position be filled?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, the staffing for the position went out for recruitment well over a month ago. I understand it is currently in the screening and interview process at some stage. I do not know the particulars. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could the Minister tell us exactly how many positions are vacant at this present time within corporate services?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe at this time we have a number of positions vacant in corporate services. I do not have the exact number in front of me, but overall on average, the department has a vacancy rate of approximately 10 percent over the given year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could we get the list of the vacancies within corporate services from the department?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, we will supply that information.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could we have that before we finish with the main estimates review?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, we do have some information here relative to the Member's question, so I will ask Mr. Vician to respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, with respect to the number of vacancies, I do not have the particular details by division, but we do have currently 28 positions vacant. Those are distributed around the four regions and headquarters overall. They are summarized: in the South Slave, six positions vacant; Fort Simpson region, two positions; North Slave, one; Inuvik, five; and in headquarters, 14. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Could we get that list so we could see where those vacancies are and the particular titles they have, so we can see where we are not filling those positions? That could end up having an effect on the delivery of this department.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, we could get that information for the Member.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Page 10-9. Corporate services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense \$7,560,000. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under corporate services, I would just like to ask the Minister a question. When they created the North Slave office, what did it cost to create the North Slave office when they broke off from Fort Smith? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that there was no extra cost, but we did have to relocate one position from headquarters to the North Slave.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you. The relocation cost of your employees to the North Slave, can you give me a cost on that?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, there is no relocation cost.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under human resources, I understand when the North Slave office was created, people were appointed to the positions. I would like to ask what happened to the public process where they have competitions for these positions? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, this is the day-to-day operations of the department, so I will direct the question to Mr. Vician.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not clear as to the particular position that is being referred to. I can surmise that it may be in question of the regional superintendent

position which, during a period of time, the person was acting in that position. That acting period is ending and subsequently, that position has been out for public competition through the normal recruitment process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. We are on page 10-9, corporate services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7,560,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to follow up on Mr. Lafferty's questions about the hidden resources, I just want to know about the aboriginal content of the new office in the North Slave region. If there are any affirmative action or P1 positions, what positions do they hold? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the information I have suggests aboriginal is 56 percent and non-aboriginal, 44 percent.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be helpful to get a breakdown of the positions they hold. Is it management, labourers or in between? What positions do the aboriginal content make up? Fifty-six percent is quite high, even for this department. I am just wondering if there are casual positions that brings up that percentile and if so, by how much? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, do I understand the Member wants questions to all the department or just the North Slave?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah, would you clarify that question, please?

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am referring to the newly created administration region for Transportation, North Slave. That is the office I am talking about. I am not talking about highways. I am not talking about airports. I am talking about the new administration region that the department created in the North Slave region. I understand they have taken people from the south side of the lake and so on. I would just like to know the aboriginal content of that new office.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we would be happy to supply the information breakdown to the Member.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** When can I expect that information, Mr. Chairman? It would be nice to have that information while we have the Minister and his senior staff in the seat. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, it will take us a couple of days to put this together for the Member, but we will supply him with the information.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we have to wait a couple of days, we have to wait a couple of days. It is unfortunate. You would think the department would be ready with this information, since it is not information that has never been asked of them. We continuously ask about the aboriginal content of employees and positions they are in, et cetera. I think we do this to try to get the number of aboriginal people within the public service and to move them up within the management ranks. However, if we are going to have to wait, I guess we are going to have to wait. I would just like to express my displeasure in having to wait for that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Member's concern. We are prepared to supply him with the information just as fast as we can get it to him.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Anything more, Mr. Nitah?

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get into a different area. It is the area of airports. I asked a question earlier today and we were waiting for that area of activity within the budget. My question was how many flights per day does one airport have to have within legislation before they require mandatory safety crews, fire crews, et cetera? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I believe this is a standard set by Transport Canada. I will ask Mr. Vician to respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have the particulars on the current regulation. However, the standards for airport firefighting are fairly high in terms of the new provision that was proposed by the federal Minister of Transport. Those do apply to the larger airports such as Yellowknife, Inuvik, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Hay River. The airport firefighting response at smaller airports is set out through the airport regulations. In that context, it is required that there be an emergency plan for the airport that is filed with Transport Canada. So in essence, there is a response for every airport, every one of the twenty-seven. However, the nature of response varies depending on the frequency and the number of landings at the airport in a given year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would sure like to get that information for the community of Lutselk'e. As I said this morning, by noon, there were five flights into Lutselk'e. I am sure there were many others afterwards.

I am just wondering if there is any difference in the policies when it comes to communities that have no road access or any kind of access into the community other than air transportation. If there is a problem with their airstrip or if it is going to be closed down or anything, that lifeline to the community is going to be cut off. I wonder if that is considered in the policy that Mr. Vician had mentioned. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, at this point, the airport regulations do not consider the remoteness of a specific community. However, in the draft of the airport regulations, the airport fire-fighting provision that was brought forward by Minister Collenette recently, there was a specific provision in the exclusions clause that did speak to remote sites that did not have year-round access. Regardless, the airport fire-fighting requirements are not that significant for airports such as Lutselk'e in terms of movement. We are talking about significantly higher movements before the airport fire-fighting regulation requirement would kick in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister or his deputy elaborate on what he means by significant? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Significant, Mr. Chairman, would mean traffic in the order of 10,000 or above movements per year. That would be the kind of traffic on a total basis. My understanding at Lutselk'e, current traffic in Lutselk'e in 1998 was 780 aircraft movements. Again, that is quite a difference in totals. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are probably scheduled flights that have been recorded. I just want to know what provisions the Minister or the deputy minister could speak of off the top of their head, just for the information to the House and to the people of the Northwest Territories, what kind of provisions are in place for a place like Lutselk'e? What kinds of plans do they have if there is an emergency due to a plane crashing, a plane running off the runway? It poses a danger to the safety of transportation of people and material to and from Lutselk'e. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The requirements under the current airport regulations require that an airport emergency plan is filed with Transport Canada as part of the airport operations. At this point, an airport like Lutselk'e would be limited to a minimum with regard to notification procedures and how to respond to such an airport incident within the airport proper. The department, of course, in operating the airport, does not take responsibility for airport incidents that occur not related to the airport. Those are handled through Transport Canada, the Transportation Safety Board, the RCMP and other search and rescue agencies in Canada. It becomes a matter of federal jurisdiction and regulation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yesterday the Minister offered to provide the Members of the House with a table that would outline all of the fee increases that are in this proposed budget. I have noticed during tabling of documents that it was not tabled. I was wondering if the Minister could advise us how he is going to make that table public, or is the expectation that we will ask for fee increases under each of the tasks?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have copies of the documents here for the committee Members.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Again, Mr. Chairman, just a question, how are we going to get that out to the public record as part of our discussion?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of any tabling process in committee of the whole.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of it either. That is why I was surprised today that the Minister did not table it during tabling of documents, which would have put it on the public record.

Could I ask that it at least be distributed to Members of this committee now and perhaps the Minister could agree to table it during tabling of documents tomorrow?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I apologize if the Member expected me to table this today. I understood him to make it available to the committee. I would be happy to table this tomorrow.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. The question was also if you could have it distributed to the Members now and then table it tomorrow. Could that be arranged, Mr. Steen?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, that is what I intend to do. I have copies here for the Members. I would be happy to table a copy of this tomorrow.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to ask that the copies be distributed before we change pages here, so that Members are aware of any fee increases that may be contained on this page?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you. Could I have the Minister send it up to the Clerk's table? Mr. Dent, anything further? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, not at this time. I may have some questions after seeing the table on the fee increases.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I was just wondering, in regard to the increase on the compensation benefits, which have increased almost \$500,000. Could the Minister explain what that increase is for?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will direct the question to the deputy.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The changes are a result of a series of adjustments, predominantly the adjustment related to the UNW increase that was associated with the recent collective agreement. That was the key part. The remaining portion was with regard to a transfer of the transportation assistance program that is provided to two communities currently under the Department of Public Works and Services as a program which is being transferred for administration purposes to the Department of Transportation. The total changes add up to the difference of approximately \$500,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does this amount also take into account that the vacancies within the department that those dollars are still allocated, regardless of whether the position is filled or not?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, budgets account for vacancy during that period. In many cases, a vacancy is back-filled with a casual position for a short-term time. So in the case of a vacancy in the corporate services budget, if it is a financial position that was vacant for a period of time during staffing, those dollars would then be reallocated to help offset the cost with a casual position in that sense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Since you mentioned you have quite a few vacancies, what happens to those resources in the budget that are not used within the budget year? Does it go back into general revenues? Is that spent elsewhere within the department?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the course of a year from the time an estimate is approved by the Legislative Assembly, there were often changes during the course of a year. If there are any funds remaining at the end of the appropriated year, those funds of course return to the financial books of the Government of the Northwest Territories. If during the course of the year adjustments are needed, those being approved by the Financial Management Board or the Minister, some adjustments can be made, but generally speaking, the budgets are very tight and by year-end, if there is any free balance, it returns to the budget of the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to vacancies, you mentioned there were five vacancies in the Inuvik region. Could the Inuvik region spend the allocation for those five positions say within their regional budget on other items than having those positions filled?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, once again, I would say that in the period of a vacancy, if a position was vacant and work was needed, the option exists for the department to procure those services through a position such as a casual hire for a short period of time or, if necessary, a contract resource to bring on to help during that shortfall period. It would really depend on the nature of the position.

For instance, if it was a position at an airport facility for one of the maintenance personnel, the work could be done by a casual backfill for that period of time, or it could be done as well by contract resource that was procured to help provide that service for that short period.

In answering the other part of the question, could a region do this? Yes, those authorities are given to the region in the overall operations and performance of their responsibilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Does the deputy minister have any idea how many positions have been filled using the process of contracting out to fill those positions instead of having them filled in-house?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, I am aware that over a period of time, we have procured contract services to do work that normally would be done by own forces. I do not have specifics, but when needed, if a snowplowing operation is necessary over a period of time and we do not have the resources to do that, we would procure that service. It really depends on the nature of the work, the location of the work and the time of the work. However, over a period of time, I do not have those statistics. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Does the deputy minister have any idea of the percentage that is used in that format? Are we talking 20 percent of vacancies that are filled in that manner? Ten percent? Do you have a general idea of what the percentage of using that method of filling positions is, where we are using outside sources to do the job when we are not able to fill it within?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would speculate the percentage is quite low, that in most cases of the vacancy rate the department experiences, we do not fill the majority with contract services. The majority are filled with either a backfill or we remain vacant for a period of time for the process of staffing and refilling the position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Page 10-9, corporate services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7,560,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** On to page 10-11, airports, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$19,217,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-13, airports, grants and contributions, information item. Onto 10-15, highways. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** I am just going to go back to airports.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Krutko wants to go back to 10-11. Does the committee agree? Page 10-11, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Regarding airports, one of the big concerns I have, especially with Transport Canada, is improving our fire protection programs at most airports that we have shut down. One was Norman Wells and Yellowknife. Now they are being reinstated in places like Iqaluit. Are we going to reinstate the fire protection system so that we do have firefighting capabilities at all our major airports, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Hay River, Yellowknife? Is that something the department is working in with regard to Transport Canada's regulations or guidelines? Are you considering reinstating the fire protection for these different airports?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe we touched on this subject a little yesterday. The deputy minister was responding to a question from another Member on this particular subject, so I will ask Mr. Vician to respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, as I believe I stated yesterday, the subject of airport emergency response services is one of particular concern for the department. The Minister of Transport Canada has brought forward first a regulatory amendment to the airport regulations. That amendment came to a Gazette reading, at which point the Government of the Northwest Territories responded. Since that time, it has been indicated to us by Transport Canada that the second stage of the regulation, Gazette Two, would be brought forward in the near future. Those regulations would require the reinstatement of some level of airport firefighting at particular airports, depending on the level of service and aircraft movement at those airports.

The department expects once these new regulations come into force -- not having seen them yet -- that five airports will be affected in the Northwest Territories; Fort Smith, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Inuvik and Hay River. Those requirements would require reinstatement of airport firefighting services.

I would want to state though that the responsibility for airport firefighting responsibilities prior to 1995 was with the Government of Canada, Transport Canada. It was their decision to remove and shut down those airport fire services at

those airports. It was not the Government of the Northwest Territories. When the transfer occurred, the Government of the Northwest Territories did not have airport firefighting at those sites. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Does the Minister or deputy minister have any idea what the cost is going to be to reinstate these at all of these different airports you mentioned?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe, as I stated yesterday, we are anticipating a one-time capital expenditure of \$2 million, plus ongoing annual O and M costs at those airports of \$425,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Another concern in regard to airports is they are talking about opening up the polar routes for international flights that will be flying directly overhead. I am wondering, in regard to that issue, do we have to do anything to deal with the amount of air traffic that will be flying overhead? Also, do we have the capability, if we have an emergency where there has to be aircraft landing at any one of our airports in the Northwest Territories, do we have the capacity or the ability for these airports to land on the runways we have now in the Northwest Territories?

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

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not directly involved in the polar route assessment for air services. The responsibility is currently being led by NAV Canada, a non-profit organization set up under the federal legislation. NAV Canada is working with a number of international agencies from Russia and from China, and from other locations to establish polar routes. Studies have been conducted in terms of the viability of establishing polar route traffic between North America and Asia. Some of those studies have been published as recently as just before Christmas.

There are many technical and economic issues that play a part in the decision for airlines to pursue a polar route. In most cases, what we are dealing with here are long distance overflights that originate in North America, predominantly in the United States, and travel over the North.

NAV Canada, in concert with Transportation Canada, is dealing with the other agencies that would have an interest in the administration of these polar routes, including the transport branch of the Transportation Safety Board, the issues that pertain to the Department of National Defence, for instance, the search and rescue operations, and of course other regulatory and economic groups under the Department of Industry.

Overall, it is a very complex issue that has been underway. It is not anticipated that we will see a significant change in the near future, but subject to all things lining up correctly from an

economic perspective, it could happen in the next two years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** I asked another question with regard to the capability of our airports in the case of an emergency where we have some major aircraft, a 747 or what not, having to land. Are our runways long enough to be able to deal with such a situation where we have an emergency where an aircraft that large has to land? Do we have any airports that can handle such an aircraft?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point, it appears, and this is from a preliminary indication, that some of our airports could be utilized for what is considered an emergency alternate in the event of an over-flight that requires a deviation to land for emergency purposes. Usually, the requirement is that the alternate be within 45 to 90 minutes of the flight route. In this case, airports such as Inuvik or Yellowknife could possibly be considered if an emergency situation prevailed. There is a complexity that would often require the dumping of fuel prior to landing. It would require the aircraft to be reconfigured before it could take off again, but we do have that potential.

Again, the decision for that would be up to the carrier to decide if that was a designated alternate for emergency purposes. At this point, we do not have specific services that could handle that kind of emergency at those airports. We have had an occasion, for instance, at Yellowknife, where we have managed to deal with the situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Has the government or Department of Transportation, with regard to airports, considered the route that the Yukon is taking, where they have extended the airport at Whitehorse to allow for international flights to fly directly from Germany to Whitehorse, so they are able to take advantage of the tourism industry? Has the department done a study or looked at the possibility of having the ability to extend some of our airports and what the costs would be to, say, add a couple of thousand more feet to the runways to allow for these international flights to land in Yellowknife or Inuvik, definitely Inuvik?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I am not sure if that has anything to do with the detail here, but Mr. Minister, would you like to respond to that?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, we are aware of this particular situation where other communities are in fact making proposals that they would be available as an alternate site, alternate route or landing site. Also, they are suggesting that they would be available for consideration for over the top stops. I believe Anchorage and Whitehorse have put forward this type of suggestion.

The department has been analyzing all this. At this time, we are well aware of the potential at some point in time whereby possibly Yellowknife would be considered as an international stop. However, as the deputy has stated earlier, it is a complex situation and it may involve a fair amount of investment in order to be considered as an international stop.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Page 10-11, airport, budget summary, operations expense. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Getting back to airport safety, I know that Mr. Krutko has expressed concern for international travellers, but my concern right now is to take care of the people in the Northwest Territories. I would like to know who would be liable if there is an unfortunate incident. If it happens that a plane crashes in the community and there is property damage and, God forbid, if there is human suffering and death, I would like to know who would be liable at that point in time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, could I ask the deputy to respond?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, I would have difficulty answering a hypothetical liability case, but I can assure the House that the department, through its government insurer, has liability conditions associated with the operation of the airport. I am further aware that in operating an aircraft in Canada, there is a requirement for appropriate liability protection. Presumably, depending on the nature of an incident, liability would be dealt with accordingly through whatever claims are made. I would be reserved here to speak to a hypothetical accident at this point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would rather be dealing with a situation of a hypothetical manner than in a real manner. My concern is the possibility of this happening in one of our northern communities. Given our weather, our four seasons, our extreme weather in the winter and our unpredictable weather in the fall and spring, I think there is a possibility of this happening. The department may be insured to the gills, but that should not be used as a deterrent.

If the department is not willing to put permanent fire fighters onsite in communities that have high traffic volume, would they be committed to working with community fire fighters who are volunteering, and-or would the Department of RWED, who have professional firefighters in the forestry season near the airport in Lutselk'e, to work with them to see if they could come up with a training program that will at least have some capable people and equipment at the ground level in communities such as Lutselk'e? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, this particular situation has been around for a while, in particular when Transport Canada pulled the support for fire fighters in the larger airports. The department then started working with MACA in coming up with some kind of training programs for the local fire fighters in the communities, whereby they could have some form of training to respond to aircraft crashes or fires at the airports. We have been working with MACA on this. I understand MACA has been working with the communities on this as well.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a transportation issue, I guess we are punting it over to Municipal and Community Affairs. MACA is responsible for community fire fighters who volunteer their services. Does the department not know if they have supplied MACA with the right equipment, or if MACA has done any of this training at all?

As far as I am aware, there has never been any training done in this area or of this nature. Can the department elaborate a little bit more, rather than saying that the department is committed to working with MACA on this? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am aware that some communities did in fact have fire fighting equipment to respond to crashes in the form of foam or dry chemicals. This in fact was some equipment that was turned over from Transport Canada, that was turned over to Arctic airports at the time.

The training that goes with this, there was no funding from Transport Canada in regard to training local fire fighters in the communities to handle this equipment, so it fell on MACA and the community to try and resolve the problem by supplying some form of training to handle this equipment.

However, this is a voluntary service that they have in these communities, and it is not always available on a 24-hour notice. Therefore, there is a problem of having the equipment or the fire fighters respond to situations at the airports.

MACA has tried, I know, to work with the communities to address the situation through the training that was available under their programs, but the communities still felt there was a need to have some form of training to actually respond to a fire at the airports. To my knowledge, the process is still ongoing and I do not know at what stage it is sitting.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be good to get the information on where the process is at. Which communities they are going to be targeting, how they are going to be targeting, which equipment is going to be used, et cetera. I would like to concentrate on the department's responsibility in the areas of airport maintenance. Where does the responsibility lie for maintaining the airports in the small communities?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, all of our airports are subject to inspections by Transport Canada. They set the standards and we maintain the airports to those standards, either directly through our own force or through contracts with the communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the department take as consideration the contractors' ability, not only through experience of personnel, time of availability of personnel the contractor has, the equipment the personnel uses to maintain the airports? An example I will use is the Lutselk'e airport. The town foreman does the airport. He is contracted. He is working for the band. I would imagine that Transportation has the contract with the band.

However, because of this individual's other responsibilities in the community, he is really stretched for time and the equipment that he is using is old MACA equipment, such as an old loader that sat in the bottom of the Bay of Lutselk'e over winter. It has been put back together piecemeal, and all of the gadgets are not working. If that particular piece of equipment goes down, then there is no other equipment that could replace it. I am just wondering if the department takes special consideration of these issues prior to awarding the contract to individuals or organizations within the community.

Like I said before and I will say again, Mr. Chairman, some of these communities, the only lifeline to that community is one airport. The department should take special considerations and keep that in mind when awarding contracts and doing business in those communities. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. I do not know if there was a question there, or a suggestion more or less, mostly comments. Do you want to respond, Mr. Minister?

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

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In communities where contracts are signed with, for example, community councils for the provision of airport maintenance, the regional staff meet on a regular basis with the community representatives with regard to the operation of the airport to ensure they are aware of the requirements under the contract and what the requirements for the airport maintenance would be.

Equipment is assessed, personnel are assessed. In addition to that, the department, through arrangements with Aurora College, provides for airport maintainer training. Those training opportunities are provided to community employees through the department and with Aurora College for ongoing airport maintenance.

Overall, the standards are very high. I can say that on our airports with community councils and hamlets in the Northwest Territories, the operation is very good. We have been very pleased with the operation at the local level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Page 10-11, airports, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$19,217,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-13, information item, airports, grants and contributions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-15, highways, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$35,141,000. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what is he doing to attempt to link as many communities as we can to our present road system, so that we can expand our transportation links to communities, so that we

can eventually have a system in the North where we have the ability to drive from the majority of our communities who are accessible to our highway systems.

There may be some communities we may not be able to access, such as Holman Island or Sachs Harbour, because they are on an island, but eventually maybe we can give them ferry service.

When we do strategies or initiatives in this government, we should be looking long term. I think the goals we set for ourselves should be at some point in time in the future. We do have a road system that every resident in the Northwest Territories has the ability to drive from as many communities as possible so that we have a system that connects our communities by roads.

When will the Minister's department consider looking at doing that, knowing that we have 2,200 kilometres of highway and winter roads of some 1,400 kilometres? Will the department consider looking at the possibility of such a strategy, knowing we are having problems now with our winter systems because of the greenhouse effects?

Right now, looking outside, you can see the temperatures we are having in December, January and even in February. Has your department considered looking at such an endeavour with regard to the different strategies that you have been doing?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I believe the Member is referring to our Highway Investment Strategy. Through that strategy, we have plans to construct all-weather roads in the Mackenzie Valley to the Beaufort Sea. This would serve to connect those communities in that area to the highway system.

We have identified in the Highway Investment Strategy future investments. At the time the strategy was put in place, the department and this government had a very limited source of funding that we could direct towards that type of construction. It does put the department in a position where we cannot address all the needs that have been identified by everyone in the Territories.

In particular, as you get further and further off the general route, some of these routes that are being suggested now were just possibilities at the time we put the Highway Strategy together. I think it would be beneficial that we looked at this Highway Strategy as a living document rather than simply something that is written in stone. I think we are looking at this document as something that would be reviewed on an ongoing basis. That would probably address the needs that some Members have brought up here.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will the Minister consider looking at the possibility of doing a study or an evaluation to see what the possibility is of linking communities in my riding? Aklavik has for years wanted an all-weather road. Communities like Wha Ti...sure we have a winter road up the valley where the people have been pushing for an all-weather road from Wrigley all the way up to Tuktoyaktuk. These talks have been going on, but it seems like the strategy that has been done to date, the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy and

the Highway Strategy, is more looking at the non-renewable sector.

If the Minister is open, I would strongly encourage the Minister and his department to take this on and look at the possibility of doing a scenario of what the actual cost will be to link our communities to our highway systems, so we could eventually have an all-weather road system connecting the majority of the communities in the Northwest Territories. Will the Minister consider looking at that as a possibility down the road?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I think it would be beneficial to everyone if the department could approach the federal government as another option for funding for access roads or all-weather roads into communities that are not on the existing highway system.

As the Member stated, we seem to be addressing more the need for new roads to serve industry. Maybe there is a need for an approach where we approach the federal government for funding to do surveys into supplying all-weather roads into those communities that are not involved in any kind of economic activities such as mining or oil and gas.

I would be happy to take the Member's comments and look into what process we could use to approach the federal government on this. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** With regard to the whole area of highways, we all know that it is going to cost some \$500 million to conclude the Mackenzie highway system. Has the department looked at some sort of a make-work project or initiative so we could have these special projects in different communities? Instead of having to start at one end of the other, the communities up and down the valley may be able to do a portion of the road from their community south. Right now, we have the community access road project.

There have been some good endeavours done, especially for the people in the Deh Cho, where they have taken it on to themselves to find these unique ways of making these access roads into permanent roads. I think that we have to applaud them for doing that. I think they can show us if you put your mind to it, you can do it.

As a government, we should seriously consider looking at such an initiative so that communities that are up and down the valley are able to do portions of the road over a longer period of time, knowing we are never going to get \$500 million overnight from the federal government. This is probably a way we can access funds through the aboriginal funding. There is \$240 million that is there. We can work in conjunction with aboriginal communities to look at the development of human resources in our communities.

Have you considered looking at such an initiative to expand the community access roads in our communities, to start accessing creek crossings adjacent to communities using our winter road systems so we are able to use those roads a lot sooner? Also, for us to start doing these special projects using the scenario behind the community access road, but expanding it, similar to what was done in the Deh Cho with the roads there? Will the Minister consider looking at that?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I think I mentioned earlier that the department is working with and approaching this whole need for new roads. We are approaching the federal government from a different angle, which in fact is what we mentioned in our Highway Investment Strategy. We are suggesting that there is a possibility of constructing the highway system through small projects, based mainly in the smaller communities so that we actually bring work on the whole thing, but not from one end or the other, but rather as the Member suggested, working it from the communities and then out from there. That divides the whole project into smaller projects or contracts that the communities can handle.

This is basically the approach we took with Indian Affairs in approaching them through the Community Aboriginal Economic Development Program, where there is an involvement of the aboriginal community. There is a partnership whereby Indian Affairs, this government and the community would get involved in the project. It is similar to what happened on the bridge program. It would be addressed more to all-weather roads rather than the winter road program.

We are taking this type of approach to address the need to eventually have an all-weather road system. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Page 10-15, highways, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$35,141,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, I have a motion.

I MOVE that the Department of Transportation must invest in the surface transportation link to all communities in the Northwest Territories for those communities that can be linked to the NWT Highway System;

AND that the Department of Transportation considers an all-weather road to improve the intra-community travel and road transportation services to all residents of the Northwest Territories and to be able to drive community to community;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Department of Transportation carry out a highway strategy to look at the cost-effective intra-community travel and road transportation services to all communities in the Northwest Territories to connect as many communities to our highway system.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We will have to take a short break while we get copies of the motion distributed to the Members.

-- Break

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** I call the committee back to order. Mr. Krutko, could you read your motion into the record, please?

**Committee Motion 39-14(3): To Revise the Highway Strategy to Incorporate Cost-Effective Inter-Community Travel (Carried)**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the department of Transportation revise the Highway Strategy to incorporate cost-effective means of intercommunity travel and all-weather road transportation services;

AND FURTHER that the strategy be aimed at connecting as many communities as possible to the existing highway system.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

-- Applause

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We are on 10-15, highways, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$35,141,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-19, ferries, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$4,906,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** We are on to page 10-23, community marine, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$221,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** This is something that I have been asking the Minister about. The communities along the coast that I represent depend a lot on their boats and what not that they use for whaling out in the ocean. However, we do not have a community marina in Aklavik. I am wondering what it would take for a community like Aklavik that depends on boat transportation not only within the Delta but also within the Beaufort Sea. Has the department done any studies to look at the distance between Aklavik and the coastal plain?

Sometimes you get a lot of movement of water, especially when you get a strong north wind. That does have a real effect on people's ability to store their boats. Because of that, is there a possibility of the community of Aklavik gaining access to this type of funding so they can build a wharf to deal with the waves that come in from the ocean?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I believe page 10-22 describes the purpose of this activity: construction of breakwaters, docks, wharves, in support of subsistence marine harvesting and recreation of boats. I think that pretty well addresses the Member's concern. I believe he is referring to tidal action and the effect it has on small boats. I think this is basically the purpose of this program, that the community can access this funding.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** How many communities have accessed this funding to date, considering we have been putting a couple of hundred thousand dollars in into each year? What is the chance of the community of Aklavik having access to this funding, especially for building a breakwater or a dock?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could I ask Masood Hassan to respond to that?

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

**MR. HASSAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Particularly with respect to the community marine facilities in Aklavik, the department is aware of the community's request and we have done some preliminary analysis. We do plan on sending department staff to Aklavik this coming spring to take a look at the issues, problems and consult with the community and NTCL and the Power Corporation, then we plan to prepare some options for the community marine infrastructure needs of Aklavik. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Hassan. We are on page 10-23, community marine, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$221,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-25, community marine, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions \$80,000. Mr. Lafferty.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to go back to page 10-14, just to point out a number. If we are going to approve it, the number is wrong.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The appropriate time would have been going through there. Does the committee agree to go back to page 10-14?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Okay, Mr. Lafferty, page 10-14.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to point out there, the Minister made a statement yesterday saying they just opened up 165 kilometres of winter road to Colville Lake. In the book here it says they only have 1,400 kilometres, but in the statement he referred to 1,465 kilometres. I am just wondering if there is a mistake in the kilometres. If we are going to approve this, as the winter road was open yesterday and they are fully maintaining it, it should be included in here.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised the statement I made yesterday with regard to the number of kilometres is correct.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** I agree with the Minister that his statement was correct, but we are approving this the way it is written, so if we could have a change on this before we approve it?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Probably just for clarification, what we are approving is the dollars attached to it that goes into the bill itself. The actual detail will be in Bill 19. We are not approving the words of how it is written up. We are approving the dollars attached to it. Mr. Steen, would you like to respond to that?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, if the Member is asking me to correct that number, I cannot do that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Lafferty, the book is just to provide information. Can we return to page 10-25, community marine, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$80,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-27, community access roads. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I notice the budget here has gone up considerably in the last couple of years in this area. I had thought that the community access roads program was \$50,000 per community per year. I was just wondering if we could get an idea, is that still the way the program works?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that the program is still limited to \$50,000 a year per community.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can we get a list of which communities are covered in this budget before us?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, starting with Lutselk'e, \$50,000; Rae Lakes, \$50,000; Wha Ti, \$25,000; Aklavik, \$50,000; Paulatuk, \$50,000; Tsiigehtchic, \$50,000; Tuktoyaktuk, \$50,000. We have 30 community access roads uncommitted, \$55,000 for various territorial.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if we could find out, is the program limited to a one-time grant of \$50,000, or can communities over a number of years get subsequent grants and thereby get perhaps half a million or a million dollars over a period of years?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, it has been my understanding that communities have been accessing this program on a yearly basis and we have been funding some roads on a yearly basis at \$50,000 a year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do we work with communities to make sure that there is an equitable distribution? For instance, so one community is not getting ten years of \$50,000 and some other community never gets access to the funding?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I suppose a person could get that impression, but some of these communities have been accessing this program longer than other communities. Although the program has been made available to all the communities, some have not been taking advantage of it until recently.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The community access roads fund, when I was in Wekweti, they did not even know that money was available last fall. Does the department make sure that each community is aware that funds are out there?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, if the communities have not been made aware, I can assure the Member that we will make the communities aware of the program. Based on the number of applications we receive, they are all aware of the program.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister says that he is getting a lot of applications, but then on the other hand, he said earlier that a lot of communities are accessing the funds on a regular basis. I do not understand. Some communities have more priorities than others? How do they do the selection?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of the department turning down any community's request at this point.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I spoke to the Minister the other day trying to find out what was happening on the Ingraham Trail where they are hauling a lot of gravel. He was not aware of what they were doing. Would this be one of the areas where they are accessing money for crushed gravel to go to people's driveways?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, this is a situation that I am quite aware of. I am quite aware of where the gravel is going now. At the time the Member asked me, I was not aware that this gravel was being used or placed at these particular locations.

I hope the Member takes into consideration that I am responsible for a fair number of communities, and a fair number of kilometres of highways and winter roads. I cannot keep track of every kilometre by the minute or by the hour. I did find out what that gravel is there for. It is just simply stockpiled for future use, to allow the contractor to haul heavier loads while the road is frozen.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Page 10-27. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if he could give us a definition of what constitutes an access road.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, could my deputy respond to that?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The program for community access roads is targeted to access what is considered recreational or other types of renewable resource harvesting areas, as described in the description in the main estimates. Typically, the program provides access to a recreational area that the community has used over the years, or to some resource that is of interest.

It could include some traditional activity or access to a firewood area. We have seen a variety, and if we went through each of the individual projects, each one was different in its purpose. It is everything but access for the purpose of connection to the highway system in terms of its policy. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** I would like to ask if a community such as the Hay River Reserve that have been trying to secure dollars to improve their road would qualify for this program.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the Hay River Reserve road has been called an access road because it accesses the reserve. It is not the same definition of an access road as we have here. It is an access into the community. The amount of funding the department already spends on this road is more than the \$50,000 that the Member would be getting under this program. It is a totally different definition of an access road.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** The program does not apply to access roads, only to firewood lots and recreations, not to fund dollars that are earmarked for access roads, or to consider the 13 access roads we have in the Territories?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Mr. Steen, would you like to elaborate on your definition of access roads? Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the explanations given to me by the department in regard to the difference in access roads, if I may use an example, we have the Hay River access road. We have an access road into Nahanni Butte. We have an access road into Jeanne Marie River. Those are access roads that eventually become and are part of the highway system. They are not recreational access roads as under this program.

I believe the deputy did give the definition of where these program dollars apply and how you can qualify for them. It is not to build an access road from point A to point B and then eventually become an all-weather road. That is the difference.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you. Mr. Chairman, am I to understand the Minister, in his response, that there are two types of access roads then? In the case of Jeanne Marie and Nahanni where they are working on a road, a link to the highway system is one thing. The reserve in Kakisa where they are already linked and referred to as access roads are under a different category, or a different standard? If the dollars are going into Nahanni Butte and Jeanne Marie and they are working on developing and improving roads, what is the difference? Why is there a difference, where one can access dollars in this program and the other cannot, yet the end result is the same?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, perhaps a simple way of explaining it is the access roads that I mentioned, like the access road into the reserve. The access road into Jeanne Marie and Nahanni Butte are included under the highway budget. It is included in the section dealing with highways. This particular program applies to different types of roads than the ones I just finished mentioning.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The access road funding, I see roads and trails here. I am just wondering if it is the Ingraham Trail or something. If there was a campground at the end of the road, would funds be put in to upgrade the road that goes to...let us say there is an airport and then a campground passed that. Could access road funds be put towards upgrading the airport road? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could I direct the question to my deputy?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The current program requires the submission of a proposal by a community. The community proposal is then considered against the criteria it has for the road and the project overall. Based on that, subject to funding, availability is approved or not approved, depending on the circumstances. In a hypothetical sense, if a community wanted to make an application on some parameter, they could do so and the department would consider that. This program is set up for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I gather here is that we can put roads to wood lots. If there was a wood lot at Wha Ti, can I use this money to build a road to Wha Ti so we can pick up wood?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, as the deputy indicated, the community makes a proposal and we consider it.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Page 10-27, community access roads, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$587,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-29, community access roads, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$517,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Page 10-31, motor vehicles, budget summary, operations expense. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question about the removal of the \$10,000 to fund SADD and CYADD conferences, both good programs with a laudable goal of dealing with stopping impaired driving, drunk driving. I was wondering if the Minister could indicate why? Was it just for a conference and not any ongoing support? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Vician to respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of funding for the CYADD conference, the department provided a contribution to the organizers of the upcoming conference and did so in cooperation with other departments. This funding established the Minister's commitment to the overall funding, but in addition to that, the department is providing in-kind support with some personnel time and other efforts. Hopefully, we knowingly will make a success of this very important conference that is coming forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate then, is this conference before the end of this fiscal year? Thank you.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, but the budget, if I could just be clear, the budget is accounted for in the year the contribution is made. So the budget was provided under grants and contributions in the 2001 fiscal year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under this section, the description accounts for the department's responsibility in the area of safety, safe operation of motor vehicles in the NWT. I would like to ask the Minister what kind of targets or measurements it has for improving safety on our highways and what kind of resources it plans to bring into play to help promote and achieve those targets? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In specifics to the department's overall objective for highway safety, we have identified in the business plan of the Department of Transportation a key outcome, which is...say for territorial transportation system, our specific objectives are for the safe movement of people and goods on the highway system. We

have targeted three specific things that we want to achieve in our business planning cycle.

Number one is the reduction in the number of injuries and fatalities on the highway system. Number two is the reduction in the number of alcohol-related injuries, accidents and fatalities on the highway system. Number three particularly is the increased usage of seatbelt and child restraint devices in the Northwest Territories.

Within the business plan that the department has brought forward, the department is seeking improvement in all of those statistics throughout the highway system and hopes to report a significant improvement in the territorial results over the three-year period of the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Could the department advise of what specific methods does it have in mind to communicate those goals, which I think are good ones? There are some measurements in there and some target figures, but I think they will get some support and some buy-in if they are well advertised, well communicated. If we can get some sense of how the department is going to go about that. What kind of media, what kind of campaign, what kind of information is going to be brought to bear to let the public know that these are goals that we want to achieve? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak to the three key issues that I have just raised. Number one, in terms of injury and fatality rate reduction, our objective is to continue the campaign for public awareness to reduce speed and drive safely according to road conditions. We continue to do that through both media and through our compliance initiatives with our officers. We are also dealing directly with the Department of Justice and the RCMP with regard to increased enforcement on the highway system, ensuring that there is adequate enforcement to deal with speed infractions, to ensure that residents who are users of the highway system are aware of speed and its contribution and violations are not tolerated in that sense.

Number two with regard to alcohol-related vehicle accidents injuries and fatalities, this is a concern that we do not own exclusively. It is across the country. We continue to work with youth through the CYADD program. We continue to work with our jurisdictions with regard to national publicity and campaigns. The Minister has legislation proposals under consideration that would look forward to tougher consequences for those that would not comply with those provisions for drinking and driving.

The final are of seatbelt and child restraint. The department is still and will continue to have underway public relations campaigns that speaks to the usage of seatbelts in the Northwest Territories, which happens to be the lowest in Canada, and the use of child restraint through the fire officers at various communities, who are providing community-based training for proper use of child restraint devices. Most of the problems today with child restraint devices is the inappropriate use of those devices. Those are some of the measures. There are numerous others that we can elaborate on, but those are

the key measures to the targets we have discussed previously. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the department advise how much money is being put towards these? What kind of staffing human resources are going into it? What I am looking for, Mr. Chairman, is to set up some kind of way of measuring effectiveness in the performance of these. Not so much this year, but as we build a baseline of targets and then be able to compare the resources that go in, it is going to be an easier and a more effective way of deciding whether we are getting there, how fast we are getting there and whether we are getting value for money. I would like to repeat my question. How much money and what kind of human resources are we putting into promotion of safety? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of a dollar amount, we do not discriminate the actual dollars spent on human resources and program costs by specific safety initiative. However, in the department, there are a number of staff that are directly involved with the various initiatives, whether legislative, whether communications or specifically compliance. So in aggregate, I would sense that there is a significant dollar attributed to safety programs. However, in terms of these specific measures I have mentioned, they are captured and incidental to a number of initiatives that those staff are already doing. I do not have a specific target number. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to reinforce the point that one of the ways that I find useful to measure progress is to have some kind of relationship between what we are investing in an objective and what we are getting out of it. So what I would like to do, for the record, is for future business plans, to urge the department to be somewhat more specific or detailed in this. It will give us a better sense of where we are going and what we are voting for. I request there, Mr. Chairman, if the department would like to comment on that, that is fine. Otherwise, I do have one other area that I would like to ask about in safety.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Any comments, Mr. Vician?

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, yes, we could extract the component for specific safety initiatives as best as possible and provide that in future business plans. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** The other area I wanted to ask about is with regard to patrolling and monitoring on the highway and specifically the degree to which the RCMP are engaged in this. I understand that through a contract the Department of Justice has with the RCMP, that it includes provisions for this, but there have been difficulties because of staffing and resources within

the RCMP side related to the amount of enforcement and coverage they are able to offer on our highways.

This is an area that I think is augmented, if you will, by the Department of Transportation's own monitoring services which, I understand, are directed primarily or perhaps exclusively only at commercial vehicles.

I am wondering if the department could give us a sense of the extent of monitoring, which agency handles what category of traffic and do we have an adequate level of monitoring and enforcement going on in our highways? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department, through its compliance branch which is within this budget area, is responsible for the compliance of motor carrier or commercial traffic on the highway system and all aspects of that motor carrier compliance pursuant to regulation and statutes, both national and territorial.

The requirement for compliance by the general public or the motoring public is with the RCMP. That is established through the contract with the Government of the Northwest Territories for enforcement on the highway system and elsewhere.

A further authority exists with the delegation of enforcement authority to communities through bylaw and the ability for communities to have enforcement staff on their employment list to enforce those.

Overall, there is a series of ways to enforce. The RCMP at this point, we understand, have increased their presence on the territorial highway system at the request and continued pressure of the Government of the Northwest Territories, both through the Department of Justice and through the Department of Transportation. We are very pleased with the cooperation the RCMP has provided. They have also assigned some oversight to one of the detachments to look at how, in the long term, enforcement can best be handled on such a large system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. At this time I would like to recognize and welcome Mr. Roland back to our committee. He just got back from Inuvik. Welcome back.

-- Applause

Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I have some questions in this area. Mr. Braden has already indicated a request for more detail the next time we look at this, and I would agree that I would like to see that. I will try to keep them of a broad nature, and hopefully we can get some answers that way.

I am wondering, especially regarding safety, reading the description here, it says: "The department establishes and enforces acts, regulations and safety codes that apply to drivers and motor vehicles, including commercial motor carriers." I am wondering if the safety budget has declined this year from last year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** No, Mr. Chairman, with regard to compliance, we have not decreased our budget. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** So my question then is, if the mandate used to be that we would stop non-commercial traffic and enforce seat belt legislation and all these other kinds of things, and now we no longer do that, what are we doing with that extra money that must be kicking around?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, nothing has changed in terms of the resourcing of the compliance branch. The challenge that we were facing over the past few years was the amount of time spent in compliance of motor carrier units. For example, the highway patrol that was dedicated to looking at large vehicles was challenged in the time it could spend on motor carrier as well as enforcement of infractions under the Motor Vehicles Act by the general public.

There is no doubt that we are facing increased traffic volumes in the commercial sense in different parts of the Territories, the Liard, the Beaufort, the Dempster and in this region of the North and South Slave. What we have done through a policy measure is ensure that our officers, or our compliance group, are focusing on motor carriers and sticking to ensuring that the increased volume of motor carriers adhere to the large vehicle regulations and other statutes, such as dangerous goods transportation and so on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. So are we no longer involved in any sort of enforcement of seat belt legislation for non-commercial carriers, that is entirely out of our hands now? Or do we still do some promotion, or any of these kinds of things? Or are we strictly in the safety business for commercial traffic?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, from a compliance point of view, the department only enforces seat belts with regard to motor carriers. As far as the promotional aspect of the department is concerned, we are continuing to pursue seat belt awareness and seat belt campaigns. Time is given to the officers and other compliance and motor vehicles staff to work with fire departments, to work with communities to continue to promote these activities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** One possible concern I can see is that we can spend a lot of money promoting seat belt awareness and these kinds of things and have very little or maybe no idea if it is working if we are not actually stopping traffic, and we are taking somebody else's word for it. I will move on to other issues.

It looks like the department also has information related to the status of registration of vehicles and other kinds of things. I know that in Alberta, for instance, if you were going to purchase a vehicle, you are able to access information from motor vehicles that will tell you if there any liens against the vehicle. You can do a vehicle identification search to confirm ownership. I am aware that the department also has this information, but residents of the Northwest Territories are for

some reason unable to access any of this information. I believe they are told that it is confidential. Can the Minister confirm whether that is in fact the case?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue to access to information for the purpose of motor vehicle registration or licence information is considered restricted. That information has limitations and is ongoing in terms of the discussions with regard to the degree of release of that information for certain purposes. We have considered presentations by the access to information commissioner and other parties, such as the Department of Justice, that have concerns with regard to disclosure of this information.

We are aware that other jurisdictions practice differently. It is a matter that is currently before the department and we are looking carefully at the possibility of changing our current policy in terms of release of that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. On that issue, I would urge the department to look carefully at this and see what other jurisdictions are doing. I think that many of the provinces have determined that there is no reason to restrict access to that information. This is certainly something that we should probably consider.

The last thing I want to touch on is the last line of the description talks about opportunities for partnership with other governments and industry and regulatory harmonization. I am aware of a situation that has come up with the municipality of Yellowknife. In the past, if vehicle owners had unpaid fines and these kinds of things, information from motor vehicles was shared with the municipality so that they could then restrict registration until they could collect these fines. I am aware that the department has decided, for access to information reasons, to rescind this service and no longer cooperate in this manner. It seems to be getting further away from harmonization of regulation with other governments. Could the Minister speak to this?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Steen.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That issue is before the department as we speak. We are considering the issue of access to information and the security of that information. The details with regard to the Member's request have to do exactly with those concerns and the security of information as it is shared. The partnership reference in the description of motor vehicles has more to do with issues with regard to harmonization between jurisdictions for weights and dimensions, for practices pertaining to permitting and the smooth and efficient movement of goods across provincial and territorial borders.

At the same time, I want to point out that we are of the view of sharing information that is available for sharing within the limits

of legislation and government policy for access to information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. Given that this information is before the department, can they foresee lobbying to have this legislation changed so that access to information is not so restrictive in these various areas? It seems that we may be going against the trend in other jurisdictions. Are they in fact going to take up the cause?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, the department is doing everything possible to ensure that it fully complies with the requirements under various pieces of legislation, including access to information. At this point, we recognize that we have differences with other jurisdictions. It is not new, but we have differences. We will continue to work with our provincial partners to try to define an appropriate level, but we are bound to territorial access to information legislation and the policies of the government in terms of how that information is shared and how the security of that information is managed by any partners involved with the department. Thank you.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to go back and echo Mr. Braden and Mr. Bell on the highway patrols. I travel back and forth to Rae a lot. During the day, I would see these guys out there between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., but after 5:00 p.m., there are no highway patrols out there. Do they have nine to five hours? Or are they out there but pretty well hidden? Thank you.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the North Slave region, the department has one enforcement compliance officer who works on a normal employment work schedule. His presence would be on the basis of time dedicated to on-road compliance and time dedicated to both the inspection of commercial carrier facilities, and through the associated time that generally occurs through the enforcement business of documentation and court activities. So in essence, the answer is yes, it is a five day a week operation. It can vary depending on the time of year. At this time of year, it is variable because of the nature of the trucking. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** So we do not have any highway patrols in the evenings. So if all the trucks travel in the evenings, then this officer has no work to do during the day. Is that what I gather?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated at this time, the time can be variable. At this specific time, we have complemented the one officer in this area with the additional officer support out of the Enterprise dispatch area. We have also mobilized our mobile enforcement vehicle to the North Slave to ensure that we are keeping up to the level of trucking

that is travelling up from the South Slave into the North Slave and onto the mining areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one more question. It is a question I asked the Minister before. It is about safety signs on the highways. New signs were put on the reconstructed highway between Stagg and Rae. The new signs that are out there are non-reflective. There is no safety when the signs are not reflective. You cannot see them at night. These signs are the seatbelt sign and the turn your headlights on sign. There is also other information signs that are not reflective. They do not meet regulations. At that time, the Minister said they would do something about it but nothing has been done to date. It has been three months since asked him the question about it. Thank you.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding the work was to happen. It was to be dealt with by the contractor who was responsible for that section of road. I am not familiar with the sign change at this point, but if they have not been changed, I can assure this committee that they will be changed in short order. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to get clarification. As I understand it, the department is responsible for safety regulations. The deputy minister is now telling me that it is up to the contractor to do it. I do not see it as the contractors. The department has to make the contractor do it or else they would put the signs up themselves. This is a safety issue. The contractor has gone south. He is not going to be back until the end of March. Are the signs going to be there until he is back? I just do not understand this.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, it is not an issue of where the contractor is. If there is a requirement for the sign, the sign will be there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to follow up on one other item from a discussion that Mr. Vician offered a few minutes ago, on the overall issue of highway enforcement and compliance, and the offer that the RCMP have given to look into this on a much more detailed level and come back with some recommendations. Do I generally have that understanding correct, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have a correspondence commitment by the RCMP to look at this issue of highway enforcement. It is my understanding they are continuing their dialogue with the Department of Justice, the policing division, which has the mandate to administer the policing contract. However, the commander has communicated that he will have, and he has one unit, one detachment and specific staff looking at the overall approach to this. Through our motor vehicles

division, our department has staff assigned to work with them on a committee. By the enthusiasm of the RCMP in this area, we are very hopeful we will see some improvement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am encouraged by this as well. Given what we have now in the way of traffic, not only in the way of...we get a lot of attention because of the increased density of traffic on the winter road cycle. There is a lot more traffic in the Deh Cho and Sahtu areas and in the Mackenzie Delta. Of course, we are anticipating sustained traffic out there. When and if this Highway Strategy kicks in and all of our roads are exquisitely paved and painted, we are going to get a lot more tourism traffic up here, so I am encouraged with the initiative the RCMP have taken. I look forward to the support.

I guess my final question would be to what extent is the Minister or the department going to keep MLAs informed of progress? To what extent might this committee also involve other user groups, such as the trucking industry? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I anticipate the Minister will keep the committee fully informed, specifically the GED committee, with regard to progress in this area. I will just add that the RCMP has indicated that they were looking at the creation of a traffic enforcement awareness program for our highways, which is modeled after RCMP success stories in other parts of the country. The one detachment I referred to before were taking the lead in that initiative. We would continue to target that as a key result in our highway safety area. We will continue to track enforcement initiatives and what happens on our highway in terms of speed and other kinds of accidents. I believe we will continue to bring that information back to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question in response to the department's answer to Mr. Bell's earlier question. I was listening to the answer, but I am not sure if I understood what the answer was saying. I am in possession of the same information that Mr. Bell has.

In my first reading of it, it appears to me the department has discontinued doing something that it has done to cooperate with the City of Yellowknife in terms of some of the data on motor vehicles registration, and also having a system in place where the registration may be denied when people have tickets owing or outstanding charges or something. There was a cooperation that was happening that has resulted in the city being able to get the job done without having to have their own manpower and such.

I have two questions. What has brought about this change? I do not believe there has been a change in the Access to Information Act. That is not a new act.

My second question is that it just appears to me it seems to be contrary to the partnership and working together that we are

trying to foster. Will the Minister and the department consider revisiting this change in policy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are my two questions.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will direct the question to Mr. Vician.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, what has brought about this change is the continued review of the sharing of government information, or information the government has access to in terms of other parties. The legislation has not changed. However, over time as we have reviewed systems and we reviewed that information and the sharing of that information, the access commissioner has made it very clear to us that we need to use better care in both what information is provided as well as the security of that information once it has been given away. There is a risk that information falls outside of the security net of the GNWT and therefore could be used or fall into other hands, unless there are assurances of system protection or other types of processes.

About a year ago, the government did look at security measures with regard to its own systems. That is a key part. That brought about the change. There is also a change with regard to the policy of suspension of licenses on the basis of a failure of payment of by-law fines. That particular issue is being reviewed as we speak, as I mentioned earlier. We are going to continue to look at that.

In terms of the second question, would the department consider revisiting this change, I commit we have been dealing with this issue as we speak. The issue is a complex one as well. We hope that we can come to a mutual agreement with our other parties with regard to the use of this information, which we consider very sensitive. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to state that I appreciate the answer from the deputy minister. I could accept the fact that this may be a sensitive situation, but I would really encourage the Minister and the department to revisit this issue to see whether or not it is at all possible to rearrange the working relationship with the city.

I have one question. In the review that the department will undertake on this issue, I am still not clear as to what would have brought about this change, because access to information, not only in this jurisdiction, but it is not new in all parts of Canada. I am just curious to see what has brought about the change in the legal opinion to raise a red flag or to convey some sort of concern about confidentiality.

Mr. Bell had stated that this is not the trend that is being followed in other jurisdictions, yet they are subject to their own access to information acts. I would think there might be some room to manoeuvre here. I am not trying to challenge that legal opinion of the access to information commissioner, but this is not something that is only being done or is only being proposed in this jurisdiction.

I would urge the Minister and the department to review that legal opinion again and see if there is room to manoeuvre

there. It appears to me that where the municipalities are all on their financial restraint where we cannot give them anymore money, the least we could do is not take away something they did not have to spend money on, where they will have to put their own money into it. I would really urge the Minister and the department to just revisit it with a view of putting it back where it was before. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this issue was brought to my attention just recently. As a matter of fact, I believe it was just today that I received a letter from the city in regard to this particular issue. I do have a briefing scheduled with the department as to how we can address the city's concerns, including having another look at how in fact the access to information legislation applies in this case. I can assure the Member we are going to have another look at this. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of motor vehicles, there has been much discussion about the economic up-turn in the Northwest Territories when it comes to mines and to oil and gas. There is definitely an increase in commercial traffic up and down the highways. Has the department undertaken any activity or work in the area of beefing up their operations in the area of weigh scales? I know the department has a vehicle that can go up and down the highways and do its checks out on the highway system as well. Are there any plans for increasing their monitoring and enforcement? Thank you.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, if I may direct the question to Mr. Vician.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The deputy minister, Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I concur with the observation. We are challenged in the commercial compliance area with monitoring of the trucking industry. In the past year, we did reopen the Liard scale, which had been closed for about eight years. We did staff it with a new officer. Thank goodness we had, because from both a compliance point of view and a revenue point of view, it has paid its way. We believe it has made sure that section of the highway is safe.

At this point in time, we are looking at the Dempster Highway activity. We are assessing that very carefully this year. We have two officers, two staff in the Inuvik region who provide this service. We are looking at it very carefully right now to see if we will have to beef that up for next year's activity load which, from all we can tell, is going to be quite different than what we have seen this year.

In the Enterprise and North Slave region, we have managed to keep our coverage quite good and have mobilized our mobile unit to ensure the compliance side is kept up.

It is something we are going to have to continue to look at but at this point, we think we have ample coverage between the North Slave and the South Slave for the time being. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been much discussion about the toll coming in and trying to raise some revenue there, my understanding would be the monitoring of that would end up being through weigh scales. Is that correct?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, the motor vehicles branch would be responsible for a proposed highway toll in terms of compliance and collection. At this point, the branch provides services to the Department of Finance for the collection of the motor fuel tax for motor carriers. It would be an additional task and would be subject to discussion as part of the toll in the future. Thank you.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is discussion happening, as I understand it, but is there a timeline as to when you think something will be nailed down? Again, it is a further responsibility that is added to existing staff. You would almost see a need for an increase in that area.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This discussion would be part and parcel of the overall package that comes with the proposed submission for the road toll, which the Minister has indicated would come forward to committee and the House. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to touch base on safety on the highways. I have been addressing this issue for some time now in the House, practically since we started the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Every time I ask questions on it, it seems to be a very complicated issue as to who wants to take responsibility for safety on our highways.

The more we talk about it, the more we talk about enforcement on our highways. I think that is great that we do have a lot of kilometres of highway to patrol and that is a big task in itself. My major concern is not so much in the enforcement end of it. I can drive all the way from Hay River to Edmonton some times and not see a police car or any kind of patrol car on the highway. Sometimes you see a lot, sometimes you do not see any.

Very often, you see signs along the highway as to what number to dial if you come across an accident or if you have to get a hold of someone. This is the area I have addressed a number of times in the House. I still do not see any signs on the highway. It is still an issue with me. Whether it is a tough situation to address or whether it is hard to address, it is still a safety issue. In my view, there are lives at stake out there if there is an accident.

We have to somewhere address the fact that we have to get a handle on this. We have to be able to put some information out there and help the travelling public as to what to do if they come across an accident or even if they are involved in an accident.

It seems to be very slow in coming. I have been told on a number of occasions when I have addressed it that there are a number of different departments involved. There is Transportation, Health and Social Services, MACA. For the area that the Department of Transportation is involved in, I would like to know exactly what the department is doing in that area.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, since the Member has been voicing this concern, I have been discussing with the department what we could do in order to make the public aware of how they could contact the authorities if in fact they come across an emergency situation. I believe the Member has a very good suggestion in that the department should be posting signs advising the general public, in particular by region or by area, as to what the numbers to call for emergencies. We do not have a 911 system, so it would be very beneficial. I agree with the Member that it would be very beneficial to the general public to be made aware of what the RCMP number for emergencies is, or what exactly is the authority that the general public would be reporting to, depending on the type of emergency they are dealing with.

I agree with that, and I agree that there is a need for this. I have been discussing this with the department as to what we can come up with as a way of responding to the Member's concerns. We had previous meetings with Health and Social Services whereby there is some discussion going on as to who would respond to an emergency situation, which ambulance from what community, et cetera. I think both MACA and Health and Social Services are looking at this.

Realistically, there is a need to advise the public as to what the numbers are to contact the authorities. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the suggestions I had made and talked about a little bit was that the trucking industry has a very large presence on our highway. There are quite a few of them. Most of them check in at the scales. I had hoped if we could at least get our boundaries set up as to what areas are supposed to be answered to by someone in Yellowknife, someone in Hay River, or wherever. Once they figured out what areas are going to be responded to, we could get some kind of little sticker that would have the different numbers for the areas on the highway and hand them out at the scales to the truckers, so they know where they are out on the highway and who to get a hold of.

In a lot of cases, they are the only ones who have communication devices out there on the highway. They can get a hold of someone to get help out on the highway. That is one area where we could make some improvement and help out the travelling public. I was wondering if there has been any movement in that area, Mr. Chairman?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the highway pamphlets which have the emergency numbers included in the rest of the information. Those pamphlets are available at the scales, the truck stops. If there is a further need, or somewhere we could supplement this with highway

signs, I would definitely prefer the option of putting signs up that identify the numbers for contact in case of emergency.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one area I would like to have some information on if the department could maybe look into, or maybe they have looked into, and that is the area of 911. I know it might be very expensive to have it throughout the Territory, but as soon as you go over the Alberta border when you are driving south, there is a sign that says 911 is in place.

What would it take to extend that service further north, as far as we could? Is there any way we could access that system through part of the Territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, the problem with access to 911 is more related to what telecommunication systems NorthwesTel has in place. At this point in time, NorthwesTel does not have anything that would allow for 911. As the Minister of Public Works, I could bring this to the attention of NorthwesTel.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We are under motor vehicles, page 10-31, budget summary, operations expense, total operation expense, \$2,508,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 10-33. Motor vehicles, grants and contributions, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Page 10-34. Active positions, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Details of work performed on behalf of others. It goes on to page 10-38, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$4,181,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Revenues, recoveries, transfer payments, information item. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just under revenues, under airports, landing fees and other fees, has there been any discussion with air carriers as to increasing fees and the other area of leases? My understanding is those areas will be going up as well. Has there been any contract with people holding leases or will they increase? For example, if a lease comes to an end and they renew, but if somebody has a couple more years, will they be impacted? Or will it be only at the end of existing leases?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I will have Mr. Vician respond to the lease aspect of the question. However, when dealing with airport fees in general, I have to apologize to the committee for suggesting that I could table this document, this

information that I supplied to the committee. I am told that I do not have that prerogative. I would have to pass this through Cabinet before I could table this document. Therefore, before these documents are tabled tomorrow, it will depend on whether or not Cabinet agreed with it. These are confidential documents. With that, I pass the other half of the question to Mr. Vician.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that we wait for that information after Cabinet approves or disapproves accessibility to it, hopefully by tomorrow?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. DENT:** Just a question of process, Mr. Chairman. If we cannot discuss the proposed fee increases until after it has been approved by Cabinet and then tabled, perhaps tomorrow, how can we possibly discuss approving the budget?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister, how soon can you have this information available for the committee so they can consider it before the conclusion of this item?

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I would take this request to Cabinet strategy tomorrow for consideration. I do not have the prerogative of tabling these documents on my own. The committee has the information before them. That is as far as I can go with this under my own authority.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So as I understand the Minister, we could ask questions relating to fee increases before the information is tabled, and the Minister can answer questions about the impact of those fee increases because it is included in the budget. We should be able to get the information. So there really is no problem here. Mr. Chairman, seeing as I have the floor, maybe I could ask a question. How many other jurisdictions charge for basic driver's manual?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I will ask your counterpart. Mr. Roland, is it okay if Mr. Dent cuts into your time? Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can proceed with other Members and their questions, but it is the same area that I am interested in. In the document, we see areas where there are revenue increases. If we are going to approve this department, we should be able to speak to the increases that are listed here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To be fair to Mr. Roland, I will allow Mr. Roland to ask his questions and I will have Mr. Dent next on the list. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of airports, the 2000-01 revised estimates is \$439,000, and estimates for this year is \$1.2 million. That is a significant increase compared to past years. There has been much discussion on that, but little detail. Has there been contact with air carriers and companies that hold leases with the department or airports that there will be increases? Have they been notified as to the amount of the increases?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will direct the question to Mr. Vician.

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of landing fees and general terminal fees, which make up the fees component of the revenue projection, the proposed changes have been discussed with the Northern Air Transport Association and through consultations with air carriers as well.

With regard to the lease in terms of increased fees for costs of leases at air terminal buildings, those issues come up and arise with individual tenants. As a tenant renewal comes forward, they would be made aware of those lease increases. Of course, the proposal is to pursue that at a market rate structure versus the previous process, which was a flat rate established prior to our transfers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Vician. At this time, I would like to recognize Mr. Dean Myers, who works for Back Bay Welding. I believe his daughter is one of the pages here. Welcome, Dean.

-- Applause

Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has a figure been discussed with the air carriers as to what they would be looking at for increases?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we look at it, my understanding is domestic rates are not much higher than they were previously. Do we actually feel there is going to be international flights starting to stop in the Northwest Territories?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, the answer is no, we do not anticipate any change or significant traffic because of international flights. However, because we do receive international traffic, we are required to consider the publication of rates that apply to international travellers. Those rates are compiled nationally and then provided to IACA. It is a matter of distinguishing the two different rates. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the department inform us if into these proposed fee increases for air carriers, for example, out of Yellowknife to Inuvik, the majority of flights are Comm B, where it is freight as well as passengers. Has that been taken into consideration? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. The configuration of aircraft would have an effect on the terminal fee proposal. The landing charge is based on the number of seats in aircraft. Depending on the configuration of the aircraft on a predetermined schedule, that would effect the way the charge would apply, depending on where it landed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question has to do with the proposed fee increases under motor vehicles. In particular, I was wondering about the proposed increase in fees for the basic drivers manual, the professional drivers manual and the air brake manual, where we are going from no fee now to the proposed fees. I was wondering if I could get an indication from the department about how many other jurisdictions charge for these manuals and what sort of prices. Are we pricing ourselves at the mid range, at the top of the heap or what?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The deputy minister, Mr. Vician.

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, I do not have the rates for the other jurisdictions. The publication costs for different types of manuals and the complexity of those manuals varies across the country. The rates we are proposing are relative to the basic costs of production of those publications. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take it from that answer that most other jurisdictions in Canada do charge for these sorts of manuals?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, other jurisdictions charge for manuals. I will not use the term "most" at this point, but our evidence shows that other jurisdictions place a flat rate charge, depending on which jurisdiction it is. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I notice a line item on the revenues here is the driver's test fees. Do we not charge any fees for drivers' tests?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Yes, we do charge for the driver test fee as well, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** I was just wondering, why is that line shown as blank in our budget books?

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

**MR. VICIAN:** Mr. Chairman, the fees for this area have been rolled and streamlined into the different activities under the revenue stream. Under exams and certification, under reference 10-39 in the main estimates, those relate to the examination fee. It is reflected there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** The department has not been able to tell me what other jurisdictions charge for their manuals. I would be interested in receiving that information. Perhaps I could seek a commitment from the Minister to provide that information to me within the next day or two, please?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we could commit to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That concludes all my questions.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. I would like to see if I can get an answer from the Minister. I want to speak generally to the virtual onslaught of tolls and fees proposed by the department. When we first saw the Highway Strategy last year -- Mr. McLeod has already made this point -- when you looked at the possible scenario of speeding up Highway No. 3 reconstruction, taking it from a proposed ten-year timeline to a three-year proposed timeline, there were various rationales given for why this was not feasible. Some of them seemed more believable to me than others.

Money certainly was the main one, but there were other things -- training opportunities for Northerners would be missed if we sped up the timeline, northern companies would not have the capacity, so southern equipment and labour would have to be used if we went from ten to three years, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McLeod asked the Minister about this yesterday, and to quote him in Hansard, he said:

"To some degree, we are still doing that. The difference is we are suggesting to the contractors that this is not just a one-time thing. This is an ongoing thing where they can do some investing of their own and expand their operation to allow them to put in the tenders."

What he is saying is now that we are talking about a four-year program that all of a sudden northern companies have the capacity to deal with this. However, in the Highway Strategy, when the scenario of three years was looked at, it was virtually impossible because there was no way we had the capacity. I did not believe it then and I do not think I believe it now. I think it is all about money. When I see this onslaught of tolls and fees, that further reinforces that feeling. I wonder if the Minister could speak to that.

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, I do not understand what I said yesterday has to do with the revenue section that the Member is talking about. I do not see any reference to tolls or the topic the Member was talking about in this revenue section here.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I will allow the Member to clarify. I thought he was finding a new way to generate revenues. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess in either case I am on the record, so really it is a moot point. Let me try to rephrase and put it to him another way. We were talking about the imposition of tolls and fees and why they had come about, and trying to find some sort of rationale for this. The Minister, in speaking to speed up the programs, said before when we were looking at speeding up Highway No. 3 reconstruction from a ten to a three-year timeline, yes, we did not have the money. However, there were many other reasons too, such as northern companies did not have the capacity, southern equipment and labour would have to be used, training opportunities for Northerners would be missed. I think these kinds of things made us stop and take note and say maybe it is not such a great thing.

I always believed it was only ever about money. Now they seem to have figured out a way to charge us and raise some money. We are only talking here now about a one year difference in timelines. We have a four-year plan and now that the Minister is suggesting that we can say to these contractors this is an ongoing thing, so they are going to be able to ramp up and have the ability now to have the capacity.

The scenario on the Highway Strategy was a three-year plan. I do not see the difference between three and four years being about capacity. I think this is simply about money. Now that we have come up with a proposal to raise money, we are willing to look at this scenario. Is that not in fact the case?

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

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Chairman, again I make my point that I do not understand what the comments from the Member have to do with revenue recoveries. There is no mention of tolls here.

However, I want to respond to the Member's comments. There is a difference between accelerating from three years instead of doing it in four years. There is a whole lot of difference in how much we are trying to do in three years versus spreading it over the four-year period.

No doubt the Member is correct. One of the major problems with reconstructing in the past was finding the funding to do the job. That was a major factor. However, in our past tendering, we did get indications from the construction industry that there was the capacity there and therefore, there was the ability to increase the amount of work we could tender per year.

We got back from the construction industry that there was the capacity out there to do the job. We were concerned in the past that we were competing with the mines for the services of these companies. That was a concern of the department. I think we received some indication that a lot of the work that is going to the mines is in fact not from local companies, but from outside the Territories. There was the capacity there. I do not know how else I can respond to the Members concerns here under recovery.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Revenues, recoveries, transfer payments. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Moving to page 10-7, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$70,140,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Now we will move to capital, which is at the back of your binder, page 15. Transportation, capitalization plan, ferries, total ferries, program, \$50,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Highways, total highways, \$27,269,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We are on capital, page 19, airports, total airports, \$11,240,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Motor vehicles, \$500,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Community marine, total community marine, \$80,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Total department, \$39,139,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** That concludes the Department of Transportation. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses.

I will call the committee to order. We have agreed the next department we will be considering is the Department of Education, Culture & Employment. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for this department if he has any opening comments. Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have some opening comments.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has a mission to invest in and provide for the development of the people of the Northwest Territories, enabling them to reach their full potential, to lead fulfilled lives and to contribute to a strong and prosperous society. This mission, as well as the goals outlined in the department's strategic plan update, supports the overall vision of the Government of the Northwest Territories, outlined in Towards A Better Tomorrow. In particular, the activities of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment support the first goal outlined in that vision: healthy, educated Northerners making responsible, personal choices for themselves and their families.

To fulfill our mission and reach our goals, the 2001-2002 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment total \$183 million for operations and maintenance and amortization of our capital assets. This represents an \$8.9 million increase over the 2000-2001 Main Estimates. The

increase addresses additional commitments, including a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio, increased student supports, incremental funding to support the NWT Literacy Strategy, as well as an increase to the allowance for persons with disabilities and food scales provided under the income assistance program.

The department will continue implementation of our government's commitment to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio from 18 to one to 16 to one over a four-year period, which started in 2000-2001. The ratio is currently 17.5 to one and will be reduced to 17 to one in the 2001-2002 school year. Over the same four-year period, funding for student support activities will be increased from eight to 15 percent of the overall schools' budget -- an increase of more than 80 percent. Funding for student support is currently at 10 percent of the overall schools' budget and will be increased to 12 percent in 2001-2002.

These two initiatives will result in an additional estimated investment of over \$3.6 million in schools in 2001-2002.

In our estimates, \$2.4 million is included to enhance literacy activities across the NWT, based on the draft NWT Literacy Strategy. The strategy is a response to a motion passed in this House last summer and has been developed in consultation with other departments and representatives of non-governmental organizations, Members of the Legislative Assembly and the general public. It calls for increased access to literacy and adult basic education in NWT communities, increased workplace literacy programs, expanded library services, targeted programming for inmates, the disabled and seniors, as well as the development of baseline data to ensure that we clearly understand the nature of literacy and the progress of our efforts. These measures will go a long way towards helping prepare Northerners to take advantage of economic opportunities.

Earlier this year, the Premier spoke of the importance of "maximizing northern employment". The Premier made a number of commitments, some of which will be fully developed by March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. The estimates before you do not include funding for any additional programs and services associated with these commitments. We are committed to the development of key initiatives in both the public and private sectors to advance employment opportunities and ensure that Northerners have the skills and knowledge needed to obtain available jobs.

The Northwest Territories has a very successful apprenticeship program and we plan to build on that success to help meet the increased demand for skilled tradespeople for current and future non-renewable resource development. We will be expanding the Schools North Apprenticeship program, which enables students to achieve credits towards their high school requirements while also receiving time credits towards apprenticeship. We will be working closely with the schools and employers to develop the implementation plan for expanding the program.

The department is working closely with the education authorities on teacher recruitment. The department has also begun discussions with the five divisional education councils and the Yellowknife education districts to identify strategies for employing northern graduates of teacher education programs. We expect those strategies to be developed more fully in the

coming two months. The employment of northern teachers will support one of our key goals of having a teaching force that is representative of our northern population.

The department is also working with other GNWT departments to develop an internship program to employ graduates of programs other than teaching and nursing. The internship will provide the opportunity for recent graduates to gain valuable work experience, which will enhance their employability prospects for future employment. Strategies for the internship program are being worked on and will be finalized by the end of March.

It is important that we also continue to build on the work and the relationships that we have with many people, employers and organizations who have a role and an interest to play in maximizing northern employment. We will continue to work closely with the private sector to ensure training and employment opportunities are maximized for Northerners, not only through programs such as apprenticeship but also through programs like youth employment, formerly known as working together.

Due to an improved territorial economic situation, increased emphasis on career development and improved administrative systems, we are anticipating reduced spending in the income assistance program during the 2001-2002 years.

We are proposing to reinvest \$500,000 into the income assistance food scales. Preliminary data gathered in a recent survey of food costs in NWT communities indicates this investment will ensure that the purchasing power of income assistance recipients is, at the very least, maintained at historical levels. As well, we are proposing to increase the disability allowance provided under the income assistance program by about 29 percent, from \$175 to \$225 per month. The additional cost for the increase in this benefit is \$200,000.

We will also continue our work to support aboriginal languages. The Aboriginal Languages Strategy has been released in draft and we are receiving comments and suggestions from the language communities. The strategy will be finalized over the next two months.

Staff of ECE and the Department of Health and Social Services are working together on a comprehensive strategy to support early childhood development. The departments have identified four key areas for joint action:

- Healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.
- Healthy parenting.
- Early childhood care and learning opportunities.
- Stronger community supports.

The action plan will be in addition to existing programs for our youngest residents. In 2001-2002, \$1.8 million is allocated for the healthy children initiative, which provides funding for early childhood programs and services in the communities and funding to assist with specific supports for children with identified needs. In addition, we are continuing our support for licensed early childhood programs. There are currently over 70

licensed early childhood programs across the NWT with more than 1,200 licensed spaces for children.

We recognize the importance of developing a northern teaching work force that is representative of our northern population. Our continuing investment in the training and education of northern educators through the Aurora College teacher education program will not only provide us with a more representative work force, but will also help to ensure that our education system is reflective of the language, culture and heritage of the North.

Before I conclude my comments this afternoon, I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Social Programs for providing me with some valuable advice during the review of the business plan and main estimates. Our discussions have helped to improve the department's plans and refine the directions that we are taking.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this department have any opening comments in regard to the review of the main estimates of this department? Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs met on January 17 and 18, 2001 to consider the 2001-2002 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

There were a number of changes in the main estimates from the figures provided during the business plan review in October; a \$635,000 increase for the revised capital cost of the Helen Kalvik School in Holman Island; a \$1,840,000 increase to address changes resulting from the collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers; a \$763,000 decrease in amortization expenses; a \$4,535,000 increase for reductions in pupil-teacher ratios resulting from the NWT Teachers' Association agreement; and a \$325,000 transfer from Health and Social Services to create a one-window approach to service for seniors and disabled persons.

Subsequent to the Minister's presentation on the main estimates, correspondence from the chairman of the Financial Management Board indicated that there would be a further \$335,000 provided to the Yellowknife school districts and the Rae-Edzo School Society to cover costs associated with the signing of the new collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers. The correspondence also stated that the \$2 million previously identified for the Early Childhood Development Action Plan in the main estimates would become part of the supplementary reserve.

As part of the business plan review, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight had made a recommendation on behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Programs regarding reinvestment of the projected \$1 million savings in the Income Support Program. As a result of the recommendation, the department has reinvested \$500,000 to enhance the food basket and \$200,000 to improve services for disabled persons.

When questioned about the \$300,000 shortfall from the recommendation, the Minister advised the committee there would also be increased spending for the Literacy and Maximizing Northern Employment Strategies, which would bring the total reinvestment to at least the \$1 million mark.

Committee members are not sure that this will achieve the intended result of the recommendation for re-investment and will be watching the implementation of the enhancements to the Income Support Program to gauge their effect.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to thank the department and the government for meeting at least part of the recommendation to reinvest the savings that were a result of the increased efficiencies to the Income Support Program. The department is strongly urged to examine the Income Support Program on a regular basis to ensure that it is sufficient to maintain the dignity of income support clients and meet their basic needs.

### **Early Childhood Development Action Plan**

After years of committee recommendations to focus on prevention to better ensure healthy children, the standing committee is pleased that the government is prepared to make a \$2 million investment in early childhood development in each of the next three years. Now, members are anxious to see the details of the program. The committee looks forward to being able to comment on the proposed program when the department, along with the Department of Health and Social Services, brings that information back to the committee in April 2001.

Committee members will be looking for a co-ordinated approach with existing programs and service providers. For example, aboriginal organizations and governments have already been delivering Aboriginal Head Start Programs that have proven very effective in meeting early childhood development needs. Programming under the action plan should enhance, rather than compete with, such existing programs and services.

To date, there is little evidence that there is true coordination and cooperation between Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services on the action plan. When the proposal is reviewed in April, the committee hopes to see strong evidence that these two departments are finally working together toward a common goal in measurable and tangible ways.

Members noted that the commitment to early childhood development is only for the next three years. It is hoped that the government will be able to find funding to make early childhood development part of the base, as it will be difficult to wind up extremely important programs when the funding is sunsetted in three years. It was also noted that subsequent to reviewing the main estimates, the \$2 million was removed and placed in the supplementary reserve.

### **Student Financial Assistance Program (SFA)**

The members of the standing committee continue to have many concerns about the current delivery approach for the Student Financial Assistance Program.

During the review of the main estimates, the Minister indicated that the department is moving \$214,000 from the SFA program

to pay for new SFA loans officer's salaries. There was no mention of the need for this transfer of funds from the program to salaries during the review of business plans just three months ago. What is particularly disturbing about this funding transfer is that the Minister insisted the department could not afford the \$300,000 in program funds to grandfather students at post-secondary institutions who were previously entitled to remissible SFA loans. The Minister then takes more than two-thirds of the amount necessary to grandfather these students and shifts it to pay for the increased administration costs of the revised SFA program.

In light of the administrative funding transfer, the unwillingness of the Minister to grandfather students adversely affected by the change in the SFA Program continues to be an issue for the committee. When committee members gave approval last year to the SFA redesign, it was with the understanding that students presently receiving benefits would be grandfathered. It is a concern that the members cannot take the Minister at his word when he makes a commitment in order to get committee support for a program change.

Members of the committee remain concerned that the SFA program continues to be entrenched at headquarters. There is a strong interest in seeing this program delivered regionally or locally, like other similar programs. This decentralization would be a good first step. The Student Financial Assistance Program will probably be part of self-government agreements and any eventual transfer would be the responsibility of the regional administration.

While the department has made efforts over the past few years to improve the delivery of SFA, there is still room for improvement. It was noted that Members from the larger communities spend far more time dealing with complaints about the SFA program than with the Income Support Program. The committee will be monitoring the fall intake of students and hopes the system will run considerably smoother than it did last year.

The committee and Minister discussed the benefit of introducing an interest reduction-relief plan for those students who return to the Northwest Territories and have paid back the principal of their student loans. This would be an excellent way to encourage students to return to the North once they complete their studies. It would also be consistent with the approach announced under the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy. The committee was pleased to hear that the department is considering a similar proposal and looks forward to further discussion in the near future.

### **Oil and Gas Training**

The government has provided members with information demonstrating the significant employment opportunities, both short and long-term, in the oil and gas sector. Less than a year ago, there were announcements about the efforts to support oil and gas training and government officials were heavily involved in plans to support this effort.

The standing committee was pleased that \$500,000 was identified in the business plan for oil and gas training, but is disappointed that more could not be made available. The money identified thus far has been allocated for entry-level courses.

The safety and truck driving courses may meet immediate needs of employers, but they do not ensure that Northerners are trained and ready to advance past the entry-level positions or to assume the technical jobs available after the initial exploration work is done.

Officials from oil and gas exploration companies have told committee members that there is a need for more extensive training than what is currently available. It is important that the department take a leadership role in determining those training needs and finding ways to help Northerners prepare for more than just entry-level jobs.

While we can look to partners such as businesses and the aboriginal governments to complement the training offered or coordinated by the government, the government has the responsibility to ensure that residents have the skills that employers need through programs and institutions such as Aurora College and the Apprenticeship Program. The creation of an Oil and Gas Sector Committee, similar to the very successful Mine Training Committee, may be one way to bring all partners together to address training issues.

Oil and gas development may come and go in a relatively short period of time. The committee is apprehensive about having further efforts to support northern employment and training in oil and gas contingent on federal funding that may take a long time to materialize. The department must monitor this situation and the government must be prepared to invest in the future of the people of the Northwest Territories should the federal government fail to recognize our potential.

#### **Impact Benefit Agreements (IBA)**

Some members of the standing committee are concerned about the treatment of Impact Benefit Agreement payments in assessing income support amounts. Currently, income support clients have their income support reduced by the amount they receive under an IBA.

There are two areas where greater clarity is required. First, it is not clear whether an IBA payment is similar to a treaty payment and whether either type of payment should result in reductions to payments received under other government programs.

Second, IBA payments are almost like a windfall for those on income support. Under normal circumstances, these individuals have no opportunity to buy extra items like a nice pair of runners for their children, or to put a small amount of money away for their future. The IBA provides that opportunity, but it is then taken away because their income support payments are reduced and they need to use the IBA payment to meet the necessities of life.

Members are pleased that the department will revisit this issue and look forward to discussions with the Minister in late spring on possible options for dealing with this issue.

#### **Consistency in College Programs**

Members are aware of students who have quit jobs to attend Aurora College only to have courses cancelled at the last minute because of insufficient enrolment. While the committee understands the economics behind these types of cancellation decisions, there is still an obligation on the part of the College to deliver the programs it says it is going to. If the College

wants to be treated as a full-grown college on par with its southern counterparts, it must find ways to ensure that students have full access to the range of course offerings that are initially advertised. Students should not have to take courses that are of no interest or value to them in order to get their diplomas on a timely basis.

Distance education is being used more and more in the high schools to provide choices and options for students. The college needs to take a hard look at how to access distance education options so students are treated fairly and receive the quality and variety of education that they register for. If the college cannot offer a course because of low enrolment, there should be a distance education opportunity for the student to acquire the course.

An important part of this equation is how the SFA program will support students pursuing distance education opportunities. The committee is still waiting for information on how the department plans to deal with this growing issue. Members would like to stress that Aurora College students should not have their SFA funding threatened if they are required to take distance education programs to fulfill credit requirements that the college is unable to provide.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn the rest over to my colleague, Mr. Bell. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bell, you may continue.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

#### **2000 Student Support Needs Assessment Territorial Report**

For a number of years, teachers and healthcare providers have warned that there are large numbers of FAS-FAE youth in our schools. Members have regularly heard about the extra student support and teacher time that is required to work with these children to help them achieve their full potential. It was surprising, therefore, that the report on student support needs did not mention FAS-FAE. The committee members are aware that clinical diagnosis is necessary to make a final determination of FAS-FAE and teachers are not trained to make that diagnosis. However, to leave this particular disability completely out of the report suggests that there are gaps in the assessment and seems to reduce the value of the report as a planning document.

The department did provide information on FAS-FAE students in the classroom after the committee raised its concern. However, this does not address the fundamental flaw in the report when it omits this prevalent issue and possibly others as well.

#### **Other School Funding**

Committee members note that there is a discrepancy in how funding for schools outside the normal school system is allocated. For example, the Western Arctic Leadership Program is funded through negotiation, while the Koinonia School is funded on enrolment. As with all government programs, there is a need for consistency in how similar organizations access government funding.

### Maximizing Northern Employment

While funds for the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy are not included in the 2001-2002 Main Estimates, the Premier did highlight components of the strategy in his recent address and committee members are under the understanding that it will be implemented in the 2001-2002 fiscal year. With the understanding that the Premier and Cabinet hope to implement parts of this strategy within weeks, the standing committee saw the opportunity to make any comments were extremely limited. Consequently, Members believed that it was important to include our initial comments on the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy in this report.

At this point, the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy is a vaguely defined plan with good intentions but very little in terms of substantive detail, definitive implementation plans or clear budgets. Committee members are generally supportive of the thrust of the strategy, but disappointed that the government has chosen to pursue this significant strategy with no opportunity for the committee to comment before the Premier made components of the strategy public. This means there was no chance to discuss linkages with other initiatives that might have had an equal impact on northern employment.

For example, committee members see the Student North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) as a very valuable program and have consistently encouraged its expansion. This program allows students to attend high school part-time while working towards their first-year apprenticeship in a recognized trade during the other half of the school day. The SNAP program seems to be a good fit with the announcement about program changes to allow students to pursue other paths in high school beyond a strictly academic education. When the details of the strategy are announced, the Committee expects to see clear linkages to SNAP.

Members are aware that some math programs offered in our high schools do not provide sufficient background in math for a student to pass a pre-trades qualification exam. If you cannot pass this exam you usually cannot get an apprenticeship. The standing committee hopes that the program changes the Premier spoke of will include upgrading the math curriculum to meet trades entry requirements.

Another element that members hope to see addressed is a better understanding among students of the program entry requirements for all forms of post-secondary education and training, from university to college to trades to specific technical and specialized training. Without this information, students may not enrol in the necessary high school courses.

Members are interested in the links between the employment training programs and how high school students will be supported and tracked through their post-secondary education and subsequently encouraged to become part of the northern workforce.

Many of the emerging job opportunities in the non-renewable resource sector involve heavy equipment operation. Although the government says preparing Northerners is a priority, there is a lack of a corresponding commitment to the Heavy Equipment Operators Program at the Thebacha Campus. As a result of budget cuts, this program has to train operators on equipment that is often no longer in use by industry.

The government must work on partnerships with employers and aboriginal governments to design a heavy-duty operator's course that meets their needs. There is also a need to consult with employers to determine and acquire the necessary equipment for the Fort Smith Campus to produce employable heavy-equipment operators. It is hoped the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy will acknowledge this need.

The department's main estimates talked about an increased emphasis on apprenticeship training but there is no new funding and no evidence that the programming will change. The need for tradespersons is great in the non-renewable resource sector and the government should be making a strong financial commitment to address that need.

The committee is interested in the plan to offer term positions to every post-secondary graduate in priority occupations. Given that it is less than three months away from the end of the post-secondary school year, members would like to see the program implementation details, including how priority occupations will be defined. Committee members also expect consultation with the Union of Northern Workers will be necessary to determine how this program relates to the collective agreement.

Committee members are very anxious to engage in the detailed review of the strategy with the Minister quickly so there is time for the committee to provide advice prior to implementation.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will bring in witnesses.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-At-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in please? For the record, Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witnesses?

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Mr. Mark Cleveland, the deputy minister of the department. On my left is Mr. Paul Devitt, director of management services.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will keep my comments brief as a lot of my concerns have been addressed through the committee report. Some I would just like to personally emphasize as MLA for Thebacha, of course. One of the ongoing concerns I keep hearing about is the special needs issue, class size and special needs assistants. I was called by one constituent today who has children who have special need requirements. He indicated that he had been told, for example, at the elementary school in Fort Smith, they could use as many as ten SNAs. They have seven. Word is that it is going to be cut back to three next year. It is a pressing issue that I will be bringing to the table with the Minister in the coming days and weeks as I receive more information on that.

A broad issue I want to stress is the absolute imperative nature of the cooperation between the departments, between Health and Social Services and Education, between Education and Housing when you look at harmonization. As the Minister has committed, it is going to be able to demonstrate clearly a working link between the Literacy Strategy, the Aboriginal Languages Strategy, the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy and the Early Child Development Program, all that are on a continuum and are linked and should flow from one to the other. Unless they are linked, the money is not going to be as effectively used as it could be.

Another issue I want to talk about -- and I will wait for more detail when we get to that particular part of the budget, of course -- is the decentralization of the SFA program. It is an ongoing concern. We have communities running complex services for their citizens. We have aboriginal governments planning to take over all sorts of government programs for their people. We have programs being run, income support and such at the community level. I want to come back to the point that for some reason, the Department of Education is vigorously resisting the need to decentralize this program and move it out to their communities, close to the students it serves, with the ability to cut cheques and do all the appropriate work.

I could tell you my own personal experiences as an MLA that I have more contact with the department on student financial assistance than any other single item in my constituency. That I can recollect, I never contacted the department on income support at the headquarters level, but Mr. Cleveland and I, during certain times of the year, sometimes correspondence on a daily or hourly basis on some issues. This is an issue I am going to come back to until the Minister will finally recognize the benefit of moving this program and saying yes, within a year, we will move it or whatever it may be.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, there is a strong concern about what will be entailed in the maximizing northern employment. There were a tremendous amount of commitments made in terms of providing employment, defining priority occupations, beefing up apprenticeships, both at the school level and at the college level. What does that mean? As I see it, the department has a tremendous amount of work on their hands over the next couple of months.

There are students coming home for two months now from university. There have been commitments made in terms of jobs and such. I am not sure where they are. Do they have the numbers? Do they have a process in place that will allow them to address those needs?

My own sense is that the magnitude of the number of students coming back who may be looking for employment are going to be significant. It is going to be very difficult organizationally for the government to adjust its current hiring processes and job requirements to honour that commitment. I would love to see the details of that. It is critical. Time is of the essence in that particular area, especially given the clear public proclamations and commitments.

I will have other comments as we get into the detail, Mr. Chairman, but that concludes my general opening comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Minister, do you want to respond to those general comments?

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of areas that the honourable Member has referred to. One is on the investment we are making in PTR and student needs. As the Member knows, we are making significant investments in that area. I am a bit surprised to hear that there is a rumour floating around that a number of class supports are going to be cut, in one particular case, in one of his schools. Of course, that is not the intention of this program. I would have to know the details of that and check with the DEC, who is ultimately responsible in this area, to ensure that this funding does flow through to the schools. We believe it does.

At the end of the year, we ask that an accountability be provided for funding that we put forward. It should show that we have made inroads in terms of improving the student financial assistance and the classroom support area, as well as the reduction in PTR.

Mr. Chairman, the Member also referred to the clear need for cooperation between Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. That is certainly my intent as well. I believe the Minister of Health and Social Services has spoken on that end as well.

It certainly is becoming very strong. We are working tremendously hard together on various areas. We have formed a Ministerial committee that meets on a consistent basis now. It is an informal Ministerial meeting, of course, but it does include the social envelope Ministers. So there is increased activity in that end.

As well, as the Member well knows, we have partially completed the harmonization between income support and housing, between the Minister responsible for Housing and myself. We have met a number of times on that area. It is a matter of introducing that now.

On the decentralization of the student financial assistance program, as I mentioned, I think it may be a wrong assumption to say that we are not prepared to look at decentralization. We have made some moves already in that regard, Mr. Chairman, to ensure that on a regional basis, the regional career development officers are trained to handle inquiries from students and to ensure they can handle filling out application forms and so forth.

We are strongly moving towards a computerized system. One of the reasons that there is not as much response required on the part of MLAs on the income support side is because we moved into a computerized system two years ago. We basically have three-quarters of a year under our belt, not quite, with student financial assistance on computerization. I think we will see the same results in that area, Mr. Chairman.

On maximizing northern employment, we are making strides very quickly in that area. I know it has been an area that has popped up quickly, but it is an important area for all of us in the Territory. It deals with a number of areas. We are looking at summer employment programs for students, a website for students, work experience programs for them, career employment and career development experiences, so we are making moves in that whole area as well, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of things. I want to make it clear that I recognize the money that is being put into special needs and the class size and the money to early childhood development, but I also know that the money will never be enough. There will always be a greater need than there are resources available to service it.

My final comment is on student financial assistance. In fact, income support, which used to be welfare, has been delivered at the community level by computer for far more than two years. I would like to see a clear plan for the department to take student financial assistance off of training wheels and give it to the communities and to the region where it belongs with all of the other programs that should be delivered at that level. Once again, I will be asking the Minister when we get to that particular part of the budget about that particular issue. I would like to see a clear commitment that we are not just going to keep practicing with you, but you are actually going to take it over. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** I think I addressed the issues before, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments? Mr. Roland.

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I intend to make general comments here and highlight the issues I will be raising as we get into detail later on during the budget process.

In going through the Minister's opening remarks and comments, I have highlighted a couple of areas and hope that they will be able to get the detail when the issues come up during the budget process.

One particular area that I wanted to get some detail on is when we talk about the pupil-teacher ratio, there has been much discussion about that over the years. It has been the point of focus during negotiations with the NWTTA. It has been a highlight that has come to the surface on many occasions.

The government has now instituted and agreed to lowering that rate through that negotiation process, which was a very different tactic that has been taken this time around than in previous governments.

The area I would like to get some specifics on, and not tonight - if they have it available, that would be good, but if not, then I will go through it when we get into detail and request some of the specifics at that time -- but what were the ratios, for example, back in 1971, in 1981? I can recall my classroom sizes. I have talked to a number of people who have been through the school system. The sizes were quite large. I do not know if we have actually changed in that area, if it has become worse or whatever. The thing that might highlight the difficulty of a large class is that you have more special needs.

I have raised this issue on a number of cases; how we deal with special needs instead of going from, for example, as all studies now point to, you have to get to children before they even hit kindergarten. Those are the critical years. Our special needs program in that area seems to go from K-12. That is an area of concern.

I would like to get some of the actual specifics of the information of previous years, if there has been a decline or an

increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, because it has been a highlight for quite some years.

Further in the Minister's comments, he speaks to the Literacy Strategy and makes particular reference to enhancing literacy activities across the North. I hope that would be more than just enhance, that we try to make sure they are focused and the outcomes are going to be measurable.

I am going to use an example that has been of some concern. It impacts in the area of the Schools North Apprenticeship Program. Speaking to some educators in the community I represent, there is some 22 percent of our high school students who are going into their programming. I raised this issue with the Social Programs Committee a while back. It is in the general area. I am not sure what the specific course level is called, but it is 16-26-36 course levels. The credits have been reduced because it is seen as the lower level, compared to a 33 or a 30, or applied or non-applied. The terminology changes quite regularly.

If we are going to work in the Schools North Apprenticeship Program to enhance that on the apprenticeship level, but if we have almost a quarter of our high school population -- and I am speaking specifically from the community I represent -- who are entering a course level that will not even see them being able to challenge pre-trades, that really concerns me. It goes to the whole idea of preparing our children for taking on jobs. If they can go through 12 years of school -- and it is no longer called grade 12. The terminology as I understand it now is year 12, because you could be in year 12 and have a grade 6 area in some of the courses you have undertaken -- that really draws concern to the state we are in.

Hopefully, as we are going to put more money into it, we are also going to line our programs up that will see students, when they accomplish a grade level, or when they accomplish years of schooling, that they can indeed challenge at least the basics out there. If we go to apprenticeship level, the pre-trades exam so they can get into first year carpentry, mechanics and those areas.

There is nothing like going through school your young adult life and coming out thinking you have accomplished something and then when you go to get a job in the trades area, your potential employer tells you "Sorry, young man, young lady, you do not cut it."

You have gone through a system that tells you we are going to prepare for you a study. Do this, do that, follow the rules and we will make something of you. At the end of the day, they tell you that you did not make it. You have to go back for another year. You have to go for upgrading, challenge the GED, or something like that a number of years later when you have become very upset with the system, I guess is a kind way of putting it in some cases. We are talking about young men and women who are at a critical point in their lives, where the next stage from grade 12 is into the work environment.

Those areas are where I am talking about linkages and tying them. Hopefully we will see that with the Literacy Strategy that we are not only going to enhance, but we are going to ensure that in fact they are linked to outcomes and we will see some growth there.

I have raised this in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly as well. We spend a lot of money in education. We spend a lot of money from K to 12,

and then we go again through the adult upgrading because the first K to 12 system did not work. For some reason, some place in the process, it did not work, so we have young men and women dropping out of school and trying to get into the work environment. They work for a while, but later on in life they realize they need a better education to get the higher paying jobs. They go back to school for a second time, costing this government more dollars.

We really need to ensure that the K to 12 program is working and is adequate to address their needs and not just address the numbers that we are faced with in trying to meet quotas, or trying to show that we are doing the right things.

There is talk in the Minister's opening comments that we are hoping to improve administrative systems and also anticipating reduced spending in the income assistance program area because of our improved economic situation. We all hope that is a fact, that we will see less income support being drawn when the economic times are better.

There is also a negative impact to having more economics happen. Some people will end up, because there is more money available, some families -- and this was highlighted during the training symposium up in the Beaufort Delta -- about some of the impacts that are not seen initially, or planned for initially, when you have a quick increase in your economic activity like a boom. There is a boom and bust cycle. Everybody looks at the positive side of increased dollars, corporate revenue, taxes, and so on.

However, there is a negative side and some families are impacted by that. Hopefully, we are not going to budget and cut down in that area and find out that we are short. That is a concern I would have.

I have examples of housing where initially in Inuvik, everybody was looking at the housing market and increased rents, and people on income support got hit. However, because people were looking for renters who had employment and two-week paydays, income support clients were put on the bottom of the list and negatively impacted in that area.

These are issues that I will be raising in detail as we get through the Education, Culture and Employment budget. I hope that when we go through the detail, the Minister will have some of that information. I do not expect it immediately tonight, but if he does not have it available now, I will be looking for it as we go through the details. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Minister, do you wish to respond to those comments?

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I will just quickly reference some of the areas that the honourable Member has made comments upon. I would like to state that we will do our best to get more detailed information on the pupil-teacher ratios as they applied in previous years. It may be difficult to go back to the 1971 era, but certainly we will try and get them as far back as we can. I know that I looked at some statistics the other day and they did date back, I believe, to the 1990 era. We will do our best in order to get those.

The Member has appropriately stated that yes, in previous times, class sizes may have been larger. The change, of course, that is upon us is the recognition that there are a

tremendous amount of needs within a classroom, students with special needs, and those are areas that require assistance. Hence the reason for us to address the pupil-teacher ratio, because if we can bring that down, classroom teachers find it more manageable to conduct classes with some efficiency. It does become difficult because of the numbers of students in a class, and especially if the number of students are students who require individual education programs, for example. That raises some concerns.

On the Literacy Strategy and measurable outcomes, the Member also referred to various courses that are in the school system. In the math area, I will perhaps just make reference to that. We do have more than one pathway now. We have approximately four pathways, but the reasons are because of potential dropout of students if we do not offer that opportunity. I understand what the Member is saying, that there can be concerns expressed, can they then go back and upgrade themselves, and will those courses that they have taken be applicable to upgrade? In other words, if they want to go into apprenticeships, will the courses be applicable for that? We feel that the math programs that have been designed, with the exception of one perhaps, gear them to the appropriate ability to upgrade themselves in the future.

Trades is an area, Mr. Chairman, that is becoming extremely important and it should have always been one of importance for us here in the Territories, and should be elsewhere, too, simply because there is a tremendous opportunity out there for our population in that area. It is even on a national basis. There are shortcomings in the trades.

In the income support area, we did experience an opportunity to save funding there, although we did not cut back on the programs. This is happening because of improved employment by individuals. There are more and more individuals receiving employment in the Territories, and it is showing within our program on income support.

Yes, there are definitely side effects to economic development. We are cognizant of that. We are not treating this as a cutback to support for individuals by any means. We are looking at improving the food basket rates for individuals. We have also improved, in the course of it, some funding for the disabled. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I share the same concerns as described by the two previous Members. One of the great concerns I have is regarding FAS-FAE and the lack of acknowledgement by the department within their budgetary process. That area has been covered very well by the two previous speakers, so I will move on to other areas of concern that I have.

The Minister concluded his statement with two answers to Mr. Roland talking about employment. We all agree that employment is the best solution to combat poverty and poverty situations, such as low education rate and low health rates, et cetera. However, as the Minister agrees, economic opportunities present challenges as well. The challenge that I see in the North, especially in the smaller communities now, is a cultural divide.

The title of his department is fitting; Education, Culture and Employment. His responsibilities lie in the area of education, educating people to prepare them for employment. However, in his opening statements in the budgetary process, there is nothing on culture here. There is some mention of language, assistance to language and communities, et cetera, but there is nothing this department is doing on cultural revival.

There are all kinds of ways to work with communities and culture, but there is no description of culture here. With people moving in and out of the communities and working on a two-week rotation, it is pretty hard to even schedule cultural events and participate in them. The challenge is going to be more on individuals than anyone else, but if it would be nice if the department would look at ways of helping assist community members, groups and communities, or even coming up with their own innovative ways of assisting people in the North to understand the cultures of the North, the Dene cultures, the Métis cultures, the Inuvialuit cultures, the Inuit cultures, the French culture, et cetera.

There is nothing within the department's budget or the Minister's opening remarks to deal specifically with culture.

The other area of concern I have deals with employment. Now that we are seeing a lot of people working on rotational work in the mines or within oil and gas industries or in the communities itself, we talk about spin-off opportunities to the mines. People are more qualified to go to work at high paying jobs, leaving employment opportunities in communities that were not there before.

The problem is now that there is no infrastructure in the community for daycares, I understand the department is working with early childhood development through the funding process. There are three areas that the Minister mentioned this afternoon, but those have age requirements. You have to be a certain age to participate in that. That is why I suggested if the Government of the Northwest Territories is willing to outdo the federal government by two years and give new parents up to three years paid leave or EI leave, then that is all right. However, the department is just concentrating on the early childhood development. What we need in the communities are daycares so that parents who want to work at six months or a year can do so.

We are seeing a lot of people working for the bands, working for the Métis organizations, working for the municipalities and organizations in the communities, whether private or public, missing work because they do not have babysitters. We are creating work and training people, but at the end of the day, if they cannot go to work because there is a lack of babysitters, then it is all for naught. They are back within the social envelope, back in line at income support. I do not see much in that area of the budget.

We should have anticipated this challenge coming up. We expected it and we talked about it and the Minister first talked about it on many occasions. Previous Ministers have done the same thing. If we are expecting a lot of employment, then we should start planning on addressing challenges associated with those opportunities. There is an equal reaction to every action. If more people go to work, there are less people to stay at home and take care of the kids and take care of the home, et cetera.

I am hoping to get some kind of commitment from the department that they will work with communities, they will work with other departments within government to establish facilities that will see the creation of daycares. It is needed everywhere. Yellowknife has the highest number of daycare centres in the Northwest Territories, but there is a waiting list for every one of them. It is not just the communities that are experiencing it, but the communities are seeing the worst of it, I think.

The employment sector of the Northwest Territories, the opportunities are there, but the people in the Northwest Territories, especially the aboriginal people, are having hard times getting jobs. Once they do get jobs, they are very low on the totem pole. Those who try to move up seem to be hitting the wall. It could be because of a lack of education, but I suspect sometimes it deals with other matters. Some people just do not want to climb the totem pole as fast as they can, but that may not be the problem of the department.

The level of education is still a disgrace. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in a westernized country where we supposedly have the best standard of living, we still have a very poor education system, or a system that does not seem to work for a certain segment of the population. Those problems have been identified throughout time, but there seems to be a problem with this government rectifying the problem. What is the big problem in trying to fix the problem? Why are they having such a hard time at getting aboriginal people graduated from high school? High school! Less than 50 percent of the aboriginal population has graduated from high school. Why is that?

I know there has been talk of people being pushed through the programs just for numbers and budgetary reasons. I think we are coming up with more imaginative ways of doing that and calling it employment and easy credit accreditation. We are cheating the people, as Mr. Roland said. If we are not giving them a good, valued education, then at the end of the day, we are cheating them as a government and as a program service provider.

The level of northern students, specifically aboriginal northern students, graduating from university is very low. I imagine that stems from the low level of graduations from high schools, but student financial assistance and the way that program is delivered does not seem to meet the need of a lot of the students up here.

I have a lot of calls. A good percentage of my constituency duties have been spent on student financial assistance. Students want assistance after they are in class, but they do not have the dollars to go buy the books necessary to participate in the studies. They may have failed a course here or there, or did not meet the exact course requirements. The fact remains they are down there, they are committed to going, but the rules that this government and this department have established are just too tough for them.

Are we establishing rules and procedures that discourage our northern aboriginal students from participating in the education system?

We have statements like we want our civil service to be representative of the population. What a farce. What is the level? How many aboriginal teachers are there in the Northwest Territories? How many aboriginal teachers are within our Aurora College system? Those are just some of the

questions I have and I will be asking during the detail, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will just quickly make reference to a number of areas. On the area of culture, I think that we sometimes overlook some of the strategies and the areas of support we do have. I understand the Member's interest and concern in that area, but we cannot overlook some of the concerns that we have as well, but also some of the programs we have in place.

Yesterday Mr. Miltenberger asked me about arts support. I found out later, which I had forgotten about, we are working on an arts policy between RWED and ourselves and the Department of Heritage. Again, that will potentially outline some of the areas of concern.

In terms of the daycare assistance, I spoke on that earlier today. We do have approximately \$4 million we will be putting into the Healthy Children's Initiative daycare support programs, and we are looking at the early childhood development program as a potential support area as well, Mr. Chairman.

The SFA, there are two areas there. A policy area and...the policy area was really long established when we changed the legislation and the conditions of applying for SFA were well established. The other is the administrative area. The administrative area merely supports the policy area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try not to repeat everything my colleagues have said. They have made some very good points. I think the Minister has addressed many of them. I guess we do not want to go round and round here, but there are some specific things I would like to address that either for me are highlights or are very important to my constituents.

The first point, Mr. Chairman, is this issue of magnet communities. I do not think it is going away for the larger regional centres. I think they will continue to see an influx of students from communities as families move to the larger centres because, quite frankly, that is where the services are. If they cannot get the services, be it health care or other things in the smaller communities, they come to the larger centres. With them come young students who enter the school system.

We have seen as recently as this year, where there have been some situations where parents have been unsatisfied with the level of support in classrooms. There has been both varied level of ability in the classrooms, which I think is probably becoming more and more common, but also behaviour problems.

One of the things that we see when children come in from smaller communities -- and I can speak from experience, as I moved to Yellowknife from a much smaller community and know there was quite a struggle for myself in transition -- we see that if you are behind coming from somewhere else to a larger centre, you are going to be frustrated in school and you are not going to enjoy it. I do not think it is going to be much

fun, Mr. Chairman. I think with that comes behavioural problems.

I think there is a real need for the department to take it upon themselves to look at implementing some sort of a transition program for students coming from smaller communities to help them adjust to the life in a bigger centre. It can be quite a shock, I believe culturally, Mr. Chairman, and in other ways. I think this is something we certainly need to address. I have raised it with the boards in Yellowknife and they indicate they are looking at this, but I would like to see some support from the department in this area.

On the Literacy Strategy, I wanted to make one point about consultation. I think one of the main, important initiatives and thrusts when the consultation was taking place coming from some of the people the department interviewed -- I know because I was at one of the meetings with several other MLAs, Mr. Dent, Mr. Braden -- we indicated that it was important to us to see that this was a government wide initiative, not Education, Culture and Employment out on an island, not Education, Culture and Employment left holding the bag and all of the other departments saying "That is reading and writing. That must be Jake's concern, Jake's problem. That is not our worry."

I think it is critical that if you look at any of the services provided by this government, we need to address literacy concerns. We cannot have applications for lending, especially in some of the smaller communities through the BCC, that are so convoluted and complicated you would need a lawyer to get through them.

There are many instances where you can see where other departments have to buy into this Literacy Strategy. I think it is more than putting \$100,000 toward plain language training, although I admit that it is a very good start and a very good initiative. I was really hoping to see some collaboration. Maybe the Minister can speak when I am done to the collaboration that did happen between other departments, because I am very interested in this. It could be that I am just not aware.

With maximizing northern employment, Mr. Chairman, the guarantee the Premier first put out to the public raised some expectations. Now it is about delivering on this. I think we made a guarantee that we were going to provide jobs for northern students who were trained nurses and teachers. I am concerned that these guarantees do not become make-work projects in the public sector. I think we know that we have economic development. We know that we have demand. There is a real need to collaborate with the private sector here. I know the Minister has indicated that is their intention in his opening comments. I am not saying that we do not need public sector jobs and it is not a great idea to get students involved. I just do not think it does any good to create jobs that would not otherwise be required, so I hope we will look at that.

Also, on the issue of guarantees, we do not know exactly what the details are going to be. I have indicated in the House that I have had calls from constituents who were very excited when they heard the Premier's announcement. One woman in particular has a daughter at university who is a northern student. She is going to be a teacher. She called me after hearing the Premier's announcement and said that is great news. Did you hear the Premier has basically guaranteed jobs for northern students who are trained as teachers? She was saying her daughter could now save money and pay back

some of her student loan because she would be able to live at home.

I do not know if we ever received an explicit guarantee that jobs would be guaranteed in students' home communities. I think if you talk to my colleagues, there are certainly jobs for nurses and teachers in many of our smaller northern communities. If we are guaranteeing that these jobs will still be there, I simply give to you, Mr. Chairman, that is simply market demand. As I have indicated before, guaranteeing jobs is fine. Guaranteeing that we are going to provide adequate housing for teachers who come to the communities or for nurses who come to the communities or adequate support for these people, so they are not working 14 hours a day and working without vacations, that would really be an achievement. I hope the department will look at those kinds of things when we talk about maximizing northern employment.

I am also specifically interested in recruitment and retention issues and bringing northern students back here. I think it is great that the department is looking at some sort of interest relief for students who are paying back student loans if they are willing to come back here. It seems to me it would be pretty simple to administer. I think it is good the department is looking at this. I think it will make a difference. We need to get people who grew up in the North back here because we all know that those are the people who will stay here.

On the Aboriginal Language Strategy, I was interested to see that a draft has now been rolled out and is now out for consultation. I do not believe it has come to committee. I know we have been asking a lot of questions about this strategy. We are very curious to know how it is linked with the Literacy Strategy. I am just amazed that with all of our concerns, we were not privy to this draft. Quite possibly, it has come to us when we were in session already and we just have not been made aware, but I certainly hope we have it and we are being considered on this.

My last comment, Mr. Speaker, is on oil and gas training. I recently had an opportunity to go up to Inuvik for a dinner and meeting with some industry and government people in oil and gas. I tell you, Inuvik is really hopping. It is just night and day from when we were up as a Caucus. I could not believe the number of rental vehicles all over town. Everybody is excited. The mayor is talking to me about what a job it has become because of all the activity. He is thrilled about it.

I think we really have an opportunity here. It would be a serious mistake if we missed the boat and did not spend, not hundreds of thousands of dollars on training, but millions. When we sat down and talked to a lot of these folks in the industry, I thought the concerns were going to be around the regulatory regime. They told me "No, we just want to know what the rules are and we are willing to live with them. We understand that we are going to have to respect the rights of the people, consult everybody and as long as we can see the path laid out in front of us, we will do the work to get there. We are more concerned with the lack of trained Northerners. We are going to try to hire Northerners, but we are going to certainly need people who are trained."

Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development had a strong presence and was involved in organizing this meeting, but there were not departmental officials from education. The Minister or the deputy were not there. I think it was a missed

opportunity because we had a lot of people asking us where our government people responsible for training were.

I think it is really important that Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development collaborate with Education, Culture & Employment, and that as an Assembly, it is important for us to find money for training in the oil and gas industry, not just in the Mackenzie Valley and the Inuvik region, but also in the southern parts of the Territories that have potential for oil and gas. I hope we will look to do that. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Member for his comments on a variety of areas. I will quickly touch on some of them. I think one of the areas he dealt with when he dealt with the magnet community issue was some concern of funding levels to support any changes. We do have a mechanism and all of the DECs, as well as the DEAs in Yellowknife, are aware of the possibility of extraordinary funding and the application they can make in that area in the event that they need it.

The area that we are addressing is support for the classrooms through the PTR and the student needs. Mr. Bell also spoke about behaviour problems, and it is an interesting area, an area of great interest to me. We had several teachers in Vancouver a while ago to attend a session in British Columbia on behavioural problems and effective behavioural support. It is an area that some of the DECs and DEAs are already working on and have instituted some programs already.

On the Literacy Strategy, the collaboration between departments did take place, Mr. Chairman, and will continue to take place. A deputy minister's committee and his officials meet on a consistent basis to help develop the Literacy Strategy. We recognize that, because it was one of the areas that was part of the request by a motion that was made to ensure there is government-wide coordination.

The maximizing northern employment, we do intend to look at private sector support and to encourage and to look for opportunity to deal with the private sector, as well to ensure that employment is increased there.

The recruitment and retention issue, on students with interest relief, yes, that is something we are pursuing and we would like to pursue fairly rapidly now. We have been caught up with some other issues, but we have never put that on the back burner. It was just something that we needed to flush out a little more. We will be getting back to the Members on that.

The Aboriginal Languages Strategy, we did give that to the committee some time ago, Mr. Chairman, but we can certainly provide more copies if that is required, Mr. Chairman.

On oil and gas training, I would just like to state yes, Inuvik is humming and buzzing. The Minister of RWED was up on the weekend, but I was there two weeks ago, Mr. Chairman, and you were there yourself, at the time. The next morning I had some meetings with Inuvik officials, with Nellie Cournoyea and Freddie Carmichael, to discuss the whole issue of training, the whole issue of potential up there. Our department is very heavily involved in the whole training aspect there, Mr. Chairman. We have had a training committee operational there for many years already. The lead on that are our officials there.

We are well aware and we are very involved in all of the activity there. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make some general comments on this Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I feel it is a very important department. This department is charged with preparing our youth and our residents for employment. We heard from the Finance Minister of the number of employment opportunities in the last while in the Territories.

However, the communities I represent still have high rates of unemployment, virtually no training opportunities and there is really no training going on. We have one program now, Women in Trades. They are learning how to do welding. They are taking a two-week course in welding. Other than that, there is really nothing.

There are some safety courses that have gone on, and there is really no opportunity for training, especially in the area of oil and gas. The Deh Cho is an area that has high potential for oil and gas. We have already seen some lands being opened up, oil and gas in the Liard.

I also heard the Aboriginal Affairs Minister announce today the Deh Cho First Nation had signed an interim resource management framework agreement. We are anticipating that we are going to start seeing a lot of oil and gas initiatives in the area really soon.

However, we are not seeing anything in the area of oil and gas training. We have known that oil and gas was going to come down the tubes for many years, yet to date we have no college program to accommodate oil and gas. There are no college programs for oil and gas training in the North. The only thing we have is driver training and safety courses.

If anybody wants to take courses in the area of oil and gas right now, they have to go to the south. There is no community based training. I was hoping to see additional dollars in this budget committed to oil and gas, but the money committed is the same as last year.

We were told that the oil and gas sector would get the same attention the diamonds were getting. We are not seeing that at all. In fact, there was a mine training committee put in place, but there is no equivalent group for the oil and gas area. There is no oil and gas committee.

The Minister mentioned yesterday in my line of questioning that there is a training group. I believe there is a training group located in Inuvik, but that has no bearing on what we are doing over on this side of the Territories. During question period yesterday, I asked the Minister about how successful he felt the government was in their discussions with the Minister of Indian Affairs. He did not take the time to really answer that. He indicated that they were continuing their discussions. That does not tell us where we are.

I am concerned that we will be missing a lot of opportunity, and we will see a lot of jobs go south because we are not prepared for oil and gas when it starts to come about. I believe that is in the very near future.

Another concern I have is something that has been raised a couple of times now, and that is the maximum allotment for the fuel subsidy for the seniors. I have had a couple of seniors now that, because they are raising the inflated gas prices, their heating fuel subsidy has gone over their maximum allotment. I think that is something we have to take a look at.

Other concerns include some of the programs that are listed in the detail, and I have a concern that a lot of these programs that are listed are very hard to access. For example, we have a group that is traveling to California and will be performing in a number of different places. They are a youth group. They had to raise a lot of money, and they are just about there. They are planning to leave in about a month. They are going to demonstrate hand games and drumming. I see programs here for northern performers, for cultural projects, yet they cannot access any money from this government. I cannot for the life of me understand why an aboriginal group demonstrating cultural activities, and something we all say we promote, cannot draw down from some of these programs.

Another concern I have is regarding high schools. I think Mr. Roland touched on some of the concerns that I have also. That is regarding the quality of education that our students in the North are getting, especially in the smaller communities. Since the introduction to the smaller communities, more specifically Fort Providence, I think it has been four years now that the community has had a grade 12 program. We have not seen one graduate yet. The numbers seem to be dwindling rather than increasing.

When I was in high school, there were 26 of us in grade 12. The community has just about doubled in size, yet I think we have four or five students in the high school. There seems to be a reversal in the trend. Some of those students who are in grade 12 are not satisfied with the level of education they are receiving, and they have taken the option of attending the Northern Leadership Program in Fort Smith. There is a real concern that this option might not be around for much longer. I think that is something we should really revisit.

It has a lot of importance for us in the communities because it gives those students who want to try living in a different environment, want to access the better sports programs, have more opportunity for different academic programs, it gives them that opportunity. Just about all of the students who have attended the Western Arctic Leadership Program are now in university, while we still do not see that kind of success coming from the grade 12 programs in the communities.

I was quite happy to hear mention of FAS over the last little while. We as the Regular Members will be addressing it as part of a theme day. A lot of the communities have started discussing FAS. Myself as an MLA, I am fully aware now. The profile has been raised. I hear it in the communities. I think, judging by the level of discussion, we finally brought this issue out to the public attention. It was not the easiest thing to do. I have heard from my own communities that it is kind of a negative backlash to coming out and say you have a certain level of FAS.

We are trying to approach it in a way so that we are not pointing fingers at anybody. Our schools are really taking an aggressive approach. In fact, we have been trying to secure some funding in the last little while. We have been turned down for funding by the federal government because they considered

the proposal too ambitious. However, we are not going to give up. We are planning more workshops and a lot more discussion on this issue.

I am also concerned about the harmonization for housing with income support. The biggest concern is adding the additional costs to the seniors. I realize a lot of these costs are very small and for the most part are not in the smaller communities. However, I believe most of the seniors -- and I have a lot of discussions with the seniors -- are experiencing a lot of hardship. I do not think it really does it any justice to add increasing costs to them. I also do not believe that we should be adding any costs to the students, as this program will start charging a level of rent to students also.

I will be addressing some of these issues during detail, so I will reserve my questions until then. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the honourable Member spoke about the unemployment rates in the communities he represents and the potential for oil and gas. There has been training taking place. I understand that many of the courses were on an initial basis. This budget includes another \$500,000, Mr. Chairman, to address oil and gas training. Yes, perhaps it is not as much as we would like. It is an area that we continue to work on.

We are working, and we continue to work, with the federal government on the human resource development plan to see if we can access funding through that mechanism. That is essential for us, Mr. Chairman, to get substantial money.

Additionally, we are working on the maximizing employment. We are talking to the oil companies. We are suggesting that they too come up with potential suggestions. If there are suggestions from communities and other organizations, we would welcome them because we are interested in seeing what is possible.

With regard to the seniors' fuel subsidy program, as we know for the moment, we do have a program to do rebates to individuals and families on fuel. We are looking at some anomalies in the whole area of seniors' fuel subsidy.

The support for youth groups, our programs in the culture area are limited. As I stated earlier, we are doing a program to study an Arts Policy, and we are working on that with RWED and Heritage Canada to see if we cannot develop some area of improvement there.

The area of high school programs, our enrolments have increased. That is true. Perhaps we need to continue to look at programs. I do not know the specific answer to perhaps the enrolment and graduation rates of Fort Providence. We would have to take a look at that.

With regard to the Western Arctic Leadership Program in Fort Smith, it is a program we are studying at the moment to see, because other funders have pulled out of the project. We want to see if we cannot look at how to approach that.

On the harmonization of income support, we did brief the committee on it. I think we are looking for a report back on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I could echo many of the comments made by my colleagues here, but a lot of it I could also get into under the program details as we go through the budget. I do have a number of questions arising from the Minister's opening comments, particularly a couple of areas that are not covered anywhere in the budget, so I would like to examine those a bit right now if I could.

In his opening comments, the Minister made reference to the Maximizing Northern Employment Program. Of course, there is nothing in the budget for this program right now. In his opening comments, he says that the commitments will be fully developed by March 31 of this year. Does that mean they will be fully developed and implemented by March 31, or does that mean that the program will be developed by March 31 and ready for discussion with the standing committee before implementation?

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the concerns we have with Maximizing Northern Employment is in the area of students, university students and post-secondary students specifically, because they will be coming on the market fairly shortly. We want to ensure we are prepared for that. Our planning is progressing fairly diligently in that area, Mr. Chairman. We anticipate that by March 31, we will have a lot of our planning out of the way.

I will have to go to Cabinet and then proceed to the Members after that to pass the program as planned, as we finalize it to the Members. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get some understanding from the Minister of when he proposes to meet with the committee to explain the details of the program?

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do need to finalize some of the areas. With regard to the student area, the projects that we are working on there, I do need to go to Cabinet with. The moment I am through Cabinet, then we can appear before the committees and before the Members. At this particular point, I do not know what specific dates I can provide.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can understand that the Minister may not yet be able to give us a final date, but what I really am looking for is a commitment that the Standing Committee on Social Programs will be involved before the details of the program are sent out to the public, so that we can at least be involved in the consultation process.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was our intent and our desire. I appreciate that the committee also wants to proceed on that basis.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In his opening comments, the Minister also talked about developing an internship program to employ graduates of programs other than teaching and nursing. Again, this program was going to be finalized by the end of March, so I would like to see the same sort of commitment on that specific program as well from the Minister.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister responsible for Education, Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a number of areas we are working on with regard to students, Mr. Chairman, and we would like to bring that forward to the committee for consideration. There are a number of areas that we want to deal with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One other area that I am interested in -- and again, the money is not in this budget, so I would like to get some commitment from the Minister -- has to do with the early childhood development program. As we know, that money does not show up in this budget. Do we have an idea of when that program is going to be ready for presentation to committee, so we can hopefully discuss the program before it is sent out to the public?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our intention would be to have it presented to Cabinet. We are looking at April to finalize it with Cabinet and then we would go to the standing committee, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The balance of my questions I can have answered during the detailed consideration. Thank you.

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

**MR. DELOREY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to repeat a bunch of things that have already been said by my colleagues, but there are some areas of concern I would like to bring up in general comments.

If there is anything I can support easily, it is extra money into education. It is pretty hard to look at new initiatives in education or extra funding with any negativity, but it does create some problem as I do have with the whole budget this time as to where the money is coming from and how long we are going to be able to maintain it.

We know from where we were a year ago to now, we are putting another \$9 million into education. We can introduce a whole bunch of programs with that. I would certainly hope, Mr. Chairman, that we are not setting up a whole bunch of programs just to, in a year from now, have to start pulling money out of them because we cannot afford to keep up with the programs that we have put in place.

I know there are a lot of energies and strategies being put into our young people and the importance of starting them off on the right foot and I agree with that. I think that is very important. However, we are still seeing letters coming across our desk

that say young...(Microphone turned off)...are not being able to access any funding to continue the support. When they try to access funding, they get pushed around back to this department, to the federal government, to Health and Social Services. It just seems to be a go-around where they can never get any funding. We have ones right now that are on the verge of closing up because they just cannot access any funding. I think if we are going to be serious in this area, then somewhere we have to be able to fund these programs.

There is also a part in that which has been brought to my attention. Although we do want to start our kids and have them ready for learning when they hit school, there are still parents who would like their kids just to be kids for the first few years of their lives, and not necessarily start a system that we are putting them in school at three-years-old or two-years-old and have them two years ahead of every other kid that starts at kindergarten or grade one.

If we are going to start that system and have it in place, then we are going to have to have the support staff in the schools to help the ones that are maybe not as prepared to start learning, or their attention spans are not quite as long as other kids. We do not want to set up a system where we basically have the same thing as we have now in some cases.

The system we have allows kids to go along until grade 9, and they just basically go along with the rest of them, whether they are at the same grade level or not. I think it goes a long way to saying why we lose so many kids between grades 10 and 12. They hit high school and all of a sudden they have to have good study habits, they have to be able to write exams, they have to get marks. In many cases, they just do not have what it takes to meet that grade level. We lose an awful lot of kids who do not end up graduating because the support staff has not been there through their earlier years in school.

I do not think that is going to change, Mr. Chairman. That is going to stay there regardless of how many programs we put out at a younger age. That difference in learning ability is going to be there. We are going to have to put the extra help in the classrooms to help these kids along.

We know that we are losing a lot of teachers in the North, and recruitment and retention is big. I know that the department and education boards went on a big recruitment and I think that was great. I made a statement in the House the other day that I had to clarify myself on a little bit, because to some people it sounded like I was maybe a little critical of the drive they went on. That was not the case. I thought that had to be done, and I think it was an important recruitment effort.

At the same time, there were also some incidents brought to my attention where we have qualified teachers here that have applied on jobs and have not even received an interview. They are people who live in the North and qualified teachers. I think that if we have those people, if it is one or two, it is too many. I think that we have to be able to identify those and hire them and put them to work.

Student financial assistance is a problem. We have heard that it has been very big on our agenda for a long time. Even though it was overhauled about a year ago, it only created some more problems because it got too complicated and too lengthy to try to apply, and the kids were having a hard time

understanding. The biggest concern of all was trying to get hold of somebody to find out the information and get help.

The students are out there and they are phoning a number and all they get is an answering machine. Nobody is returning any calls. In checking with Hay River and people that administer the program there, they do not have a problem with it being in Yellowknife. I certainly would not want it farmed out to the regions that we have right now anyway.

I do think there can be some improvement made at headquarters as far as having people there to help students and to help parents when they are phoning to find out about the student financial assistance.

We talk a lot about maximizing northern employment. I think that is very important. It is an area that I think that I have had some concerns about for a long time. We talk about bringing our graduates back to the North and putting them to work here. Now that we have some activity in the North and are able to do that, I think we could take that one step further.

I think we could look back over the past five years and look at the kids that we have educated in the North, and this government has paid to educate a lot of kids. The kids who came back to the North and were qualified, who were educated in certain fields, they could not get work in the North. They ended up going south again to find employment. Not because they did not want to work in the North. They just did not have the work here. For some of them, it was for different reasons, but I think that there are still some kids out there whose parents are still living in the North and working here. I think that a lot of those parents would like to retire in the North, but there is not much here to hold them if their kids are working down south.

If we could bring those kids back, we might be holding some of those parents here as well. Those are very important to the fabric of the Northwest Territories.

We have teachers who have been here a long time. They have contributed to our communities. If we could keep them here in their retirement age, they would still do a lot of good for the Territories.

Oil and gas training in the oil and gas sector, I think there is room there for the government to take that one step further where it is bringing money back to the Territories as well. When we are training, especially in safety training, right now there are only outfits in the south that have set the standards for safety training for employees in the oil and gas sector. I do not see why this government cannot set the standards they would have to meet to work in the oil patch, in the oil field. That money that is paid for training employees comes back to this government and does not go south. I think there is a lot of money going south that this government could keep right here in the Territories. I think there is room to move and move quickly.

One of the areas I have talked about in the House many times is the area of seniors and the disabled. I am happy to see that there is extra money going in there for our seniors and our disabled. The subsidies that are going in there will go a short ways towards alleviating some of their problems. I am sure Mr. Roland could tell us that the extra activity in Inuvik, although it is great for the area and has created a lot of economic activity, it has certainly driven the price up of everything in Inuvik. That goes across the whole spectrum. It goes to seniors and

disabled, and they end up paying the extra prices. Although we are putting the extra money in, we may not have been meeting their full needs as well.

Those are some of the areas I have some concerns with. I will deal some more as we go through detail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Mr. Ootes.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have covered a lot of areas there as well. I will try to address a couple of them where Mr. Delorey was perhaps seeking some comments back. On the daycare, the access of funding to it, we do seem to find pressures, specifically at the end of the year because the organizations start to run short of money and therefore get on to us. It is an area of concern that we have noted and are working on in the early childhood development program that we are developing.

In support staff for schools, again I understand what Mr. Delorey is saying. Our programs are geared to ensure that we increase the support staff in schools, both through the PTR and through the student needs funding.

The recruitment and retention of teachers is an important area. They are in demand. We seem to be having some success, however, with recruitment. There is some positive feedback from recruitment teams. Our concentration is to develop a northern workforce trained and educated in the North. These are the people who remain here in the North, Mr. Chairman.

On the SFA program, we have a policy area and an administrative area. We keep making improvements in the administrative area. There have been some problems. I will readily admit that. Certainly in the fall we did hit a few problems around early January. That is when the intake takes place and it is a bottleneck. We are continuing to work on that. I think Members will no doubt see tremendous improvements in that as the year goes on.

With maximizing northern employment, we definitely want to concentrate on bringing our students back to the North, those students whose education we have paid for. Even those we have not paid for, we want to bring our students back and have them work in our systems. We as a government want to bring them into our government. We want to bring them into private industry in the North. It is a key area for us that we are working on.

That pertains to oil and gas training as well. We want to ensure that we get the jobs, that Northerners get the jobs. We understand we have to provide the training for that area. It is a big challenge. We all know that. It has come on to us very rapidly, certainly in the Beaufort Delta area and in the Sahtu area.

Seniors and the disabled and the extra cost they are facing, as I mentioned earlier, we are continuing to work on the whole seniors area to see what we can do there. Thank you.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It appears that my colleagues are on a roll and I am not sure I can say anything to

better the suggestions already made. I would just like to make a short comment.

Basically, the Minister's opening statement talks about all of the good news. This report here talks about how to improve your policies. I think most of the points are covered there.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to indicate that generally, I am in support of the direction the department is going. I think that a lot has been done by the department and this government in the very short time of a year. I think it is worthy of celebrating.

I really feel that it is going in line with what I have in my campaign platform. I think we are doing a good job of balancing the economic development and that sort of political agenda with the need to take care of the wellness and educational needs of the people. Looking back, one of the first things we did was to amend the Education Act to allow for lower pupil-teacher ratio and more support money, which is going to take effect shortly here, starting this year.

I applaud the latest change to the Student Financial Assistance Act where the appeals will be heard by an independent body.

The Literacy Strategy speaks to the priority that the Minister and the government is placing on the importance of that issue, and \$2 million is not a small amount of money.

Guaranteeing jobs for students out of nursing and teaching programs, I think the meat of this will be on how they are implemented. I think the Minister appreciates that there is a lot of work that needs to be done to make sure all of the details are taken care of. I think it is a statement. It is quite a moral boost for those students who are in these programs to say we appreciate you and we need you. I think that is good for the teachers who are in the system as well.

I applaud the department for working on early childhood development and the healthy children initiative. I think those are the things that successive governments have talked about, but we are beginning to see a tangible result of that. I think that those are small celebrations or big celebrations that we should recognize.

I quote from the Minister's statement here, on page 4:

"Due to an improved territorial economic situation, increased emphasis on career development and improved administrative systems, we are anticipating reduced spending in the income assistance program during the 2001-2002."

That is good news. That is great. I have lived here for 23 years. It is not usual to see a decrease in social spending. As soon as I read that, I was thinking what did you do with the money? I see that the money has been put back. It is sort of going in the direction I would like to see it go. I applaud the Minister for putting extra money to increase the disability allowance.

I do have to say that I do have some constituents who were unhappy about the fact that they were not grandfathered on the Student Financial Assistance Act. I do not think that they will ever be happy with me until I could somehow get this back for them. I am not saying that everything is perfect, but I think that we are on balance and we are going in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman, I have one point that I need to make to highlight the concern in my riding and in the city of Yellowknife. It has to do with crowded schools. I innocently thought that when we passed the legislation, the Education Act, to say that pupil-teacher ratio should be going from 18 to one to 16 to one, I actually imagined that there would be 16 students to one teacher. Then I learned last fall, as a result of what went on at J.H. Sissons, that some of these classes in grades 3 and 4 have almost up to 30 students. As you know, there was a lot of back and forth between parents, teachers and school boards, and the situation has settled a little. I learned a lot through that process. I have also spent some time at Range Lake North School with a special-ed assistant to see what it is like to take care of special-ed students.

What I learned out of this process is that we need to have a better system of identifying and evaluating students in need. I understand that out of this came, I heard in the news that Yellowknife District No. 1 is going to try to fund schools based on PTR rather than all the staff in the school combined to the student. I do not know what the formal word is, but I think that the board is looking at revisiting that formula. I understand that the board is going to make it available to the public for input.

I would, and I learned, and that I think is worth looking at.

I am sort of jumping from one to another, but I guess I somehow relate crowded schools and additional resources that are needed to the special need situation in our schools. I think a lot of parents felt there were a lot of students in their classes, especially in combined classes, that needed extra help.

They were discouraged that they could not convince them of that and there was no mechanism in place to see whether these students really needed extra help. I learned that the Yellowknife District No. 1 could only afford half-time teachers to even assess the situation.

I would really like to encourage the Minister. I have been a beneficiary of a great school system in Yellowknife and I would really like to do everything I can to protect that. I would like to ask the Minister to help the boards in any way he can, and also for the department to work out a system -- probably not just only in Yellowknife, but all through the Northwest Territories -- to have a system where we can identify, test and assess different levels of needs, of students with special needs, whether it be from FAS-FAE or from any other conditions they may have. I think that will be a challenge for us. We need to really look out to that.

Early childhood initiatives are on the prevention area, which is important, but I am talking about students who are already in the system who need to be taken care of. I do not think they can be taken care of unless we know what their needs are. I am not confident at this time that we have a system in place to know that. Those are my general comments, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments of the honourable Member. Certainly she has touched, like some of the others, on many areas. Perhaps I can deal with a couple of them that are of interest, naturally to her and to others.

The reduced spending in the income support area was referenced and we are putting money back into the food basket area, as well as support for disabled, Mr. Chairman. We are realizing that, and it is a good news story, that income support numbers are reducing. It is because of the employment possibilities out there for individuals. They are taking advantage of that. Even the public should be applauded for that, Mr. Chairman.

The school situation that the Member spoke about substantially, the Member is aware that we did start funding last year for a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio, as well as funding for student support. As well, through the fall period, we did a student needs survey. That survey was completed. It had two or three components to it.

The second component is a technical report that we pass back to the regions and the district education councils and DEAs, so they can take those reports and analyze and utilize that information for their own planning. I think that will be valuable. We are approximately seven or eight months into this program to reduce PTR, to support student needs support. So it is early days yet, but we believe we are making progress already.

As well, Mr. Chairman, I think that we have, on a semi-annual basis, a gathering of chairs of the DECs with myself and the directors of education in the various regions. It has always been an opportune time to discuss issues of this nature to see what progress we are making. We are looking at accountability reports back from the boards as well.

I really appreciate Ms. Lee's comments in this area, because that is the ultimate purpose: to ensure we resolve problems in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have some concerns in the area of education in light of what is going in the Mackenzie Delta with regard to the oil and gas sector. We still have a real problem especially when we are trying to keep our students from dropping out before they have a chance to conclude high school. In the Delta, it is a real problem where we are not seeing the graduation rates we should be.

In most communities, we have not had any graduates in our communities for a number of years. We have to do more to assist our students to understand the importance of education, but also making them aware that they have to realize that with all these opportunities, you have to have an idea of where you want to go and how you get there.

We have to take the time with the students when they are in grade seven or eight or sooner, so people know that career planning is important. You have to be able to determine exactly what it is you want to get into. What courses do you need to get there?

Mr. Roland touched on it, where we see a lot of students get through the system, but after they get through the system and they try to find a job, they find out that they do not have the qualifications or they do not have the education that is needed to take on these different opportunities and jobs that are out there.

It is important that as a government, we seriously look into this problem, realizing that the industry, oil and gas, diamonds or any private sector out there, are requiring people with higher and higher education qualifications to take on these jobs that are out there.

Talking to people in the oil and gas industry is important as well, so they too are willing to work with the government, work with the Department of Education to identify what their needs are when it comes to different areas.

A lot of these companies and corporations have scholarships and different program manuals they develop themselves, in which they work all around the world in different areas, regardless of whether it is in northern Canada or foreign countries. They have confronted this problem. We are seeing the problem in the diamond industry, especially around literacy.

That is another problem I see we are going to be facing in the oil and gas industry unless we do something now and make it mandatory that we develop different curriculum in our schools, so we know we have the sciences, the math, the biology, chemistry. People need these courses to be able to get the grades needed to get the high paying jobs that are out there. Sure, you can get the people through the system, but at the end of it all, if all they are going to get is the low paying jobs, either labour or else finding jobs in the lower ranks of the wage scale, it is all for naught.

I believe we have to do more to develop the education funding programs we have and make them more accessible to all students, regardless of whether they live in the communities. I mentioned in the House about students in the Arctic College program and trying to access the different government programs with respect to child care subsidies, so students could access these programs more readily and faster than we are presently doing.

I think we have to work in conjunction with other agencies within our communities and also agencies that are presently being funded through federal dollars in different programs. We have seen those programs working in the other areas in our communities. Brighter Futures is one, and there are other programs that are out there. I think we have to work with the institutions and organizations that are in our communities so we are better able to deliver these programs and services closer to the people, closer to the students in our communities.

We have to seriously look at the quality of education that we are delivering and ensure that the teachers and the people we have in the different positions in our communities have the qualifications and are teaching the curriculum, and they understand exactly what is going on. We have to ensure that we have a high standard that we set, not only for the students, but our teachers, to ensure that the programs and the education curriculum is being delivered with the strong expectation of meeting high goals.

I also feel that it is important that as a government, we do more in the way of ensuring the student financial assistance program has to be taken out of the major centres and given to either the divisional education boards or closer to their regional centres, or closer to the college programs that are being delivered.

We are delivering three major college programs: one in Fort Smith, one here in Yellowknife, and one in Inuvik. If we can somehow tie them into the college system so students could

register at the regional college or access those programs at the regional colleges, it would make it a lot closer and easier for the students at the regional level.

If possible, in the future, to look at having it delivered or accessed through community programs, either through the employment process that we have in place or through the income support system that we have out there.

I think it is also important that we consider ways we can assist students if they are falling behind on a particular year or if they need more credits. In southern Canada, you hear a lot of students taking summer schooling programs. If there is some way we could do that in the North to assist students who may want to take maybe one course just to get their credits up in one area, so they are able to take summer school instead of having to waste a whole year to go back and redo the whole course. They are able to do it in a short period of time, so when the next semester comes around, you are able to get back into it without having to waste a whole year just to make up those extra credits that you need to get into that next year.

You see a lot of that happening, especially in southern Canada. That is something we should seriously consider in the North so we are able to use the whole school year, not just parts of the year, and students are able to make up that time. If they are falling behind in a certain area, they are able catch-up on their courses, so they are not wasting a whole year to go back and redo the whole thing over.

I think it is important that we start expanding the education system, especially in the area of literacy. From what we have seen with the experiences we had with the diamond industry, I think that in the regions where we have the oil and gas industry, we will have the same problems. The education rates we have and talking to a lot of people who are in the industry, they are already seeing that. People are not understanding particular documents that they have to know or understanding manuals that they have to understand.

As a government, we will probably have to be there to assist, similar to what we are seeing happen with BHP on their literacy program. I think it is important as a government that we try to strive in those areas to put more money into literacy in order for people to have success in these jobs.

The other area that some people touched on is regarding the cultural aspect of the department. From the region I come from, the Gwich'in group I represent are really losing their culture and their language. As a department, we have to put a priority on the whole aspect of culture and trying to find ways of enhancing the language, especially the ones that are in dire straits and do need assistance from this government to find new ways or initiatives in dealing with that. Those are some of the issues that I have. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Oil and gas has been discussed extensively by many Members already tonight, and certainly there is a need to ensure that we continue to concentrate on ensuring our people are trained in that whole area. I would like to just state that in the Inuvik area, we are very active. Our superintendent is part of the Inuvik training committee, the Beaufort Delta Training Committee.

That consists of a number of representatives in that area. It has been in business for a number of years now and has been working very successfully. We recognize that support is required for that.

On the college reference with child care subsidy, it is an area again that we have to address in the early childhood development program that we are looking at. We are working more and more with the various agencies around the Territory to coordinate our programs with aboriginal programs that may get funded through sources other than the territorial government.

I would just like to state about the quality of educators, we believe that our educators are extremely well qualified, Mr. Chairman. They are teachers who are in demand elsewhere as well, but we are proud of the educators we have and the fact that they can deliver the programs and the curriculum that has been set. We do not have any questions about that. There are other problems associated with that, of course, and I think that we all know that does exist.

The student financial assistance, as I mentioned earlier, we have already initiated action to have more ability to assist students through the career centres in the various regions. Mr. Krutko made reference to the college system. A very good point, but we feel the career centres can provide the same thing because they are in those particular communities.

The ways to assist students at summer school, yes, that is something that has merit. You have to remember as well that students can access distance learning and it is done on a six times a year basis.

On the cultural aspect, it is important throughout the Territories to maintain our cultures and promote them. In the case of the Gwich'in Cultural Institute, we do provide some funding to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know how much more we can add to all the comments all my colleagues have put forward. I would like to say the Minister is doing a good job in listening to all of us. There is one area I think I should make comments about, where the Minister did say that he would like to thank us for the valuable advice we gave him and the discussions have helped to improve the department's plan and refine the direction we are taking. I hope the advice I gave him about the income support claw-back would be some of the advice he is talking about using. I can see where the reduced expenditures on income support, the amount of money of the claw-back sort of equals the amount of reduced spending. The amount of money that IBAs from Treaty 11 and Treaty 8 have been clawed back.

On that, I would just like to add one more thing. The amount of money that we spend on the lawyers to get the legal interpretation could have probably been put to better use if the Minister and the Cabinet could have just changed the policy. The interpretation I have was that the people who had the IBA funds were entitled to those funds under treaty entitlement. Before the session is over, maybe the Minister and the Cabinet can change the policy so we do not have to see this or hear this again in any other business plans. Thank you.

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Member for his comments. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments? Does the committee agree to go on to detail? We are on Education, Culture and Employment, directorate, administration, 9-9, operations expense, total operations expense, \$4,818,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey):** There is a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We shall rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses. We will see you tomorrow.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of the committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

#### ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MR. DELOREY:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act 2001-2002, and Committee Reports 6-14(3) and 7-14(3) and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland, as seconding the motion. We have a motion on the floor. To the motion. Question? Is the House prepared for question?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

#### ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Speaker, meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, at 10:30 a.m. of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act; at 12:00 p.m. of the Social Programs Committee and also at 12:00 p.m. of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 28, 2001:

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 Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
  - Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002
  - Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001
  - Committee Report 5-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
  - Committee Report 6-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
  - Committee Report 7-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2001-2002 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, the House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 28, 2001 at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

