



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 11

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Tuesday, March 5, 2002

Pages 341 – 388

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Tuesday, March 5, 2002

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement on 2002 Legislative Assembly Youth Parliament**

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to make some comment in the area of education and its value to the Northwest Territories, specifically a couple of things that are going on or have gone here in this Legislature. I would like to refer to the week of February 3^d to 8^h when we conducted and supported the NWT Legislative Assembly Youth Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

You, along with your staff, did a remarkable job of coaching and working with representatives from across the NWT that took our places here. Based on my experience with this program for the term that I have been here in this Assembly, I am particularly optimistic about our youth and am very committed to the program that the Legislature has had with the Youth Parliament. This year, sitting as the Member for Great Slave was a constituent, Liselle Cook, a grade 11 student from St. Pat's. She has lived in Fort Good Hope and now Yellowknife. She speaks North Slavey and English, and she has also participated in the Western Leadership Program. She is certainly an example of the leadership involvement and development on behalf of the youth of our Territory.

As a young resident, Miss Cook presents an ideal role model through the Youth Parliament Program. The statement and questions she asked on health care illustrated a good understanding of the concerns on behalf of her constituents and mine, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe we acknowledge sufficiently the successes of some of our resident role models. Young people are much more receptive to absorbing the message from their peers and acknowledged role models. This government should provide greater support to those people who actively support healthy living and active lifestyles. If we can encourage our young people to be more health conscious and take on leadership roles in the communities and participate in sports, this will certainly pay long-term dividends in the future of our health care costs.

In closing, I wish to offer my congratulations to Miss Cook and indeed, all Youth Parliament Members, and again, Mr. Speaker, to you and the staff of this Assembly who make this such a success. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: What can one say? Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement on High School Grade Extensions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on an issue that has been raised in this House on many occasions, and it has to do with education. Mr. Speaker, it has been some time that this government has moved away from regional centres in the sense of providing high school classes in those centres, and have gone out to extended grades, as they call it, and moved to other communities in the Northwest Territories to provide higher levels of education to try to address the issue of young men and women having difficulties adjusting or moving into larger centres to get a higher education.

Mr. Speaker, it has been some time since that move has happened. I think it is time to see if we are measuring up in terms of providing successes in those areas. The move was not only to have more students going to school, but to have more success in going to school and have more graduates for residents of the Northwest Territories.

What we found in the community of Inuvik was that we were negatively impacted in the sense that when the students no longer came to our community that lowered the number of teachers we were able to have in our schools and that impacted our ability to deliver specialized programs in the sciences and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to look up as well since those days, at the success rates we have had in the Northwest Territories amongst grads competing with those across the country to see where we have gone with the numerous changes we have done within education and other sectors in this government. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was enough of a concern to the Beaufort-Delta leaders in my area that they raised the issue and pushed to have tests start again to measure where students were. Mr. Speaker, we found that when those tests were performed, a lot of our students were not measuring up in the sense of national marks or the national standard, and we found that we had some work to do.

I think those tests show the result, Mr. Speaker. One is the measurement of where we stood in the process of education, teaching our youth, and it is also a help to parents, Mr. Speaker, that we need to be able to measure where our children are. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement on Inclusive Schooling Challenges

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, inclusive schooling was introduced in the Northwest Territories to ensure the constitutional right of all students, regardless of any physical or developmental handicaps, to receive a quality educational experience with their peers. This has meant students with learning, developmental and physical impairments are no longer separated from the general school population and attend the same schools and classes as other able-bodied students the same age.

Mr. Speaker, inclusive schooling has changed the way teachers make lesson plans. There is no longer just one lesson plan for the entire class. Depending on the number of special needs children in their class, there can be several different lesson plans for the same class. Between making all of these lesson plans, supervising the work of the special needs assistants and teaching the regular lesson, the workload of the average teacher has increased dramatically since the introduction of inclusive schooling, and I commend teachers for their dedication.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, special needs assistants are expected to deal with the medical issues and needs of students with severe handicaps, something for which most special needs assistants have received very little formalized training. In fact, Mr. Speaker, one can argue that in some cases, the special needs assistants are actually personal caregivers.

So where does that leave us? We have a system that does not, apparently, separate the inclusive schooling needs of those students with medical issues from those students with learning or developmental issues. We have special needs assistants who are expected to deal with medical issues that they are not trained to deal with. In some cases, dealing with the medical and physical needs of the child preclude the special needs assistant from actually helping the student with their education.

Mr. Speaker, if we want inclusive schooling to work, the district education authorities must have adequate funding to meet the needs of the students. Funding must be provided so those students who require extensive help to function receive one-on-one support. The DEAs must have the funding to ensure they can either hire special needs assistants with medical training or pay for their training.

For example, has the department considered offering a program through Aurora College to train special needs assistants? I realize the department has increased the funding to the district education authorities for special needs schooling and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the budget for 2002-2003 that is presently before this Assembly will increase the amount of funding for special needs schooling to the DEAs one year in advance of the legislative requirement. However, I am not convinced that as a government, we are doing enough to support the DEAs in delivering inclusive schooling in our communities.

I will be following up with the Minister of [Education, Culture and Employment](#) during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Funding for Student Support Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to rise today to speak about the funding for student support services. I am also heartened by the government's response in the budget, making sure we have achieved the level targeted for student support services in subsequent years a full year early. This was the approach recommended by the committees of this House and I am pleased the government heard our request and acted.

So next year, Mr. Speaker, we will spend the average spent by other jurisdictions in Canada on student support services. Yes, we have done well, but we can and we should do better. We keep hearing stories about the challenges faced in the classroom. We hear that we have a higher number of students with special needs than the average across Canada.

As Mrs. Groenewegen has just said, we have a large number of students who have severe problems in the classroom and require extensive support. We also know we have a higher number of students at different grade levels in one classroom because of the problems they face. With the number of small schools in the Northwest Territories, we probably have more multi-age grouping classes than is average across Canada.

Our kids right now do not have good enough access to assessment for the challenges they face. Mr. Speaker, I know this is true in Yellowknife, so it must be even more of a challenge to get a proper assessment done in a smaller community. I know I have been called by constituents because their child cannot be assessed. Recently, a constituent told me she and her family had to spend \$4,000 to take their child south because they had waited and waited and waited for an assessment, and it did not appear to ever be getting done.

Mr. Speaker, if we have more challenges in the classroom than the average, we cannot be satisfied with achieving the level of funding that just matches the Canadian average. We must set the bar higher. We must not be satisfied that we have achieved the level of funding for student support services set in legislation a year early.

Mr. Speaker, let us commit to continuing to increase the funding each and every year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on High School Graduation Rates

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about graduation rates in the Northwest Territories. A few decades ago, even less in some of our communities, families were forced to send their children away to receive an education. This was not always an easy choice or decision, but parents had to decide what was best for their child at the time.

However, today we have an education system that offers grade extensions in the communities, allowing children to stay with their families and receive their schooling. Grade extensions on balance have been a good thing, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion.

Also in the past, the focus of education seemed to be more towards preparing our students for life after high school. We wanted to ensure our youth could move into meaningful employment or continue on to post-secondary institutions. There were also fewer curriculum options at the high school level, Mr. Speaker, and students were required to pass more grade 12 level core courses.

Mr. Speaker, graduation requirements have changed. In order to receive a high school diploma, students must pass the grade 12 English course and two others at the grade 12 level. Subjects such as grade 12 level math, science or social studies are no longer required courses to get a high school diploma in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it disturbs me to think we may have watered down our academic requirements too much. Our graduation levels may be increasing, but we have to ask ourselves, at what expense? Are our children equipped with the necessary level of education to go onto post-secondary schools? I am not so sure, Mr. Speaker.

I have looked into Alberta education requirements for high school graduation. To a great extent, we are comparable, Mr. Speaker, but there are some subtle differences. In Alberta, students are required to complete grade 12 level English and social studies, along with ten credits in other grade 12 level courses. Here in the Territories, Mr. Speaker, we need only pass a grade 12 level English course, plus 10 credits of other grade 12 level courses.

In Alberta, Mr. Speaker, a student receives a pass mark in a grade 12 diploma course if they receive a blended mark of 50 percent. Also the same here, Mr. Speaker. However, if we get a 48 percent here, we say that we are close enough.

I have also had the opportunity to compare student final grade marks, diploma exam marks and blended marks of the grade 12 level diploma courses. Mr. Speaker, our students' marks are falling short. I believe we need to be up-front about our performance and set out to address it. 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. Bell, you may conclude.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. We need to ensure our education system is preparing our youth for meaningful and fulfilling lives. We need more focus on setting performance goals, measuring that performance, publicly reporting on it and striving to improve it. Graduation rates as we currently measure them may not be meeting our needs.

Mr. Speaker, some of these issues are difficult and uncomfortable to address, and we certainly do not have all the answers and have to be careful not to point fingers at our schools and teachers. Certainly parents need to shoulder as much responsibility for supporting the goals and aspirations of our youth. It is hard to imagine that our performance will

improve, Mr. Speaker, if we assume no learning takes place after 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to continue to support improvement in our education system for the sake of our youth. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Community Supports and Student Success

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, watching the show West Wing on Wednesday last week, a quote that the acting president said caught my ear. He said, "Education is a silver bullet to cure a lot of ills in our society." I am thankful to my colleagues in this House for making education a priority in the House today.

In the Northwest Territories, our education system should be one of the best, but unfortunately, it is not responding in that nature. The system is not responding to the needs of our communities and our communities are unfortunately not responding to the education system, Mr. Speaker.

It takes a family, it takes a community and it takes partnership to have a good working education system. A lot of the problems with the school system in our communities where we see grade levels far behind grade levels in other parts of the Territories, Yellowknife, for example, compared with Lutselk'e, Yellowknife compared with Edmonton, Lutselk'e compared with Edmonton.

My office called a lot of schools during the last couple of days asking about different programs. Even if the parents are not helping the children, which they should and they must make education a priority in order for the children to grow up independent and healthy, most of the schools and teachers my office spoke to are saying that most of the schools in the communities do not bother to rely on the parents to help the children because of the background or lack of education the parents have, and the parents have a lack of interest because of that.

There is also a question of space in the home and quiet time for the children to study. A lot of our homes are overcrowded. Most times, the teachers stay after school to help the students. They do not send homework home because it does not come back, Mr. Speaker.

In some schools, if the parents were able to go to groups with their younger children, it would help because they would learn together. Even the communities that have programs for adults find that adults are not interested in some of these programs. All teachers feel that by working together, the education system would be more responsive and more successful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Junior High School for Rae

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is on education. Thirty years ago, this government tried to create a town called Edzo. They wanted to move the people from Rae, so they built the school in Edzo. For 30 years, we transported our children back and forth -- safely, I have to say. However, now the community of Rae wants to maximize the use of the facility in Edzo, which is part residential and part school. They have asked for a junior high school in the community of Rae. The plan for the school in Edzo is to use it for mine training, oil and gas, for economic development, whatever is out there. They did petition the Minister on that.

This government is putting infrastructure into some communities, but only putting half of the infrastructure in. We have a whole infrastructure here that we can use. In Inuvik, they are putting in a college without a residence being included. That is only half and that is a shame.

We have infrastructure in the Dogrib region that we can use. I want to make a statement saying that for too long, the small communities have gone without. It is time that we started maximizing on every structure we put in place and it is time we listened to the people as to what they want.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions on this later. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Pupil-Teacher Ratio Versus Class Sizes

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in honour of Education Week this week, I would like to join my colleagues here and speak on the education issue. I want to talk about the PTR versus class size.

Mr. Speaker, I am a product of the local education system and I am very proud of what it has offered me. It has given me a lot, especially in higher grades and post-secondary education. I believe we are second to none, but I am worried about the class size in the lower grades.

Mr. Speaker, I know we are proud of our record of putting more money and legislating the PTR ratio to 16:1, but the fact is that as we speak, there are a lot of lower grade classes where there are up to 30 kids in a classroom.

I am really tired of hearing people do not understand the difference between PTR and class size, and then some parents getting upset that we are being funded at the territorial national average. I think in some ways, it is creating division between bigger communities like Yellowknife and other communities. I think that in the communities, schools are crowded as well. It is not right for some people to think there are ten kids sitting with one teacher in a smaller community and 30 kids to one in Yellowknife.

I think we have to revisit what is included in terms of staffing for the PTR. The very pamphlet that the department has sent out shows there are a lot of essential positions that are not included in the PTR formula. The Minister has even communicated in writing to us about what is not included, such

as the librarian position, the special physical education position, consultant positions or counsellors.

I understand it is up to the local boards to decide how they are going to use their resources and that affects the class size. To me, Mr. Speaker, that is just passing the buck. It really does not matter who is making the decision. We have to look at the classroom size and these are positions that are essential. If that is bringing up the class size high but keeping the PTR rate low, then we have to revisit that.

I think in the end, what matters is what is happening in reality, not what is happening on paper or what the average is or anything like that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on South Slave Student Achievement Test Scores

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to address our education system. I would like to start off by stating, Mr. Speaker, that we owe a large debt of gratitude to our teachers throughout the education system. Our teachers are to be commended for the work they do on a daily basis to encourage our children to receive quality education.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Minister of Education and his departmental officials for the obvious increased focus they are placing on the education system...

-- Applause

...as evidenced by events like Education Week, currently in full swing throughout the North.

In Hay River, Mr. Speaker, Harry Camsell Elementary School is holding a scholastic book fair this week, along with a geography challenge for the students. Those students are also hard at work on their science fair projects.

Mr. Speaker, Peter Grimm, the principal at the Princess Alexandra School in Hay River, has said that the theme of Education Week, Changing Land, Changing Peoples, is very relevant to his school students. As most of you are aware, the school has been undergoing renovations for some time now. Peter remarked that the students have been very tolerant with each other and with the teachers and have performed wonderfully under the changing working conditions. In addition, parent-teacher interviews are being held this week at Princess Alexandra school to discuss student progress.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe we as legislators have an inherent responsibility to ensure our students continue to receive the highest quality of education possible. To this end, I was very disillusioned to learn of the low rankings of students in the South Slave region on the Canadian and Alberta achievement tests.

Mr. Speaker, a three-year summary compiled in November of 2001 showed that over 50 percent of the South Slave region grade 9 students scored below the acceptable standards on

the Alberta test for mathematics in the years 1999-2001. I find these numbers unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. The numbers are slightly more encouraging in language arts, as only an average of 28 of the students scored below the acceptable standards on the Alberta achievement tests.

Mr. Speaker, the scores for South Slave grade 6 students writing the Alberta achievement tests in mathematics showed that only 51.4 percent of the students attained the acceptable standard. The numbers were slightly higher in language arts, Mr. Speaker, as 53.5 percent...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, the time for your Member's statement has ended. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: 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. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. The numbers are slightly higher in language arts, Mr. Speaker, as 53.5 percent of grade 6 students achieved the acceptable standard.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the problem with these low test scores are systemic. We must do everything in our power to encourage our students to aspire to higher test results in order for them to be able to pursue the opportunities that a quality education provides.

Mr. Speaker, I previously raised the issue of low student test scores in this House in October of last year. At that time, Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible stated in this House, "When something like this is brought to our attention, we are very concerned about the results." I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I too share the Minister's concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on 2002 Mackenzie Regional Youth Conference

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today, as part of Education Week, I would like to announce an initiative sponsored in part by the Deh Gah School. Mr. Speaker, the Fourth Annual Mackenzie Regional Youth Conference will be starting tomorrow in Fort Providence. Our 2002 Northwest Territories Youth Parliament delegates, Robyn McLeod and Courtney Squirrel, will be present with opening remarks on behalf of myself and Mr. Jim Antoine, the Minister of RWED. I want to thank them for performing this duty for us.

The theme for this year's event is Honouring Our Gifts. This three-day conference will consist of presentations by many well-known keynote speakers. Mr. Speaker, the keynote speakers are both northern and southern role models. They include Sharon Firth, Meika McDonald, Pauline Plamondin and Travis Dugas, to name a few. All of these presenters have

developed their gifts to the fullest potential and some have even built careers around them.

The Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School conference organizers are Julie Elleze, Maxine Lacorne, Laetitia Levavasseur, Margaret Thom, Jane Arychuk, Cliff McLeod and Shane Thompson. These people have committed themselves to ensuring that each participant will come out of this conference with the ability to recognize and honour the gifts they have.

The 160 youth participants range from communities across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The programs will give insight to spiritual, mental, physical and cultural aspects of well-being, which is the basic foundation of traditional teachings.

Mr. Speaker, this conference has been made possible by cash contributions from MACA; Deh Cho Health and Social Services; Fort Providence Brighter Futures; Diavik; Paramount Resources; Evergreen Forestry; Stitco and other donations were supplied by the Northern Store; Fort Providence DEA; Zhati Koe Friendship Centre; [Education, Culture and Employment](#); Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development; the Legislative Assembly; my Deh Cho MLA office; Territorial Beverages; Fort Providence Health Centre; Ethel Blondin-Andrew; ILE Holdings; and the Snowshoe Inn.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the organizers, volunteers, sponsors and role models for offering the youth the basic building blocks for self-improvement through this conference. I also would like to wish all of the youth, visitors and presenters a safe and enjoyable stay while in Fort Providence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to written questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time will be directed to the Minister of [Education, Culture and Employment](#). It is in the area of education and results. I would like to know if the department has done any work in the area of looking at the achievements that have been made since significant changes were made in the programs. There have been numerous changes, Mr. Speaker. I would be interested in whether the department has looked at the results since going to extended grades, for example. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to answer questions in the education area. I should point out and pass some

compliments, Mr. Speaker, to those who are out there in the education field, our educators, many of whom have devoted many, many years to the education system and have helped make it a success.

With regard to the question posed, Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention that probably one of the largest impacts on the education system recently with regard to participation rates has been the grade extension program. That particular program resulted in many more individuals coming back into the system, Mr. Speaker. Graduation rates did increase for a period of time. The result of that was achieved probably in the last two or three years. There was some leveling off last year of graduation rates. We feel that is because all of those who had come back into the system, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has given me some information, but I would like to know, has the department tracked the achievements being made since these changes? There are numbers in different areas, but I am more interested in the extended grades.

Yes, they show numbers. There has been an increase in the number of students, but has that lead to a better graduation rate and quality of education? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the tracking system that is in place, and has been there for several years, of course, the one that is used is mostly graduation rates. Those graduation rates did increase in the 1997-1998 year. That was significant because of the extension of grades to communities.

There are testing systems by schools. They are not all reported centrally to us. I do not have that information here, Mr. Speaker, as to what other testing systems and the results of those testing systems. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the department does not have that information, but they seem to track the increase in graduations or the graduates out there, can the Minister inform us, when those students graduate from our schools and carry on to further education in college or university, do they indeed meet the requirements of those schools in the south? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will speak specifically, perhaps, on some of the graduates from Aurora College who, after high school, went to the college system and then went on to university. We have experienced with the Teacher Education Program, for example, that those students who went to the University of Saskatchewan were high in recognition in marks and were being recruited, as a matter of fact, by most of the Saskatchewan education system. It is an example of the kind of level our students can match. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked a question earlier because I am aware a lot of students from my region who go down to school have to take almost a year in university prep courses to be able to enter that field. Is that what the Minister is finding when they are looking at these results? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 135-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates After Grade Extensions

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of students who enter the university system directly. Many go on to other fields, as we know, into apprenticeships or occupations. Some return to school in later life. Our experience has been with the college, which is our system, and it is easy to track how students do.

As I stated, our students, both in TEP and in the nursing programs, are performing extremely well academically, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 136-14(5): Northwest Territories Economic Development Advisory Forum

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I have been elected, I have been trying to track the number of committees that are formed and what their mandate is. I would like to ask the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development if he could tell me what the mandate of the NWT Economic Development Advisory Forum is. Thank you.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for not taking steps to inform the House that the

Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Jim Antoine, will be absent from the House this afternoon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Premier has explained that the Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is not able to answer the questions. Perhaps he will answer the questions. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 136-14(5): Northwest Territories Economic Development Advisory Forum

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. The honourable Premier is taking the question as notice. The Chair has to be informed that is what is happening. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke of the fact that some special needs assistants were actually personal care attendants. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment tell this Assembly whether his department differentiates between special needs assistants and personal care attendants in the school? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we do not. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us whether there are any special education requirements or training offered to special needs assistants who have to deal with students who have profound medical issues? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the DECs, through the DEAs, look at this issue and seek assistance wherever possible, and the most appropriate person. We do not have a formalized program on this.

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

Supplementary to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister give any consideration to offering a program at Aurora College to train special needs assistants for the schools?

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

Further Return to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I think this is an area that would be a next step in our whole program. Our emphasis has been to put the funding into place, get the funding into the school system. Certainly with the increasing use of special needs assistants in classrooms, classroom assistants, there is a need for us to address the issue of training. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he has contemplated whether there is any need to have concern about liability issues surrounding the care of students with serious medical needs who are cared for in the school by people who are basically unqualified to do that? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 137-14(5): Special Needs Assistants

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is always a concern, of course, with regard to ensuring safety and proper care of individuals. I do believe that principals have guidelines with regard to school operations and individuals that are working within the school. Thank you.

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

Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our act currently requires that by a year hence, we spend 15 percent of our education funding on student support services. If I remember correctly, we set that figure because that was the average that was spent by Canadian jurisdictions. I would like to confirm that is still the case.

Can the Minister confirm that the average Canadian jurisdiction currently spends about 15 percent of their education budget on student support services?

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

Return to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot confirm the amount of funding for special needs. We do have comparisons of PTR, the pupil-teacher ratio. With regard to the amount spent by other jurisdictions in special needs funding, I cannot confirm that here, that it is consistent with other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. We may be higher or we may be lower.

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

Supplementary to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If memory serves me right, we were told that was the average when we were talking about Bill 1 right after we were elected. That is why we set the figure at 15 percent. I will ask the Minister, will he find occasion to confirm what the average is across Canada that is spent not just on special needs, but on student support services, which includes a much broader spectrum than special needs, and report to the House what the average is across Canada, please?

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

Further Return to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will be glad to do that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister also at the same time, perhaps not at the same time, this might take a while longer, could the Minister also undertake to find out what percentage of students in southern jurisdictions are requiring of services that would be provided by student support? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I should state that we would be glad to do the research on that particular question, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure that other jurisdictions might have the kind of comprehensive information that we have. A student needs survey was done, Mr. Speaker, two years ago, which provided us with a great deal of information on student needs. From that, we developed the student needs implementation of how to address the issues facing our students. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certain the Minister would agree that we probably face bigger challenges in our classrooms in the North than are found in the south. In spite of whether or not he has the figures, will he commit now to champion for the next budget further increased funding for student support services?

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

Further Return to Question 138-14(5): Funding for Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the Member stating this, because it was certainly my hope to be able to, once the MOU that had been signed and what we had put into legislation, that we could carry on with that.

I am certainly there to ensure I do what I can to carry forward with the program of the PTR and the students needs requirements. That is a very important element for the success of our school system, if we could continue to bring down the PTR. Ms. Lee spoke about the class sizes. It is having an effect on class sizes. The issue of student needs is also a very important element for us to have success.

There are challenges in our school system that we have to address and a lot of it does depend upon the amount of resources that we can put into that whole area. I think we are making a good dent into it, but we have to continue that. Thank you.

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

Question 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, it takes a community, it takes a family to encourage education and to teach children. In those communities that have a good graduation rate and a good progressive education rate, I would like to ask the Minister if the parents are involved in schools that have what would be considered a good education system? Thank you, 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 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no question, Mr. Speaker, that it takes educators, it takes a community and it takes parents' involvement and parental support in the system to get success for students. When we can provide students with a home situation where there is support, and it does not necessarily need to be doing

homework, but it just requires a good home situation, support and encouragement. That does make a difference. There is no doubt. That has been proven time and time again. Similarly with community support. Wherever we can, we need to ensure that communities provide the support as well as, of course, the school itself. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke about some of the schools my office contacted, and the teachers' remarks about some of the questions. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, on average, which is a guesstimate based on the limited phone calls that were made, that 20 percent of students in the school system in the communities have parental involvement, leaving 80 percent, which is very high.

I would like to ask the Minister, what is the Department of Education doing to include parents in the education system at the community level? 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 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A very important area, Mr. Speaker, and the department did a student needs survey two years ago, as I mentioned earlier. There were a number of elements in that report that contributed to the success of students. It was school counselling, et cetera, but one of the areas was parental support and parental assistance. They identified this as an issue. The department is in the process of designing workshops that would involve parents more in programs. One that has been designed is called Nobody's Perfect. It is a situation to allow parents to become more familiar with the school, bring them into the school and become comfortable with the school system. There needs to be a partnership between the parents, the school and the students.

Additionally, we have worked on the Early Childhood Development Plan, whereby we are working with parents to come in with children when they are very young, into areas like language nests and into resource centres. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it sounds like the department has developed some plans that are long overdue. I will be interested to hear the time line for the implementation of those plans.

The Minister, along with the Minister of Health and Social Services, had released some information in the House a couple of days ago regarding early childhood education and how they

are developing kits that they could take home to measure their achievements. That is a very good idea for parents who are lacking education and do not trust the education system because of residential schools, et cetera. Can the Minister tell me if they have plans to develop kits to assist parents to assist their children in school? 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 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Early Childhood Development Plan is allowing us to focus on the need that Mr. Nitah spoke about. Certainly we see that as an area that can help.

We are also teaching, just by way of reference, a course on residential schools to grade 4. We have piloted that in Fort Providence. Issues like that we are bringing more and more into the schools so parents start to identify and start to become comfortable.

Mr. Nitah's concern about having materials and kits available for parents is a very good point. I believe we do some in a limited way now to try to make people and parents familiar, but certainly a good issue that we should follow up on. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The initiatives taken by the Department of Education I am sure will help greatly in addressing the future needs of young people in terms of education. When these initiatives are started, sometimes they run for a short period of time, Mr. Speaker. What kind of guarantees can the Minister provide to us in the House today regarding the implementation and longevity of these plans? 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 139-14(5): Parental Involvement in Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question has been asked before, am I willing to continue to champion the need for funding for special needs? I think there is a need for championing and continuing that role, which I feel I have played for the last two years, hopefully fairly well.

In order to continue to improve the resources available to schools and school systems and put it into a permanent place and continue to improve, I think it is okay to introduce programs. It is important to start them, get them going but then start to refine these programs. Like our student needs assistants in the classrooms, we need to move forward again with that. We have introduced it and we need to move on and refine it and improve it. Thank you.

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

Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Education. As I indicated earlier, I do not believe the Department of Education is solely responsible for student performance, but I do believe they should be accountable. For some time now, I think our students' marks going into Alberta exams have been higher than when they come out of the Alberta exams. I would like to ask the Minister if we are able to determine why our students' marks on the Alberta exams are generally lower than the term marks they have going into the exams? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There may be a variety of reasons for that, Mr. Speaker, but I do not have that information here at hand. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have thought that it was a fairly general question that the department would be analyzing quite closely. I am wondering then, since we compare ourselves so often to Alberta, why is grade 12 social studies not required for graduation in the Northwest Territories the way it is in Alberta? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the school system has set up a requirement for 100 credits to graduate from high school. This can be one of the requirements. You do require two years of social studies in order to graduate, but I am not sure that it requires the grade 12 social studies. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister can take my assurance that we do not require grade 12 social studies. I do have one other question related to graduation rates. Although it is limited in scope, I would like to keep the variables fairly low so I can get an answer I can compare across jurisdictions. I am

wondering, what percentage of our high school graduates enroll in universities immediately after high school graduation? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are technical questions I do not have at hand here. I can certainly get this for the Member and would be glad to follow up on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister would not have that level of detail. I am wondering, when he does get that information, if he could also, if he has it handy, show us a comparison across other jurisdictions as well. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 140-14(5): Student Performance in Departmental Exams

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would be glad to do so, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Jake Ootes, the Minister for [Education, Culture and Employment](#). I would like to ask the Minister if he can go into my community and meet with the community services board and myself, regarding looking at the infrastructure that is in place and putting in new infrastructure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be glad to join the Member at his invitation to have a meeting with the community services board, Mr. Speaker, to discuss infrastructure needs in the community. I believe the community is interested in the school in Edzo, to convert it into a different facility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All through the Budget Address, we saw small communities show up all over the place. I think it is time this government started to look at future plans on using the facilities and infrastructure that is there for our long-range plans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I believe Mr. Lafferty may have an idea there, that we could address the issue of occupations and trades and so forth, and the training of that and to do it within the Dogrib region. I believe that is what Mr. Lafferty may have as a possibility for the school, which I would be more than pleased to discuss as a possibility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government, we make policies and regulations. I would like to ask the Minister if he can look at making changes to policies and criteria used for building infrastructure to go forward for a better tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question with regard to changing policy and regulations, I would have to be knowledgeable on the specifics of the type of changes that are required. Certainly if it is with regard to looking at development of a particular type of infrastructure that is perhaps beneficial to that particular region, and would not go outside of our area of responsibilities for other areas and regions, I would be more than pleased to look at that possibility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the criteria used for building new infrastructures such as junior high schools is enrolment. Many times we see future plans of the community not being used, even though it would benefit a lot of people in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 141-14(5): Education Infrastructure in the Dogrib Region

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we do need certain criteria in order to address infrastructure needs and we have to apply that across the board. If there is an opportunity from time to time to use that facility for other purposes and there is a requirement to replace that particular facility, then we could look at that.

I have to take into account though the capital planning process that we all have to adhere to and this whole Assembly has to, naturally, agree with. Thank you.

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

Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, the Canadian and Alberta achievement test scores for students in the South Slave region for the 2000-2001 school year were quite disconcerting. Would the Minister please indicate to this House if the test scores for the South Slave region were on par with the test scores in various other education districts throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The test scores for the Alberta achievement test, only two jurisdictions participated in that particular testing process, which was last spring, I believe. While there were certain areas that were lower, and I have to go by recollection here, Mr. Speaker, there were some areas where the Yellowknife No. 1 board was fairly equal to Alberta on. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has stated in the House in October of 2001 that the test results of the South Slave District Education Council and the YK Education District 1 caused the Minister and the department some concern.

Would the Minister please state what action the department has taken in this regard since October of 2001? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has produced a student assessment, evaluation and reporting directive, which provides guidelines for responsibilities of jurisdictions: the schools, the district education authorities, and the department. That takes into account areas like testing to ensure that testing is done, examinations are followed with the Alberta system and that we participate in the national testing processes, like the student achievement indicators report. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I read an interesting report from the YK Education District No. 1 entitled "What Affects Students' Achievement Forum," held in February of 2000. One aspect that was outlined was the need to continue to stress smaller class sizes. Would the Minister please indicate what current pupil-teacher ratios are in the South Slave education district now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the South Slave PTR here. I know that it is in the likelihood of 17:1, if not lower, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago in the House, the Finance Minister unveiled his new budget. There was a substantial increase in the education funding outlined in the budget. Would the Minister please state whether any of this increase in funding will be applied to reduce class sizes in order to address the problem of low test scores amongst students? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 142-14(5): Canadian Achievement Test Scores

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there is an additional \$2.7 million, I believe, being added to the education system. The money that will be spent on that, Mr. Speaker, is in the student needs area. The present PTR across the Territory is at 16.5. We have one more year to go in funding in the agreement and by legislation, and that will bring it down to 16:1, Mr. Speaker, bringing it down another half a point. That will result in reduced class sizes. Class sizes have been

reduced by approximately 5 percent since we introduced this particular program of funding, Mr. Speaker. It results in more teachers in the classrooms, which in turn results in smaller class sizes. Thank you.

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

Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot in the news about jobs, jobs, jobs. All the jobs are out there and they are there for the taking. However, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the quality of jobs that are out there, so people can receive the job they want, knowing they will get paid for that job.

Mr. Speaker, smaller communities have the lowest level of university degrees in the Northwest Territories and the highest level of people with less than a grade 9 education. Mr. Speaker, in most communities, 30 percent of the students have less than a grade 9 education, and only 5 percent of our students have a university degree. Mr. Speaker, those statistics alone compared with Yellowknife, where 5 percent have less than a grade 9 education and 20 percent of the people have university degrees.

I would like to ask the Minister what is he doing to ensure that our students going to our schools in the Northwest Territories are receiving a quality education, so they can take advantage of the economic opportunities and the meaningful jobs out there? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the success of students is an important issue. We need to especially address the smaller communities. We have been attempting to do that over the last several years, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, teacher turnover has been an issue. Mr. Speaker, we have introduced a Teacher Induction Program, so we have some stability and look at providing more stability of teachers in the communities. The Teacher Induction Program is being welcomed and other jurisdictions are looking at our particular program.

As well, we are looking at the possibility of increasing and continuing to promote northern teachers to be trained, so we have teachers from the North in the communities, Mr. Speaker, who have a cultural appreciation and identity. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that teachers are important, but I feel the quality of education is more important, ensuring the students have the resources and courses available to them in their communities, by having chemistry, math, science projects. The courses you need to basically move on into post-secondary and university, so you have the marks to succeed. I think that is the problem.

I would like to ask the Minister, what is he doing to ensure that all schools in the Northwest Territories have accredited courses, so those courses are available to all students so they can succeed into post-secondary and university education? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the challenge is always there, of course, for small communities to provide as much support as possible, but there are limitations to what can be provided and the number of teachers that can be provided. However, considering that, we have done a lot of work, Mr. Speaker, to provide some alternatives in this whole area. One has been through the area of distance education.

Mr. Speaker, distance education was introduced two years ago. We are finding that in the small communities, all courses are available on...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ootes, may I just ask you to stop for a moment and ask the House to come to order. There is quite a bit of noise in the background and many conversations going on. The Minister has an important reply and the Chair would like to hear that reply, as would the honourable Member who asked the question. Thank you. Mr. Ootes, you may continue.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was speaking about the process of extending to the small schools distance education, which is available in large schools as well. What we are finding is there is a tremendous uptake in the smaller schools of courses on-line. There is a tremendous enthusiasm there. We now have 75 teachers, many of them in the smaller schools, who have taken courses to act as supervisors for students to take on-line courses. As I say, there has been a tremendous uptake by the students in smaller schools in this whole area. That is one of the ways we are addressing the issue of needs in small communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is great that we have the technology, but I think at the end of the day, you need someone in a classroom setting to develop courses such as chemistry. You need a chemistry lab and you

need to have the classroom setting, so you can work on the different chemicals you need to do these different tests.

Again, I stress to the Minister the importance of the quality of education. Could the Minister assure us that there will be courses that are delivered here in Yellowknife delivered in communities such as Fort McPherson or Aklavik, so you can have the expertise and the professionals in the classroom, delivering those courses so you do not have to take those through the Internet or whatever. Is that a possibility? When will we see that day come?

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

Further Return to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The courses are available, as I mentioned, on-line, but I know what the Member is saying. What he would like to see is a live body in the classroom, performing science tests, et cetera. That is dependent, Mr. Speaker, upon the available resources for us to be able to devote to the extension of that kind of resource to communities.

Am I interested in that? Yes, I am. Is it possible? That really depends on the availability of our financial resources to achieve, Mr. Speaker.

In some cases, this will be a hurdle because we are dealing with many small communities in the Northwest Territories. We cannot be all things to all people. However, I recognize what the Member is saying and the importance of that.

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

Supplementary to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister says that he hears what I am saying, but I do not think he really has a grasp of exactly what it means to have a rich school and a poor school practically sitting side by side. That is what it comes down to.

The resources in the larger centres and the resources in those schools are based on a formula that is based on numbers, and the dollars go to those schools. I would like to ask the Minister if he will consider revamping the allocation for funding for programs and services in all schools, so these courses are fully funded for the curriculum that is needed for education in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return to Question 143-14(5): Delivering Quality Education in Communities

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that would be a requirement for all of the MLAs to discuss, to see whether there needs to be a realignment of funding. That is not for me to solely answer and take in hand.

There is a system in place. We feel the funding process is working efficiently. We recognize that perhaps we need to look at small communities in the Territories and see how we address their particular problems. There is no question about that. Thank you.

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

Question 144-14(5): Administration of Metis Health Benefits

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health and it is regarding Metis health benefits. Some of these questions were brought up in committee of the whole. However, we do not have access to televised discussions when it comes to committee of the whole. I want to ask the people who have been calling me with regard to the request for proposals that was in the paper for the administration of the Metis health benefits, could the Minister give us the status on what the current situation is so that everyone knows what is happening with this issue?

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

Return to Question 144-14(5): Administration of Metis Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I committed to during the review of the main estimates and in discussion in this House, the RFP has been put on hold. We will enter into a month-by-month arrangement with Blue Cross until such time as we have had an opportunity to sit down with the Metis organizations and governments to review the Metis health benefits. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 144-14(5): Administration of Metis Health Benefits

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one more question. I would like to get a commitment from the Minister that he will consult the aboriginal groups prior to putting ads out in the paper or making commitments, so we will not have to go through this same type of issue again. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 144-14(5): Administration of Metis Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of consultation is a very critical one and there was never any intent to do anything other than provide good management and make sound administrative decisions when it came to making sure there was no lapse in the payment authority arrangement we had with Blue Cross.

Yes, before anything further is done, as I have committed in writing to the Metis governments, there will be a meeting. We

will get together and look at the Metis health benefits and no decision will be made prior to that. Thank you.

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

Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question would be directed to the Minister responsible for [Education, Culture and Employment](#). It is in the area of extended grades, following on my earlier line of questioning.

With extended grades being put in place, I would like to know from the Minister if there is any special requirements for teachers going into the smaller communities, because they have to teach more than one grade. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the one requirement we do have is a teacher that graduates from our college system receives a diploma, and that teacher is eligible to teach up to grade 9. A degree is required for a teacher to teach beyond that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So those are the only requirements for teachers that are in the small communities doing extended grades? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there may be other requirements that are required, but to the best of my knowledge, as we all know, teachers are in demand today throughout the country. At times, there may be some difficulty in filling positions in communities. There may be situations where a teacher is teaching beyond the grade 9 level with a diploma, and that is because of necessity. My understanding is there are no other requirements, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us if those teachers hired and going into smaller

communities are made aware of the situation they will be in? For example, teaching multiple grades in one classroom? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we introduced an induction program two years ago, which was to make the teachers familiar with the community they were going into, the school they were going to be teaching at and generally an introduction to the culture and the population the teacher would be going to.

As well, it was to provide some comfort and an opportunity to provide a mentor for that particular teacher, who is new either to teaching or new to teaching in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of qualifications, or of being ready and aware of, for example, teaching multiple grades, it is good to hear the Minister is talking about an introduction to the communities and the culture of that community. However, for teaching multiple grades in one classroom, are there any requirements or an introduction to that? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 145-14(5): Teacher Qualifications for Extended Grades

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with what other requirements are put into place when hiring teachers for communities, but certainly I can find out for the Member, if he is interested. We know the requirements are the educational credentials for teaching, that they have a diploma or a degree. Thank you.

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

Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, under our current Adoption Act, can the Minister advise me if a gay person may adopt a child within the Northwest Territories?

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

Return to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, under our current legislation, a single person can apply to adopt. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So under our current law, if one person in a same-sex living arrangement applied to adopt a child, that could be approved?

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

Further Return to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if a single person applied to adopt, their sexual orientation is not one of the questions that is asked. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under our current legislation, may a gay person be a foster parent in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when a person applies to be a foster parent, sexual orientation, as far as I understand, is also not one of the questions that is asked. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I take it, based on the Minister's response, that the government does not then track whether we have any children who have been adopted or fostered in gay family situations?

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

Further Return to Question 146-14(5): Adoption Act Provisions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those are not statistics that I would have readily at hand. Thank you.

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

Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of [Education, Culture and Employment](#), regarding another statistic that is found within the Department of Education. I would like to ask the Minister about the comment he made about the quality of education in our communities.

I will use another statistic regarding high school students with diplomas. In Yellowknife, it is almost 30 percent. In the smaller communities, it is almost ten percent. That is one-third of what it is in the larger schools.

I would like to ask the Minister, where does he come up with the notion that the quality of education is great in our schools, considering we are not seeing the statistics when it comes to graduates?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure of the question here, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps I could ask the Member to repeat that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Krutko, the question please, not too much preamble.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the point I was trying to make is that in the Mackenzie Delta, in my communities last year, there were only two graduates in the community of Fort McPherson.

Based on that statistic, does that not tell you that we are not having as many people graduate from our high schools?

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

Return to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things we must look at when we deal with graduation rates is that yes, there is no doubt that some statistics out there state graduation rates are not happening in certain communities. In other communities, they are happening.

I was in a community in the Dogrib region last year, a small community, and they have eight graduates, Mr. Speaker, from high school. It happens in some communities, it does not happen in others.

What we do have to remember when we deal with graduation rates, Mr. Speaker, is that a lot of these students have dropped out or are in the process of dropping out. We do have graduation rates. Those who do drop out may move into the workforce for a period of time and they may move on.

What is not taken into account in graduation rates are those students who go into apprenticeships, those students who go into the Aurora College access programs or take adult basic education. We do not count those as statistics in graduation rates, Mr. Speaker. That is a real deterrent to our knowledge of saying we have this graduation rate, because there are a lot of people out there who have the qualifications to move on to university, to college, et cetera, and take programs. A lot of our tech program people, a lot of our nursing people who take access programs do not have a high school diploma, but they qualified to enter those programs through adult literacy or access. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spoken like a Minister. It seems like everything is in a glass bowl and everything is perfect. Mr. Speaker, in his comments, he made reference that there is a difference where you are seeing graduation rates in certain communities and not in other communities. Does that tell you there is something wrong with the way education is being delivered in our schools? We are not seeing statistics at the end of the day where people are graduating.

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

Further Return to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt the challenges are there, be it small or large communities. Some of the large communities have challenges as well, in terms of getting graduates through and having them pass the grade 12 examinations, Mr. Speaker. There are challenges facing us throughout the Territory in the graduation rates. There are perhaps a multitude of reasons for that, and it is not just the education system.

I believe our educators are good people. They are working hard and diligently to ensure they provide the best possible service, as do many of our community people. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too agree that our teachers are great professionals, regarding the area they work in, but again, it is the frustration of the students and the teachers in our communities that drive students to drop out, because they do not have the curriculum or do not have the resources or classroom programs to deliver in our schools

so those students can be compatible with other students, say in Yellowknife or the regional centres.

Have you looked at this problem? Are there any studies going on to see what this problem is?

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

Further Return to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been looked at and will continue to be looked at. Certainly whatever we can do in that area, we will do. The delivery of distance education I mentioned earlier has provided one source of assistance for students to be able to take courses. That is on-line. It is helping students in the smaller communities. There is tremendous enthusiasm for doing it that way, Mr. Speaker. Facilitators are being trained in that area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about students being provided courses on-line. Is this his way of not saying we need more teachers in our classrooms in our communities, so that we can provide all programs and services to all grade levels? Is that his way out of dealing with the matter?

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

Further Return to Question 147-14(5): Scholastic Achievement Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, the reality is that we are moving into a day and age of technology and teachers, educators are very interested themselves in ensuring they can be conversant with the technology. They are becoming facilitators.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the other step that we are taking in this whole program is to train Northerners to deliver long-distance education programs. We already have two programs we are delivering in that. Northern Studies is being delivered on-line. What we do with that is ensure we are not dependent totally on southern input for distance education.

As I said, and I am repeating myself, technology is here. It is a part of it. Young students are keen on it. They love the process, by the looks of it. Thank you.

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

Question 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question I have is for the Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member for Mackenzie Delta. The gap between the quality of education between regional centres such as Yellowknife and the communities is such that we tend to question the Minister on the quality of education.

I do have a follow-up question to the questions I had for the Minister. He has talked about programs the department is currently designing. I would like to know the time line, or when those programs are going to be implemented in our education system in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, 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 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the programs, in terms of distance education, if the Member is referring to that, we are continuing to train our educators in that whole area to become facilitators and deliverers, not just facilitators.

In terms of other programs, we are continuing, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we bring as many new possibilities into the system as possible. We spoke earlier about the parent support to students. That area, Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in ensuring we move forward quickly on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The on-line one, we have to wire the North. We still have to wire the North before distance education becomes a reality.

I would like to know specifically, Mr. Speaker, when the community and provincial inclusiveness programs are going to be implemented? The Minister has indicated he hopes very soon. I would like to know when, 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 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the department has done fairly extensive work on this already. I expect that by the new school year, which would be the fall, we would look at ensuring we have programs in place. Additionally, we are working quicker than that in the early childhood development area, where we are introducing language nests and resource centres in communities, where we bring parents together with children, so there is an inclusive program. Parents learn at the same time as the children, because they can learn from each other. As they teach the language to the children, they themselves can learn the teaching process. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That sounds great. The sooner the better. It is needed.

Mr. Speaker, based on my limited conversations with the schools in the Northwest Territories, specifically Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution, it seems in those two communities, parental involvement is around 20 percent. Before the Minister introduces the programs he has mentioned, would he do a survey or a study to determine exactly what percentage of parental involvement at each school is 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 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can certainly do a survey of the education districts and in turn, ask for information from the schools. I think what is important here though is to move forward with programs into the schools. That is the priority. While I think we can gather statistics on the amount of participation, I think it is important to ensure we proceed hastily, as hastily as we can, with programs that involve parents, because it is the next step in our whole program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The final, final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here, the Minister and I are in complete agreement -- the quicker, the better. However, Mr. Speaker, if we do not know what we are starting with in terms of the current participation level by parents and community, we do not know how far we have gone. I would like to ask the Minister, would he commit to this House that the department, once his program is initiated, that no less than 10 percent a year more participation rate from the community, school and parents be a target? No less than 10 percent improvement?

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

Further Return to Question 148-14(5): Implementation of Distance Education

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to this; that I will personally ensure that we have a very good program of parental involvement established by this fall. I have difficulty with setting a statistic, Mr. Speaker, and committing to meeting that, because it requires so much...

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Mr. Ootes, you may finish what you were saying.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to ensuring I will personally work on this program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period is over. 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, report of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. 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 Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 10: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. There is 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 10 has had first reading.

Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The Minister is requesting consent to give second reading to Bill 10. Are there any nays? There are no nays, you may proceed, Mr. Minister.

Bill 10: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill increases the amount of the single status tax credit, marriage or common-law partnership tax deduction, eligible dependent tax deduction, age tax credit, tax credit for mental or physical impairments that are deducted from taxes payable by an individual in the Northwest Territories for the 2002 and subsequent tax years.

This bill also establishes a minimum cost of living tax credit for the 2002 and subsequent taxation years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. There is 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 10 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee.

Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Bill 2, Bill 4, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), Committee Report 3-14(5) and Motion 1-14(5), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the committee of the whole to order. We have several matters to deal with; Bill 2, Bill 4, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), Committee Report 3-14(5) and Motion 1-14(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I suggest we proceed with Bill 2 along with Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), Committee Report 3-14(5) and continue on with the Housing Corporation. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will begin with the Housing Corporation after a short break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee back to order. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Minister.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Tom Beaulieu. To my right is Mr. Jeff Anderson, the chief financial officer of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. We are on page 8-23, human resources, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-25, operations, information item. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to seek consent to go back to page 8-23.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree to go back to page 8-23?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, on page 8-23, we have compensation and benefits increased by \$200,000 in these main estimates over the current year's main estimates, and other expenses decreased by \$200,000. I was wondering if we could get an explanation. It looks like there was a switch between the two lines in the budget. Can we get an explanation as to why that change was made?

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to refer the question to the chief financial officer of the Housing Corporation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member noted, there is no change overall in that budget. We have moved \$200,000 from other expenses to compensation and benefits to be consistent with the presentation of other government departments. Those types of expenditures include dental premiums, removal costs, storage costs, those types of expenditures. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-24, operations, information item. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the Housing Corporation appeared before the Standing Committee on Social Programs, we had some discussion about the marketing of Northwest Territories products in other jurisdictions. I think the last time we talked about the business plan, the corporation had indicated they were very active in marketing Northwest Territories products, and actively seeking contracts in places like Alaska, for instance, to build homes that were manufactured by Northwest Territories manufacturers. We had some discussion about panelized homes and other approaches to housing.

Members of the committee were somewhat concerned that the corporation did not appear to be providing wholehearted support to the marketing of all the products manufactured in the Northwest Territories in the housing area. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, the standing committee is bringing forward this motion.

Committee Motion 6-14(5): Transfer of Responsibility for Marketing NWT Products and Services (Carried)

I MOVE that this committee recommends that if the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is not going to comply with their mandate to market Northwest Territories products and services, that this responsibility be transferred to the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all I have for page 8-24.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Page 8-25, operations, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-26, operations, information item, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 828, district operations. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, when the corporation was discussing district operations with the Standing Committee on Social Programs, members noted there had been some recent instances where there were concerns about the integrity of the books in an LHO. In order to ensure we were not getting too far behind the ball with following up on how LHOs were spending the money, the Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to present the following motion. Therefore, Mr. Chairman,

Committee Motion 7-14(5): NWTHC to Conduct Regular Reviews and Operational Audits of LHAs

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation conduct regular reviews and operational audits of the local housing authorities that deliver housing programs on behalf of the corporation to ensure access and program delivery fairness.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried.

Page 8-29, district operations, information item. Page 8-30, district operations, information item, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Capital acquisition plan, information item, page 8-31 on to page 8-32.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Contributions to local housing organizations, information item, page 8-33.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Grants to local housing organizations, page 8-34.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, contributions to local housing organizations, grants and contributions, page 8-35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Active positions, information item, page 8-36.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, lease commitments-infrastructure, page 8-37.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, pro forma income statement, page 8-38.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will go back to page 8-7, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$48,981,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree the NWT Housing Corporation has been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you, witnesses. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend the committee continue on with considering Bill 2 and Committee Reports 1 through 3 concurrently, to deal next with the Executive, followed by FMBS and then Aboriginal Affairs.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will just take a short break.

--- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the House back to order. We are now dealing with the Department of the Executive. At this time, I would like to ask the Premier if he has any opening remarks. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The primary role of the Department of Executive is to support Cabinet by translating its political direction into administrative action so the entire government and its partners can succeed in achieving goals arising from Towards a Better Tomorrow.

The work of the department also includes support to the Premier's office, Ministers' offices and the Executive Council; coordination of the government's relations with other governments and with the public; government-wide strategic planning and policy development coordination; corporate human resource services; support to departments to improve government-wide communications; and the provision of protocol services.

Mr. Chairman, during the life of this government, the department has been assigned the lead for a number of key initiatives necessary to fulfill our collective vision. These include

the Northwest Territories Energy Strategy, Maximizing Northern Employment and the Social Agenda Framework. I have already briefed the House on the social agenda. Because we are not seeking additional funding for this initiative in this budget, my remarks will focus on the other initiatives I have mentioned.

NWT Energy Strategy

An Energy Secretariat has been established to coordinate the efforts of the government and its partners in the development of an NWT Energy Strategy. Through a comprehensive consultation process with all NWT stakeholders, the Energy Secretariat will identify a wide range of energy consumption and management options. An investment of \$1 million is requested to support this initiative. Cabinet is reviewing various options to amalgamate all energy-related programs under a single Minister.

Maximizing Northern Employment

The Department of the Executive coordinates two key features of the Maximizing Northern Employment initiative. The Northern Student and Northern Graduate Employment Programs are part of the government's larger effort to recognize the importance of our most valued resource, the people of the NWT. Through these programs, all departments are eligible for funding to employ summer students and northern graduates.

Under the Northern Graduate Employment Program, 53 interns were placed in government departments, boards and agencies. About 80 additional graduates have registered for the program for 2002-2003. Under the Northern Student Employment Program, 342 students were employed across government. Ninety-eight students completed exit interviews to ensure the program continues to meet northern student needs.

An investment of \$4,646,000, identified in the department's 2002-2005 business plan, is requested to support our ongoing work in this important area.

Intergovernmental Forum

Concurrent with the appointment of the Special Advisor to Cabinet on the Intergovernmental Forum as deputy minister for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, the Intergovernmental Forum Secretariat was transferred to the Ministry. This will ensure that Intergovernmental Forum initiatives are coordinated with others being undertaken by the Ministry.

As a result, some of the Department of the Executive's baseline funding will be transferred to Aboriginal Affairs. This includes salary dollars for three persons and O and M and contribution funding totaling \$1,148,000.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the Executive contributes to the government's overall effort by ensuring that departments are working closely with one another, that all necessary groups and agencies are involved and that the resources of government are being efficiently employed. The department has taken on this lead coordinating role in response to Members who spoke of the need to improve the overall coordination of government initiatives and strategies.

Mr. Chairman, the additional investment of \$5,646,000 that we are seeking as an increase to our base funding is critical to

achieving the important goals outlined in this business plan. We must continue to work effectively together to achieve the vision in Towards a Better Tomorrow. With fewer than 20 months remaining in our mandate, it is essential we approach these strategies in a cooperative and collegial manner. I look forward to working with every member of Caucus towards that end.

I would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have on the department's 2002-2003 main estimates submission. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Premier. At this time, I would like to ask the chairperson of the committee that is responsible for reviewing the department presently under consideration, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of the Executive provides support and advice to the Executive Council and its committees. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Premier and his staff on January 22, 2002, to review the department's 2002-2003 draft main estimates.

The Department of the Executive proposed a \$1,148,000 decrease in its overall expenditures from the business plan. The decrease in funds is entirely due to the shift of the Intergovernmental Forum to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Placement of Social Agenda Initiative

As the committee reviewed the Department of Executive's draft main estimates, the chairperson noted the placement of the social agenda within that department opened the door for considerable discussion on social issues and problems that would usually fall under the domain of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. The committee would once again like to recommend that the Social Action Working Group or SAWG initiative be placed within the most relevant department, namely the Department of Health and Social Services.

The committee was concerned that there did not appear to be collaboration between the Department of Health and Social Services and the SAWG. While the department's action plan was announced in January of 2002, the recommendations of SAWG are not due to be released until the end of February 2002. The committee is unsure how these recommendations will be incorporated into the department's action plan, or if they will be. The committee would like to be assured that SAWG's recommendations would be considered in the plans of the Department of Health and Social Services.

The committee was also made aware that SAWG's mandate was only recently and rather quickly written, despite the group's previous meetings and significant funding. The committee would like to be assured that this group has clear, established roles and responsibilities and a well-thought out action plan.

Placement of Energy Secretariat

The committee is aware that in addition to the newly formed Energy Secretariat in the Department of Executive and the Hydro Secretariat within FMBS, there are a number of other departments working on energy initiatives. The committee would like to see a reorganization that incorporates all of these initiatives under one roof in order to reduce costs and avoid duplication of efforts.

The committee noted that Mr. Handley is in charge of the Energy Secretariat, despite the fact that the Executive is the responsibility of the Premier. The committee was informed that both Minister Handley and Minister Antoine are in the process of developing option papers regarding the coordination of both energy and environment initiatives. The committee looks forward to reviewing the option papers once completed and offering its opinion on any new proposals.

Environmental Protection

During the discussion of the possible reorganization of energy initiatives, the issue of environmental protection arose. While the committee recognizes that environmental protection is largely a federal responsibility, members would like to be assured that the GNWT is monitoring the environment to prevent possible oversights by the federal government.

The committee noted that the Premier, in his recent address to the people of the Northwest Territories of January 11, 2002, stated:

Let me state categorically, this government is committed to ensuring that the land is protected for all our future generations, and for the duration of our term, we will continue to work and to organize ourselves in ways that better reflect the important balance between environmental management and resource development.

The committee recognizes that the federal government must do its share of the cleanup of sites throughout the North. However, the committee acknowledges that the territorial government also has a responsibility to its residents to ensure that they live in a clean, safe environment. The committee looks forward to reviewing the environmental options paper being prepared by Minister Antoine.

That concludes the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development's report on the Executive offices. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the Premier if he will be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in? For the record, Mr. Premier, would you introduce your witnesses?

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have on my left the deputy minister of the Executive, Ms. Snider. On my right, I have the director of corporate services, Carl Bird.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Premier, and welcome, witnesses. General comments on the department's estimates? General comments? We will go into detail.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will begin on page 2-13, Commissioner's office, operations expense, total operations expense, \$209,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 2-15, Ministers' offices, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3,438,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 2-17, Ministers' offices, grants and contributions, grants, \$50,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, on page 2-16, I am just wondering why the line, Native Women's Association grant in kind, shows a reduction of \$73,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bird.

MR. BIRD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The grant in kind is for the use of the Tapwe Building. At the time of the development of the main estimates, the renegotiation of the lease agreement had not been finalized. It will be finalized prior to the fiscal year end, and this will be coming forward as a supplemental requirement in the new year with an offsetting grant in kind revenue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bird. Page 2-17, Ministers' offices, grants and contributions, grants, \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Contributions, \$485,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$535,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 2-19, Cabinet Secretariat, operations expense, total operations expense, \$11,179,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The compensation and benefits have gone up about half a million dollars from the current year's main estimates. Could we get an explanation for that increase please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bird.

MR. BIRD: From the main estimates, the main area is for the Energy Secretariat; salaries, wages and compensation for that. Also, to bring in line the compensation and benefits expenses with the way all departments are now reporting them, by adding items such as training, medical travel and all other employee-related items into that line from other expenses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Other expenses have gone up about \$5 million from the mains for this current year, these mains that we are looking at right now. What is that \$5 million for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bird.

MR. BIRD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the \$5,646,000 increase: \$4,646,000 related to the Maximizing Northern Employment initiatives that the Executive is responsible for; the portion of the million dollars for the Energy Secretariat that is not compensation and benefits; approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 in other expenses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the money is here for Maximizing Northern Employment, can we ask questions? For example, I have a concern about how some parts of that program have been promoted in the North. I am interested in following up on that. Is this the proper area? Or do we have to talk to different departments about where the money is going to show up?

My other question is since we are showing \$4.6 million here for Maximizing Northern Employment, and I know the Executive does not actually administer the programs directly, in other departments, how do we see where that money comes in? Is it shown as revenue in the other departments?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask Ms. Snider to answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Ms. Snider.

MS. SNIDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of the Executive actually coordinates two programs, the Northern Student Employment Program and the Northern Graduate Employment Program. It is for these two programs that we are asking for the money. There are also six other programs; an Employment Support Program, an Aboriginal Private Sector Program, an Advanced Training Program, a Teacher Education Program, a Student Success Centre, and a Healthy Workplace. There are monies for these programs in other departments.

We are working together with those departments, both in coordinating the Northern Student Employment Program and the Northern Graduate Employment Program, but also in the implementation of the areas that are under their responsibility.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it the intention of the Executive to continue to administer programs like the Northern Graduate Employment Program or the Northern Student Employment Program? I am sure that must take some coordination with other departments. There may be some argument for it, but I would have thought that something like that would normally be handled by Education, Culture and Employment. Why was the choice made to keep it at the Executive?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Ms. Snider will answer that question as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Ms. Snider.

MS. SNIDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The corporate human resources section of the Department of the Executive provides overall coordination in human resource issues. The student

employment program, because it cuts across all departments, has been administered out of that department since it was set up. The Northern Graduate Employment Program was put into the department to sort of add to that coordination.

I think the decision was that the departments felt that putting this into a central agency, and a central agency that is looking into employment, would be the best place to have it. Both of these programs have been very successful. We are working with the students to improve the programs all the time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to agree with Ms. Snider. I have heard good things about the programs from northern graduates, in particular. I think it is a useful and worthwhile program.

My concern is that we have the Executive branch of government, which is typically not a program-oriented area. They have corporate human resource services, for instance. That is more of a program area, as far as I am concerned. It is something like the Department of Personnel used to handle in the previous structure of government. The Energy Secretariat -- I know the Premier has committed to take a look at moving that out of the Executive. We have Maximizing Northern Employment -- these are all programs now.

We have a body that is designed to provide executive support to the government now getting off into the program areas. You know, I am not even sure that the establishment policy for the Executive even contemplates that kind of activity.

Specifically, I am having a problem with the philosophical approach of having the Executive take on programs. I am just wondering, has the establishment policy of the Executive been amended to include contemplation of such actions that they are now undertaking?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other departments in the government are treated as equals, so it goes to the Department of the Executive, because it is under the Office of the Premier and is headed by the secretary to Cabinet, the most senior deputy minister we have in the government. When it comes time to take the lead on important initiatives and to provide for overall coordination, then it is our responsibility to take the lead on it. This is what the deputy ministers expect. This is how we get things done. There is no other department that can take the lead and have the mandate to provide overall coordination that goes across other departments.

It is working. It is working well. We have no immediate need, I think, to make any changes. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Premier did not answer my specific question about whether or not the establishment policy has been amended to specifically bring under the mandate of the Executive program activities. Typically in governments, it is the role of the Executive to coordinate. I will agree with the Premier on that. I am sure in other governments, the Executive works to bring departments together to make sure that initiatives are undertaken in a

coordinated manner. However, it is unusual for the Executive to take on the role of delivering programs. With those three areas, we have the Executive now actually delivering programs.

I am just wondering, is it not time to either take a look at the philosophy of how our government is set up and either say the way it was set up -- which, in the establishment policy, clearly does not set out the Executive as being a program department -- is wrong and we are going to change that? We are going to change the establishment policy or we should take a look at moving these initiatives into the program departments.

I think it is clearly the responsibility of the Executive to ensure there is coordination and to work with departments, but I do not think it is their responsibility to actually deliver programs. That is what I have a bit of a problem with.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not delivering programs, per se, at this time. What we are doing is taking the lead in trying to develop, for instance, under the Social Agenda, some sort of a Social Agenda Framework. In the Energy Secretariat, we have undertaken that to develop work towards a framework or a policy. Under the Maximizing Northern Employment, we are coordinating the overall government's work towards Maximizing Northern Employment objectives. Each of the departments are doing their specific responsibilities under that coordination.

It is working and it is working well. If the establishment policy needs revision, we will look at it and make the necessary revisions. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is about the intergovernmental relations and strategies. One of the concerns you hear about is the way we deal with groups, organizations and institutions, that we do it fairly and not try to pit one side against the other, especially with politically sensitive issues, such as pipelines and other projects out there.

With the positions some of these groups take, we cannot comfort everyone, but I think we have to realize that we are there to represent everybody. We cannot play one party off against the other. I would just like to ask the Premier, what are we doing to improve our relationships with organizations, aboriginal organizations, in light of some of the positions some groups have taken on the issues that have come forward, by way of different pipeline initiatives, regional concepts or ideas?

I feel we cannot and should not put ourselves in a position where we are compromising the ability of government to basically represent all interests without fundamentally taking one stand and not allowing ourselves to keep our minds open to other options or alternatives that may be out there, that we do not support one initiative over and above another.

I would like to ask the Premier, what are we doing to improve our relationships with political organizations, either the aboriginal organizations or institutions outside of government that have different opinions and a whole different philosophy on how to deal with things?

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the government has been working with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs over the last two years to develop a dialogue with the different community leaders, aboriginal regional leaders, as well as the Aboriginal Summit in establishing the Intergovernmental Forum. We are showing our support as much as we can behind the different negotiating tables and forums up and down the Mackenzie Valley, as well as supporting the economic aspirations of the different communities and the aboriginal groups.

The relationship has been good. I feel that while there are always differences in perspectives, the overall relationships with the aboriginal groups have been an improvement in the last couple of years over the way it was previous to that. I think it is a compliment to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Cabinet and Members of the Legislature, that this is the current sentiment that prevails with the aboriginal leadership, generally speaking, up and down the Mackenzie Valley.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think when the Premier says there is an improvement, well, because of all the other scenarios and issues that are out there, we have different aboriginal governments in different areas of the North dealing with land claims and self-government. There are pipeline discussions and diamond mines opening up.

I think that as a government, we have to ensure we leave our options open when it comes to trying to find a suitable solution to some of our problems. Every region is different. They have their own aspirations, they have their own means of trying to meet their goals. We are only one party at the table, especially where the federal government seems to be driving a lot of these initiatives.

As a government, we have to ensure that the residents of the Northwest Territories have alternatives, that we do not find ourselves sticking to one position, realizing there are other options or alternatives out there.

In light of what has happened with the pipeline discussions, I think we do have a couple of options that have been thrown around. We heard it through the news media and public announcements and statements. I think it is great that the private sector makes these announcements. We should encourage more developments to take place and more groups, institutions and organizations to throw their options around so people can say, "Maybe there are alternatives. Maybe we have not thought about something."

I do not think we should limit ourselves to sticking to one particular strategy or scenario. We have to work closer to the aboriginal governments, industry and the communities. At the end of the day, we do not hear much from the communities. They are the ones that are going to be living with the social and economic impacts development is going to incur.

It is going to change the North as we know it. For some people, that change is a concern because of the uncertainty that comes with change. We have to acknowledge that we have a

responsibility to ensure there is a balance, like you mentioned in your statement. A balance between what happens with the environment and development, and also what happens with our society, people, cultural groups, that people can take on this change without seeing any adverse impacts or effects on the way we live our lives. People want to continue to live their lives without seeing any major changes to it.

As a government, we have to be more open to that. We cannot limit ourselves from alternatives, options or issues. We have to allow the public to direct us on those initiatives. We should not be picking one position and sticking to it. We have to be flexible in what our decisions are.

I would like to ask the Premier, where do communities and institutions outside of the Intergovernmental Forum fit into the picture of government initiatives and strategies outlined in [Towards a Better Tomorrow?](#)

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our government has taken the view that in order to accomplish the fundamental goals we set out for ourselves, we need to partner with aboriginal governments and non-government organizations. With aboriginal governments, partnering to address and conclude discussions on devolution and revenue sharing. We have also said we need a social agenda, and there we have begun a partnership with non-government organizations and again, aboriginal leaders, to work in partnership towards developing a framework for our social agenda.

More than just verbal commitments, we have actually engaged in reaching out and taking on partnerships to work together on reaching some of our goals we have set out. I think it is a good start. It is one that can serve this government beyond the term of this Legislature.

If we set it up right, I think the approach we take with the aboriginal governments in developing a mandate and an approach to negotiating revenue sharing and devolution can continue without any major hiccups beyond the life of this Legislature. That is what we would like to try to do.

The Social Agenda Framework will be delivered by the non-government organizations next month for us to look at. It will be up to us to discuss that, probably in June, and take some concrete measures to address it through our business planning cycle.

I think we are working in the right direction and showing that we are more than just prepared to talk partnerships or prepared to take action. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the area of Cabinet Secretariat, the committee was also concerned about the placement of initiatives under the Executive Offices. We were informed that two other Ministers would be looking at the area of energy initiatives, looking at a possible reorganization and incorporating all the energy initiatives under one roof. We have not seen that come forward as of yet.

My question is, if that in fact were to occur, reorganization of these initiatives under one roof, what would that do to the funding? Would a certain amount of the funding go with that to another area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is probably what would happen if we decide, for instance, the Energy Secretariat was more properly housed in a new ministry or if it should go to an existing department, such as Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, then we would arrange for the transfer of the resources. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Premier inform us as to the time lines that would be involved with this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In December, the Caucus met in Hay River. It was very clear from the comments there that the overriding concern and priority Members of this Legislature were focusing on was the environment. It was not energy. It was the environment. Following that, as Ministers, we had a discussion about it. It was clear that what we need to show the public and this Legislature was that the environment was the priority issue to address in how we reorganize and organize ourselves in this government.

Following that, we asked Minister Jim Antoine to also come up with suggestions on how we can profile more of the responsibility for the environment or the importance of environment within this government.

It is my expectation that following this session, Cabinet will have suggestions made from Minister Handley and Minister Antoine. We will find a day or so to have a workshop and look at the suggestions from these two and make some decision on how to proceed from there.

So some time in April we will hopefully have that discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As these plans progress, will there be involvement of all Members of the Assembly?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Chairman, Cabinet is planning a workshop some time in April to basically decide the main area we will work on during the remaining time in our mandate. This particular area is one we are going to address.

If it is the wish of Members of the Legislature that we should bring it to a meeting of Caucus before we finalize our plans, I am sure Cabinet will be prepared to entertain that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I was looking for a commitment following up on both Ministers, when appearing before the committee, also stated they would be bringing forward those papers through the committee process.

Another area I would like to get some information on is under Cabinet Secretariat policy. A number of policies under the Executive Offices are formulated. I would like to know if there have been any changes to the ministerial policies paper. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: I am not certain of that. If there is a Caucus meeting planned for some time between now and June, then it would be possible to bring our ideas on how to reorganize to Caucus.

As far as I know, there are not any specific dates that are being suggested for a Caucus meeting like we had in Hay River. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other part of the question I had was in the area of the Cabinet or ministerial procedures policy. Have there been any changes in that document?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: I am not aware of it. If changes were made, I am not aware of it. We can ask and inform the Member if any changes were made. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be interested in seeing that. There was some discussion in the past in that area. It would be nice to know if there have been any further changes.

Again, for process, with possible developments under reorganization of the Executive or under the Energy Secretariat, or all the energy initiatives, when the mandate was given to the two Ministers to review that, was there a time line again that they were to report back?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because of the Caucus meeting in Hay River, where virtually every Member mentioned the importance of the environment and highlighting that particular issue, it became clear to us that the idea of setting up a Ministry or Department of Energy may not be in line with the political views of Caucus, from what we heard.

Following that, we met again in January and decided to ask Minister Antoine if he would also look at making a paper and having discussions with Mr. Handley and come forward to Cabinet with it.

It became clear that we did not have time to discuss it before the session. I asked Cabinet to give it the proper attention that it deserves. During the session, there was not enough time for the attention that should be paid to it available, so we agreed that following this session, when the Ministers come forward, we will take a day or two to have that discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. General comments? Detail, page 2-19. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up on the line of questioning Mr. Roland was just pursuing with the Premier. I am a little bit distressed that the Premier keeps talking about a Caucus meeting. I thought that it was a general practice that what happened in Caucus was kept in Caucus and it was not something that came out on the floor of the House.

Also, Caucus was not to be a decision-making place. In other words, we would use the committees and the official parts of this Assembly, not the unofficial parts of the Assembly, for decision-making.

I am troubled that he seems to think that some direction was provided that the government should respond to at Caucus, because that would not be appropriate.

Having said that, I would also like to say that from my recollection -- after having said we should not be talking about Caucus -- it was one of the things that I brought up at Caucus, that Towards a Better Tomorrow did not appear to provide the same emphasis on the environment that it did on economic development. What I suggested was that we needed a better balance. I did not say that one should have a priority over the other.

I am a little concerned that the Premier is also now saying that there is a priority here. I think if anything, I was trying to point out that a Caucus document maybe needed to have some better balance in it. That was what I was speaking to -- a document that was the property of Caucus.

If we are talking about direction to government, I am not sure that it is appropriate that that sort of direction be taken from Caucus, which is not an official part of this House and does not have official records or records of proceeding, whereas our committees do.

Just a comment about the process and the Premier, where he is taking direction from. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I did not hear a question there. Do you want to respond, Mr. Premier?

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Well, a meeting happened and some discussions took place. I took notes. I thought some indicators were given to us on where we should go from there. We have had some follow-up discussions.

Caucus meetings happen. I am not quite sure of where to go from there. If I should be out of bounds for referring to them, then I stand corrected. I will not mention them anymore. They

do not make decisions. No decisions they make should be referenced. I was not clear on that.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of my point was that we do have a process for making decisions, and that is that once the government has decided on a course of action, they make a proposal through the committees to this Legislative Assembly.

If the Premier and Cabinet have decided on a course of action they recommend, I have no doubt that either the chair of GED or whatever committee is appropriate would be happy to work out a meeting schedule with the Premier to discuss that.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do work with the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, as well as the other committees of the Legislature. It is true. That is where the accountability starts and it is the official bodies that we work with. I agree with the Member.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, are we on page 2-19 or 2-18?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-19. Mr. Nitah

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a question regarding 2-18 under Cabinet Secretariat, corporate human resource services, where the Executive is responsible for developing and monitoring the government's recruiting policy, Affirmative Action Policy and other government-wide human resource policies; provides specialist training and advice to government departments, boards and agencies on human resource planning and staff development; and supports internal communication processes.

It is an area with a wide degree of responsibility, especially with our Affirmative Action Policy of this government, to try and get a representative work force, yet we see, except for a few departments, that the affirmative action candidates are a lot lower within the departments and are not representative of the population.

I would like to ask the Minister if all departments work from the same song sheet? By that, I mean is there one interpretation of the Affirmative Action Policy used by all departments consistently? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer is yes. It is one of the reasons why the Department of the Executive has to take a lead in initiatives like this, to provide overall coordination and consistency in the approach that we take to achieving the objectives of the goals of the policies. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the interpretation of the policy is not the problem, then it must be at the departmental level because we are seeing a great discrepancy between one department over another. Take the

Housing Corporation, for example, where the affirmative action representatives outnumber those of the non-affirmative action area. The Department of Transportation has a lower number; FMBS has an even lower number.

Why is there such a discrepancy between the different departments in representative government if the Affirmative Action Policy is interpreted equally by all departments, boards and agencies? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you. I will ask Ms. Snider to respond to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ms. Snider.

MS. SNIDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess we are in agreement with Mr. Nitah that there is room for much improvement in terms of how the human resource policies of the government are applied. What we did is we undertook an overall human resource management study. We are in the process now of implementing a number of recommendations of that study. We are trying to enhance our policy base and to make sure the interpretation of the policy within each one of the departments is consistent and actively implemented. We are trying to strengthen our human resource community. That means we are providing training and workshops with our human resource managers to make sure they are actually applying the policies in a consistent and effective way.

We are trying to enhance our human resource practices, again for the same reasons, to make sure the interpretation is similar across the government. We are working in partnership with people, both inside and outside of the government. We are trying to strengthen our reporting and our accountability.

We have found in the past that we have not only not held people accountable the way they should have been, but we have not been able to report on our results the way we should. We are trying to improve in that area. We think the initiatives we put in place will actually improve the things you have identified as being problem areas.

We are also moving from an affirmative action to more of an employment equity approach, which would actually look at areas where we are not doing well in terms of applying the Affirmative Action Policy and providing support and enhancement in those areas to make sure our work is better.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Snider. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to hear that there are some motions in motion, some equal employment representative government initiative by the department is encouraging. I would like to see that happen as soon as possible.

If we are going to look at equitable distribution of employees that is representative of this government, would they also look at geographical locations as a means for equitable distribution of government resources and employees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Ms. Snider will respond to that as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Ms. Snider.

MS. SNIDER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In applying our policies, we are trying to make sure they are applied across the Territories. Where we have employees in the region right now, we are trying to provide the supports that are necessary in those areas.

The other thing that we are looking at is capacity building. That is certainly a regionally and community-based focus. We are working with the Intergovernmental Forum on capacity building.

The other initiative that we think works to support the kinds of things you are looking at is Maximizing Northern Employment, where we are trying to make sure we are hiring graduates in communities. We are really encouraging that in this second phase of that program. We also see Maximizing Northern Employment as an affirmative action program. We see it as a program that if we are actually retaining northern students in the Northwest Territories, even if they are not retained in the Government of the Northwest Territories, we are strengthening our community capacity.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Snider. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. I was pretty sure I was not going to get the response I was looking for. That was more of a political question than anything else, Mr. Chairman.

However, I do have a question resulting from the answer on affirmative action being considered a part of the Maximizing Northern Employment initiative. There are a number of communities and regions that have negotiated impact benefit agreements with industry. Within those agreements, there is talk about employment levels, where communities that they represent, business opportunities. Has the department looked at contacting some of those regions and communities to see what they can do to assist in making those agreements work? Any agreement is only as good as what you do with those agreements. That is one question.

Another question on the recommendations that came out of the human resource study, have they looked at an independent body to hear appeals by GNWT employees? Right now, employees are afraid to appeal decisions because the appeal that they have to go through is their boss. It is a scary thing for an individual to do when you might have to put your whole career on the line. Two areas, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you. I am not clear if our government is actively communicating with communities and groups that have these agreements. I know that many of the Maximizing Northern Employment initiatives are geared towards the private sector and the aboriginal groups and industry. If we are not, we should be. How is that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. We are on page 2-19. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Sorry, the Member had also raised the issue of appeals. We should just inform the Members of the

Legislature here that we are preparing to have this discussion about appeals with a committee on Thursday. Following that, we may be able to have some resolution to that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Page 2 19, Cabinet Secretariat, operations expense, total operations expense, \$11,179,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 221, Public Utilities Board, operations expense, total operations expense, \$401,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Information item, page 222, active positions. Page 2-23, detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, total department, \$31,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-24, lease commitments infrastructure, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will return to page 2-11, Executive Offices, program summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$15,227,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that review of the Executive Offices is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Premier and his witnesses for appearing. As previously agreed, we will move on to the Financial Management Board Secretariat. I will ask the Minister if he has any opening comments.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the Financial Management Board Secretariat's 2002-2003 main estimates.

The 2002-2003 main estimates proposed total operational expenses of \$29,763,000. This provides for a total net growth from the 2000-2001 fiscal year of \$2,802,000 and represents a slightly greater than 10 percent increase in expenditures from the previous fiscal year. The expenditure increases proposed for the FMB Secretariat included:

- \$1,500,000 to address increased power subsidy program requirements associated with recent electricity rate increases;
- \$299,000 to provide for the FMBS costs associated with preparing for and conducting collective bargaining negotiations this coming year; and
- \$1 million in support of research and consultation regarding NWT hydro-electric potential.

During the review of business plans and main estimates, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development questioned the location of the hydro initiative in the FMB Secretariat. In its report, the committee suggested that the government combine all of its energy responsibilities and initiatives into one coordinated task or activity. As committed to by the Premier, an approach will be presented to committees before the end of this session to address this concern. In the interim, the hydro funding continues to be included in the FMB Secretariat.

The Secretariat's proposed capital acquisition plan for the 2002-2003 fiscal year includes \$1,105,000 for three information technology projects:

1. Approximately every 18 to 24 months, software vendors release a major software upgrade. These upgrades are significant and include enhancements or changes to software. The vendor only supports a version of software for a certain period of time. In order to remain supportable, the current version of PeopleSoft needs to be upgraded. \$800,000 has been allocated to complete this conversion.
2. \$280,000 has been allocated to complete software upgrades to the existing financial information system to keep it functional while a business needs analysis for its replacement is performed.
3. \$25,000 has been allocated for the development of a review plan for the implementation of a corporate budget development and monitoring system.

That completes this brief overview of the proposed FMBS estimates, and I will be pleased to answer questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the chair of the standing committee responsible for FMBS have any comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Financial Management Board Secretariat reports to the Minister of Finance. FMBS manages and controls the government's financial, human and information resources. The FMBS, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Executive Offices make up the Department of the Executive. Each component submits their own business plans and main estimates for review by the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the chair of the Financial Management Board and his staff on Wednesday, January 16, 2002, to review the Secretariat's main estimates for 2002-2003.

The committee noted a \$3,000 net increase in operations expenses for the Secretariat from their 2002-2005 business plans. This entire increase is attributed to a \$3,000 decrease in the Secretariat's amortization estimates.

The FMBS did not propose any increase in its capital expenditures from their 2002-2005 business plans. However, committee members did recall that the Secretariat proposed a \$985,000 increase to their capital plan in their 2002-2005 business plans from their 2001-2002 main estimates. This

capital expenditure increase was due to a PeopleSoft upgrade of \$800,000 and other improvements for the financial information system, and the budgeting development and monitoring system.

Placement and Coordination of Energy Initiatives

The placement and coordination of the government's many energy initiatives have been an ongoing concern of the standing committee. For example, the Energy Secretariat has been placed in the Executive Offices and the hydro unit has been placed within FMBS. A number of these initiatives have been placed within departments that do not have a clear mandate for those programs. The committee first learned of these organizational anomalies in its review of the government's 2002-2005 business plans.

Committee members conveyed their concerns in the committee's review of the 2002-2005 business plans to the government and stated that:

...FMBS' role is to oversee the expenditures of the government and not to directly participate in economic development. Economic development is part and parcel of the mandate for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED). The committee does not want to see funding going towards FMBS for the development of programs and services outside its mandate.

Committee members noted that many departments, secretariats and agencies already have their own energy initiatives. The committee concluded that a coordination and centralization of efforts would lead to better results.

(Response to the Government on the Review of the 2002-2005 business plans by the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, page 5)

During the review of the 2002-2003 draft main estimates, the Minister advised the standing committee that the government is considering two options, to either create a new energy ministry or place all of the government's energy initiatives within RWED. The committee stated that the government's plan must ensure lines of accountability and authority are clearly identified and established.

The Minister reported that the proposed plan is due to be completed by the end of February 2002. At that time, the plan will be considered by Cabinet and subsequently referred to the standing committee for further input. The Minister added that until a decision is made, the hydro unit would remain within FMBS. The committee looks forward to reviewing the government's options plan.

Government-Wide Human Resource Plan

The recruitment and retention of human resources is an ongoing concern of the standing committee. The government had produced a study to come up with recommendations to

evaluate and improve its human resource management. The study is entitled, Report to the Government of the Northwest Territories Human Resource Management Study, December 2000, or otherwise referred to as the Grant Thornton Report.

The committee understands that an options paper on the report is being completed for consideration by Cabinet at the end of February 2002. The committee looks forward to reviewing the government's option paper and discussing other staff issues with the Premier.

FMBS Human Resource Plan

FMBS is developing its own human resource plan. This plan is specific to FMBS and is not a government-wide human resource plan. The Minister informed the standing committee that the plan would be finalized and ready for implementation by July 2002.

In discussions with the committee, some of the issues that were identified included the training and placement of more aboriginal people in FMBS and competition with the private sector for the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel.

Adherence to the Financial Administration Act (FAA)

A number of Members were of the position that stricter amendments must be made to the FAA to ensure all Members have timely and effective input into new initiatives, budgeting adjustments and other expenditures. Committee members are concerned that new initiatives are announced with little or no input from Regular Members.

The Minister replied that he would do his best to notify Members of new initiatives and added that there needs to be some flexibility in the FAA to respond effectively to emergencies. He further stated that there are guidelines for the use of supplementary appropriations, including special warrants, and Members are able to vote down appropriations.

Power Subsidy and Power Rate Increases

The committee expressed its concern to the Minister regarding the recent power rate increases in the majority of communities. The Minister explained to the committee that the recent power rate increases by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation or NWTPC reflects the incremental costs of delivering power. Furthermore, he stated that an increase to the power subsidy is necessary to offset these increased costs.

The committee commented that if fuel prices have dropped, there should be a resultant decrease in our power rates and a corresponding decrease in the government's power subsidy program. The Minister replied that the NWTPC had to purchase fuel in advance at a fixed price.

Committee members confirmed with the Minister that if the NWTPC were able to purchase fuel at a lower price for next year, there would be a decline in our power rates as well as a reduction in funding for the power subsidy.

Financial Information System (FIS)

The standing committee reiterated its concern from the business plans that the government's FIS would require replacement. During the review of the 2002-2005 business plans, the committee heard from the government that it has

proposed additional capital funding to extend the operating life of the FIS through the next three fiscal years. The department agreed that eventually, the current FIS system would no longer be economical or practical to maintain and stated that a replacement of the FIS is likely to cost between \$10 million and \$15 million.

In the review of its 2002-2003 draft main estimates, FMBS informed the committee that over the next two years, it is conducting a business case analysis to determine how best to replace the FIS. It will compare different systems, and consult with users and clients. The standing committee would like the FMBS to ensure a proper implementation plan for this replacement process is established.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development report on FMBS. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Would the Minister like to bring in any witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me are Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board, and Rob Taggart, director of corporate services. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A concern I have is with the Financial Management Board Secretariat taking on programs and services functions rather than being a financial management board to oversee what goes on with the government, especially with hydro initiatives and the \$1 million for hydroelectric potential.

I have a hard time understanding where does the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, which has the responsibility for distributing power in our communities, and being a Crown corporation of which this government is a shareholder...we have seen other initiatives, especially with the Executive, Maximizing Northern Employment. I would like to know, why has this responsibility not gone to, say, another department responsible for energy or looking at the responsibility of non-renewable energy by way of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Power Corporation, some other department? Why specifically this department?

My concern is that the responsibility of the Financial Management Board Secretariat is to ensure the accountability of government is there, that we look at the revenues and what is coming into government and that we oversee that we are reaching the potential we have by way of those responsibilities.

For us to start taking on programs and services roles, that should be left with the departments responsible for carrying out programs and services. I would like to ask the Minister, why is it

that this department is now in the business of looking at programs and services?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, all of the options the Member has referred to are there and are under consideration. As the Premier just mentioned in the review of the Executive's main estimates, Cabinet is looking at that as soon as possible. Then we will be deciding on which course we are going to take.

We agree with the Member that the current establishment policy for FMBS does not provide for provision of programs such as the hydro responsibility. We agree with that and if that were to continue, we would either have to change the establishment policy or pick another option.

The option the Member has referred to, whether it is a new ministry responsible for energy, whether it goes into an existing program department or whether it goes into the [Power Corporation](#), those are all options that are on the table right now. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is awfully hard to follow some of these initiatives this government is taking on. One minute they are talking about reviewing the [Power Corporation](#), next we establish a hydro strategy initiative, next we have an energy initiative. It seems like we are tripping over each other with all of these initiatives.

At the end of it all, where are we going by way of simplifying and regulating what goes on in government? It seems like the bureaucracy just continues to blossom with no real controls in place to streamline the government so that we are structured in such a way that we are affordable. We cannot be spending all the money running a bureaucracy without having dollars to run programs and services. If anything, that is where we should be focusing.

I think with the [Power Corporation](#), it seems like the potential they have is out there but we are restricting them from reaching that potential by saying, "Well, sorry, you cannot move on that because we are doing a review."

On one hand, they are looking at taking over petroleum products. The next minute they are doing a review on the [Power Corporation](#). Then we have the situation that happened in Hay River, the whole idea of privatization and even the idea of selling off the corporation.

I think for myself, it does not do justice to the corporation. It is a viable asset to this government and to the people of the Northwest Territories. I think with us taking on all of these different initiatives and leaving the [Power Corporation](#) sitting on the sidelines looking in, my view is that is not the way to build a corporation that benefits the shareholders, the people of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to suggest to the Minister that he seriously relinquish some of these initiatives that should not be in the mandate of these different departments and put it where it should be. In my view, it should be with the [Power Corporation](#).

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Member. Under the current establishment policy, it really does not belong in the Financial Management Board Secretariat. We are not building a bureaucracy, Mr. Chairman. We have not staffed these positions. We do, within FMBS, have responsibility for the Power Support Program. At one time, when we did the electrical generation study, part of the reason for doing that was because of the concern with the growing amount of the program to support our power costs.

That is how it started in FMBS. Mr. Chairman, I take the Member's advice seriously and we need to straighten this out as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is it, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. General comments? Detail? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would not want the Minister to get let off too quickly. Just following up on some of the committee's comments in our report, it is an area of concern, and some of the questioning in the earlier department with the Premier, in the area of mandates and carrying out work. Just to raise a concern there, we are aware that work is ongoing. We were informed by the end of February. Well, we are starting into March now, and also hearing from the Premier that after session is done, then there will be some discussion on it. Hopefully at that point, whatever decision will be made or proposals will come out that will work their way through the committee system.

I would like to know if the mandate, if there is agreement to move ahead with restructuring the department's resources that are identified under hydro unit would then be transferred out and put into whatever body was directed to head up the energy initiatives.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The commitment has been made. It was made with the committee in January sometime. We continue to agree that this has to be sorted out in terms of what the best option is here. I certainly intend to do my part to make sure that happens. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, in this area, hopefully we will see the proposals moving along and I look forward to the commitments when they are filled.

Another area that committee members raised was adherence to the Financial Administration Act. Understanding the Minister said he would work along with Members to do notification, we have had a number of instances in the last while that as a result, this attention was raised. Knowing it is a matter of interpretation, or how things would fall out, just how to get that

information out to Members in a timely fashion. Even though, for example, a project can contain multiple contracts, it can be deemed as one project and voted in one allotment, but could have numerous contracts that fall within that. Each contract is a legal document.

When you go to different contractors along a system, highways, for example, or even in large construction projects, because each tender that is let out is a legal document and a company can sue on that and make complaints, or visa versa, I guess, that is just a matter of informing Members of that and other departments. This is where I see the mandate of the secretariat, to ensure all of the departments are following the Financial Administration Act so we will not run into the kind of problems that were raised a number of months ago. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take that more as advice than a question. We certainly will be as diligent as possible and use good judgment in disclosing contracts, and trying to provide timely and thorough information. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is the last area for me around the issue of mandates and what departments are doing in increasing their roles in other areas. Has there been a change in the FMBS mandate, the establishment policy? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, there has not been any change in the establishment policy. Until we decide what options there are, we felt we would carry on this way for the time being. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments? Detail? Page 2-35, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6,866,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this year's mains, we had \$1,705,000 for other expenses. In these main estimates we are looking at, we have \$2,858,000 for other expenses. What has caused that million-dollar increase?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the million-dollar difference is the money that is in for the hydro unit. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While I think this is a good initiative, I am just echoing Mr. Krutko's comments about its placement and look forward to hearing from the government on where they would recommend these initiatives be placed, to move them from one of the central agencies to a program area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. No question there. Page 2-35, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6,866,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the staff housing, this was something that was an initiative in the 13th Assembly, to sell off staff housing and get out of that market. I see we are still in it.

My concern is there is another initiative within this government to look at the selling off of the Housing Corporation units in our communities. I think with our experience of selling staff houses from the government, we find ourselves probably worse off now than we were before, when we obtained housing for staff in small communities, and where you had housing units available for the nurses, the teachers and other people in our communities.

My concern is if we continue to sell off all of the assets of this government, eventually we may find ourselves in a situation where we do not have a market that we can turn to, or we can turn to the private sector to provide those houses.

I would like to ask the Minister, where are we in staff housing initiatives in FMBS? How many more units do we have out there that still fall under the elimination of staff housing in this government?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, selling off the staff housing has caused some squeezes, where we have been short of houses in some situations. It is a program that it was time for the government to get out of. We have saved somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$25 million by not staying with staff housing.

Our approach as a government, instead of us owning and providing housing, is to stimulate the private market. There are a number of initiatives announced in the Budget Address to do that, particularly in smaller communities. I think between our initiatives and working with the Housing Corporation, a better route for us, rather than owning houses, is to try to get the private market built up as quickly as we can. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My other question to the Minister was how many units does this government still maintain?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the government currently maintains 24 units. I can give the community breakdown, if you want. There are six in Fort Liard, two in Fort Resolution, two in Fort Simpson, one in Wha Ti, four in Deline, five in Fort Good Hope, one in Fort McPherson, one in Paulatuk, one in Sachs Harbour and one in Tuktoyaktuk. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a possibility of winding down this program and getting out of the housing market once and for all by, say, allocating it to the local housing authorities or community organizations, such as the band or hamlet council? I think this thing has been on the books for a while, since 1995. I think we should get it off the books once and for all and leave housing with the housing association. This thing has been carrying on for some time and the goal was to eventually get out of all housing. Is there a possibility of allocating those units to organizations within those communities or municipalities?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have been, for the past number of years, trying to get out of this. We have 24 units left. We are prepared to give them away at no cost to community governments if they want them. On top of that, we have offered to pay O and M costs to allow the new owners of the houses to keep the rent. We have a number of negotiations going on as we speak here, so we will keep working away at this to get completely out of housing and have it in the private sector's hands or in community government's hands soon. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that assurance from the Minister that we will not see it as a line item on this budget next year, that it will be gone?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we will probably still continue to have this as a line item because we do have some leased units. Until those leases run out, we have them on our books. We will possibly still have some situations where communities have not taken on the house and we are still in negotiation, so I could not promise this will not show up again for another year. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the unit the Minister mentioned in Fort McPherson, we are looking at establishing a community shelter of some sort, so maybe we could use it for that purpose.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. No question there. Do you want to respond, Mr. Handley?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be a decision the community could make. Of course, with the shortage of housing, we would prefer to see these used for housing, but as I said, that is a decision the community would make themselves. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 2 35, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6,866,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-37, directorate, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$1,238,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-39, labour relations and compensation services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$10,316,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-41, government accounting, operations expense, total operations expense, \$10,197,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-43, government accounting, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$7,180,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the power subsidy, in light of the increases, especially in a lot of our smaller communities where we see a major influx because they use the argument of fuel causing the power rates to go up and what not, is that something that will be considered or built into the power subsidy?

I think if anything, maybe that is a good reason the Power Corporation does consider taking on POL, because of the cost and other factors that are out of our control. If there is a way we can have a stable power supply, it will assist when we look at the power subsidy, especially for small communities. At least it will be consistent and we would not have a fluctuation in the power rates.

I would like to ask the Minister, have you looked at that as a possibility, in light of the Power Subsidy Program? That way, we can have some continuity or insurance that we are not going to see any large spikes or fluctuations, especially in small, isolated communities, due to other factors.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, certainly the cost of fuel is a big factor in the cost of delivering power, providing power to the communities. That accounts for a big piece of the increase here.

Would it be more economical for the Power Corporation to take over POL? Certainly there could be some advantages and some efficiencies to be gained by doing that. As well, as we review the recommendations from the electrical generation report, we would be looking at what other ways we could use to stabilize the price over long periods of time so we do not see those spikes Mr. Krutko is referring to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 2 43, government accounting, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$7,180,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-45, budgeting and evaluation, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1,215,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-47, audit bureau, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1,169,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Information item, active positions, page 2-48.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 2-49, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$1,690,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. We will go back to 2-33, Financial Management Board Secretariat, program summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$29,763,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to capital, page 4, Financial Management Board Secretariat, capital acquisition plan, budgeting and evaluation, total budgeting and evaluation, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Government accounting, total government accounting, \$280,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Labour relations and compensation services, total labour relations and compensation services, \$800,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$1,105,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that consideration of the Financial Management Board Secretariat is completed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Minister and witnesses for appearing before the committee. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that committee stand down further consideration of the Department of the Executive and move for now to consider Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree we will move on to Municipal and Community Affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Does the Minister have opening comments? Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do. I will proceed with my opening comments, Mr. Chairman.

I am pleased to be here today to present the 2002-2003 Main Estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MACA is requesting \$69.4 million in operating expenses for the 2002-2003 fiscal year. This includes over \$46 million in grants and other contributions to support community government operations, including:

- community government funding for ongoing operations;
- grants in lieu of taxes;
- senior citizens and disabled persons property tax relief;
- water and sewer services subsidy;
- infrastructure contributions;
- funding for cost-shared water and sewer projects in tax-based communities; and
- additional funding to assist community governments with rising fuel, utility and other costs.

Community governments are important partners with us in serving the people of the NWT. The operating funding MACA supplies helps community governments continue to provide important municipal programs and services to NWT residents.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to improving the quality of life for our citizens. The government is now working with our partners to develop a social agenda that will help us achieve this goal. MACA has a role to play in this through its programs to support and promote youth, volunteers and recreation and sport.

MACA has identified \$1 million to support NWT youth in 2002-2003. This includes funding to establish an NWT youth corps. The youth corps will improve the outlook and opportunities for youth by providing support and leadership. Activities will include work assignments, volunteer work and skills improvement.

MACA is also working to help Northerners lead healthier lives. Over the past year, communities and our recreation and sport partners have said that we need to do more to support recreation and sport development. In response, we have identified \$1.4 million for this purpose in 2002-2003. This money will go towards communities and recreation organizations across the NWT. This is an important investment in the health and well-being of all Northerners.

Building community capacity is also a priority for MACA. Strong community governments and local organizations make our communities better places to live in. During 2002-2003, MACA will invest in our communities by providing funding to support capacity building for community governments and organizations. This funding includes amounts to support community development projects, firefighter training and leadership development.

In the Budget Address, the Minister of Finance noted that economic development in the NWT will place increased demands on community infrastructure. Helping community governments meet that demand will be an important task for MACA in the coming year. During 2002-2003, MACA will invest \$6.7 million in community infrastructure through our capital acquisitions plan. Most of this money will go towards improving water and sewer infrastructure and providing improved fire protection equipment.

Mr. Chairman, these are some of the highlights of the department's funding request for the coming fiscal year. We hope that the investments MACA will make in NWT communities during 2002-2003 will help us achieve the goals we outlined in *Towards A Better Tomorrow*. I look forward to hearing the committee's comments and questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Steen. I will call on the standing committee responsible for overseeing MACA for comments. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the mandate of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, or MACA, is to provide community governments with the support to deliver public programs and services essential to good community life, to assist with the development and maintenance of community governments, and to provide the resources necessary to achieve community goals.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and his staff on Friday, January 18, 2002, to review the department's draft main estimates for 2002-2003.

The committee noted a \$7,605,000 net increase in operations expenses from the department's 2002-2005 business plans. This net increase may be attributed to a \$1,700,000 increase in other subsequent FMB approvals due in its entirety to extraordinary funding for the community of Fort Simpson; and a \$5,905,000 increase in other adjustments due to the reporting of infrastructure contributions as operations expenses instead of capital expenditures.

The committee also noted a net decrease of \$4,305,000 in the department's capital expenditures from its 2002-2005 business plans. This net decrease is due to \$100,000 for the new Aklavik curling rink; \$500,000 for the new Wha Ti community hall; \$1,000,000 in new funding to address water treatment plants and system deficiencies; and a reduction of \$5,905,000 as the result of a transfer of infrastructure contributions to operations expenses under a revised reporting process.

Taxation

Mr. Chairman, band residents on band lands do not have to pay municipal property taxes. The federal government pays a grant in lieu to the territorial government.

A number of committee members reported that some Indian Affairs branch lands or IAB lands are now being taxed. There is no evidence that those IAB lands in question have been transferred from the federal to the territorial government. This has been an ongoing issue with many of the committee members and to date, nothing has been clarified or concluded on this matter.

The department replied that they are aware the federal government is no longer paying taxes on IAB lands. Department officials added that they are not aware of any collection action being undertaken and will clarify this taxation matter with the Department of Finance. The department will report back to the committee on this issue. The Minister informed the committee that if the government cannot find confirmation that this is Commissioner's land, then the government will not be taxing anyone residing on those lands.

Community Requirements and Capacity

Some committee members feel that the department needs to be more responsive to community needs. Committee members added that it is difficult to effectively deliver programs and services when there is a lack of infrastructure. Furthermore, the acquisition of needed infrastructure is made more difficult by the new corporate capital planning process. The new process does not take into consideration community priorities.

Water Standards

The committee is concerned about the maintenance of safe drinking water. Committee members commented that there should be a coordinating authority to increase accountability and ensure standards are met.

The department replied that it is responsible for funding the water facilities that are owned by the government or the community. The Department of Public Works and Services is responsible for maintaining the facilities to the standards that are set by the Department of Health and Social Services. The NWT Water and Waste Association provides training for water plant operators. Some committee members commented that this confirms accountability in this matter is convoluted. If a timely resolution to a problem is necessary, a community would have to deal with three departments instead of one consolidated authority.

Furthermore, although training is provided by the NWT Water and Waste Association, recruitment and retention challenges will remain ongoing as long as communities are not given adequate funding to pay their staff competitive wages.

Extraordinary Funding

Mr. Chairman, the committee learned that the community of Fort Simpson will receive extraordinary funding in the amount of \$1,700,000. This amount would leave only \$200,000 in the department's extraordinary funding for other communities.

The committee is aware that Fort Simpson has received extraordinary funding in the past. Documentation received from the department confirmed that the community of Fort Simpson has received extraordinary funding in the amount of \$1,546,000 for its water and sewer system and for the replacement of its main street from 1997-1998 to 2000-2001 and \$257,000 for deficit reduction in 2001-2002.

The committee noted that as of the next fiscal year, Fort Simpson would have received \$3,503,000 in total extraordinary funding since 1989-1990. Committee members are concerned that extraordinary funding has evolved into a pool of money that is used as an additional source of funding for some communities, such as Fort Simpson and Yellowknife. Most of our communities are being penalized for good financial management, while other communities use extraordinary

funding for public works projects and paving. In short, some communities are being rewarded for bad financial management with extraordinary funding bailouts.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development suggests that the department work more closely with Fort Simpson and other similarly managed communities to avoid extraordinary funding incidents in the future. Furthermore, the committee encourages the adoption and implementation of debt recovery programs as an alternative to extraordinary funding as a proactive initiative to encourage good fiscal management.

Funding for Youth Programs

The committee learned that the department has budgeted \$750,000 for youth corps initiatives and \$125,000 for other initiatives for youth. However, the Minister Responsible for Youth, which is independent from this department, does not have adequate funding for his youth initiatives.

Committee members concluded that it may be more effective and efficient to combine the Minister Responsible for Youth with the Ministry of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommends that the Minister of Youth portfolio be amalgamated with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to facilitate and improve funding and program delivery for youth programs.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you. That is the committee's report. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my left is Mr. Dave Murray, deputy minister. On my right is Ms. Gay Kennedy, director of corporate affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments? Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of things I wanted to raise. First of all, I would like to ask the Minister if he could provide us information regarding the cost differences or the funding differences since the new formula financing for the SOPE and MOPE communities were introduced. I believe it was last year. Would he have a breakout of all the different dollars that are going to the communities now versus what was being spent initially?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Ms. Gay Kennedy is going to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Kennedy.

MS. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can provide that information. It is a fairly lengthy table. Do you want me to hand it out?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. McLeod, would you want a list of that rather than it being read out?

MR. MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister could give it to me in a handout, that would work fine.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Could you provide that, Mr. Minister?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask how the new formula financing, now that we have removed all the different factors that were included -- I think it was 36 factors. I cannot remember the exact number, Mr. Chairman, but we reduced it down to three. I am hearing from my communities that minor capital expenditures are no longer included and they have to go through the capital planning process. Is that a fact, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I will refer the question to Mr. Murray.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minor capital under \$100,000 was built into basically a formula base a year ago, so the communities could go ahead and do small land and site development, buy small vehicles and things like that themselves. Major equipment and large projects over \$100,000 would still go through the capital planning process as they did in the past.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still want to voice that there is still a concern with the new formula financing and the way minor capital projects are dealt with. It is a complete change of how it was dealt with in the past. It is a concern and I will continue to pursue that.

The other issue regarding formula financing is some communities, especially the community of Kakisa, has raised an issue that the formula was not calculated properly when it came to their community. I just wanted to know if it was brought

to the Minister's attention at all, or has that situation been rectified?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I do know that in the past, we have had some concerns expressed by different communities, depending on whether they were receiving more funding or whether they were receiving less. There were some questions as to how we arrived at the formula. The information I have is that the consultants that put together this formula used certain factors that are applicable to each community. Every community was explained to them what the formula breakdown is and how it affects them. This is the first year where we actually put the formula funding program in place, so we are now hoping to get feedback from the communities, in particular through the NWTAM meeting that is coming up, as to how we can make changes, whether or not communities see it as a fair system or not. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to hear that there will be a review process. I know there will be some comments from the communities in my riding. I would hope that the Minister could follow up on the issue with Kakisa. I think it was a calculation for garbage disposal that was not included in the overall calculations. They indicated to me that they were going to follow up through the regional office. I have not heard, so maybe the Minister could undertake to take a look at that.

There are a couple of other issues I want to raise. I am still, even though I have raised this issue in the House a number of times, the issue regarding swimming pools being included as part of the capital planning process now for consideration is not clear to me.

I am hearing, and have heard for many years when I dealt through the capital planning process as a former mayor, that swimming pools could not be included as an item in the capital plans. We had some dollars earmarked for a curling rink and we wanted to use those dollars and the surplus that the Town of Fort Providence had to build a swimming pool. We asked many times if we could do so. We were refused. We also asked, after I was elected, in this House to the former Minister about funding swimming pools. We were told very clearly that it did not fall into the capital planning process.

I was very surprised to see that in fact, some communities are getting funding. I wanted to ask the Minister again, for clarity, how do you qualify to get funding to build swimming pools? If there is a process, I would like to know. If it is like he indicated in this House earlier a couple of days ago, that some monies were shifted, well, I did not realize that was possible either, so what has changed in the last year? Is it because we have a new Minister? Is there a new policy? I would like to know.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to the best of my knowledge, the swimming pools were moved, as I said in the House, at a time when the cutbacks were in place. That would have been in 1995-1996. Since then, curling rinks stayed in the capital plan. Communities seem to have had the opportunity, and I am referring now to previous governments or previous Ministers,

where they had the option of prioritizing their own infrastructure in the communities. If they chose at that time to take the funding that was identified for a curling rink and use it for a swimming pool like Fort Liard did, then I believe they had that option.

From the information I have been given, I believe this information was made available to Fort Providence. However, the funding that was left for Fort Providence to work with after they made the renovations to the existing curling rink was only in the area of \$50,000. It was not really enough to go with, and I believe the replacement value that the community was looking for, for a curling rink was in the nature of \$800,000, so there was nowhere near enough. However, it was indicated to them that if they chose not to use the \$50,000 towards continuing or finishing off the renovations to the curling rink, they could use it towards a swimming pool.

The only other thing I can add to that, Mr. Chairman, is that at the present time, swimming pools and curling rinks are all offered as capital. They are way down on the list of priorities. As a matter of fact, they are at zero from what I have seen in the books as far as the priority goes. The way the communities have been approaching the department now is through extraordinary funding requests, and that is how we have been responding. Like I pointed out to the Member in the House, that is not really a consistent way of doing this, so the department is looking at putting recreation facilities again to the FMBS to see if we can get a higher rating on the priority list for capital funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the concerns that comes from a lot of our small communities is the lack of infrastructure in our communities or the lack of capacity to be able to do the things you have to do to run a municipality. An example is the garage space in communities for the storage of equipment or vehicles, or even to have infrastructure in place that meets the needs of the community.

One of the items of community infrastructure that has been talked about and raised in Caucus and meetings we have held was the whole area of trying to look at a project to deal with the air quality question in communities, to deal with dust and mud.

The road systems we have in our communities, in most cases, people say that if you can come up with a sidewalk project, you will probably be elected for life, because in most communities in this day and age, you walk down the middle of the road because there is no other place to walk. There is no need for that. This government has denied communities the opportunity to develop over a period of time.

You talk about cutbacks, you talk about priorities put in place by government and you are saying FMBS this and FMBS that, but I think that is what it is, it is BS.

I think it is important that we as a government have to start allowing those decisions to be made by the people that have to live with those decisions. Sooner or later, as a government we will have to set those examples. When we have health issues, you talk about infrastructure in our communities. We cannot continue to play this game of pick and choose unless you have an inventory or means of checking from one location to another to see exactly where it is going. You cannot really tell me that

one issue is different from one community to another. Most communities have the same problems and concerns.

I touched on one, the community infrastructure when it comes to garage and road maintenance, but when you look at the budgets for communities, you might get \$30,000 for residential development. That is nothing.

I think if we want to do anything with infrastructure in our communities, it should be based on a formula that is acceptable to communities, instead of being told from Yellowknife and people in the higher-ups that the criteria is based on numbers, on population and on a formula that we determined and you do not fall into that formula. There has to be a system in place. Those formulas that we have are outdated. They are obsolete. We have to start putting more resources into communities to develop the minimum of infrastructure.

When you start talking about dust control and improving our road and infrastructure in our communities, this government has to put those resources into those types of projects so that it benefits all communities. You do not just play one community off against the others.

I would like to ask the Minister, where is he with regard to this issue about improving roads in communities to deal with the dust and mud, to allow for communities to improve the quality of life, for the benefit of people in those small communities?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Member pointed out there is a need for infrastructure in all communities. That is not just the capital infrastructure, it is the O and M funding that is needed as well.

MACA does not have a program whereby we can pave the streets in the small communities. We have tried to resolve this problem through dust control, calcium. Each community has some funding in its formula funding for dust control, but nevertheless, as the Member points out, there is no way near enough to consider hard-topping the streets.

However, in the short term, the department has been looking at some of the shortfalls by approaching the problems on an individual basis. For instance, in the past, the Member has raised the problem of the ability of the disabled to get around in small communities. MACA is responding by looking into putting a bussing service into communities. Communities would be supplied with a bus that would allow for the transportation of disabled people. We just do not have the money, Mr. Chairman, to pave streets. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I find it ironic that you do not have money for paving streets, but a couple of years ago, I had a big debate in this House with the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services with regard to the paving that has taken place in the large regional centres, yet there are no initiatives to improve the streets in rural and small communities. If there is a will, there is a way. I think there is no will.

As a government, we have a responsibility to ensure we have infrastructure in our communities, so it is not only safe for

people to walk or be able to operate equipment on, but also to ensure the public health is considered, with regard to the dust and what not that people are breathing in day in and day out. It is a health hazard in most cases. I think we should list these types of things as a priority of this government. There is the public health and public safety, yet it seems like there is an imbalance. You can come to Yellowknife, walk up and down the streets, even here around the Legislature, it is all paved.

Is there a third world aspect here that if you live in regional centres or the city of Yellowknife, you have a certain standard and people who live in small communities will have dust and potholes, because that is what makes us unique, I guess?

I think the day and age has come where the government has to do something, and I think that is a good place to start. As a government, there are initiatives that are being undertaken by Transportation to start accessing roads into communities to connect them to highways. It is over a million-dollar project. Why, as a government, is this project such a major headache that they cannot really look at it?

We brought this up when we first got here, in our meetings in Fort Providence and places like that, going on over two years ago, yet it does not seem to fit with the agenda of the government. What will it take to convince this government to do something?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as a Member from a small community, I support the Member's request for paving in the small communities. As a Minister, I am aware of the expenditures that would be involved in this. I have already heard other Members asking for capital funding for swimming pools and curling rinks. Again, it is a matter of priorities. I can take the suggestion from the Member to other departments and we can come up with a cost analysis of what it would cost to consider paving community streets. I can assure the Member that the hard part is deciding with the rest of my colleagues in Cabinet as to what the priorities are of this government, whether they are education or health comparable to infrastructure. I am sure the Member is well aware that there is competition for all of that funding from all departments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just following up on comments we had with the Executive, the Executive Offices and FMBS, and the concern about the appropriate locations for activities.

I would have to say that I think the idea behind a youth corps is interesting and certainly deserving of some consideration. I am surprised to see it and I notice the standing committee had commented on this, established in MACA. It is not because it is not an operating department. Clearly MACA is an operating department and that is not my concern. It leaves open, I think, too much of an opportunity for overlap and duplication.

For instance, if we are talking about skills improvement for young people, I would say that clearly those dollars should be coordinated through Education, Culture and Employment. My concern is that we are going to be setting up a bureaucracy to administer a youth corps when, if part of their mandate is to

deliver skills improvement, we already have a delivery mechanism. We spend millions of dollars on that mechanism. It is called Education, Culture and Employment.

When we talk about work assignments, for instance, we have that under the Executive with the graduates program. Education, Culture and Employment has a program that assists young people who may not be graduates to find jobs and subsidizes employers so that more young people can find jobs. It appears to me that we are setting up an opportunity here for duplication and overlap.

I am also surprised that the Minister for Youth does not appear to have any involvement in the oversight of this program. Just looking at this, is the Minister not concerned that we might not actually maximize our dollars if his department has to spend moneys on administration instead of using the administration that is already set up in other areas, and therefore creating more government jobs, instead of getting more young people to get into public service?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I may go back a little way here, the funding that was established for the youth was essentially put into MACA because the same Minister that was responsible for youth was also the Minister of MACA. It showed a coordination between the two. However, when there was a change in portfolios, the funding did not follow the Minister back to his portfolio, so it is still with MACA. However, the programs that he had designed and he had in mind for the youth funding were created by the Minister of Youth.

As the Minister, I still intend to follow up on what his programs and plans were, at the same time keeping in mind, as the Member said, that there is going to be a tendency to overlap with Education, and possibly Health, as to what programs we can come up with that benefit youth. The only connection I could see myself as the department in this is youth in the sense of sport and recreation. That would be my mandate as far as youth is concerned, but I will certainly work with the other departments, including the Minister responsible for Youth, so as to take the best advantage of this funding without duplication.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister's commitment to work to do that. I hope the Minister will also look for an opportunity to discuss with his Cabinet colleagues as to whether or not there might be a better placement for part of this. Maybe the program needs to be divided up so that the skills improvement part is clearly identified as part of the youth corps, but delivered through Education, Culture and Employment, for instance. I am hoping they will look for the most efficient way to make sure we get the most of the dollars into the programs, and not spend most of the dollars on increasing the bureaucracy. A million dollars may sound like a lot, but it does not really go that far when spread out across the Territories. It is important that we make sure we get as much money on the ground as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the Member's comments are well appreciated and well taken. I will most certainly work with my other counterparts to see how we can best take advantage of this youth funding. I agree with the Member that a million dollars spread over all the youth in the Territories is not all that much, and we would have to take steps to ensure that it goes as far as possible. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to pick up where Mr. Krutko left off, on the issue of community infrastructure, specifically dealing with dust control and the request time and time again from communities that they need dust control, preferably through the paving of roads and sidewalks in the communities. I would like to know from the Minister if he is keeping tabs on the requests and the number of times this issue is raised in the House, in committees and in committee of the whole? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the Member's information, we are keeping track of the requests. I am not sure just how far back this is going to go, but it is no problem for the department to search back and see how many times and by how many different MLAs this request has been brought forward. However, MACA does supply some sidewalk programs in bush communities, I understand.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just asking that because I am wondering if the Minister is getting tired of hearing this issue raised time and time again, or if he is not hearing it at all. This issue is a major issue. It is a concern for me and a concern for all Members representing small communities. It is a concern for half the population of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to know, if it is priorities, Mr. Chairman, why is the city of Yellowknife paved, has the best education, has the best health facilities and professionals? What is the difference between Yellowknife and Lutsel'k'e or Fort Resolution? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I think if we look at our per capita funding, you will see that Yellowknife is way out, less than any of the small communities. The difference is that they collect revenue through taxing. People pay for what they get. That is really the difference, that the tax-based communities have the ability to tax. The small communities do not. Their per capita funding is far higher, in some cases, almost double what Yellowknife gets. So it is not a matter of this government not giving them enough money per capita. It is just that they do not have the large enough populations to get large funding.

Again, the major difference is the taxing ability of the tax-based communities.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that answer. We do not have the population base in the small communities to have a tax base, therefore, we are suffering

because we do not have a tax base and we cannot pave our roads. We cannot build the infrastructure needed to even keep our people there. The housing crunch in Yellowknife and Inuvik is becoming a big issue. Most of the problem is people coming from our small communities into these centres because that is where the infrastructure is. That is where the people are getting fed the bigger portion of meals, et cetera, on all issues. That is just a metaphor, Mr. Chairman.

You know, BHP is starting to pay royalties. Diavik will start paying royalties, and royalties will be paid by other industries in the Northwest Territories. These are royalties that aboriginal people living in these small communities believe are their royalties, their resources. Therefore, they should not have to pay taxes to get the kind of quality, services and infrastructure in the communities.

The Minister indicated that the department does not have a program to pave community streets. He is talking about O and M on maintenance. I would suggest that once you pave the streets, the O and M costs will be dramatically reduced on a year-to-year basis, and in the long run, probably provide a savings to the department.

I would like to know if the Minister, working with his Cabinet colleagues, in lieu of the fact that royalties are becoming a reality in the Northwest Territories that is far more than what we get in transfer payments, that the department come up with a program that will see every community in the Northwest Territories paved to have dust control. It is a health issue as well, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not disagree with the Member that this Territory should be receiving the royalties from the diamond mines, therefore allowing the government to have funding to pass on to the small communities. I support that 100 percent.

As far as this government coming up with paving or hard-topping programs for the communities, I think that although it may look like O and M would be cheaper, I believe that, based on the figures from Transportation for maintenance of hard-top versus gravel surfaces on the highways, it is almost double for hard-top than it is for gravel. The same thing would apply in the communities. At some point in time, you have to replace this stuff. You have to do repairs to it. That is when it becomes expensive, the maintenance.

Although I tend to agree with the Member that health-wise and all that, there may be large benefits, what MACA is trying to do is we have supplied the communities with what is called poor man's hard-top, which is calcium. It does help to control dust if it is used properly. At this point in time, that is all MACA can afford.

I tend to agree with the Members that there is going to take a large push from all Members towards changing the priorities of government as far as funding is concerned for small communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I was referring to royalties coming out, I am not referring that the GNWT should

be collecting. I do not agree that we have to wait until then. What I am saying is there are royalties coming out already. I know the federal government is taking that in lieu of transfer payments, but those royalties are what aboriginal people believe is theirs. If we are taking revenues from the federal government, a good percentage of that are for people in all communities. Paving the streets in every community would be a worthwhile investment, not only for the health reasons, but for optical reasons, to get away from the stigma of a third world environment. We are in Canada, for God's sake. Canada is supposed to be the best place to live in the world, yet in our communities, we are still living in third world conditions. There is something wrong with that, Mr. Chairman.

If our government and our Minister, who is responsible for that optical look, is not willing to even develop a program for consideration, and saying that we have to have priorities, then I am not too encouraged. I would like to see a Minister who knows that there are significant concerns, not only from Members of the House but the people they represent.

When people come to them on a regular occasion with the same concern, then he should be responsible enough to take the initiative to respond to those concerns. You know, we have seen snowmobile accidents far too often in communities. If these roads were paved, then maybe snowmobiles would not be on the streets. If these roads were paved with proper stop signs, et cetera, maybe we could avoid some of these accidents. If these streets were paved, maybe we could avoid some of the health problems in terms of lung cancer, which we always blame on cigarettes. We never did a study or never proved either way that dust has nothing contributing to the number of people who are sick, who have died.

When recovering from any kind of illness, whether it is physical or mental, what you see and how you feel about what you see is so important to the recovery process. I think this one area of responsibility under this department would do a lot of good for the social development of the people of the Northwest Territories in our small communities, and may reduce the exodus of people from smaller communities to the larger centres, which is threatening the survival of those communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, in response to the Member's comments, I think the department does champion, at Cabinet level, FMB level, the concerns of small communities, as far as capital funding and O and M funding is concerned. As a matter of fact, the most recent formula funding program shows major changes, as far as we are concerned, in the amount of funding the small communities are getting. Most communities received increases. I think it was only a small percentage of the whole that actually got decreases.

We have managed to increase the O and M funding. What we are working on now is trying to get increases from Cabinet, FMB towards capital funding for these small communities.

I must be realistic that it is going to be a long time before we see the streets paved with diamonds, because I think that even just to reach the stage where each community could enjoy hard top, that is going to be a while down the road yet, if we take into consideration all the other capital infrastructure the communities need. I am referring to arenas, curling rinks,

whatever helps to increase or improve the lifestyle in the small communities. I support that 100 percent because I am from a small community as I said before. I am aware of the problems.

My department does take the trouble to go into the communities to see what is needed. We meet with the communities and we discuss their capitals. Like I said, we are in competition for funding with the other departments, but we definitely push for what we feel the communities need. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My general comments are relating to small communities, the unfairness in how they are being funded for municipal roads. We see hidden funds given to larger communities, tax-based communities by using highways, transportation capital for paving roads. For instance, Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith, the Fort Simpson main street...you see all of these examples. I would like to say that those roads within municipal boundaries should be funded under a formula basis, not through Transportation.

I had asked a former Minister of Transportation to look at that. He did not get back to me. Also, the current Transportation Minister was going to go to the city and talk to them to see if they wanted to take it over under a formula base, which I have still not received any information on.

I think it is time this government started treating everybody fairly and not using other budgets to subsidize the tax-based communities.

This is just general comments. This is what I see. I see a flaw in how this government is funding communities and using other departments to subsidize the larger communities. I think it is time that we start making changes and treating everybody equally. If you are going to be funded by culverts, the width of the road, the streetlights in the smaller communities, let's do it right across the board. Let's treat the larger communities the same way. We fund them by the width of the road, the culverts and streetlights, and everybody in the smaller communities is getting treated like that. They do not have any roads in some of the communities. You cannot piggyback on Transportation. It is not fair to the smaller communities.

I do not expect an answer from this. I expect results. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. There was no question there, just comments. At this time, the Chair is going to call a ten-minute break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the committee back to order. We are dealing with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. We were under general comments. General comments. Detail? Page 4-8, directorate, activity summary, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$5,612,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 411, directorate, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$2,220,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$2,220,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, the grants and contributions, extraordinary funding, I believe that a large majority of that amount is targeted for one community. What would be left over and what criteria has to be met to access that extraordinary funding? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Murray to respond.

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

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of that \$1,925,000, \$1.7 million is for one area. The other \$225,000 that remains will be dealt with on a case-by-case emergency request basis. It is a very small fund that will not go far. In most cases, we will have to come for extraordinary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is done in the area when a community finds itself in the situation of being in a deficit? Is there not a request for an action plan to deal with the shortfalls, or a deficit plan to get out of deficit? Is there not something like that put into action? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct, Mr. Chairman. There is a process. We approach the community with a deficit reduction plan, whereby we may end up helping them with some of the funding that they need. However, they must take steps to reduce their expenditure or increase their revenue, and in some cases, both. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What was done before, for example, the one community we highlighted in our report, what was done in that situation to try and deal with the situation they found themselves in before this bail out occurred?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I believe there was a reduction plan in the past, but I will ask Mr. Murray to respond to that.

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

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department has been working with that particular community for over a year now, since the reduction done to the formula was known, to develop a sound capital planning system and to make budget reductions. In fact, the community had to demonstrate they could balance their budget before this particular item could even be considered and brought forward. They had to be able to balance their budget as part of that process and show us

what their approved budget for the year was. As well, we monitor their expenditures on an ongoing quarterly basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it not the case when MACA is aware that a community is in such difficulty that a plan is put into place and the community, through an agreement, has to try to meet that? This has been going on for quite a number of years, this extraordinary funding. Has not a plan been put in place before this year? It is my understanding from the deputy minister that a plan was put in place a year ago. So when this funding formula was changed, was there not something in place prior to that? Thank you.

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

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there was a plan with the community in place, where they may have brought the financial positions fully under control. What they are now dealing with is addressing the long-term reductions in ongoing funding that they would have to deal with. The community got into this particular situation because they entered into a loan at a time when the funding was considerably higher than it is under the new formula. So they entered into this loan thinking that in the long run, they would have a higher level of funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories and therefore would be able to absorb the ongoing payments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What page are you on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 410, 411, directorate, grants and contributions.

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Chairman, I am going to wait for the next page before I ask my question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Directorate, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$2,220,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Disagree? Total grants and contributions, \$2,220,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Community financial services, operations expense, total operations expense \$4,057,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of community financial services division, can the Minister or his staff inform us, the section here that works on actual community finances, they go into communities and do audits of their books. Is that the function here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So for example, when a community or town or municipality goes in to making a by-law, for example, or going for a debenture, that would come forward under this section and the department would be aware of what a community would be doing, in a sense? When you are going out for debenture, you are going for a loan and your tax base is going to repay that, or your block funding from the government. Is that a correct description?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This particular section reviews certain kinds of financial by-laws where in certain cases, they might want to go and enter into a debenture without ratepayer approval and those kinds of things. These are accounting types of people that would both work with the community in terms of solving their financial troubles, as well as reviewing things that might come forward.

This division has actually been set up in the last two years as a separate section so that we can increase the emphasis on working with communities on their financial situations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Community financial services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$4,057,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Community financial services, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask a question in this area. Some time ago, I had asked the department to look at volunteer firefighters in the Territories. I am not sure if this is the right place to ask the question.

I was asking for the department to look at putting in programs in place for recognition of volunteer firefighters. I was wondering if the department could give me an update as to where they are on this and what has been done? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): If the Minister does not mind answering the question now, unless he can point us to where this question will be dealt with? Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we could deal with the question now. However, it probably fits better under emergency services, but I will ask Mr. Murray to respond as to where we are with the proposal from Hay River.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are putting a program together for the fall of this year that will provide 5-, 10- and 15-year awards for volunteer firefighters, to recognize the service they are providing to their communities. It is to be timed with the annual fire prevention week, which I believe is in the month of October. So that is the time frame. It is separate from the volunteer awards program that is currently being done because we wanted to raise its profile.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take that to mean that it will be coming into play this fall. At the same time, I had

asked if the department would also, as part of the same program for volunteer firefighters, approach the Minister of Finance to see if they could match the federal contribution that is made to volunteer firefighters, and that is to forgive the first \$1,000 of income they have. It is tax-free. I had requested that this government communicate with the Department of Finance and match that funding the federal government does for volunteer firefighters.

I was wondering if the department has in fact communicated or had any action from the Department of Finance to go along with this program?

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

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not yet, but I think we will still have to look at this from a tax point of view as well. To match it, it has to be done as some kind of tax forgiveness, as I understand that is how the federal program that you are referring to works. They write off the first \$1,000, or am I confusing that with something else?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you. I had provided the department with the figures and I had received a commitment from the department that they would talk to Finance about this. If I am not mistaken, it is not much, but it is a \$1,000 that they do not have to pay taxes on. It is tax-free money they get from the federal government. I had requested that MACA work with Finance to match that funding from a territorial perspective to volunteer firefighters as part of their recognition program.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have had my level and the officials level at least raise the question. We have to figure out how to do it. I believe that it requires tax changes as well for us to be able to implement it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: What kind of a time frame would I be looking at to see if anything is going to be done in that area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In conjunction with the business planning process, so by this summer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Community financial services, grants and contributions, contributions. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under infrastructure contributions, cost shared water-sewer project with tax-based communities, \$2.5 million. Can the Minister state how this program would work in tax-based communities? That is not a large sum of money. Communities that have large projects, and most communities with utilidors would require a fair bit more money. How does that portion get covered? Is that again through property taxes of that community's rate payers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, this money would be tied in with the federal program for water and sewage and combined together, and then the municipality meets that on a

50/50 basis. What we see here would reflect only the Government of the Northwest Territories' share. There is the federal government's share here, and that is met by the municipalities on a 50/50 basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For example, in my community of Inuvik, where there is water/sewer repairs being done, and if a project costs \$1 million, this government would put in \$250,000, the federal government would put in \$250,000 and the municipality would have to come up with \$500,000, using that as an example? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, we could actually use the figures that Inuvik actually applied for. Inuvik's project is \$3.6 million, and combined federal/territorial contributions is \$1.5 million, so the community's contribution is \$2.1 million. That makes up the whole project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that clarification. Unfortunately, I feel like I just lost out two-thirds/one-third. I understand that, but I guess my question would be then the rest of the community's contribution that the Minister mentioned would come from the revenue generated from the community, property taxes? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the community's share is their own revenue, wherever it comes from.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The breakdown the Minister provided, is that the normal breakdown for water/sewer projects funded or worked with communities in this department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, thank you. The \$2.5 million is all we have from this government for this year. The total program altogether, federal and territorial, is \$4.3 million combined for this year. With that, the community's share is \$5.9 million, so altogether it is roughly \$10 million worth of water/sewage programs for this year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see that and you have it listed down here as tax-based communities. In non-taxed-based communities, what is the breakdown? What would the formula be?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: On non-taxed-based communities, it is 50 percent from the territorial government, 50 percent from the federal government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: So 100 percent funded from the federal government and the territorial government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 4-15, community financial services, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$2,750,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$2,750,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 4-17, emergency services, operations expense. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under emergency services, just talking with my colleague there from Fort Providence, my great neighbour, we were talking about emergency extractions on highway transportation accidents. There is no avenue for anybody to do a rescue on the highways because Rae is not outfitted for rescues on the highways, nor is Fort Providence. I am wondering, is there anywhere in here that they are looking at outfitting some of these smaller communities on the highway system?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are working on a program whereby we may be eligible for funding for communities from emergency measures federal. What we are working towards is certain communities along the highways would in fact be equipped with emergency measures vehicles, like ambulances, that would go out onto the highways for rescue purposes. Not every community would receive the funding, but those communities that are in a position to actually respond to emergency measures within a given length of highways until eventually we have all the highways covered.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: When?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): When, Mr. Minister? Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: What was the question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister, the question was when will something be done.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we are responding from communities being requested to respond to the emergencies on highways. I believe the Member for Hay River has voiced this more than once, where ambulances from Hay River have had to respond to emergencies on the highways, and the same situation here in Yellowknife. So that is why we are doing this, to allow for communities to have the proper equipment to respond to emergencies on the highways.

There is no other program at this point, and because the federal government does have a funding program for

emergency measures, we are able to obtain some federal funding in this manner towards this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is one thing to have the proper vehicles for extractions at accident scenes and ambulances, but then, before we can do anything with that equipment, we need to have training. That is specialized training for highway accidents and all that. When they do plan to put equipment in communities, I am hoping they would put training in place before then. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, training is part of the program and it will be done through training of firefighters.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of having trained paramedics, I guess, staff and ambulance services in communities funded by the federal government, has the department selected the communities yet? If not, what process are they using to select the communities? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, this whole program is at a very early stage. Right now, we are just going through the process of applying to the federal government for funding. As a matter of fact, the Municipality of Hay River applied to the federal government on their own behalf for the funding. We would meet that funding in some formula. I am not sure exactly what the formula would be at this point, but we would contribute as well towards the vehicle.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the vision of the department, in putting positions to this program, on a voluntary basis? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we are assuming that this approach is being used by the community. As to how this is going to be staffed, it would be similar to responding to a fire emergency situation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So it is a voluntary basis, because most of our firefighters in the communities are volunteers. Is my assumption correct? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I did not get the whole question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah, could you restate your question?

MR. NITAH: Thank you. The Minister stated that it is in the same manner as a fire department responding to a fire. In most of the communities, fire service is on a voluntary basis. I am

asking, if that is consistent with the new program the Minister is referring to, then I am assuming it is on a voluntary basis. I am asking the Minister if it is a voluntary basis or a pay position or positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, in those communities where fire fighting is on a voluntary basis, it would have to continue on a voluntary basis, including this program. In those communities where they pay their paramedics or firefighters, that is what would be the approach that is used.

At this point in time, we have not identified any communities along the highway system, whereby we would equip them with these vehicles. We are still at the very early stages of this thing. As a matter of fact, we are just putting it together and working with Hay River.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A community like Fort Resolution would be ideally located to have such a service. However, I would suggest that this would be a paid service. If you are following the firefighters and volunteer firefighters example, I believe the only place in the Territories that pays their firefighters is here in Yellowknife. That scenario will not work in terms of creating employment opportunities in communities.

However, I would like to get into the emergency service division preparedness, community emergencies. How often does the emergency measures organization, which is responsible for developing GNWT emergency response plans, go into communities and go through the emergency response plans with communities that have been developed at the community level? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

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

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

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have two positions that are really involved in the emergency measures section. They do travel into the communities and review the plans. For instance, last year, when we were coming up to flood season and there was a chance of floods happening, we sent our people out to those communities to make sure they went through their plans with them, to make sure the community was ready and that the plan was up to date, in terms of being prepared for that type of situation.

With the new arrangements for emergency measures that were approved over a year ago now, they involve going into communities with the one officer position we have to help them, with a template, basically, of how to complete and update their plan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good to know. It is something you do not have to worry about when there is an emergency at the community level, what the reaction of the

people would be. It is good to know that something is being done to get everybody on the same page.

In the area of emergency response on the lake, is the department working with the community of Lutselk'e to provide such a service? Too often, Mr. Chairman, we get emergency beacons and people going out looking for people who broke down on the East Arm of Great Slave Lake. With Lutselk'e being ideally located, and the fact that the waters between here and the Devil's Channel are often rough, making it very difficult to go through by boat from here, that makes Lutselk'e an ideal location. Is the department working with the community in its responsibility of emergency response on the Great Slave Lake? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I believe each community has a different plan in place, but basically, it identifies an area and how they would respond to any kind of emergency within the given area of the community. Normally, this involves other people, other organizations like the RCMP or the rangers, so that eventually, there is a plan there as to who would respond to that type of an emergency.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad there is a generic plan, but specifically for the East Arm and the south part of the lake with Fort Resolution being ideally located, is there any working relationship between the department and those communities, whether it is the Community Rangers Program or the RCMP at those communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specifically where it relates to Great Slave Lake, the federal government, through the Coast Guard, has a major responsibility, along with the RCMP, in terms of organizing searches. Our plans with the communities, what would happen is if a call came in and a search is required, then the federal government -- I am not sure if it is RCMP or the Coast Guard, off the top of my head -- tells the local search and rescue boat people to go out and start the search and where to search, so it is controlled in that manner.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to ask a couple of quick questions in this area of emergency services regarding search and rescue. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me how much money was spent for training in my riding in the area of search and rescue?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we do not have that information on hand.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Is the Minister committing to providing that or just not going to give it to us?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister, can you provide the information the Member is asking for?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we will provide the information, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under other expenses there, the \$267,000, how much of it is for equipment and how much of it is for training?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will ask Ms. Kennedy to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Kennedy.

MS. KENNEDY: Training funds are located in the school of community government. Most of the training, especially for the Firefighter Training Program, was moved down to the school of community government. The second part of the question was...?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty, could you elaborate a little more on your question? They did not catch the second part.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was how much of the \$267,000 is for equipment or for training. She already answered the training part, so the \$267,000 must be for equipment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Kennedy.

MS. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$267,000 is for other O and M. It is for travel, supplies, for some fees, purchase of computers, that kind of thing. It is not for purchase of assets for community governments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): At this time, I will recognize the clock and rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Minister, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses out, please?

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 2 and Committee Report 2-14(5) and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty, seconds the motion. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and Cabinet House strategy; again at 10:30 a.m. of Accountability and Oversight; and at 12 noon of Caucus.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 6, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2001-2002
 - Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
 - Committee Report 1-14(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-14(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development

Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 3-14(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
- Motion 1-14(5), Establishment of a Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 6, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

