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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 15, 2006****Members Present**

Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Honourable Paul Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Welcome back to the House, Members. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 69-15(4): 2006 Arctic Winter Games**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer congratulations to all the athletes who participated in the Arctic Winter Games team selection process which was held January 12th to 15th. Fort McPherson, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Ndilo and Yellowknife successfully hosted the territorial trials for 17 sporting events.

As my colleagues are aware, the 2006 Arctic Winter Games are being hosted this year by Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, from March 5th to 11th. I would like to extend congratulations and best of luck to the 300 plus Team NWT athletes, coaches, cultural delegates and chaperones who will be travelling to Kenai Peninsula. Our athletes will be joined by delegations from Alberta, Alaska, Greenland, Nunavut, Nunavik, the Yukon, the Russian province of Yamal, and the Saami from northern Scandinavia.

I look forward to following the progress of our athletes and celebrating their successes as they compete in their respective events.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend my thanks to the Sport North Federation, the territorial sport organizations, regional coordinators and the many hard-working volunteers who are leaders in our sports system. Without their hard work and the thousands of hours they spend helping make our events a success, the Arctic Winter Games and many other sporting events would not take place.

I am pleased to announce that this year saw a 33 percent increase in the number of athletes who participated in the regional trials. This increased participation has resulted in six more NWT communities being represented in the 2006 games than in 2004. I am proud of this increase as it shows that our sport and recreation system is promoting the development of athletes in all the NWT communities, large and small.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will continue to work with our partners to ensure that youth from all communities have an opportunity to participate in

sport and recreation programs. The Arctic Winter Games are also an important component of our sport system. Our youth look forward every two years to the opportunity to share in friendly competition and cultural exchanges. I am confident that our youth will once again benefit from this experience in Kenai Peninsula. I know that numerous friendships will be formed and our young people will return with many lasting memories.

As the Minister responsible for sport, it will be my pleasure to attend the games and watch our athletes compete. I invite all Members to join me in wishing the best of luck to Team NWT and all the participants in the 2006 Arctic Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Income Support Program Confidentiality**

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2005, the Accountability and Oversight committee decided to hold pre-budget consultations in communities outside of Yellowknife. This was a new process that was never done before by previous assemblies. To my colleagues of AOC, I thank you for having the foresight to visit communities outside of Yellowknife to hear firsthand some of the concerns people have with the lack of human resources and infrastructure in our smaller centres.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to a concern heard by the AOC members that visited Paulatuk. An income support worker appeared before the committee to discuss the location of the income support office. The office is located in Angik School, Mr. Speaker. Students are able to see who comes and who goes from that office. The worker indicated that it's difficult for parents or students who required income support assistance to go to that office. Why should students be able to see their parents or see which classmates' parents have to access income support?

The people of Paulatuk are proud of their culture and heritage. As a government, we should not be belittling people, whether intentional or not, by making them apply for social assistance in full view of their children and their neighbour's children.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will soon be administering the rental of social housing. This will mean even more people having to go to the income support office in Angik School.

The department is also considering setting up centralized government service centres. I don't want to see the centre located in the school, and urge the Department of ECE to look for alternate rental space in the community of Paulatuk, possibly in the hamlet office or the local housing authority office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about the track record of this government when it comes to spending. Prior to division in 1999, the entire Northwest Territories had an annual budget of just over a billion dollars. It only took us five years as a stand-alone territory to increase spending back to over a billion dollars in 2004-05. Five short years to increase spending by over half a billion dollars.

In 2006-07, our spending habits remain alarmingly high. This year, we are set to spend a record \$1.1 billion, and I would equate our current government's spending habits to an out-of-control locomotive that just keeps steaming ahead.

The two-and-a-half years I've been a Member of this Legislature, I have not seen one initiative designed or brought about to effect any substantive cost savings. Saving money remains a foreign concept to the Government of the Northwest Territories. They seem to only know how to spend money and not to save it, Mr. Speaker. Efficiency and effectiveness are two things that government should always try and achieve, and the GNWT always seems to think that achieving effectiveness and efficiency means spending more money.

One hundred forty-seven new positions in this budget alone. We currently spend approximately \$440 million on our 4,500 employees; soon to be 4,657 and counting. Forty-three percent of our spending is immediately taken up by salaries and benefits. I know the government does not have an overall plan, nor do they pay the least bit of attention to the out-of-control growth of government.

We need a plan, Mr. Speaker, a strategy, a concept, or some type of idea on how this type of growth can be sustainable over the long run. In my estimation, forced growth brought on by increases in the collective agreements with our unions will cost us an additional \$60 million over the next three years. Where are we going to get this money from? I would suggest that the Finance Minister may need to take up farming, as in money trees, Mr. Speaker, to balance our books. Any opportunity I've seen to cut costs and get more money for things like day cares, treatment centres, schools, et cetera, is never taken. The government has absolutely convinced itself that it has to let the tail wag the dog, and meanwhile our people are demanding more, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Travel Assistance And Dental Health Care Benefits

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about access to dental care and travel assistance for dental referrals. Healthy teeth are an important issue on a number of fronts. Dental hygiene and regular dental care is important to a person's health. This government has extended health care benefits, to assist with dental coverage, to Metis, Dene, seniors, and many employers provide dental care insurance benefits for their employees. Then there are those who do not fit into any of these categories and get no assistance for dental care, and I have a huge issue with that.

Another problem is that even people who are fortunate enough to have coverage, Mr. Speaker, that does not address the issue of northerners getting to and from dental services when specialized services are required outside of the area in which they live. We have an excellent pool of highly qualified dental care professionals in the Northwest Territories; however, since many of our communities are small and remote, and sometimes specialized services are required, travel assistance becomes an issue. There is a definite distinction drawn between medical care and travel assistance, which we recognize the need for and support financially as a government, and access to and travel assistance for dental care. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I find this very peculiar. Healthy teeth and gums are important to the digestion of the food we eat. Diseases of the gums and tooth decay, abscesses and infection can affect the whole body, so why are teeth treated differently and distinctly from any other part of the body? We don't say if you break your finger and need medical attention, don't worry, you've got nine other fingers so you don't need medical attention. But if you break your tooth -- and this could lead to all kinds of pain, decay and infection -- I'm sorry, that's not a medical issue.

Mr. Speaker, healthy teeth are important, as I said, to how we digest and get proper nutrition from our food. Their health can affect the rest of the body. Healthy teeth play a large part in our personal appearance, and how others perceive us, and how we see ourselves and even feel about ourselves. I don't think that dental care should be treated any differently than any type of medical attention required by the people of the Northwest Territories. I don't understand why dental care is not a service covered by our universal access to health services. By extension, I certainly don't understand why travel to receive dental care is not treated exactly the same as travel for any other medical cause, because eventually, Mr. Speaker, when people have dental care issues, we do pay eventually. Perhaps later today, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Social Services could explain to me the answer to some of these questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Respite Care Assistance For All Residents Of The NWT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, sometimes the community MLAs sound like country singers with their concerns. They sound like a broken record. But the only broken record here is this government.

---Laughter

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh!

MR. MENICOCHÉ: For example, previous commitments with the equalization of health services for all are just continually deferred. This government must provide flexible and adequate respite care assistance for all residents in the Territories, whether it's in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Simpson or Trout Lake. Most residents can recognize the financial implications and limitations of this government to have full services for all communities; however, if every community is too small to have a specific full-time health care provider, then why isn't some, at least some, assistance offered?

The most consistent and pressing health concerns for small and remote communities are the lack of access to various health care services for seniors and children. Very few programs can be legitimately described as accessible for all residents. Most of the funding, capacity, infrastructure and staff are allocated for the larger centres.

Mr. Speaker, respite care for seniors and others is one of the programs receiving considerable criticism from the Nahendeh residents as non-accessible. Respite is not just for seniors, it is also for families with children who have serious disabilities requiring considerable attention, or need special facilities. Families are often separated for long periods of time because the only care is in the larger centres, or have enormous responsibilities with little or no relief while caring for their loved ones in their home communities.

There is a malady often described by our residents as care burnout. There seems to be no middle ground. I am suggesting that this government adopt a "let's keep our families together" program for this coming spring and summer, whereby we aggressively review the various options to provide health care to our communities and to our people. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On IBA Payments And Income Support Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I will speak to you about the IBA agreements...(Translation ends)

...for the impact agreement payments and the Income Support Program. When a person on income support receives an IBA payment, the government takes it away by reducing their income support. The net result is that the beneficiary gets nothing -- nothing, Mr. Speaker -- and the GNWT saves money on the Income Support Program.

When our leaders negotiated IBA agreements with the diamond mines, I am sure this is not what they had in mind, Mr. Speaker. They wanted to make sure our people, especially our elders, receive some direct

compensation for the use of our land and resources. IBA payments are not the same as money a person might receive as a gift or by winning a lottery. It is compensation for use of the land, in accordance with our rights under Treaty 11 and the Tlicho agreement, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

The diamond mines are taking something away from the Tlicho people and they are compensating us for that. People who receive IBA payments do not profit. They are just being compensated for what has been taken away from them, Mr. Speaker. It is the same as if your home had a broken window and an insurance company pays you. You have money instead of a window, but you do not have any more than what you started with, Mr. Speaker.

The social assistance regulations already exempt money received in accordance with the treaty or land claim agreements from being taken away under the Income Support Program. They recognize that these payments are a form of compensation, which is different from income. It is clear to me that IBA payments fall under this category. If it is not clear to the Minister and his department, then I think this could be very easily fixed with a small change to the regulation, Mr. Speaker.

On June 6, 2003, in a letter to then-Minister Jake Ootes on impact benefit agreement income from Minister Dent, then chair of AOC, Mr. Dent stated, I quote, Mr. Speaker, "The committee does not feel that income support should be reduced as a result of IBA payments." Charles, you believed it once; believe it again.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ohhh!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable from Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On The Need To Adopt Flexible Policy Platforms To Benefit All Communities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to talk about a couple of policies this government is currently considering eliminating or revamping. The two I want to talk about are the business incentive policy and the negotiated contracts policy.

Mr. Speaker, I do agree that both of these policies need some changes made to better suit our changing northern economy. What I do not agree with, Mr. Speaker, is the view that these economic changes are happening in all communities across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, many small communities in the NWT only have one or two small businesses located within the community. It may be a development corporation which relies heavily on government contracts to keep the corporations operating. Mr. Speaker, we all know that many of these large contracts can only be acquired through a negotiated contract process or by the inclusion of the business incentive policy for these small communities' development corps. Mr. Speaker, this government has to start looking at two different versions of these policies: one version for the larger centres with

the large economic bases and development activities, and one version for the small and more remote communities with very limited development opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that one policy does not work for a diversified economic environment, and I think it's time to make the required changes that meet both the needs of the large urban centres and the requirements of our small northern communities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On WCB Insurance And Investigation Practices

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. One of the great compromises of our modern age is the workers' compensation system, Mr. Speaker. It's a no-fault insurance program that was originally arrived at in the 1920s. It ensures, Mr. Speaker, that workers, if they're injured on the job, get medical and financial care, while it protects employers from potentially devastating lawsuits. It is paid for, Mr. Speaker, by employers. It is not paid for by employees or the government.

The government, on that principle, should not, Mr. Speaker, interfere with the daily operations of a WCB, but we do play a crucial role. Governments, such as ours, across Canada play a crucial role because we have the authority for the oversight and lawful governance of our WCB. We set the stage; we appoint the citizens' board to implement the rules; and it is on the implementation and the application of these rules, Mr. Speaker, that we see success or failure on behalf of the stakeholders.

Here in the NWT and Nunavut, we have seen our WCB fall down badly in its mistreatment of some injured workers. Some, Mr. Speaker, like Ivan Valic who was injured in the 1980s while working on a swimming pool here in Yellowknife, are still involved in legal issues involving fundamental discrimination and bungled appeal tribunal processes that have kept him on a bureaucratic treadmill going on 20 years.

Our WCB is not faring well in the eyes of some employers, Mr. Speaker, like restaurant owners who have seen rates jump the maximum for the last years, but can't get a respectful hearing before the WCB. We've seen the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Speaker, develop a corporate culture shielding itself from difficult decisions such as how to deal with chronic pain diagnoses, something that Alberta, for instance, has recognized and helped workers with since 1997.

We anticipate in the near future a report from the Auditor General of Canada on the WCB's performance. We're anticipating resolution of the Valic case soon, and revisions to the appeal process. We're looking for the board of governors to investigate chronic pain options and catch up with the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we will not shy away from our responsibility to probe and challenge the operations of our WCB. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. I'd just like to draw Members' attention to a couple of minor infractions happening the House where Members refer to other Members by their first name, and also referring to Members that are not in the House from outside this House. Thank you, Members. Members' statements. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Life Lessons And The Passing Of Family Members

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the last couple of days I've gone back to my community in Tulita to be with my family. Mr. Speaker, in the last six months or so I've lost many members of my family: two of my aunts and three of my uncles. Mr. Speaker, when the family calls for you, you go as a member of the family, you go for your community. Especially when your mother calls for you, you go right away. It is our belief, Mr. Speaker, and our culture as aboriginal people that we go right away when you're called.

You know what, Mr. Speaker, my mother called for me when she was in Edmonton. She said come down, your uncle's not going to make it. Then she called back a little while later, she said no, maybe you should stay. Maybe you should stay here, you're working. When I heard the cry in my mother's voice, I said I'm going right now. My uncle gave me good values. He said if you're going to work, you work for yourself, don't depend on anybody. He extended the values of do it yourself and work with other people. But most important, Mr. Speaker, the value he told me is that when you do your job, you do it the best you can.

Mr. Speaker, when my uncle passed away, it was really hard. I struggle with that in my mind and my heart. When my other relatives passed away...(inaudible)...sometimes I question myself. Mr. Speaker, the heart won out of this matter when we're asked to go back home and be with our people. They remember that. As an MLA, you're there with the people during the hard times and the good times. They remember you for that. That's why they voted for you, to comfort them, have heart. This stuff will keep on going in business, but the people will be gone.

So our role as MLAs is difficult sometimes and we struggle with the heart and our mind, and the heart always wins and the people always win, and that's who I'm accountable to and I'll always be there for them. Mr. Speaker, that's what I want to say today. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On WCB Assessment Rates In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to draw attention, once again, to the unfairness of WCB rates being charged to food franchise operations. As I said in my Member's statement yesterday, this group of businesses have seen a serious increase of 25 percent of their WCB rates over the last several years. This despite the fact that the food franchises follow high national safety standards set by their head offices.

The explanation for high premiums, Mr. Speaker, is that they are paying for the poor safety practices of other businesses in their rate class. Mr. Speaker, although technically right, this explanation is not acceptable or fair, Mr. Speaker. Why are we not penalizing the establishments with bad safety records, through hefty fines or even closure, instead of making the other good businesses pay for their mistakes? How does punishing businesses with good practices, who promote work safety, how is that fair, how does that increase safety by punishing them with high rates?

Mr. Speaker, not only are the rates themselves unfair, but the process by which they are set also leaves much to be desired. Mr. Speaker, they are not asking for this; they are begging for fairness.

In the past, premium increases have been imposed on businesses without any explanation or justification; increases of 25 percent. The WCB is clearly out of touch with small business. As one step to improve communication and a working relationship, I would suggest to the WCB Minister to make it a standard practice of holding a meeting with any class that has a rate increase that year of 10 percent or more, Mr. Speaker. This way it would be a fair way to discuss the reasons associated with such a rate spike.

It is the very least, and a reasonable suggestion, Mr. Speaker, and I can't understand why the WCB wouldn't embrace this idea or something very, very similar. Good communication is a very basic customer service. We have to keep in mind the WCB works for the businesses and it's not the other way around. If WCB is not willing to take up this challenge and formalize consultation, I think it will be time for this House to pass legislation to make them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Passing Of Elders In The North

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I spoke on the obligation this government has to the children of the NWT. Today I would like to speak on elders. Almost every week we hear of an elder somewhere in the NWT passing on. With their passing, Mr. Speaker, we lose a part of our history, a part of who we are, and, most sadly, Mr. Speaker, we continue to lose part of our language.

It is getting to be a huge challenge to keep our language alive when most of us can't speak it. I commend this government for doing what they can to help preserve the languages. It is becoming apparent that my generation, who will soon be the elders, try to maintain our tradition and our language.

Mr. Speaker, we have to continue, as a government and as a people, to try teach ourselves and our children to preserve the languages. Having all the children's programs under one roof close to the school will go a long way in accomplishing this goal.

Mr. Speaker, other than losing a beloved elder, one of the saddest things is that we continue to lay to rest not only our elders, but a part of our history and part of our language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Housing Opportunities Arising From The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my statements and questions in the House over the last number of days, let me make it clear that I believe very strongly that all things associated with resource development in the NWT, we, the residents and businesses of the NWT, have to be the primary beneficiaries of the economic spin-off of the projects.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a strong supporter of the pipeline project from the beginning. I support even more the idea that we must maximize the benefits from that. I have to tell you, on that score, this government's record is downright pitiful so far, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Pipeline Group has figured out how to do this. They got a third equity partnership out of the deal, and they are looking for more joint venture projects. The 22 communities in the NWT know how to do this. They got \$500 million out of the federal government. The rest of us look at this government and ask, what are you doing for us lately? The answer is the government sent a comfort letter to Imperial Oil, and they are about to send a large proportion of a \$297 million housing deal to a company in Calgary. Through a one near paragraph in the budget, it has declared to the world that this government does not believe that we can build our own housing in the North and the government would not even look at the possibilities. It says, very clearly, that it does not have the vision or foresight to get a plan that would keep the spin-off from the \$297 million housing project to stay in the North.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe it would go very well if Premier Klein got a deal with a business in Ottawa or Ontario to provide housing for its oil projects without looking locally first. I tell you, it is not right for this government to not even try north before it becomes the major lobbying agent through the budget for one product, for one company from Calgary, to lobbying out on.

Mr. Speaker, I must insist that this government needs to do better and do it now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oral questions. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 401-15(4): Affordable Residential Power Rates In The NWT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Power

Corporation. In Colville Lake, the residential power rate is \$2.67 per kilowatt hour. This is, by far, the highest rate in the Northwest Territories in the small, isolated communities that rely on diesel, such as Sachs Harbour and Nahanni Butte that have a rate under \$1.00. Can the Minister explain to the people in Colville Lake why the power rates are so high in Colville and how is this fair? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 401-15(4): Affordable Residential Power Rates In The NWT

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have different rates in the Northwest Territories in regards to diesel communities, hydro communities and communities on gas generation. Again, the way the rate is determined is based on the actual cost of generating that power in the communities and how that cost is going to be distributed amongst the residents of those communities. Also, Mr. Speaker, we do have a subsidy program which allows people that use power, the first 700 kilowatts of power that is used is being subsidized into the Yellowknife rate. We are, Mr. Speaker, looking at this issue. Again, it is the Public Utilities Board that does make the final decision on exactly how our rates are through a public hearing process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 401-15(4): Affordable Residential Power Rates In The NWT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, power is an essential service in the Northwest Territories, especially in Colville Lake. Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure it is affordable for all residents and businesses. The Co-op in Colville Lake had a \$10,000 bill last month just for the power itself, Mr. Speaker. The government subsidy is not adequate, as many businesses and residents use more than the maximum number of kilowatts that the subsidies allow for. A way of dealing with this, I know it has been brought up before in this Assembly and also past assemblies as a single rate power zone. Can the Minister tell me whether this is an option being considered by the NWT Power Corporation for the next general rate application? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 401-15(4): Affordable Residential Power Rates In The NWT

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at other options in regards to how power is being used and also what rates we are charging. Again, one of the ways we are trying to deal with that, Mr. Speaker, is to look at expanding the capacity we have by expanding the Taltson system and trying to get more customers online. We are talking about the Bear hydro expansion. We are looking at the pipeline. As it is right now with the population base we have in the Northwest Territories, we do not have the number of people to be able to continue subsidizing our program, but we will have to look at how we can generate more revenues for the

corporation so we can continue to subsidize those communities.

We are looking at alternatives and subsidies for possibly businesses such as the Co-op in Colville Lake, and looking at offering them some sort of an incentive and also being able to bring down those costs in those diesel communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Your final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 401-15(4): Affordable Residential Power Rates In The NWT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister commit to providing some form of firm direction to the NWT Power Corporation to include a single rate zone structure in the next general rate application? Can we have some commitment from the Minister? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 401-15(4): Affordable Residential Power Rates In The NWT

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at some options. We know what happened to the last board that followed such a riding, and I think that we want to be sure that, this time, it will apply. So we are looking at all options. We do have to come forward within the next two years to the Public Utilities Board, which we do have to file a rate application. So we are looking at some options, but we are trying to find a package that will be sellable to not only the Government of the Northwest Territories, but to our residents in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 402-15(4): Fuel Pricing In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is with respect to fuel prices in the smaller communities. I believe it would be to the Minister of Finance. One of the big headlines in today's news was that the oil prices are continuing to drop and will drop in the next little future. But back home, in the communities like Jean Marie, Nahanni Butte and Trout Lake, the price is remaining high at \$1.40. I would just like to know that this government will be responsive to the communities' request and equalize the prices like the rest of the world. Why should they be penalized for being in isolated communities; indeed, not only them, but throughout the North, Mr. Speaker? Is this government going to look at some type of relief for people that are stranded and have to pay these high prices? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 402-15(4): Fuel Pricing In Small Communities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the area of fuel products and delivery in communities, we, through the petroleum products division in Public Works and Services, provide those services to

15 communities. As we go out for a contract on an annual or biannual basis, we would contract with a supplier to deliver and supply the fuel. We pay the cost of the product at that time. We do not have the ability, at this time, to offset the higher cost, as the policy in place right now through petroleum products division is one of full cost recovery in the communities aside from our capital infrastructure in those communities. So we don't have that flexibility at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 402-15(4): Fuel Pricing In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think our people are asking this government for that flexibility to do that. What we are talking about here is improving our people's lives in the communities, improving their standard of living and their quality of life. We talk about we are a global economy, yet we are not reflective of that. Our people in the communities that are stranded in the remote communities, they are paying for this aberration in the global world prices. So they are looking to this government to hear them, to offset the skewed prices that they are stuck with today. Will this government do something about that? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 402-15(4): Fuel Pricing In Small Communities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, do a number of things to try to offset the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. One, we have a senior fuel subsidy. Two, through the housing program where we have social housing in place, full utility costs are not paid on that basis, as well as through a number of initiatives whether through working with hunters' and trappers' organizations and some of the funding that flows out of that. So there are a number of factors that we do try to help offset the costs. Particularly with fuel, we do subsidize it in a way because we are not adding the cost of the capital infrastructure to the price of fuel in communities. Unfortunately, the way we are structured is, once we receive the fuel in the tanks, we are charged that amount from the supplier. We have to pay it. Our ability to take a loss in the area of fuel sales is very limited. We have tried to offset the higher cost by putting a 10 cent reduction on home heating oil on the last price changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 402-15(4): Fuel Pricing In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to have to disagree with the Minister. The only people that are offsetting the cost of this high fuel are the people in the communities. They are continuing to pay these high prices. Once again, I would like to ask the Minister to look at some type of programming to offset this aberration in global markets that happened last fall and yet the smaller communities are still paying the price. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 402-15(4): Fuel Pricing In Small Communities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can address the situation to my Cabinet colleagues and looking at options and opportunities but, as a government, we are already looking at the area of energy use and how we use that energy, and the cost of living in the Northwest Territories. We do already have over \$100 million in subsidies trying to help people in the Northwest Territories deal with the high cost of living.

This area, as well, we do provide some area of relief in a sense of not charging for all of the assets in the community. We will continue with that practice. But for us to go and react to this at this point when we are not sure if the price will go up once again or not, is something the last fall situation did catch us by surprise. We will have to look at how we effectively go through some of these issues and possible changes down the road. At this point, all I can offer the Member is taking the issue back to my Cabinet colleagues in light of our overall discussion around energy use in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 403-15(4): Travel Assistance And Dental Care Benefits

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my Member's statement was about why we draw distinction between health care, medical care and dental care. Why are teeth a second-class consideration when it comes to our health? There are issues around access to dental care. Some people have insurance coverage through extended health care benefits through this government. Some people have employer benefits, but a lot of people, again, usually, unfortunately, not the indigent but usually the working poor, have access issues to dental care. I think that dental care should be a universally accessible service. It is part of our body. If it gets sick, it affects the whole body. Why are teeth and why is dental care treated differently than any other type of medical care? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 403-15(4): Travel Assistance And Dental Care Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point, dental services are not an insured service. There are, except when it comes to required dental surgery, we do have some investments made where we have positions for dental therapists in schools to provide dental care to all the children in the schools. That used to be the norm. Unfortunately, over time, a lot of those positions no longer exist or aren't able to be filled. The reality is that it is not an insured service at this point. Unless you have third-party coverage, you have limits to the coverage. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 403-15(4): Travel Assistance And Dental Care Benefits

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware that is the case. That is why I'm asking this question. The Minister says that coverage is available when you need dental surgery. Yes, when we need to anaesthetize five and six year old children and extract all of their teeth because they are rotten, oh, we'll pay for that. But what about ongoing dental care, dental hygiene and issues to do with people's gums? Even if you have coverage, people can't even get to the services. Medical travel doesn't go if it is a dental issue. No medical travel. Why is that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 403-15(4): Travel Assistance And Dental Care Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct; dental services are not covered fully under our health care system. There is a resource issue to be able to do that. There is coverage for third parties, for government employees, for larger organizations that have third-party coverage, as well as for Metis and through non-insured health benefits. We are currently, as well, doing an ongoing review of the supplementary health benefits, trying to look at how we close the gaps in our social safety net and health safety net. There has been one briefing not too far in the distant past with the Social Programs committee. We are continuing to work on that particular review so we can come forward with some suggestions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 403-15(4): Travel Assistance And Dental Care Benefits

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when you do that review of insured services, I would like to state, for the record, that I think that universal access to dental care, with the accompanying benefit of travel when required, is something that should be looked at. It should be included. If not, then I would like to ask the Minister, are teeth and healthy teeth considered optional by this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 403-15(4): Travel Assistance And Dental Care Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take the Member's point. We will, of course, be looking very closely at the actual detail of her comments. Good health is something we strive for as a territory, as a government and as individuals. We are going to look at trying to provide the best health care that we can possibly afford. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 404-15(4): IBA Payments And Income Support Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: (Translation) Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, I meant to say Mr. Dent, but the question that I have is regarding payments and compensation. This is what I want to ask the Minister. (Translation ends)

...of land and resources. As I indicated in my Member's statement. In accordance with our rights on the Treaty 11 and Tlicho Government.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is, will the Minister recognize that IBA payments are the same as the other exempt agreements and direct his department to immediately stop clawing back IBA payments from income support clients? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 404-15(4): IBA Payments And Income Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the IBAs are a private contract between the companies and the Tlicho and are not something that this government has seen. The situation now is one that, if it can be demonstrated inclusively that these payments are arising from a treaty or a land claim, then the situation will change. But the onus is on the Tlicho to demonstrate that to this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 404-15(4): IBA Payments And Income Support Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the Minister is somewhat receptive with discussing more on the approach with respect to the agreements that we have in place with these mining industries. At the same time, the interpretation of the regulations that we have with our current system, rather than argue, if the Minister can make a commitment to change the regulations to make it clear that IBA payments are not an income to the communities. Mahsi.

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

Further Return To Question 404-15(4): IBA Payments And Income Support Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my previous answer, the onus is on the Tlicho to demonstrate inclusively the relationship between these payments and the treaty or land claim. Until that happens, I can't make the commitment that the Member seeks. We are willing to take a look at the evidence that is presented by the Tlicho Government on this issue and move forward from there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 405-15(4): Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Minister of Finance questions before about the growth of government and government spending in general. Does the Minister or Cabinet ever question departments on adding positions, or is there just a great big rubberstamp in the Cabinet room that says yes and you proceed from there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 405-15(4): Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no big rubberstamp; it is just a small one. Mr. Speaker, the reality of government and the jobs we do and the growth in government, it is my duty to question what Ministers bring before us for increases in their budget and have them demonstrate, or justify, what they are asking for. So, yes, when Ministers come forward with requests for extra funding and it means extra personnel, we do question as to why they feel they need that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 405-15(4): Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Finance Minister for that. I am wondering if the government, if the Finance Minister, the Minister responsible for Human Resources in the Government of the Northwest Territories, if they have some type of strategy going forward that is going to answer some of the questions about the sustainability of the growth of government. Are we just growing for the sake of growth and we will worry about it later? That seems to be the attitude, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 405-15(4): Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of factors will influence how we go forward as a government. One is our fiscal responsibility and policy that this Assembly has agreed to, we have in place and we operate by. The second to that is our overall fiscal situation, which we realize, is getting much tighter.

Yes, there have been discussions going forward as to the growth of government and how we deal with that growth. Mr. Speaker, as much as even this morning, when we deal with the situations that come up from Members and the issues they raise from their constituents, there is a request to do more with what we have. Sometimes we turn down a lot of issues and say we are unable to do those things. Yes, we have added positions to the workforce within the government, but many of those positions, as the Member highlighted, the growth since division has been around the service delivery end of things where we've taken people already delivering a

service and brought them into government, so that is part of the situation we face. Those are being in most of the communities and regions in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 405-15(4): Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my final question about a comprehensive human resource plan. I am a bit worried about this, Mr. Speaker. Given the trouble that some Members have voiced to him on the amalgamation of the HR, soon to be HR department and the troubles that have taken place there, are they going to be in charge of a comprehensive human resource plan? Who is going to be steering this human resource plan? One should be developed. Where will that responsibility lie? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 405-15(4): Growth Of GNWT Expenditures

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within the Executive, Finance and FMBS operate under that envelope. Once the budget is endorsed and we set up a secretariat for human resources, it is within that function we will deal with the human resource issues across the government. For the overall plan of how we will go forward as a government, that will have to be within the Executive mandate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 406-15(4): Paulatuk Income Support Office

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement, the income support office located in Paulatuk at the Angik School, the local income support worker raises a concern that the public meeting be held in Paulatuk, and this also concerns the rest of the residents of Paulatuk. My questions are for the Minister of ECE. The department is considering setting up centralized government service centres. Will the Minister direct his department to find a suitable office space outside of Angik School for the income support worker? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 406-15(4): Paulatuk Income Support Office

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some time ago, when I was first elected to government, it was considered good practice to move social agencies into schools, like the social worker, the income support worker, the RCMP and so on. I suspect that is where this office location came from. However, if the community would prefer that it be located somewhere else, it is something that we will certainly consult with the community and find out what their interest is. From that, we will move to look at alternate locations if that is, in fact, what the community wants.

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

Supplementary To Question 406-15(4): Paulatuk Income Support Office

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand what the Minister is saying. At that time, social workers were included as part of the income support workers but, right now, Mr. Speaker, they have two different job descriptions, basically. Income support worker is based out of the assistance programs among other things. If the residents of Paulatuk would like to see an alternate location, when can that location by the department be finalized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 406-15(4): Paulatuk Income Support Office

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure about the availability of other space in the community right now. So we will have to, first of all, consult with the community. If the direction is clear that they would prefer to see the office located elsewhere, then we will work towards that, but we will have to find a suitable location. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 406-15(4): Paulatuk Income Support Office

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated also in my Member's statement, one option to look at is the hamlet office and also the local housing authority in Paulatuk. Will the department look into that right away? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 406-15(4): Paulatuk Income Support Office

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will follow up on the Member's request right away.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 407-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement today about the WCB that I think communication is a problem, I think we are here to fix that, Mr. Speaker. I believe that full commitment that communication can solve a lot of problems in the world. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we can make this very easy by today showing to the people that we are truly listening to their needs. My question to the Minister of WCB is, and I am looking for a commitment, would he write the board chair of WCB and request that they make a formal policy that any time a rate jumps by 10 percent that they are willing to hold a stakeholders' meeting so they can air out problems and concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 407-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would agree that the WCB should be prepared to meet with stakeholders regularly. I would be happy to write to the chair of the governance council and ask them to establish a policy for communications with stakeholders groups.

It may be somewhat challenging to offer to meet with all of the members of a certain classification because they may have businesses ranging from Pond Inlet to Fort Smith, so it could be difficult to put a group together, but I know that the WCB reaches out to stakeholder associations. That would be one thing that would also make it easier for the WCB, if groups of employers could form associations that could communicate with the WCB.

The answer to the Member's question is, yes, I will write and make that suggestion to the governance council.

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

Supplementary To Question 407-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that very good commitment. I think the communication of that was very well accepted. I think that the people raising the concerns will be very happy. Mr. Speaker, because the Minister is in such a good, committal mood today, I think I will ask him just one more question to help us avoid rate shock. Will he also write the board chair of the WCB, referring back to my Member's statement, to look at ways to avoid rate shock where premiums can grow at 25 percent a year? If that's the case, then they can double in only three years. Will the Minister write the chair of WCB and find ways to help avoid rate shock for those businesses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 407-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly pass on, to the chair of the governance council, the Member's concerns. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 408-15(4): Rent Scale Funding Formula For Public Housing

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up with some of the questions my good friend Mr. Lafferty was asking the Minister of Housing yesterday about the rent scale formula that the Housing Corporation uses, especially when it refers to the condition rating system that affects people's rents. We know that the rent is reduced based on the condition of a unit, but I just want to make the Minister aware if someone is living in a dilapidated, near-condemned unit with cold floors and ice

blocks for windows, and frost on the exterior walls and doors, mould and no ventilation, when they get their condition rating done and their condition rating gets their rent down to the lowest level possible, these families and people are still living in these units. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to say that because you are getting a lower rent and you are living in dilapidated conditions, let's be happy. I think the Housing Corporation should seriously consider the rent scale funding formula to reflect something to the effect of what Mr. Lafferty touched on yesterday. Put some money aside and tell these people, yes, your unit is going to get money put aside out of your rent that you are willing to pay that's going to address these issues. Is the Minister willing to take this avenue under serious consideration? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 408-15(4): Rent Scale Funding Formula For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Members have to realize we have a major housing crisis in the North and we do have problems of replacing older units. Without having a major capital investment in housing, replacing older units...Yes, we have to admit we have units that are 30 years old in a lot of our communities. In order to make a difference, we have to be able to have a major change of how we do business. We cannot continue to spend in excess of \$100 million here in housing. We have to do some major...find new initiatives to do this.

Mr. Speaker, the way that we've calculated the rates, the majority of those dollars that are collected in the rent goes back into the operation of those units in those communities. In order to make a difference, we have to have the tools to do that. That's why through the proposal put forth for the 500 houses over the next three years, and the Novel concept of 1,400 houses over the next number of years, it will make a difference. But in order to really change how we deliver housing in the Northwest Territories, deal with the social challenges we face, we have to be able to make a major capital investment in this area. Those dollars we do collect through rents are left in the communities to operate those units in those communities. That's where the money stays. In order to make a difference, we have to bring down the high cost of operating these units, which are not as energy efficient. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 408-15(4): Rent Scale Funding Formula For Public Housing

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the Minister that we do have a major housing crisis here in the NWT and one of the major contributors to this crisis is people just don't want to pay rent. The reason why they don't want to pay rent is they are living in shoddy, dilapidated, mouldy houses. If the Minister can just look at a simple formula in the rent scale and say part of your rent is going to go towards fixing some of your mould problems and ice blocks on your windows. I think if you told people that, people would be more than happy to pay their rent on a regular basis, which doesn't happen today.

I know many scenarios in my community where people just don't get their unhealthy living conditions addressed. So I want to ask the Minister again, can he sit down with his staff and commit to reviewing the whole rent scale of the NWT Housing Corporation? It obviously doesn't work for the Housing Corp; it doesn't work for the clients; it doesn't work for the LHOs. Could that be taken under serious consideration? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 408-15(4): Rent Scale Funding Formula For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, we are doing exactly that by getting out of the social aspect of housing, evolving that to Education, Culture and Employment. We will focus our emphasis on managing those properties, but also renting the properties at a reasonable rate. Right now, people paying \$32 a month for rent is subsidized housing. Right now, the cost to operate one unit in a community is roughly \$18,000 a year. That's what you have to pay to operate a unit in a community. At \$32 a month, that house is subsidized for roughly \$1,500 a month. There is a major subsidy attached to a lot of these rents. People pay, because they are in social housing, roughly in the area of 14 percent of your gross revenue on rent. We don't charge the full 30 percent like some people assume. Again, we are looking at that. The first step we are taking right now is to centralize all social funding into one area. We are looking at focussing our emphasis on improving the quality of our houses in communities, but, more importantly, putting more houses on the ground. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 408-15(4): Rent Scale Funding Formula For Public Housing

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that. I am just asking the Minister if he could maybe consider splitting the pot. Have one pot address the O and M, fuel and utilities of running any particular household, whether it's a dilapidated house or a new house. The costs vary. But another pot is going to tell the people, yes, we are trying to use some, five percent or 10 percent of your portion, your rent, that is going to go towards addressing your mould problem, your ventilation problem or your unhealthy living conditions. Is that something the Minister could consider?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Final, short answer, Mr. Krutko.

---Applause

Further Return To Question 408-15(4): Rent Scale Funding Formula For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 409-15(4): Concerns Regarding The Workers' Compensation Board

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Dent as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, coming up to six years ago now, a panel was commissioned to survey the stakeholders in the WCB across Nunavut and the NWT. They delivered a report to our respective assemblies called Act Now. It prescribed an extensive list of legislative amendments that were proposed. We dealt with some of these in the last Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Legislative change does not come quickly and we sure as heck aren't breaking any speed records with the WCB legislation. We've been anticipating the second round of legislative proposals and we've got some news on this, Mr. Speaker. The president of the WCB advised a public meeting here in Yellowknife that we are going to see bills presented in this Legislature and Nunavut on really what I understand is going to be a complete overhaul of the WCB Act. Can the Minister confirm, as the president of the WCB stated, that we will see legislation tabled in our legislatures this spring, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 409-15(4): Concerns Regarding The Workers' Compensation Board

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been working together with my counterpart from Nunavut, Minister Akasuk, to try to ensure we get the legislation brought forward for the spring session. If we find that it can't all be done by that time because it still has to go before the standing committee in Nunavut at this point -- the legislative proposal has not been to the standing committee yet -- and we've agreed that we will try to coordinate the times at which it goes into the House, but we may wind up having to introduce it in the fall session. That would be the latest we would expect to see this new legislation coming in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 409-15(4): Concerns Regarding The Workers' Compensation Board

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information from the Minister. There are a couple of aspects about the timing of it. One, Mr. Speaker, is that we are also anticipating, as the president of the WCB said at the same meeting, that the report of the Auditor General of Canada into the performance of the WCB is also anticipated to be delivered to this Assembly in May of this year. I wanted to ask the Minister, considering that this is a very substantial and, I am anticipating, a rigorous review of the performance of our WCB, would it not make sense to give ourselves some time to incorporate any recommendations that may come from that hearing, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 409-15(4): Concerns Regarding The Workers' Compensation Board

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have also talked to the Nunavut Minister about this issue. We have agreed that should a recommendation come out that obviously impacts on the act, we would then wait until the fall session and make sure we would incorporate any recommendations that need to be moved into legislation into our proposed legislation coming forward.

Right now, we are of the opinion that the relationship between the WCB and the Receiver General, as they prepare the report, is one that would lead us to know whether or not they were going to make recommendations for legislative change before the May session. If that seems to be the case, then we could deal with it. However, we are leaving the door open. If the report comes in with something that is unexpected, we have agreed that we will, in that instance as well, postpone until the October sessions the introduction of our legislation.

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

Supplementary To Question 409-15(4): Concerns Regarding The Workers' Compensation Board

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am in agreement with that. I am pleased to hear that the relationship we have is a collaborative and a constructive one.

Mr. Speaker, a major gap in the scope of our WCB delivery is the issue of chronic pain. Are we ready to modernize our legislation or regulations, or at least our thinking and our attitudes toward this very real and debilitating type of injury, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 409-15(4): Concerns Regarding The Workers' Compensation Board

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I talked to the governance council chair on Monday of this week. He advised me that the governance council will be looking at this issue very closely in the next little while. Just looking at the decision that recently came down from Justice Schuler, she commented in that that she thought it would take some time for the WCB to address this issue. I got the sense from the chair of the governance council that was going to be the case. It would take some time. I don't think this is an area that we are going to try in legislation. At this point, that is not the way we are looking at it. I will wait for advice from the governance council. But he has assured me that they will look at it and work on it with a view to coming forward with a position very quickly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 410-15(4): Early Childhood Development Programs In New Schools

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the last couple days, I have been talking about the needs of the children in the NWT and, in my particular case, the needs of the children of Inuvik. As many of you know, the

children of Inuvik go to these different programs and they have to go around town. We are starting to have a little trouble with buildings. I would like to ask the Minister of Education, regarding the new \$64 million school going up in Inuvik, if he would incorporate the requirements of the Children's First Society into the new school? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 410-15(4): Early Childhood Development Programs In New Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is talking over the past couple of days about the benefits of incorporating childcare space into learning facilities like schools. I would say that I agree with him that it would be the best possible option if we could see early childcare spaces close to or incorporated in schools. We would be quite prepared to incorporate the space into the school, but we don't have the capital program that funds the building of those spaces, so we encourage the community to take a look at ways in which they could raise funds to have the facility incorporated in the school. We are quite prepared to make sure that it is included in the functional plan. But when it comes to detailed planning, they would need a commitment from the community for the funds to build the facility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 410-15(4): Early Childhood Development Programs In New Schools

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is speaking about the capital funds and asking them to come up with a portion. What would we have to do, as the government, to ensure that we can incorporate and pay for these requirements of all the children into schools across the Northwest Territories? I would like to know if we have to change anything to do that. Is there something we can do? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 410-15(4): Early Childhood Development Programs In New Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The big issue would be one of the cost. If you were going to provide an extra space required for childcare facilities through government funds in every community across the North, it would have a significant cost. Right now, it is beyond the capability of our government to take on that sort of cost.

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

Supplementary To Question 410-15(4): Early Childhood Development Programs In New Schools

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Minister mentioned cost, because I have been throwing some numbers around for some of the investments that this government made around the NWT. I see we spent \$51 million on a jail, \$41 million to a potential new courthouse, and \$11 million investment in the secondary diamond industry. Why don't we consider these kids our

rough diamonds? Let's build a facility to polish them and get them ready for the outside world. Is there an option that the Children's First Society has so that the government builds a building and they rent it off them, or make some kind of an arrangement? We have to make investments into places where they are needed and not just throw money away.

---Applause

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

Further Return To Question 410-15(4): Early Childhood Development Programs In New Schools

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be quite pleased to take that proposal up with my colleagues at the FMB meeting.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 411-15(4): Primary Beneficiaries Of The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my Member's statement, I would like to ask questions to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I took an economics course in a business program that I attended. One of the few things I learned from there is that for every dollar we put into our economy, there is supposed to be a multiplier effect of \$4. So that would translate that, if you throw away a dollar, you are throwing away \$4 to somewhere else. Another thing I learned from being a politician is that the government has to do a different kind of cost-benefit analysis. You don't do a hard line analysis that businesses do, which is everything is about the bottom line. Public government and public expenditure is about how we maximize benefits for the people. I believe, in this budget, the Minister of Finance is asking for economic analyst positions in his department. I would like to know if the Minister has done, or plans to do, some kind of a cost-benefit analysis about the spin-off benefits of the pipeline that we can take advantage of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 411-15(4): Primary Beneficiaries Of The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, the vision that the government, as we see, we are presented with an opportunity to create some economic activity as a result of the pipeline going forward. One of those, as the Member has raised in her Member's statement, is about the Novel concept. If that is to proceed, there will be \$250 million spent in the Northwest Territories through conversion of these units in setting up in communities.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, there is a bit of vision for you. I have not taken the same course the Member has taken in economics, but I know that if we spend some money in the Northwest Territories, there will be a positive spin-off, and in our smallest communities where individuals cannot afford to pay \$250,000 to \$300,000 for a home, we can

put homes in those communities if this concept is proceeded with for any...(inaudible)...Thank you.

---Applause

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

Supplementary To Question 411-15(4): Primary Beneficiaries Of The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister just listened to my little lesson there, he would have learned that spending \$250 million to an Alberta firm would result in \$250 million going out of the Territories. Spending it here, that translates into four times more. That is a billion dollars. Mr. Speaker, would he, given that he is preparing to spend almost \$300 million, this is a mega project. This is the single most significant deal that is going to come out of this thing. I would like to know if he would present to this House a cost-benefit analysis of this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 411-15(4): Primary Beneficiaries Of The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with her economics course, maybe I can provide her a lesson in some mathematical situations, Mr. Speaker. One, as we have laid out -- and we have laid it out for the Members, we have provided the information -- we are looking to go to CMHC for \$119 million. The GNWT is looking at \$116 million and the private people in the Northwest Territories, by buying these houses, can contribute another \$62 million. The \$250 million I referenced is not going to pay ATCO for these facilities. That \$250 million will be spent in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 411-15(4): Primary Beneficiaries Of The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, that is news to us. None of that has been realized. The Minister has not presented any of that information. I want him to put his words or his mouth where the words are, or however the saying goes. I want him to present that information to this House. How does he figure that all that \$250 million is going to be spent in the Territories when he is going to give most of the money to another company for one product concept that he has been talking about, Mr. Speaker? Get the math straight. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 411-15(4): Primary Beneficiaries Of The Mackenzie Gas Pipeline Project

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be only too happy to say we have provided the information. In fact, tabled in this House is the GNWT's response to the report on pre-budget consultations. Within there is a whole section on this concept and what it could mean for the Northwest Territories and for people in the Northwest Territories. So we tried to present that. We have tried to present a vision. Unfortunately, it seems the

Member wants to snuff out that vision and make sure we continue in the same process we are, crawling along at a snail's pace. Mr. Speaker, we have a vision and we are not blind. We are going to try to make something happen for the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. Written questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders of the day.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to recognize my son in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker. He is a newly-minted father along with his spouse, Theresa. They had a new son, Kayleb.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hey, Grandpa.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member from Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to acknowledge and recognize Keone Villeneuve, who is a newly-minted father, apparently, stated by Grandpa Menicoche just a moment ago. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Written questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 29-15(4): Passport Acquisitions For Arctic Winter Games

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Could the Minister please provide the number of athletes by sport that did not meet the January 6, 2006, deadline for passports, but would still be allowed to go to the Arctic Winter Games with a modified documentation provision; e.g., two pieces of identification?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Written questions. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Question 30-15(4): Health Centre Medical Equipment Standards

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

- 1) What types of medical equipment standards are in place today for emergencies such as heart attacks?
- 2) What emergency measures are in place should aircraft be unable to arrive due to bad weather? What equipment is available to maintain stability for heart attack patients?
- 3) If there is none, when will there be emergency medical equipment standards put in place in the Sahtu region that can treat such patients?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18, Committee Reports 5, 6 and 7, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 16: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. Yesterday, when we finished, we were dealing with the detail of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. What is the wish of the committee, Mr. Hawkins?

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee would like to return to the Department of Education to conclude. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The committee agrees?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. We will do that after we take a lunch break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Welcome back again, Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Devitt. It's nice to have you here again this afternoon. Page 9-29, activity summary, advanced education and careers, grants and contributions, contributions, grants and contributions continued, infrastructure contributions, \$30.835 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 9...This is detail. Page 9-32 and 33, advanced education and careers, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 9-35, activity summary, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$63.897 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, in the Minister's opening comments to ECE, there was a discussion about opening up what I believe were called one-stop community service centres by April 1st. This is very welcome idea, Madam Chair; not a new one from my few years now on the Social Programs committee. Looking at how so many of our different departments, we tend to have our own offices, our own phone and fax and web sites, and the kind of service that we're offering to the general public is very compartmentalized, Madam Chair. Stove piped is another word for it. So any effort at delivering combined services or harmonized services, if I may use that word, I think is going to be very welcomed. What I wanted to ask, Madam Chair, is could the Minister provide, for committee and for the folks watching, any more detail on what this will mean for them in the community? What difference will they see, sort of at street level and on a day-to-day basis, on how we deliver our service, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think the promise was made that we would have these one-stop locations for April 1st of this year. We are planning to implement them in the course of the year, but it is something that we'll start working on in this coming year. It would be our goal to set up operations that could be used by other departments in the future. As we move forward with the amalgamation of our income security programs, I think that is certainly one of the options that we will be laying out to other departments to participate with us in them. But at this point, we're only talking about the services that are being provided by Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. The note that I was looking at said that on April 1st, 2006, one-stop community service centres will begin delivering a range of income security programs. So these are going to be rolled out over the course of the year. Is there a sequence or schedule of communities that we can anticipate would see this kind of service centre opened in the coming fiscal year, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I should make it clear, too, that our goal with these service centres is to make sure that the staff who are in them have access to information from other departments where the public may be interested in accessing information, as well as from federal programs. So we are going to try and make sure that we have the information available on programs that we're not administering, but may be of interest to our clients.

This will start in those communities where we have staff on hand right now. That will be the first priority. It will be a bit more of a challenge and we'll have to examine how to do it in those communities where we don't have full-time staff, or we're doing it by contract, or we may have people who go in on an occasional basis to an office there. But our goal will be, then, to make sure that every day there was some way of the public reaching us in all those communities through those offices. We'll probably have to

set up different approaches in different communities, but the initial emphasis will be on those offices where we have staff. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Thank you very much. On a somewhat related aspect, Madam Chair, and very much to the staffing and people side of our business, is, I guess, an orientation, or an expectation, of our staff, Madam Chair, to be able to take on a role as counsellors, as support, as assistance to income support clients or people who come looking for help. I think this is something that, over time, we have lost in some of our frontline service agencies, Madam Chair. Such as income support, which from the perspective of some of my constituents, and I'm not saying this is entirely across the board, but where they've encountered a process where our people basically have a set of rules and criteria, and they will talk to people and figure out whether or not they fit, and issue cheques, or benefits, or whatever, according to a prescribed list of criteria and that's it. We really seem to have lost a sense of a real responsibility of ours to be more proactive and to take on a role of assisting, of counselling, of course where the individual welcomes that. I wanted to ask the Minister, are we going to be looking at that aspect of our service delivery, Madam Chair, where our people are trained, or skilled, or ready to take on more of a one-on-one role of assisting, rather than essentially being bookkeepers or monitors of a case file? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to make sure that all of our staff at the local area are ready to take on the function as of April 1st, there were training sessions conducted in February. We had all the local staff in for training sessions. So it is our hope that between that and ongoing training sessions, that we will be able to have a seamless transfer of all of the responsibilities and moving into the one-stop service centres.

In response to the Member's question about counselling, it is not our intention to start to hire social workers who are trained to counsel people. We are, however, embarking on a collaborative process with Health and Social Services to ensure that we are approaching our clients more on a case management basis. This has been undertaken here for a number of months now on a pilot basis in Yellowknife and is showing very good results. We are very close to meeting to establish the conditions around which that collaboration can take place, so we will have a protocol in place very soon. Then working in conjunction with Health and Social Services we will look to roll that out to other communities in the North.

So, yes, we are moving towards more of a case management process, but it's one that's collaborative. It's not where we're going to try to take on additional functions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on this page I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just the line items that describe income security, particularly with the public housing subsidies and I want a

detail some of my concerns with respect to public housing subsidies. Just once again, if I could ask the Minister, Madam Chair, just how is the type of, I don't know, how is it, application for public housing subsidy, is it different from regular income support? The Minister indicated that there would be no change in subsidies available to public housing clients, but I'm not entirely convinced that is going to be the case. If the Minister, Madam Chair, could detail, once again, how the public housing subsidy application is different from income support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The application for public housing subsidy will be exactly the same on April 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and sort of going forward, as it is today. The process of assessing the income is exactly the same. There is no change to the assessment of income; there is no change to the definitions of what constitutes income. The whole process is remaining the same for determining what the subsidy should be for a family after April 1st as it is today.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just trying to get some clarification so that I can convey it to constituents about the public housing subsidies. I know that even as we speak these consultations are taking place in the communities and we're not having the benefit of those same public housing subsidies consultations. So there's no change in the public housing client. Does that mean that public housing client is not going to be filling out an application form? I'm just trying to determine whether, if there is an application form, is it the income support application form? Because there's a big distinction there for people back home. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The form will be a separate application form for the public housing rental subsidy.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I have on the list Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of the idea of the one-stop shopping concept model and that will be very beneficial to people in my region to have one place that they can do their business. I'm thinking more, Madam Chair, of the older people who require more attention, more services for them to go to one place and that. The communities are pretty small. They can all go to one location where all the services can be provided to them by the different representatives of the government. So I know the Minister indicated earlier that they're working towards that. I wanted to ask the Minister this question: Is there any light at the end of the tunnel in terms of finally having a one-stop shopping centre for the elders, for the older people, actually for the whole community, which makes

more sense? Could we see something within the next year or two years from now, or within the life of this government, that we can bring back to our region? I want to ask that question, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Initially the clients will be able to see the programs like the senior home heating subsidy, senior citizens' supplementary benefits, income assistance, public housing rental subsidies. We're also expecting to be able to provide clients with information about student financial assistance and a number of other government and federal government income security programs. So our goal is to make sure that, in particular, income security programs are starting to focus in these offices. Whether or not we will be able to bring in other departments to those offices, we would think in the long run that would be the right way to go, but whether or not we'll be able to get there in the next year, I think that might be a bit optimistic. But I would agree with the Member that it would make sense for us to start moving in that direction. It would certainly help to ease some of the confusion in communities about where people have to go, stop some of them from having to go back and forth from office to office, and it may help us to be more economic in how we deliver our programs. So it is our goal to make sure that these offices can be looked at, eventually, as broader than just Education, Culture and Employment offices.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I like what the Minister is saying in terms of working towards that initiative or that goal. It does make more sense in the smaller communities. Madam Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of the student financial services, understanding somewhat that sometimes we have difficulties with our people who are disabled that want to go to school in the South and have difficulties accessing funding for the student financial services students who are living in the South now who are disabled. There might be some difficulties. Can I ask the Minister, is that something that he's run into a lot in his department in terms of people who are disabled to access funding for schools in southern institutions? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Student financial assistance to attend a post-secondary institution for somebody who is disabled has significantly increased over the funding that we provide to an abled person. The disabled person could qualify for up to \$8,000 in extra funding through our grant programs. As well as that, we recognize that the extra challenges that are faced by people with disabilities and, therefore, will require that they only complete 40 percent of a full course load in order to qualify for student financial assistance. The program does accommodate people who are disabled and intending to attend post-secondary institutions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the other question I have for the Minister is on the youth. The youth I want to talk about are the ones who are caught between probably the Department of Education's department and probably Health and Social Services department in terms of the gap there. Some of the youth that leave home at the age of 18, 17, not living with their parents and sometimes they get turned away from social services because they don't fit the required eligibility for income support and some of them are living on their own. So it seems to be somewhat a problem between these youth falling between the cracks. I want to ask the Minister, is he working very closely with the Department of Health and Social Services to bridge this gap? Because some of the youth do not want to stay home with their parents and be more independent and live alone. Some are actually going to school and they're either in Yellowknife or other larger centres or back in the smaller communities. So what is his department doing in terms of working with the Department of Health and Social Services in terms of bridging the gap? Sometimes it's a real communication problem for our youth. One department was telling the other department. So there's a miscommunication somewhere that the youth get frustrated and call us to look at things for them. There was an individual in Fort Good Hope who was caught between the cracks in terms of this issue here. I want to ask the Minister what types of programs, what type of communication, more what type of communication he has with the Department of Health and Social Services to bridge this gap. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is right that under our current legislation, income support is provided to people who are 19 years of age and older. Those who are younger need to work out an arrangement with Health and Social Services. Our staff are aware that that's the requirement and are quite constantly referring the clients, or potential clients, back to Health and Social Services. There is a fair bit of dialogue between our workers. As I indicated in my answer to Mr. Braden, as we move towards a more case managed process, that level of communication will continue to improve.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I look forward to that report, Madam Chair, and see how this whole case management will unfold for the communities. I want to ask the Minister, in terms of the income support programs and the new role that the income support workers will be working on in regards to the subsidized housing. The clients who are now in homes in the communities, will they now be referred to as income support clients and will they fall into that category of income support, because it may cause some confusion in our communities. I guess I want to hear, once and for all, in terms of how these clients now will be deemed. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the things that we're doing is moving to the service centres, service centre approach. I think it's important to

recognize that under what we call income security, we have a whole basket of subsidy programs. There should be no difference in how they're looked at, whether it's a federal program of employment insurance, or our programs for student financial assistance, or the seniors' fuel subsidy. All of these programs are provided to help out members of our territory who need that help at any given time. So this shouldn't be seen as an issue of a problem going for a subsidy. That's one of the things we're hoping to move past by moving to the one, the service centre approach.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Last question for the Minister in terms of the student financial services. Again I'm going to go back to several years ago we spoke about the programs that were offered by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The Minister had indicated that his government administers the program. It's called a university entrance college program. I understand the Minister has made some inquiries and this program is only offered through the First Nations and the Metis are not eligible as deemed as the program is rolled out. However, I want to ask the Minister, would he or has he given consideration similar to the Metis health benefits that were offered to the residents of the Northwest Territories? Has he given consideration to offering this type of program to the Metis people who want to enter into university or college? I'd like to ask the Minister that, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's one of the approaches that we could consider. The Member has also asked, in the past, if we would consider giving the program back to the federal government to administer. Both of those are possibilities. I would hope to, with the new government in place, at least make an initial approach to them and see whether or not they would be prepared to recognize the current program doesn't live up to their own, the federal government's definition of an aboriginal person by not putting all aboriginal people in it. I'll certainly make sure that we take that step before we decide whether or not to go to the next step. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time, before I recognize Mr. Pokiak, I'd like to recognize the presence in the visitor's gallery of the president of the NWT Teachers' Association, Amanda Mallon. Welcome.

---Applause

Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a follow-up in terms of what Mr. Yakeleya is saying about the one-stop shop. Earlier, the Minister had indicated that there would be no change in the process. He indicated that a form will be a separate application. How does that differ from what the Housing Corporation is doing right now in terms of what the income support workers working in terms of the form? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's just a different form coming out of our offices to serve our purpose. The Housing Corporation, or LHO, will still have to find or receive an application for a housing unit, just as a private firm in a market housing community would have to have somebody come in and apply for a house. So the housing, or the LHO, will still have their forms. Our office will have our forms, but they will be completely different and will still follow the same definitions for income as is currently the case as with the housing authorities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Because right now I'm just trying to think in my head, I know right now under the income support forms you basically have your basic needs, such as food, shelter, utilities, and even miscellaneous items that are required by a client that goes in there. I know that with the housing associations they have a form mainly in terms of for, I guess, the assessment of their monthly rent. I'm going back to the one-stop shop idea. In some communities, like Mr. Yakeleya said, there are some places where it is a long distance for some of the clients to actually walk from point A to point B. So to me that's not quite a one-stop shop. I think consideration of living very hard in terms of making sure that you have that one-stop shop where they can just go from door to door. A case in point, Madam Chair, is that you go into the housing association office, sit down with the TRO, fill out your assessment form for the monthly rent. Maybe just down the street, there you have your income support worker. She'll have all that information and there's implementing that thing. I don't know if the Minister said it earlier, we're probably looking past April 1st, but will strong consideration be given into that place right away? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would agree with the Members that it is important for us to try and consolidate our functions as much as possible and we will move as quickly as we can to do that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. Hopefully that will happen pretty soon, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just want to go on page 9-34 in regard to productive choices. Right now, I understand that an income support worker actually sits down with the potential client for their monthly needs, as required. It appears that the income support worker is always taking the lead role in terms of what are productive choices. I'd just like to ask the Minister exactly, since that program is implemented, exactly how many people actually got off their feet with the productive choice that was implemented by these income support workers and the client. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a challenging question and I don't have the numbers to give the Member on that. I can say, though, that the vast majority of people who collect income support in the Northwest Territories don't do it on a month-

to-month-to-month basis. There's a regular cycle of people on and off the program. So it would appear that people are making productive choices. They're coming in when they need a bit of a hand-up, and they're getting that assistance when it's needed, and then they're moving back into looking after themselves when they can. There are some people who will be on income support for a long period of time who aren't going to be able to make a productive choice that means getting them totally self-sufficient. But that doesn't mean that the productive choice doesn't help out with getting them making a benefit or being a benefit in the community. So for instance, a productive choice could be for somebody to go out and harvest meat for elders in their community. In that case, that's a perfectly acceptable productive choice. Or stay at home and look after young children is a productive choice that is perfectly acceptable for young mothers. There are a number of options, and the goal of the program is to provide assistance to those who need it. What we find is that most people don't need it for a long time. Most people come into the office when they need assistance, they get the assistance for whatever period of time they need it, and then they're off the assistance and we don't see them for awhile. So we think that the productive choices are helping people get out, and get involved, and be productive members of society. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up on that, I understand the intent of the whole program, but if you have some people who are dependent on the program and you give them productive choices, I think what I was getting at is, you know, hopefully that they'll have some sort of a training program right in the community...(inaudible)...For them to become independent, you know, you have to have a goal in mind in terms of exactly what they require. Personally, I don't think it's happening right now. I think it's left up to the income support worker.

I agree that there are some clients that come month by month, and the main reason for that is it depends on the availability of employment, especially in their community or outside of the region. I appreciate those people that rely on that, but there are times when it comes to some problems where an income support worker actually refused some of the clients mainly because it may be their first time, they're independent. I don't think that's right. Personally, I don't think that the choices that are being implemented by the income support worker with the client are working. I think the department should find other ways for the long-term income support clients. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is right that we need to make sure that we're finding ways to provide services to all people who need support, and we need to find ways to link the services of the college, of, as I said earlier, the health and social services so we can get counselling for people, but even to organizations in our communities such as ASEP for training. I think, as I said, we're going to try and case manage, or move the case management approach out across the Territories, in collaboration with Health and Social Services. We're hoping that that will help us

improve our ability to coordinate the services that we provide. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just in regard to the ASEP -- he mentioned ASEP just briefly there -- how can the local adult education departments access these funds for training for clients, or for adults, i.e., maybe into community-based carpenters or things like that? How can a local adult ed department get access to that fund?

Lastly, Madam Chair, before my time is up here, there are some long-term disability clients, that Mr. Yakeleya talked about earlier, and I'm just wondering with regard to the department, I raised the issue yesterday and so did the Member from Monfwi earlier today with regard to some of the benefits that come under the land claim groups. In terms of long-term disability clients, why should they be included as income where it's a benefit to them from land claim groups? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. In response to Mr. Pokiak's question about ASEP and how community education workers could integrate or make proposals for plans, they should be talking to the regional training committee or the community rep on the regional training committee, about what sorts of applications are likely to be successful, and then working with the community and the regional training committee to try and develop programs that are relevant to the businesses that are helping to fund the ASEP program to ensure that people who are trained can get a job.

In response to the second question regarding payments, I believe the Member's asking specifically about payments that were recently made by the Tuk Community Corporation. At this point, the department's waiting for more information from the IRC lawyers about demonstrating how these payments are tied to the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. At that point, then, we would be able to go to Justice and ask for some guidance in how to treat them. But at this point, we need more information. It hasn't been demonstrated conclusively yet that these payments are related to the IFA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Page 9-35, activity summary, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$63.897 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask Mr. Dent in terms of the income support workers. Some of the communities have been given the rationale not to have workers in our community, maybe on a part-time basis because they were low income support clients, which is good for the community. I mean, I can say nothing about it. I want to say there are no clients in our community that need income support. I need the Minister in terms of is that work being done out of the...It's being done out of the regional office, in the Sahtu, out of Norman Wells. Are there any provisions or updates in terms of is there anybody in Tulita, or Deline, or Good Hope, or Colville that had a contract to do that work on

behalf of the department? Because income support, I guess, is more of the people who are using their own language as a first language for these types of services, and I just want to know if there's anything that is made to service the people in that area. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have, in the past, had contracts for delivery of the program in communities. The communities that took on those contracts, though, have, for the most part, given up because they haven't been satisfied with the level of funding. What we've done is we've said here's how much it costs us to deliver the service in this community, so that's all we're prepared to pay, and it's based on the caseload. So, you know, if you have a low caseload which, as the Member has already pointed out, is really good news for the region, it makes it difficult to justify the expenditure of putting a person into the community, and it also makes it difficult, then, for us to have a community organization take on the contract because the amount of money that would be available for administering is not very big either.

Even in those cases where we don't have somebody in the community, we do try and have workers visit the communities on a regular basis. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. The Minister is correct; I have seen the regional caseworker going into our community. Again, it goes back to the number of caseloads in our community. However, I want to say that for services in our communities, sometimes I know the difficulty is to pay the price of doing business there, and I know what he's saying. Damned if you do and damned if you don't in terms of this situation here. However, when the worker is no longer in our community, then we have to make these long distance calls and I don't know if you're going to see very many elders making these long distance calls to a 1-800 number, or a toll-free number, so we need to have a presence in the community. I really understand him in trying to figure out what we can do to keep a presence of the income support workers, even on a part-time basis. I really have a tough time in terms of...I think it will help the other worker, especially now with the housing program coming over to the Department of Education and Culture. So I'd like to work with the Minister on this here. I want to ask if he has given any thought to keep the presence of a worker in our small communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. We can always take a look at it but, as I said, everything has to be based on the costs or what it costs to deliver the service.

One of the goals that we have with our one-stop service centres in those communities where we don't have staff, is to make sure that we have at least a kiosk some place where the phone will be there. It won't be having to dial a 1-800 number. You can just pick up the phone and you'll

be talking to our office. So we're hoping to increase the ability of people in the smallest communities where we don't have resident staff to contact us more easily. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I like the concept of the one-stop shop and I hope the wishes come true. I hope that we have it done by the next year. It makes a lot of sense in our communities. The Minister has my full support to have this one-stop shopping in our communities. It makes it so much easier and it makes so much sense. However, sometimes within government we have to do a lot of work to get it moving here. So I appreciate the hard work done by his department. However, we'd be happy to see something like that in our community.

I'm talking now, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the presence being in our community. I appreciate the Minister saying that there's going to be a phone there you can pick up, you don't even have to dial 8-100s, it's direct to the office. However, it's for the people who use English and also never really use it that much, but their language, they want to speak more comfortably in their first language and they could have that opportunity. I'm not too sure who's going to be on the other end if they really understand them. Sometimes people miss programs or miss dates or whatever things happen, but we need to have someone in our community that can be a tie to the Income Support Program identified that this is the person you go see, not to pick up the phone and phone and you get somebody in Norman Wells. They need to go...I mean, that's what it's there for. We get enough headaches when we have to have our phone calls with the RCMP redirected to Yellowknife, or we get an answering machine or something. We get enough of that. So I appreciate what the Minister is saying, but I would really like to see if he would do some strong consideration to have somebody in our community, even on a part-time basis, that someone can identify when they're walking down the street, or at the Northern Store, or at the post office, saying that's the person you need to see for this Income Support Program. That's what I'm getting at, Mr. Chairman, otherwise we'll just go back to same old and tell the people that there's the office, use the phone. I don't think most people are going to go that route. They prefer to see a smiling face from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment sitting in their community. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the desire of the community to see a resident worker. It will be a challenge for us to justify that, given the caseloads; but as caseloads change, it is certainly something that we can consider. I'll commit to staying in contact with the Member about service delivery. We could also examine whether or not one of the local agencies is prepared to take this service delivery on a contract basis again, but I don't have the money in this budget to start adding positions in communities across the North where we don't have a big demand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, has the Minister considered the new program that's going to be implemented on April 1st in terms of the housing? How is that going to be implemented in our communities? Is there an extra worker coming into our region or is there going to be contracts to housing associations? Surely they can look at programs like that. They've got to have some flexibility. Caseloads may not be warrant enough to have, but it's more disservice to our people who are on income support. Again, it's those people that don't use English as their first language, they use Slavey in their first point of communication and to try to work with them is going to be difficult through the phone system. So would the Minister look at something in terms of that? I don't know the rationale or the justification of the consequences of that project, but I guess I'm still pleading to have a presence in our communities. Even if it's, like I said, part-time and the funding that's going to have part-time workers, it costs high in the communities. So they can't blame the communities for saying no, because things cost high in the Sahtu region. So they're not going to do it for nothing either. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The growth that we're projecting in the workload in the Sahtu region would account for about a .75 increase across the whole region in the workload. So what we're looking at doing is, where we've got part-time staff, their jobs may be increased somewhat in order to cover off the increase in workload. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Next I have Mrs. Groenewegen. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been listening with interest to this somewhat of a debate, I guess, about this one-stop convenience for income support clients who are receiving other types of subsidies, and I still have a few questions. I have to relate it to the community I represent, though, because it's hard for me to understand how it works in other communities. There's even been acronyms referred to, Mr. Pokiak said you go from door-to-door and he named the GRO I think he said, and I don't even know...What? TRO? Oh, tenant relations officer, TRO. See, I didn't even know what that meant.

So I want to talk about Hay River. I understand what happens there. Now, Mr. Chairman, if a person is a housing client, but not an income support client at this time, what will their new involvement be with an income support worker? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Their new involvement with the income support worker would be to apply for the housing subsidy for which they would qualify. So just as the circumstance now is that if somebody goes and applies to a landlord for a unit, they have to have a letter accepting them as a tenant and stating what the income is, and they can come back and then get income support for it. If they're in public housing, they would still have to go to public housing, apply for the unit, and then the application for the subsidy will be completed at the income support office. Now, that doesn't mean that they would necessarily have to come back

every month. As I said earlier, people who are in stable situations may have it set up so that their subsidy is left stable and they're just required to come back and report to income support if their economic situation changes, and so may only wind up going into the income support office once a year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, a lot of people's financial circumstances change more often than once a year. Some of them change on a month-to-month basis. Now, when you say if the housing client is in a stable income situation, then they may only have to go to the income support office once a year to report in. Who's monitoring that, because right now the local housing authority is monitoring whether there's any changes in the economic situation, income situation of their clients, because their clients come to see them generally once a month when they come to pay their rent. That is where that point of contact is. So who is going to monitor those kinds of changes? Who's going to trigger a re-evaluation of rent, for example, if there's a change? Is it based on an honour system? Are people supposed to come and tell the income support worker if their circumstances have changed? Perhaps they've improved. Who is responsible for monitoring that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be similar to the situation that is in place now. I understand that not everybody who is seeing or is receiving the public housing rental subsidy necessarily goes into the office every month. They may drop their cheque off; they're not necessarily seen by somebody at the centre every month and this same sort of situation would continue. It will depend entirely on a person's situation and, depending on each individual situation, the circumstances may vary. So we will have compliance auditors; we will have regular meetings with clients as they're seen necessary. But there would still continue to be the usual rigour attached to making sure that the proper subsidies are being given out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't understand why we will still continue to have meetings with clients. Who will have a meeting with the client and how will they monitor what the financial situation is? Yes, of course some people do drop off their rent cheques to the local housing authority, but in most cases that I'm aware of, they do stop by the office and the LHO does play a large part in keeping their ear to the ground on changes, different people occupying the units, changes in the household income. The local housing authority has traditionally done that. Who is doing that now? Are you taking that responsibility away from the LHO? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of assessing whether or not a person qualifies for the subsidy, then, yes, that job is being taken away from the LHO. The exact level of the subsidy is one that is being taken on by income support. There would still continue to be the government service centre. At the government service centre there would be continued cooperation and collaboration between the service centres and the local housing authorities and that we expect would make sure that the compliance continues.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I hope that there would be, Mr. Chairman, a formal structure or process set up for communication between the LHO and the government service centre, because somehow, at one end or the other, somebody has got to get information about change of circumstances, otherwise there is no monitoring of the situation unless you're just counting on people automatically reporting if they have a change in their income situation. If you're counting on people doing that themselves, I would suggest you're being optimistic. If you are thinking that the LHO is going to find that out and then take the time to contact the government service centre, I don't know what kind of incentive there is for them to do that. So I would suggest that you need some kind of a formal communication process in place to feed information back and forth to these two organizations, which seems a bit cumbersome, but I'd be interested in knowing how the Minister plans to accomplish that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There will be formal mechanisms in place for communications between the two agencies. The government service centre will be involved in compliance audits. So even if somebody doesn't report on that in a month if they've had a change, they may find themselves then responsible in the future for making up a subsidy that they shouldn't have received. So there will be a continued level of watching for compliance. There's been really good collaboration between the LHOs and the income security workers to date. Just as we've gone through the process of understanding how we will now have to work with their clients, there have been meetings on a regional basis, there've been meetings where we've brought in workers from across the Territories to work with our staff. So there is already a clear level of communication and we'll work to ensure that continues.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still just want to draw attention, one more time, to the fact that you're dealing with some regular income support clients who are housing clients, and you're dealing with some housing clients who are not income support clients, who are now essentially going to become the responsibility of income support workers even if you call it a government service centre. That is a distinction and I think it calls for a different approach in terms of how you're going to manage and monitor that.

One other thing I want to ask the Minister about, Mr. Chairman, is the area of communications with clients right now, because I believe the people who are out there right now in public housing are very confused by what's going on. I don't think that the communication has been very clear. I don't think it's been very consistent. I'll give you an example. In Hay River where a senior citizen living in a facility owned by the NWT Housing Corporation received correspondence from the local LHO, which you would expect because the LHO manages that facility, it was about three or four pages of correspondence attempting to explain this shift, but in the process, even though in a couple of sentences it says if you are a senior basically this does not apply to you, it was kind of hidden in the text and there was a blank to be filled in, which spoke to the actual economic or market rate assessed to that unit in this complex. So all these senior citizens got this letter from their local LHO signed by the manager, which I'm sure was sent out on instruction to inform them, very, very complicated.

I read through the whole four pages just so that I could try and put myself in the position of the client who received this, and it was absolutely no wonder that they came running to our constituency office and thought their rent was going up \$794 when, in fact, it was not. But, I mean, it just was not presented clearly. So I want to know who is responsible. Is the housing authority and the Housing Corporation responsible for the communication on this new methodology and new system, or is it ECE that's responsible? If ECE is responsible and is going to control that communication, then you need to do a better and a different job of that. If it is the housing authority, well, then I guess you still need to coordinate with them how you are going to do this, because I could provide you with copies of this correspondence that went out to this individual and it had everybody in a seniors' complex in quite a bit of concern for a number of hours until they could get clarification on this, but it's just unnecessary stress, and communication needs to be very, very clear for everybody and it needs to be consistent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree totally with Mrs. Groenewegen. I think that we need to make sure that our communications are clear and concise. I actually would appreciate it if you would share with me that letter so that we can have a look at it and see if perhaps we might be able to provide some clarification to people who are in similar situations, and make sure that they understand what is happening. If there has been an incident that has caused concern, we'd like to be informed about it so that we can try and address it on an individual case-by-case basis if necessary.

The goal has been, right now, to try and coordinate communications. The local housing authorities, or LHOs, are still the ones who are responsible in the communities for delivering the program. As of April 1st, ECE will take over. So we have been working with most of the LHOs quite well at coordinating the communications, and ECE has instituted a 1-800 phone number. There's been an extensive advertising campaign and community radio and newspapers. This 1-800 number, we can deal with aboriginal languages should people want to speak their own language when they call that number, and we are doing our best to try to make sure that we get accurate information out there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. We're on page 9-35, activity summary, income security, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a quick question in regard to compensation and benefits. In 2005-06 you had \$2.083 and then in 2006-07 you've got \$3.166 with an increase of \$1.083. Can the Minister indicate what the increases are for, and I'm assuming that there will be more positions available or staff required. Can the Minister explain that, please? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under that heading, there's some money that was an increase in employees' salaries and benefits. There's no increase in staffing in that number, and there was a slight reduction because of the centralization of human resources.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. So this one, if I understand correctly, the Minister is saying that's because of the UNW agreement, I guess. There will be no increase in staff under this program? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: In the \$3.166 million there would also be...Just a second while I clarify something with Mr. Devitt.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the \$63 million there are 10.8 additional staff and that's including the regional staff for the delivery of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy Program. I can't say how much of that staffing increase is in the \$3.166 million because it will be in more than one place in the \$61 million. But in total under this activity, there is an increase of 10.8, which is entirely for the delivery of the public housing rental subsidy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just so I understand correctly, there will be an increase of 10.5 positions. If so, where will these positions be applied and when will they be applied? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The increases are all across the Northwest Territories. There is an increase of .75 in Fort Smith; of 1.5 in Hay River; .25 in Fort Providence; .25 in Aklavik; .25 in Holman; .25 in Inuvik; .25 in Tuk; .5 in Deline; and .25 in Norman Wells. As well, there would be the three positions in the North Slave, which includes: .75 in Rae; .25 in Whati; and 2.5 in Yellowknife.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to understand why they need the increase of all these

people to deliver the program. Can the Minister give an example on why it's required to increase the personnel? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our staff will see an increased number of clients because of the transfer of the program. There are 1,300 clients right now who are receiving the public housing subsidy that are not currently being seen by income support workers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Pokiak. Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask the Minister in terms of the proposed initiative by the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, in terms of the national childcare in terms of he's going to look at \$1,200 to each family for children six years old and under, including income support. Some of our people in the region will be qualified for that funding, should it go through. Are there any positions in the department to look how that would be seen as income support, and some of the people may get a clawback on that issue? So I just wanted to get some general indication from the Minister in terms of how his department, or the government, is looking in terms of that program if it does come into force. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under our current regulations, the program, as its been laid out so far for us, the payments would be considered income and it would be included in a family's income before we calculated what amount was owed for support. We're in the process, as the Member knows, of taking a look at our Income Security Program structure and before that program is proposed to come into effect, we will have had a chance to discuss with the standing committee what approaches we should be taking to the whole Income Security Program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do recognize that we are going into a review of the Income Support Program in the North here and that we give some serious consideration in terms of this benefit to the families. I'll wait until we come to completion of that when it runs through the documents, I suppose, in terms of the meetings, and the presentations, and what we come out with. I'm going to save my comments for that committee when we have time to have some discussion.

The other one I want to talk about is the clawback on the IBA benefits. I know there's some legal opinions on it on both sides of this House here in terms of that clawback and in terms of income support, and the IBAs are considered a transaction and a business deal and that, in this day and age, it's considered by this government as income, more of a business. It just scares me in terms of interpretation of how this IBA came out, and depending what side of the bed you wake up in terms of how you're looking at it. However, for us in the region, it's deemed as

a treaty right, or treaty obligation, under our treaties under our land claims. So I want to say that until we hear differently right now, because of the benefits of working on our land, that the land was given up in terms of having rights, go on there and work on it. There's different various legal opinions on this. So to have a benefit be clawed back, in terms of what the government sees, is something totally foreign to us. So I just want to state I know I'm going to get opposition from the other side, which is okay, but the people in our region say that the IBA benefits are a treaty obligation that flow out of our treaty that flowed out of our land claim, and our land claim is a modern day treaty. So the only way we had these types of avenues open up to us is because of our land claim or because of the treaties. That's the evolution of these IBA agreements, otherwise oil companies won't do anything if we had no treaties or no land claim. You know, they wouldn't have any legal obligation. Also, that's where it came up from, and I said there's various legal opinions out there and, you know, they put a lot of weight on them by both governments, aboriginal governments and the territorial government, in terms of how they see these IBA payments. I'm going to say it again to the history of our people, if we didn't have the treaty or the modern day land claim, also known as a treaty, these impact benefit agreements I don't think they'll be coming out. So those arrived from these types of negotiations, but that argument can go on for another day. I am just letting the Minister know that the feelings from my region and feelings from my people that because of these impact agreements and having the right to work on the land, there are benefits to it. You pay out on the one hand and the government is concerned that it's income. So they make adjustments to their funding in terms of services and programs to people who deserve it. I am not going to speak on it too much because we will have some more time in terms of having that type of discussion. I just want to state that, for the record, Mr. Chair. There are some serious concerns about how the income program is looked at. I am happy the Minister is doing some changes to the framework policy and to the way the programs are run. I am going to just leave it at that. I don't require any response from the Minister, if he chooses not to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent, would you like to comment?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand what Mr. Yakeleya is saying and I have no doubt that we will have, someday, a very extensive discussion about this topic, particularly like as we get into the whole review of the Income Security Program.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya. Thank you. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess while I have another chance on this page, I am going to say this once again. That is, I continue to be baffled at why the government is insistent upon us spending \$1.3 million to carry out the Public Housing Subsidy Program when today it's already being delivered for what we are delivering it for. Now, because it's under ECE, we are going to have to spend an additional \$1.3 million. Mr. Chairman, I can't put it any other way. It's quite wonky or quite, I'd say it's ill-conceived, however you want to put it, but something just does not add up for me. I try to think about what little money we have to go into housing and why we would rush out and spend another \$1.3 million on a program and on

the delivery of a program that is already being done is beyond me; really it is. I think there had to have been some more work or whatever to try to come up with a better way, a more cost-effective way of delivering this program. Obviously, there wasn't. Again, Mr. Chairman, I don't need a reply from the Minister. I have heard it all before. Again, I am not very happy with how this is laying itself out. I am disappointed in the fact that we have to spend \$1.3 million more today than we did yesterday to deliver the same program. It makes no sense. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. On page 9-35, activity summary, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$63.897 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-36, activity summary. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister, public housing subsidy is \$32.566 million. I saw the pages preceding this one, the \$14 million from CHMC. Is that included in this because the money from CMHC goes towards public housing subsidies? So it's \$32 million, plus the \$14 million that's going into it from CMHC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We receive some \$14 million from CMHC as revenue, but our expenditures are \$32 million for the housing subsidy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: So the money from CMHC is going to sunset in so many years and it will keep going lower and lower. Are we going to be filling in the gaps to keep delivering the same programs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is entirely up to this Legislative Assembly, whether or not that continues. At this point, that is what is happening and that is what we are expecting to happen in the foreseeable future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to the Minister. Some of my colleagues were commenting about the delivery of programs from ECE. Has there been any contact or discussion with the local LHOs to continue delivering the same program maybe on a contract basis? They are doing it right now and they are quite good at it. Are there people from ECE working with them to learn how to work the program, or is there a possibility that you could contract some of this work to local LHOs? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There may be cases where that situation happens, but we are trying to move to consolidate all of our income security programs into one office as we move forward. One of the areas we are looking at through the whole income security review is how our subsidy program should be structured. So there may be changes in the future to our subsidy programs, but that's something we are going to work with the Members of the Assembly on in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod. Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I came up with one other question I would like to ask the Minister on this \$1.3 million. I don't know if he can answer it, or if the Minister of the Housing Corporation might have to answer this one, but what are the people who were servicing the public housing subsidy going to be doing? Is there a corresponding decrease in positions in the Housing Corporation? Where does that show up? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will refer that question to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we roughly calculated that we have lost about five PYs. Out of that, we are just reassigning the responsibility of those programs. All it does is eliminate a portion of the work that was being done by the LHOs, which was looking at how you assess a client and determine what their rent is going to be because they are a low income client and you gave them the bigger subsidy. So now the responsibility will go to ECE. We will still have to have people come in and fill out an application to become our tenant. Once they become our tenant, they take the application, they go over to ECE and say I have filled out an application, I have been approved to move into a unit, which is owned by the Housing Corporation or local housing authority.

So what we have done is we basically, in house, moved responsibilities around. There is no loss to LHOs, but we did have to cut back in certain areas on our O and M for our headquarters and regional operations to fill in that gap. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, no, if there was a loss of five PYs, that's the first I have heard of it. I guess something would have to give, if you are looking at an additional 10.8 under the umbrella of ECE. I have a couple of questions that flow from this and I am wondering if the LHOs supported this move. That is the first question. The next question would be because the responsibilities have changed, will it affect the funds that flow to the LHOs? Will their funding be impacted and were they supportive of this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I believe I heard Mr. Krutko say, there was no change to the LHOs, but perhaps we should refer to Mr. Krutko for a response on that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes, we did have regional workshops with all our LHOs and also we've had workshops with the total territorial organization. So we have consulted them before we came to this point. Again, for us it's just a change of our responsibilities. We used to do more client relations and dealing with social clients, but I think through that we'll be able to shift our focus more on the program delivery side, and also in our communities, LHOs will now focus strictly on managing, and maintaining, and improving the upkeep of our facilities. It's just a matter of shifting our focus. I think now, with that, we're hoping to devolve more authority to our LHOs through collection and looking at making sure that we do the improvements that we have to to bring up our housing. We think with that shift of focus it will improve our services, but also we'll be able to focus more strictly on the property management side than dealing with the social side of housing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So basically I think what I hear the Minister saying is that the LHOs are going to continue to do what they've always done with the exception of looking after the social housing policy. What I didn't hear the Minister say is because the responsibilities are diminished, are they going to see an impact in their funding, or is the funding going to remain the same now that we're going to let ECE handle what they were doing for an additional \$1.3 million? So nothing really has changed, Mr. Chairman, aside from the fact that now we have ECE handling the social housing program and it's going to cost us an additional \$1.3 million. That's the only thing that I've seen that's changed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, the functions of the organizations are changing and there's not a duplication of the functions. The delivery of the assessment for subsidies is being delivered by the workers at the government service centres, so that's where we need to have the ability to do that in those service centres. The funding was transferred from the Housing Corporation, so I think that, over time, we will find ways to streamline the way the operations are delivered and, as we did with income support when it was revised in the mid-'90s, I believe that in the long run we will find ways to achieve the savings that Mr. Ramsay is looking for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay. Thank you. Activity summary, income security, 9-36.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Activity summary, income security, I'm talking on page 9-37, activity summary,

income security, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$9.051 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Information item, activity summary, income security, active positions, 9-39. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: For clarification, Mr. Chairman, in the other positions you have, I think in the income security you have two in the Sahtu, and I'm just noticing in Fort Smith you have seven. It's similar to the population in one community where we have in a region of five communities you have two, and one community you have seven. What's the justification to that, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Fort Smith is not the community of Fort Smith; that's the region of Fort Smith. That would include a number of communities as well, but it's called the Fort Smith region.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I didn't mean to cause any ruckus or confusion. Will the Minister in the future list the Fort Smith region, what's the region of Fort Smith? Is it Lutselk'e, then we go to another region, or is it Fort Res, or what is the region? So when you say Fort Smith region...Right now for me it says Fort Smith. So that's for clarification there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're just following the regions that are accepted, or the names of the regions that are accepted within the government. I believe the Fort Smith region includes not only Lutselk'e, but Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Hay River, Hay River Reserve. So there are a number of communities that are included in what's called the Fort Smith region.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope that when the Minister is going through the review, that they would update the regions so it reflects the Members on this side here, otherwise when we look at the budget, we'll get a little bit confused in terms of which region we're talking about. So if you could update it. I hope so, anyway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will pass that comment on to my colleague, the chair of the FMB.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll have to take it into consideration at some point here in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: No, it's okay. The Ministers are going to take it into some consideration, Mr. Chairman, and at least reflect what the Members here represent. All I'm saying is have some reflection. Mr. Minister named Fort Smith as a huge region and there's some confusion. So I hope they have some true reflection of the budget here because it does get confusing and this is where some energy and passion comes up. Same as the Inuvik region when we look at that. So anyhow, I just wanted to make comments to that, Mr. Chairman, in terms of have some true reflections of the regions when you're doing the budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I referred to Mr. Yakeleya and we'll keep the comments in mind.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya. Thank you. Page 9-38, activity summary, information item, income security, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-39.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Activity summary, information item, income security, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-40, information item, student loan, revolving fund. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering, by the looks of the numbers that are presented in the budget, it looks like you get on a yearly basis about \$5.5 million in loans that are granted, but you're only taking in \$3 million every year in loans that are written off. Is there ever going to be a time where we need to increase the ceiling or the limit on the revolving fund? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will probably have to increase the authorized limit in the not-too-distant future. We are taking a look at, over the course of the next year, making some adjustments to the repayable loans, for instance, and perhaps increasing the overall limit in loans. So I would expect that within the next little while we will have to consider raising the authorized limit, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Just one other question on that, Mr. Chairman, and thanks. Forty-three thousand dollars in

loans was written off in '04-05 and then your projection is for \$200,000 to be written off in '06-07. I'm just wondering why the increase and, yes, why the jump from \$43,000 to \$200,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's no science behind this. It's just a number that's put in as a holding figure, because it moves significantly every year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one other quick question. In terms of the loans that the Government of the Northwest Territories has to write off in student loans, is it comparable to what, say, the Canada Student Loans Program with the Government of Canada or some of the provinces might have, or are we on the high end? Where do we rate in terms of loans that we write off? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We could probably take a look at that. The sense is that it's low, but we could certainly take a look or ask other jurisdictions for some other information and do a comparison as a percentage. I'd be happy to get that information and provide it to the Member at a later date.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Page 9-40, information item, student loan revolving fund.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Before we go to page 9-41, I'd like to recognize, in the gallery, Mr. Mervin Gruben. He's the deputy mayor of Tuktoyaktuk and also employee of EGTL in Tuk.

---Applause

Page 9-41, information item, detail of funding allocated to education authorities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Information item, 9-42, education authorities, active positions by region. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, on the bottom of the numbers here, you have a little note that says the above information has not yet been finalized with the education authorities. Can I ask the Minister what he means by that sentence in terms of having these numbers in front of us? Does it make much sense in terms of putting the numbers here, or is this the estimate? What information hasn't been finalized, I guess, with the education council to these numbers here? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Yakeleya is referring to 9-41. Does the committee agree to go back to 9-41? Thank you. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, until this House has considered the numbers, we can't share the information in this detail with people outside the House. So that's always put in the book the same way. As soon as we've finished concluding this department, we'll give the numbers to the authorities in draft form, but they don't get it finalized until the House actually votes on the budget because that's when the numbers are actually finalized.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Okay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Page 9-41, information item, detail of funding allocated to education authorities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-42, information item, educational authorities, active positions by region.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-43, information item, education authorities, active positions by community.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-44, page 9-45, information item, college funding allocation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Yakeleya.

AN HON. MEMBER: You have to ask to go back.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. YAKELEYA: What page?

AN HON. MEMBER: We're on 46, but you have to ask to go back to 40.

MR. YAKELEYA: Yes, Mr. Chairman, can I ask to go back to 9-44?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Pardon, Mr. Yakeleya?

MR. YAKELEYA: Can I ask to go back to 9-42?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The Member is asking to go back to 9-42. Does committee agree? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of the two positions that seem to decrease in our region from 86 to 84. What's the justification for taking the two positions out of...

AN. HON. MEMBER: ...your number's down.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It most likely relates to a drop in enrolment in the region.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, the Minister says more likely to relate to the drop of students in our region. I find that hard to believe, because there were a number of students that graduated in our high schools and people want to come into the Sahtu region. It would be interesting to know that the Aurora College didn't have an instructor in the Sahtu and Tulita until January. Even then we had a hard time getting a place for an instructor. So it's not that you dropped the numbers because we couldn't get an instructor in September. So you can't blame it on our communities because they didn't have an instructor and not having the proper housing and all that. So there's no interest after awhile. So you know, to blame it maybe on the lack of students in our region is a poor excuse for dropping two numbers from the Sahtu. So again, is that the real reason for dropping these numbers here? Because we didn't get an Aurora College instructor in Tulita, we were supposed to have one in September, it didn't happen until January when they actually flew into Tulita. So there were no programs in our community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These numbers here are Sahtu DEC employees. So these are divisional educational council employees, and all we've got here is an estimate based on the numbers. The actual numbers may be different, depending on who the DEC hires or which teachers the DEC hires. But based on the school population, this is an estimate based on the formula of how many teachers they will likely have in the region next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

AN HON. MEMBER: More info later. Ask him to give you more info.

MR. YAKELEYA: Yes, I'm going to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would give me some more information on these numbers in the regions for the fluctuation between low and high from year to year. So if he could give me more information on this and we'll continue on with the other pages ahead. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I'd like to reinforce that these are just estimates and these aren't...These would be Sahtu DEC employees. My last answer I said this referred to teachers, but it's not teachers. This is the total staff complement of the DEC, and it's almost impossible for us to say exactly how many staff they will have next year. But I'd be happy to share a copy of the formula with Mr. Yakeleya, as well as enrolment figures for the region. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Can we go back to page 9-45, information item, college funding allocation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-46, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a short question on the university and college entrance program item there. We see that the budget for that, for 2004-05 was \$267,000; next year it was \$295,000, but in fact last year the actual expenditure was much higher. I do believe this is the area that we're in somewhat of a dispute with the federal government. I'm just wondering about the budgeting process. Am I to take that \$437,000 for last year is an anomaly and, if not, why would we not just budget it accordingly, or are we expecting to see the expenditures for this year to go back to what was budgeted for last year? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I'll take this opportunity. Yesterday I was asked how many students are funded through this program on an annual basis. The number ranges between 30 and 40. So just to provide that information to the House.

The \$437,000 included an amount that was carried forward that had been unexpended in previous years. The budget that we get is \$295,000. We would hope that the federal government would continue to allow any funds that may be unexpended to go forward so that if we don't actually spend the entire \$437,000 this year, if there is a demand next year, we will be able to access some of those funds. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Just to follow up on that. If we do have \$437,000 this year, why don't we just put that down as a budgeted item? I don't know if I understood that answer clearly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because if the \$437,000 all gets spent this year, then all the commitment we have for is \$295,000. If the entire \$437,000 is not spent, we will ask the federal government if we can carry the unexpended amounts forward, which might increase the \$295,000. But we would expect that we'll probably spend most, if not all, of the \$437,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: That's fine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Page 9-46, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm just going to follow up, Mr. Chairman, in terms of the question Ms. Lee has been asking about the university college entry program. Ms. Lee is probably going to ask for some logistics here in terms of for the Minister in terms of the requirement and eligibility and the length that First Nation students are

receiving in the Northwest Territories in terms of the funding. I don't know if they get extra in Alberta or they get additional funding for a student who is maybe taking a master's program, or six-year program, or degree program, or four-year program, or additional program. How is this funding, is it sort of...Do you get at least eight years of funding from this program here, or you get four years? I know some students go to university in Alberta and they get additional funding, or they move down there because of their requirements. So how is it here for the First Nation people in terms of the funding? Are we getting short-changed, are we short-changing our students here who are applying for this program in the North? More questions in terms of that for the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if this program is the same all across Canada. The rules for the program that are provided by the federal government to the GNWT is that this program is one-time funding only for a maximum of one year and it can only be used by someone who will in that one year achieve an education that will get them into university or college. So it's one-year upgrading and the student must be able to achieve college entry at the end of it. It's one-time only. So there isn't any six or eight-year availability of this money. Thank you, Mr. Pokiak.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. The Minister is, and I had some discussion on this before in terms of the university college entry program, and the more the Minister was talking to the previous federal Minister and talked to possibly other colleagues within the federal government in terms of our previous MP in terms of this program. I know it's being administrated by our government and that the Metis are...Again I'm going to ask the Minister in terms of the Metis, they're not being cited as being eligible. It says aboriginal on the advertisement in the newspaper, but, when you look at the program, it's under the program of Department of Indian Affairs under the Indian Act, I guess, or Indian policy that has only First Nation and Inuit students eligible for upgrading here. So I want to ask the Minister in terms of some type of outline or guidelines in terms of how or when can he talk to his federal counterparts in terms of having them look at this policy that will include the Metis students who want to take upgrading. I know there are lots in my region who want to take upgrading in this program, yet they feel discriminated. No fault to the GNWT; it's just a program that they're administrating. It's a federal program. How can he alleviate some of those concerns and get our people back into the schools, into the university and college institutions to start their career out as...

AN HON. MEMBER: Charter challenge.

MR. YAKELEYA: ...whatever career they choose to make? Mr. Chairman, there was some talk from the Metis local in Tulita and other regions that they could look at a Constitution issue here in terms of a Charter in terms of the federal government's program. So I want to ask the Minister here in terms of this program here, there's one piece of the pie that's missing in terms of how this program is really truly, I guess maybe, in my eyes should be implemented. You're missing one brother. You've got

the Inuit and the First Nations, but you don't have the Metis people eligible or falling under this program. So I want to ask the Minister in terms of his sort of general plan in terms of how do we work to rectify this issue here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Yakeleya is absolutely right; the program is right now missing Metis brothers and sisters who should rightly, I think, qualify for this program. As I said earlier today, I would expect to, fairly soon, write to the Minister responsible and encourage the Minister to take a look at how aboriginal people are defined by the Government of Canada and make the case that Metis people should be included in this course. I would welcome the support and the active intervention of Metis locals across the Territories and would encourage them to write to the new Minister and support me in that position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, certainly I would throw my full support behind the Minister in terms of he and his department looking at ways to get the Metis to be part of this type of funding. I'm not going to go into the reasons why we should continue supporting our students. We always talk about having our children going to school and attending university and colleges. So I want to ask the Minister, you know, in terms of going to bat, so to speak, on behalf of our Metis brothers and sisters, that would he consider taking this issue to his colleagues across the floor of the Cabinet to consider, you know, with the other Metis locals in the Northwest Territories possibly look at a court challenge in terms of taking the government to court to look at a Charter issue in the Constitution on this very issue? The Metis people are no strangers to asserting their rights and looking at equality within this beautiful country of Canada and here in the Northwest Territories. It's just a matter of this government stepping up to the plate and seeing if there's a possibility that they would consider. So I would ask the Minister if he would give some consideration to this thought and bring forward to his Cabinet for some discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly will discuss with the Minister of Justice whether this government can take that kind of position. I am not sure we can for this kind of program. I know that the Department of Justice has a line in their budget for aboriginal court challenges, which would, I believe, be available to a Metis local to take on this kind of case. There may be that kind of option that a Metis local may want to pursue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Also, Mr. Chair, there is funding in this government here, but I think Mr. Dent may be right in terms of the scope and the authority and the

legalities between this government and biting the hand that feeds us in Ottawa.

I think, Mr. Chair, that this government has to go to bat for the people of the Northwest Territories. It has to go to bat for the Metis people and support them in terms of this program here because it's an issue that is going to be ongoing. I am not too sure how far we will go, but I think the Minister needs to work with the Metis organizations down the valley here and work in terms of looking at the court challenge and possibly making a plea to his Cabinet to look at a charter or a challenge for programs we are administering. This is only one. I am not sure how many others we administer on behalf of the federal government that has some form of discrimination. It's a touchy issue. So I am going to leave it at that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think Mr. Yakeleya mentioned one of the other important programs where we see the same situation, and that is in health benefits. I certainly take the opportunity to discuss with my colleagues whether or not we should be following up on this. I think it would more likely be an opportunity for one of the Metis locals to take on the challenge using our funding if that is available through Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Page 9-46, information item, work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-47, information item, work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-48, information item, worked performed on behalf of others, \$6.444 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Committee, return to 9-7, department summary. Page 9-7, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$259.205 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. POKIAK: Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Considering all that I said about the Yellowknife Facilities Review Committee and all the issues surrounding it, I just want to put on record that I agreed to vote on this budget subject to my concerns about that, and I think it's a difficult issue that the Minister has to work to resolve sooner than later. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Page 9-7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Yakeleya.

---Interjection

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the contract services, does the department keep, in terms of northern professors such as George Blondin, Rene Fumoleau, do they contract them to come into Aurora College facilities and campuses to do lectures? I know George is going throughout Canada in terms of the universities. They have him in universities to do lectures. Do they have that under contract services?

---Interjection

MR. YAKELEYA: I am getting guidance from my colleagues here, Mr. Chair. I want to ask that under contract service, because I wasn't here yesterday. I apologize.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the \$40,000, that sort of contract wouldn't appear. It would appear, perhaps, under grants and contributions because the college looks after its own contracting. It is entirely possible that the college may enter into that kind of contract.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not to go too far into this, but could I ask the Minister to give me a list of professors, such as George Blondin and Rene Fumoleau and other professors down the Mackenzie Valley, that go into the colleges to talk to the students about some of the northern issues? That's good.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask the college to supply us with a list of guests or lecturers that they use, or have used, in the course of the past year and provide that to the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya. Thank you. Page 9-7, operations expenditure summary, \$259.205 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Now can we turn to the volume II of the main estimates, page 7-5. Infrastructure acquisition plan, education and culture, tangible capital assets, total capital assets, \$21.252 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-6, infrastructure acquisition plan, education and culture, infrastructure contributions, total infrastructure contributions, \$1.315 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total activity, \$22.567 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-8, infrastructure acquisition plan, advanced education and careers, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A quick question on the Green/Brown House Apartments replacement in Fort Smith for total prior years of \$2.7 million. What is the status of the project on that? As far as I know, when I was last in Fort Smith, really nothing has changed. What's happening? For 2.7 I will paint it.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I could ask Mr. Devitt to see if he has a current update on that project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, the project is actually a replacement of the Green/Brown House Apartments and they are under construction, currently under construction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Devitt. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So why are they still there? Were they supposed to be demolished and rebuilt, or are they being rebuilt? I know they are still there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Part of the project includes the demolishing of those two buildings and they will be demolished this summer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So nothing has happened, which I just stated earlier. Where has that \$2.7 million gone? Is it still in the coffers of the GNWT, or a contractor?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The project is being built, or the replacement of the Green/Brown House is just on the other side of the elementary school and they are 18 two-bedroom units that are under construction and the project is quite well along at this point.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Now I know where you are talking about. So actually the Green/Brown House is still there, but in actual fact while the original ones are still sitting there, they are just building in a different location is what is happening. Okay. I know where you are coming from now. So what are they going to do with these other original units? What's going to be happening with those? Are they going to be torn down?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The town had asked that we made sure that the buildings got demolished as part of the replacement project, and we have agreed to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Page 7-8, infrastructure acquisition plan, advanced education and careers, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$7.130 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Infrastructure contributions, \$175,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total activity, \$7.305 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, \$29.872 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that the Department of ECE has been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): At this time, I would like to thank Minister Dent and his staff for appearing this afternoon. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you please escort the witnesses out? Thank you.

---Laughter

At this time, we will take a short break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. First off, we will ask committee, do we agree that we entertain the Department of Transportation at this time?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I would now like to call on the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Michael McLeod to please provide opening comments on his department's estimates. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's my pleasure today to present for your consideration the Department of Transportation's proposed main estimates for 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The Department of Transportation's core business is to operate and maintain the territorial public transportation system. The largest part of the department's proposed main estimates for 2006-2007 is \$57.8 million, excluding amortization, is committed to the ongoing day-to-day costs of operating this system.

The department's budget for 2006-2007 details an increase of 7.2 percent compared to the current year's main estimates. This budget increase is required to cope with traffic growth, a rise in the price of material and to address our aging infrastructure. This is required to ensure that we are able to continue to provide a safe and reliable transportation system for all users.

The Northwest Territories has experienced tremendous growth in resource development activities related to diamonds, oil and gas. This positive and welcome economic development has generated significant growth in our traffic on our transportation system.

Over the past decade, the traffic on the highway system has increased on an average annual rate of 3.3 percent. Last year alone, commercial traffic passing through the Enterprise weigh scale increased by 23 percent. In the air mode, traffic at our six largest airports has arisen to an average annual rate of seven percent for the past two years. This traffic growth has meant that more maintenance effort is required at our airports and on our highways. The cost to operate the transportation system has also grown over the last year due to rising materials, along with more competition for construction equipment and contractors.

The third significant factor that has contributed to the proposed addition to the operating budget is the age of our infrastructure. The highway system is aging with many critical structures in need of rehabilitation or replacement. These structures include culverts, bridges and roadway services. Additional funding is being proposed to address these critical needs.

The Department of Transportation's capital acquisition plan is focused on rehabilitating and replacing aging infrastructure while preparing the transportation system for the continued rise in traffic associated with resource development. For the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the department's capital acquisition plan has a total budget of \$46.3 million. It is important to point out that over one-third of our proposed total capital budget is funded by the federal government under cost-sharing agreements.

In the highways budget, the main estimates for 2006-2007 propose a capital budget of \$35.6 million. With the help of a 50/50 cost-sharing agreement with the federal government under the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, the department has scheduled \$22.5 million in reconstruction projects on Highways No. 1, 4, 7 and 8, as well as the Mackenzie Valley winter road. These highway system upgrades will improve the system's capacity to support the influx of traffic associated with increased oil and gas and diamond activities. It would also help to prepare the transportation system for the heavy traffic that will be generated by the Mackenzie gas project.

In 2006-2007, \$6.2 million is proposed for Highway No. 1. These improvements are directed towards the Kakisa River Bridge and granular resurfacing, grade and drainage improvements from kilometre 188 near the Highway No. 3 junction to kilometre 457 at the Liard ferry crossing.

On Highway No. 4, the department has proposed \$2 million for reconstruction on the highway between Prelude Lake and Powder Point. Highway No. 4 carries a high volume of traffic all year round. This route becomes even more critical during the winter months with heavy resource traffic related to the diamond mines. In the current winter

road season, the joint venture that operates the winter road is projecting that 9,500 truckloads will travel up Highway No. 4 to resupply the diamond mines. This number represents the highest resupply volume to date for this route.

Efforts also continue on Highway No. 7. There is \$2.5 million proposed for improvements to the highway between the B.C. border and Fort Liard.

The department plans to continue the reconstruction of the Dempster Highway with a proposed budget of \$5 million. The work proposed will be focussed on the highway section between Fort McPherson and the Yukon border.

Since the year 2000, the department has been working on improving the Mackenzie Valley winter road and extending the operating season through the installation of permanent bridges over stream crossings. Significant improvements have been made. As pointed out by the Member for the Sahtu, you can now drive this route and balance a cup of coffee on the dash without spilling a drop.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Whoa!

---Applause

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: While this compliment may be a bit of a stretch, I am very proud of the improvements the department has made. In 2006-2007, the proposed budget for the Mackenzie Valley highway winter road program is \$11 million, which will include the beginning of the construction on the Bear River Bridge project.

One of the goals and priorities of the department is to improve connections to the communities. This year the capital plan proposes \$575,000 towards improvements to the Nahanni Butte, Jean Marie River and Hay River Reserve access roads.

Aside from the major capital reconstruction and the increasing maintenance efforts that I have mentioned, the department's capital program also includes more than \$8 million in capital projects aimed at preserving highway infrastructure on lower volume, non-reconstruction sections of highway. This expenditure will help keep our highways in good operating condition and is critical to maintain the investment value of the highway system.

In the Airports Program, the capital acquisition plan proposed \$9.8 million for capital improvements and rehabilitation at NWT airports. This funding includes \$3.4 million for rehabilitation and replacement of two key buildings at the Yellowknife Airport; construction of a new combined services building to replace the existing maintenance garage is entering its second year; and the expansion and renovation of the passenger terminal building will enter the third and final year.

The other major project in the Airports Program is the completion of the rehabilitation of the runway, taxiway and apron at the Norman Wells Airport. The federal government, under the Airports Capital Assistance Program, will contribute \$4.6 million of the \$4.9 million cost this year.

The Department of Transportation has two successful programs dedicated to local transportation in our communities, the Community Local Access Roads

Program and the Community Marine Infrastructure Program. With a small combined budget of \$431,000, the Department of Transportation will assist communities to build trails to points of local interest and to construct facilities for local boating activities. In 2006-2007, these programs will assist many communities, including Fort Resolution, Lutselk'e, Paulatuk, Whati and Wekweeti.

The department will continue to pursue an all-weather highway down the Mackenzie Valley. We have recently presented "Corridors for Canada II" and "Connecting Canada" to the federal government calling for additional infrastructure investment. In addition, working with other provinces and territories, the Council of the Federation has released a National Transportation Strategy titled Looking to the Future. We will continue to join forces with the Council of the Federation, other Ministers of Transportation and organizations such as the Business Coalition to lobby the federal government to extend and renew transportation infrastructure programs. As the honourable Minister Roland acknowledged in the budget address, it is a time to seize opportunities and maintain momentum. The department will continue to pursue the challenge to make the Mackenzie Valley highway and other system improvements a reality.

Infrastructure improvements enable economic activity, improve access to resources, lower the cost of living and provide a better quality of life for our citizens. The transportation system is essential to our continued economic success and there is a clear need for the transportation system to meet the demands of a growing economy.

In summary, these are the highlights of the Department of Transportation's main estimates for 2006-2007. The proposed budget provides for the continued safe and reliable operation of the territorial transportation system on which the people and the economy of the Northwest Territories depends so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister McLeod. I would now like to ask Mrs. Groenewegen, the chair of the Governance and Economic Development committee to provide committee's response. Mrs. Groenewegen.

General Comments

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee then met with the Minister and his officials on Monday, September 26, 2005, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Transportation.

Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget of the Department of Transportation since the committee reviewed the business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$83 million in operations expense and \$46 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2006-2007.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates and budget-planning cycle.

Deh Cho Bridge

The Deh Cho Bridge is being built through a public-private partnership arrangement between the GNWT and the Deh

Cho Bridge Corporation. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation will raise the capital, design, build, operate and maintain the Deh Cho Bridge. The Government of the Northwest Territories will pay the corporation for the bridge over a 35-year period, largely from toll revenues collected from the traffic crossing the bridge and savings from discontinued ferry operations and winter road construction.

A significant cost increase to construct the bridge could impact and increase the bridge tolls the GNWT has to collect to pay for the bridge. An increase to the tolls may mean communities north of the bridge may have to pay more for goods and services than current prices that are already high due to transportation costs.

In the 2006-2007 Main Estimates, the lease costs for the Deh Cho Bridge are projected to rise from \$57 to \$70 million dollars. The government says that this figure still keeps the bridge costs within the permissible toll rate of \$5 to \$6 per tonne. The committee, however, is concerned about delays to this project. For example, traffic is not expected to roll across the bridge until 2008, three years later than the department's original projections. Also, there are only two remaining contractors left to bid on the bridge construction and the increasing costs for steel to build the bridge is of a concern.

Finally, the government has just added greater expense and further complications to the project by taking over the operations of the Fort Providence ferry and its employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That concludes the Department of Transportation committee comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I'll now go to general comments. Oh, sorry; before we get to general comments, we'll ask the Minister if he wishes to bring in witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. The Minister wishes to bring in witnesses. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed, we'll have general comments after the witnesses arrive. Thank you.

Thank you, Minister McLeod, for bringing in the witnesses. If you could, Minister McLeod, please introduce the witnesses that you have with you this afternoon.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my right I have Mr. Russell Neudorf, deputy minister of Transportation and Mr. Daniel Auger, the assistant deputy minister for Transportation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Welcome, Mr. Auger and Mr. Neudorf, to our proceedings this afternoon. We'll now go to general comments on the Department of Transportation's main estimates. General comments, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to offer a few general comments to the Department of Transportation and I just want to, first of all, recognize the fact that the department is spending \$46 million on capital projects and \$83 million in operations expense and that's a good thing.

I think that's an improvement in terms of capital spending in comparison to years before, and I think this is the kind of department where I'd like to see more and more capital money going into, because this is the stuff that government is supposed to do. Government needs to build highways, and bridges, and airports. Those are the capital investments that we need to make, especially in the North at this time.

I wanted to also recognize the work of the Minister of Transportation. I'm not completely unable to compliment Ministers and I know that the compliment has to be given when it's due, because a lot of money that he's gotten has come from the federal government. I guess it might have something to do with the fact that there have been opportunities for federal investment because so many of our projects rely on federal funding that when we do get them, credit is given to the Minister.

Also, I'd like to tell the Minister that I appreciate the progress he's making on Highway 3. I could almost see the end of that road and I want to make sure that the Minister invites us all when he finally finishes that. I want to say, for the record, that I support the Mackenzie Valley highway going all the way to Tuk and I hope that the Minister will continue to work on that and sooner than later, and hopefully not too far distant in the future we can all drive from one end of the Northwest Territories to the other. I used to talk to the former deputy minister about how my mother and I enjoy driving from Halifax to Victoria and, well we drove from Halifax to Yellowknife and for her birthday, I think her 70th birthday. I asked her what she wanted to do and she wanted to finish the country. So we drove to Victoria and back, and I told her for her 80th I'd take her to the Yukon, but she said we have to do that sooner than her 80th and I'm hoping that my mom's healthy enough to be around for a long time. I think and I hope to be able to drive her to Tuktoyaktuk without having to go to the Yukon. I really want to state, for the record, my support. I think some of the economic projects that are happening in the North gives us an opportunity to do that and that's always a good thing.

I want to, once again, state my support for the Deh Cho Bridge. I've been a supporter of that since the beginning and I know that, because of the rises in commodity prices and the international markets that we have to reckon with, it is a difficult time, but I don't know if we will ever have a really good time. As long as China keeps going for the next 50 years, well, I don't know if we're going to see a decline in steel prices and such, but that's the kind of vision I support. At least when we build highways and bridges one good thing about it is that they can't be built in Calgary, you know. They've got to be built here and they stay here. I support that. I do understand that we have to do due diligence to make sure that we have control over the cost and we do it as economically as possible, but when you look at the weather system changing lately, I don't know if we can rely on winter roads anymore. I mean, we have to really work hard to replace much of the winter roads into all-weather roads and I think our industries around Yellowknife especially rely on that, and I think it could be the case for all of the Territories. So I just want to speak in support of that.

Overall, I can't wait to get the Highway No. 3 finished. I had the opportunity to look at the back rooms of the airport renovation. That's pretty impressive and I know that the changes happened January 1st and I didn't hear

anything about it. So I guess the transfer and the changes to the security system there worked out well.

So I believe that I'm going to have some more questions as we go through the detail, but I wanted to make that general comment and tell the Minister to keep up the good work. I know I don't bother him very much, but I do watch what's going on and whenever I do go to the Minister's office, I usually get very good service. So I want to take this opportunity to thank them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee, for the general comments. General comments. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Indeed, the Department of Transportation has huge implications for constituents I represent. I've got six communities in my riding alone and the main connect is a highway system or a winter road system, especially during the winter months. So that's how we get our freight in and out of almost all the communities. I see that there's been some dedication in the upcoming budget to address some of the concerns that were brought out by the Minister when he toured the riding, particularly Nahanni Butte's concern of continuing the creation of their access road and trying to get some resolution there, as well as addressing Jean Marie's contract to maintain that road, even upgrade that access road one step higher to classify it as a highway. I will be looking at that, as well as allowing other communities to participate in some of the contract work that's in and around their communities.

That's something that's picking up steam, is the ability to negotiate contracts, particularly with highways around our communities. Like Fort Liard, I brought up that negotiated contracts that are being reconsidered and, well, I'm finding out that the government is actually doing away with them. They're talking about consultation, but they're actually doing away with negotiated contracts and practices even before a review is occurring. But some of the communities are saying hey, wait a minute, this is our traditional area and we're requesting preferential treatment. Particularly just getting back to Fort Liard alone, they're saying that that highway that's going by Fort Liard was originally intended to go, like, 30 kilometres away from the community, but through some arrangements with the federal government at that time, there was a commitment for a lifetime contract for that community to take care of their roads in their proximity and if that's what people want, I think that our government should start looking at it.

In questioning last week in the House, I brought up the whole concept of set-aside policy, like an aboriginal set-aside policy. I know now we've got, like, negotiated contracts, but I still think it's a thing of the past because things are changing and lots of Members are questioning. Okay, these are public dollars, why aren't people having opportunities to bid on it? What the people are saying in the communities is that we're here, the majority of our communities are aboriginal and we should have the opportunity for that work, for the building capacity, that there are companies for proximity work. One of the ways the federal government does it, in questioning the Premier, he said, well, it's not really one of the best systems out there, but it is a system entrenched in public policy that people know that because you are a majority aboriginal population community, that you will be given preferential treatment for those contracts. So when it's entrenched like that as a public policy, then people know

what the government's doing. But with the negotiated contract policy, you know, I can see where there's room for questioning why you keep giving it to that same business over and over, but with a new way of modifying or doing things, I think we will have a tool in order to negotiate with these 100 percent aboriginal communities and we could look at for some of the communities like Fort Simpson, which is like a 50 percent aboriginal, there's a way to massage that policy.

But, I really think that we have to look at this because the contracts and particularly the highway contracts, like around Fort Simpson and indeed Fort Resolution, that if our communities aren't allowed to participate in the contracting opportunities, then it's jobs that aren't there for our people and we're moving toward an income support economy. That's like going backwards, especially with unprecedented growth. We're proud of our North, but we keep forgetting that we've got economic depressed regions even though we've got skyrocketing growth in the capital, for instance, but out in the regions for the most part one could argue that we're still economically depressed. So we do need this work and these contracts, and our people make the argument that we're still not sustainable because every time we find a good worker, we train them, they're either taken up with government or move into bigger industries like Diavik or anybody else. It's not a case of not being able to perform up to the expectations of that negotiated contract. We're striving our best and the communities are striving their best in order to provide the service, to build up their businesses, but as the workforce passes through them, as our communities train workforce for other people, like only because they can offer better salaries and better compensation packages that people aren't staying around long enough and the ones that are staying around long, are quite a long time like in the case of the ferry situation in Fort Simpson. Just because our negotiated contract kind of held them back from providing fair wages too. They had that contract I don't know like 10 or 12 years, for whatever reason the workers were paid not too much from what they originally started at 10 years ago. But those are just some of the barriers that are happening, Mr. Chair.

In terms of a negotiated contract, the communities are saying, well, we still want those opportunities and we still want to build up our businesses. One of the biggest barriers is that, sure, we're supposed to be building capacity, buying capital equipment, but it's taking much longer than we thought. Now like in the case of Nuni or the joint venture in Fort Simpson and now they're looking at going out with public bid, but then their equipment is too old now so it's hard for them to even consider making a competitive bid, particularly if they're going to have to replace older equipment. I'm not too sure about the government procurement rules for contracting this out, or how old the equipment's got to be, but that's what's happening. Due to various barriers and pressures, the equipment wasn't being replaced adequately. Quite often when a new contract comes around and they know that contract is for certain, then they will invest into new equipment.

Just with that, I have to speak in favour of continuing the negotiated contracts right now because I know that our negotiated policy hasn't changed. We haven't had adequate consultation. We said we were going to go out into the communities. In fact, that's what's going to happen this coming year, but yet, Mr. Chair, we're already

changing the guidelines without having it in place adequately. Let's face it; transportation is one of the huge income providers to our regions and to our communities, especially in the Nahendeh district. We say that we're a fixed economy, and what a fixed economy means, Mr. Chair, is that the pie, the amount of money that's going into the community that's generating and stimulating revenue and income is always the same. If we take out a chunk like this, then it's money that goes somewhere else.

So I guess if anything, Mr. Chair, if I can get the Minister to comment on the negotiated contracts, why is it changing so suddenly? We thought we had some time. Just with that, then, Mr. Chair, thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member for his comments. We certainly have worked hard with the communities over the last while to have some good discussion on the projects in the different areas, and different regions, and some of the work that's going to be happening and taking place in Nahanni. We still have a lot of discussions that have to take place, including with the community of Jean Marie on their public access road. We certainly recognize our role in terms of generating employment through our contracts.

I think it should be clear, first of all, that we haven't moved away from negotiated contracts. In fact, we just signed a fairly big contract in the Member's riding and I think we have around three or four other fairly large contracts where they were negotiated. A lot of them are coming to an end. When we do have the negotiated contract process take place, though, we want to ensure that it's there for a reason. It's not there just to generate employment. There is a part of the policy that requires us to look and see if there's going to be skill developed, capacity developed and also assets acquired, and that there's equity participation by the company or the community. So there are a number of things we take into consideration.

In the last while, it's become increasingly more difficult to sit down and just negotiate a contract in the different communities. There is a significant amount of companies that have developed over the last while. They want to acquire some of this work. They're not happy that they don't have an opportunity to at least bid on it or discuss it. So it really makes our rule very difficult. So while we haven't moved away from negotiating contracts, we want to be certain that there is a benefit and how long does it take to develop that benefit. The intention was to build capacity fairly quick, and in some cases we are reaching close to 16 years, 15 years, 18 years. So that's the situation. We really have to review the situation to see what we're trying to achieve.

In some areas of the Northwest Territories where there are settled claims, especially with the Gwich'in, there is an MOU that spells out exactly our targets that we want to ensure that the Gwich'in have in terms of contracts. In other areas, especially in the southern areas, it's a lot more difficult because these are the areas in the Territories where there is no settled land claim. However, there is a large number of the private contractors in the southern part of the Territories, and also in the Sahtu we've seen a huge increase in the number of contractors. So it makes it very difficult just to go out and say we're

going to negotiate the contracts, because it's not going to be that easy anymore. There are more people playing the game nowadays and we have to try to give everybody a fair chance, a fair opportunity.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on the list for general comments I've got Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make a few comments here to the Minister. I want to probably get a response after. The first one I want to ask the Minister is in his opening remarks I want to ask about the impaired driving programs. You made a contribution to the school in our St. Patrick's School I believe last year and that you made an in-kind donation to it. I think I asked him last year in terms of what type of support or what kinds of programs are run in the Territories and if he could look at other schools in the Northwest Territories to see some kind of a campaign in terms of that, because it's very serious now with the increased volume of traffic in all of the Mackenzie Valley on our roads and here in Yellowknife or down the whole valley. We need some kind of a campaign. I think it is very powerful and it would work very good for us, but it needs to have some attention in our region. If he would consider looking maybe when we go into detail in the budget in terms of improving some education programs that will help our people in our region and other regions that didn't receive any type of support. That's one question I want to ask the Minister for. I have other general comments, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do try to support, wherever possible, programs that would bring awareness such as alcohol or impaired driving, and we also support other safety type of initiatives that are out there, whether it's with a different department or organizations. The Member is quite correct; with the new legislation under the Motor Vehicles Act, we did work with the Students Against Drunk Driving and most of them, I think, were at the St. Pat's School. We did make a one-time contribution for an event I think they hosted, but most of our support was in terms of material, promotional material and things of that nature.

We'd be pleased to work with the Member if there is an organization out there that wants to embark on the same type of activity.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Minister McLeod. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Minister. I'd be happy to work with you on several fronts on this one here in terms of educating our young drivers and educating our people in the Sahtu communities and other communities around the North in terms of having safe vehicles on the road and having responsible drivers on the road because our winter seasons are shortening, but we're also taking advantage of our winter roads and it's important to have education in our communities that driving while under the influence is not okay. Any impaired driving issues should be taken very seriously by our people and by this government. So I'm very happy the Minister responded in a positive manner.

Mr. Chairman, I want to talk about the opening comments by the Minister and he's right on the button, Mr. Chairman, he's right on the button in terms of having a cup of coffee on our dashboards in the Sahtu region and not spilling one drop of coffee on our roads. So I don't know if the coffee is frozen, or it's a fresh pot of coffee, but I had that comment made to me by an elder in Fort Good Hope named Charlie Barnaby, telling me he wanted me to make it known to the Minister and his staff for his compliments of 100 percent improving on our winter roads in the Sahtu region. So the elder wanted to pass that along to him. That's his words to the department.

So I wanted to talk about the safety of the public transportation system. Of course, we have our winter road system only about three months and again we're going to ask for a type of increases in the budget for safety signs. We have big trucks coming through on a time schedule, and sometimes they have to meet deadlines and because they're getting paid by the load or the time they drive up into our communities and they do what they have to do to make a quick turnaround. So if there's an increase in safety in motor vehicles and safety signs and the patrols along the way for wide load trucks and fuel trucks, there's also safety precautions put in place that would see that we have safe driving practices on our winter roads.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of contracts in our region, we only have three months of seasonal work. So when we have this work we fight hard for our own contractors who have assets in the Sahtu region to at least have a fair chance of receiving these contracts, because we have three months of work, that's all we get. We don't have an all-season road that comes in and out and they can work on a yearly basis. If anything, we'll get small little contracts in our community, which is grading the roads and cleaning up parts of the airport like that. So we don't have that advantage of having an all-season road and our contracts are only there for three months and once you have them, you make the best of them because if you lose the winter road contract, you might as well just pack up your bags and move to another community and start getting into other areas. A lot of our people are home grown boys who put sweat and equity into their companies. You know, they're going to stay there, they pay their taxes there. So I appreciate the Minister having some flexibility in discussing things like that and other ways we can work, but yet, at the same time, be fair across the Northwest Territories. But we need in the Sahtu that we pay the prices of the Sahtu, so it has to give some consideration to that.

I have also asked the Minister to continue to take back to his office an idea that maybe my former MLA talked about having a regional office of highways into the Sahtu. I know our operations are right out of Fort Simpson now and our other operation head office is out of Inuvik. So I'd like to bring some of the Transportation offices into the Sahtu to maintain some stability and connectedness and connecting all our communities in this area here.

Mr. Chairman, the increase of resource development in the Sahtu region has also indicated for the increase of volume of traffic. I believe the Minister has done some good work in working with the oil companies to see that we have more stable roads and more stability and safety here. So I'm going to leave it at that.

The airport traffic increased also in the past couple of years and I wanted to ask the Minister later on in terms of the shelter in Colville Lake. We still don't have a shelter. I know there's some plans to put something there. We don't have a facility. So if they have any ideas, maybe he can ask his counterparts if they have any ideas for these Novel manufactured homes. Maybe that's something that can go into Colville Lake's airport for show and tell. I think that would be a fine example of the wear and tear of any type of use of a project.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister also, he talked about the reconstruction of a project in his opening statements in terms of work done around the Mackenzie Valley winter road. How is that going to impact this year and next year? I will have some more questions in the detail, but just maybe some general comments now.

My last comment to the Minister in terms of the Mackenzie Valley all-weather road is that I wonder, again, if he would consider going back to his federal counterparts in saying that we like the idea. Some people right now are half and half on the Mackenzie Valley winter road. Some support it and some don't support it. The idea that they do like is that let's connect the Sahtu communities first before you push the highway south or north. Do not push it from the south up to Tulita or to the Wells. Push it in the communities first; connect Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita, and part way into Deline. But not to push it from the south going from Wrigley to Fort Good Hope. Otherwise our people will not have the chance and the capacity to compete with southern contracts on the winter road. Let's connect the Sahtu first, and let's set these priorities. So I want to ask the Minister to give him some of these things to think about in terms of if he wants to respond, then I'll allow him to. Or it's up to you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Member's made a number of points that I'd like to respond to. First of all, I guess, I'd like to give reassurance to the Member that we made several submissions to the federal government and we will continue to follow through on these initiatives, working with some of our colleagues in other jurisdictions on the initiative to make the Mackenzie Valley road from Wrigley to Tuk a reality, and also to follow through what we're hoping is going to be a new initiative program, and we're waiting to see where that will fall out in terms of this new government continuing to bring it forward or not. Either Corridors for Canada II, which is a short-term request for additional monies, and additional monies on a short term is just to look at upgrading and continuing the work that we've already started with our Corridors for Canada initiative. We've applied for more money through a second document, \$162 million, and this includes money for more of the bridge work, more of the grade work and things of that nature to extend the season. So we're quite a ways yet from building an all-weather road and we certainly commit to having those discussions with the people from the Sahtu to let them know where we're at and what's included in those plans.

With the safety issue of the Mackenzie Valley winter road, it's something that we've talked on a number of occasions with the Member and have discussed ways of how to try to deal with that. We started putting signs up. We've committed to putting 600 signs on the Mackenzie Valley

winter road. This is our second year of doing so. Over the last winter season, or I guess the summer season, a few of our signs came down because of frost heaving, but we've put all those up and put it in properly, and we'll continue to work on that.

We plan to have our highway patrol go in as many times as they did last year. We also will be having our highway patrol going with the Transport Canada people and do inspections on dangerous goods. So there's a number of things we're going to be doing to ensure that the safety factor is there on the Mackenzie Valley different road. We've also incorporated a speed limit for that road, so there is now the ability for the RCMP to go in and also for them to stop and charge people for speeding.

The regional office is something that we've moved away from. It was a request that came forward several years ago. We've looked at it. The system we have in place now is very cost-efficient, it is working well. In terms of having enough work for staff to be in the region year round is something we're very challenged to be able to get them to have enough work that will keep them busy year round. So it would either mean leaving our office unoccupied for a portion of the year, or reduce staff, or find additional tasks for our people to do. So we're still looking at it and it's not something that's high on the agenda, but it's something that we're going to have to be able to demonstrate to our Cabinet colleagues that it's something we need to do and we've got enough work there.

Regarding the Colville Lake shelter at the airport, there was a shelter at the airport. We moved it out of there. We got rid of it because it was vandalized and destroyed. We are now doing some work at the airport. We're extending the apron and the parking. So we will now take another look at it and some if we can, at some point, replace that facility and look at a facility that maybe will be a little more durable or something of that nature.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Minister McLeod. Next on the list I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to highlight one aspect in general and that is the sustainability, the reliability and the sustainability of the winter road connection into the diamond mine country, Mr. Chair. This winter we've, I think, kind of all held our breath a bit because of the extremely warm weather, the high water, the high levels of snowfall which have severely delayed the opening of this road to full roads. I understand it's open to at least partial loads now and everyone is hopeful that this cold weather that we're receiving now will stay with us, I think, and strengthen the roads and enable what I understand is a record volume of traffic to make it up the road in time.

Mr. Chairman, I recall discussions about this vital winter transportation a few years ago in the Assembly, and with, I think, the same kind of strategy, if you will, that we're seeing winter road bridge construction up the Mackenzie Valley. It was known that the portages, of course, and the stream crossings are the last to freeze and the first to thaw and, therefore, the weakest link in the road. A similar condition, of course, exists on the diamond resupply road off the Ingraham Trail. I'm wondering if the department has been spurred somewhat by this year's warmer weather, whether there's been any sort of revival of the ideas expressed a few years ago where would it

make sense for the sustainability, the reliability, and the length of season for the diamond winter road to put some bridges in the stream crossings at least in the southern part of that road so that we're going to be able to ensure the winter resupply? So that's what I wanted to ask about, Madam Chair. With the advent of this trend, warmer winters, are we going to need to make more of an investment, or try to see more of an investment into the winter resupply road to the diamond mines?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member brings forward a real concern, and that's the weather that's been really hampering all our winter roads and all our ice bridges. In some areas, especially down the winter road, the weather has really challenged us. This is the first time that we've ever had to bring in spray pumps from the south side of the Territories into that area to build up the ice so that we can get access into the community and into some of the area for resource development.

We're also being very challenged in the building of the road to Wekweeti, and it's become very obvious that it's going to be a concern this year about the ability to get that road completed. We've seen a number of pieces of equipment go through the ice and we've also seen some of the creeks that were frozen three weeks ago now are flowing already. So it really brings concern about other areas.

The concern on the roads to the diamond mines is something also that is of concern to the diamond companies. It is now open to partial loads. I think it's up to 60 percent, or around that area, for the load capacity that they're bringing in. It's allowing them to haul partial loads and get fuel into the mines and it's probably still cheaper than flying it in, but it's a concern.

Whether bridges are going to be the answer, I don't know. A good portion of that winter road is built on ice and we would really have to take a look, or they would have to take a look at a different route. I don't know if that's possible to put in all the different bridges. We are looking at some small initiatives to see how we can deal with ice conditions.

There are companies out there that are coming forward with different creative innovative measures of trying to look at making the road last longer or getting on the ice faster. We are trying at least one of them with a company that's producing mats to see if that would work to save from mud being tracked onto the ice. There are also mats that have refrigerated units attached to it. So there's things out there that we're looking at with interest.

But overall, we haven't looked at bridges for the winter road. We have, though, been looking at increasing and looking at the all-weather road portion on the Ingraham Trail and see if that would make sense to extend that portion. That's the extent of what we're doing there, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, okay, I'm sure the companies are going to be anxious to look at this

over the next few years just to see what kind of a trend there may be. The impact on the economy for at least the whole of the North Slave region in the event of a very dramatic failure of that trail would be quite substantial. So there is a lot at stake in maintaining the sustainability of this road. So I would certainly be interested in hearing from the department, at any point, just what kind of measures could be undertaken in there.

Madam Chair, that's really the only thing I have under general comments. I have some more specific questions that I will undertake when we get to detail. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Madam Chair, I should also mention that we have been working with Transport Canada on a climate change study and the effects on transportation systems. We had expected it to be finished a little earlier this year, but it keeps getting deferred. We're looking at having this report completed early in the new fiscal year, April, and we'll be pleased to share some of that information with the Members.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. General comments. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess just a broad perspective on the department's opening comments that I just want to let the Minister know that it's good to see that a lot of the new highway infrastructure improvement initiatives are in cooperation and in partnership with our federal government, and it's good to see that the department has initiated a lot of these good initiatives because they do comprise of a large component of retaining our current infrastructure in a safe and reliable mode, I guess. I know that a lot of the monies that the Department of Transportation is putting into our highway systems is through the federal government. It's good to see, and I hope that they keep up that kind of lobbying effort and meeting with our federal government to renewing a lot of these funding initiatives and seeing some more improvements in our highway systems.

I guess I just wanted to touch on stuff like initiatives where the Corridors for Canada I and II that where they are talking with the federal government on initiatives of this type, that all the highways in the NWT be included in these funding arrangements, because I feel that all highways in the NWT are corridors in the NWT and every highway has just as much weight on importance to residents as any other one, whether it's for commercial use or just for private use.

Just on the topic of negotiated contracts also, just to stress some more points that my friend from Nahendeh was talking about on the importance that these negotiated contracts have to our smaller communities and our more remote centres that rely heavily on transportation contracts coming down the pipe to the community, and the money actually being directed into the community and staying with the community. Again, you know, just earlier today I was talking about the government's new outlook should be one that splits up the policy into two different perspectives, one for the smaller centres and one for the larger centres. Because I can see the government's rationale in that the negotiated contracts are not really fair in Yellowknife, Hay River, Smith, Norman Wells, and Inuvik and places like that, but all the other 27 smaller

communities, you know, negotiated contracts are really valued to the communities as a whole. A lot of the community elders, youth, and people who want to stay in the communities rely on these contracts, and I just don't see the fairness in just going across the board and having one negotiated contract policy that applies to every community in the NWT. I hope the government kind of embarks on this new outlook, I guess, for the revitalization of small communities. I know a lot of the companies in these small communities that work with negotiated contracts and they've been going on for years, but a lot of those negotiated contracts have a lot of merit in why they should be retained as negotiated contracts. A lot of these educated people in a capacity that is built within these communities assists people in moving into the diamond mine industry, or the oil and gas industry, and they don't usually stick around in the community too long once they're qualified either through heavy equipment operator course or something of that nature. It's a continuous capacity-building initiative, I think, for smaller centres, and I think that's something that the government should place a lot of value on in keeping our small communities in the loop and not having these large corporate giants coming in and plopping themselves down in the community just to win a tender or something like that.

With that, again, I know that the Bear River Bridge project in the Mackenzie Valley road program is at the \$100 million mark and that includes the beginning of the construction on the Bear River project. I just wanted to ask the Minister, what portion of that \$11 million is directly attributable to the phase one or phase two of this Bear River Bridge project? I just want to get some perspective of how much the department is actually looking at spending this year on the project.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I guess, first of all, we have to agree that a lot of the responsibility for investment in our roads lie with the federal government. We need investment from the federal government and will continue to bring our vision of what roads can be developed, or should be developed, in the Northwest Territories over the long term and work at trying to secure some funding. Any of the programs that may come forward we have developed a lot of that work. We've scoped it out, we've done some of the costing on it, so we are quite ready to move forward.

In the latest submission to the federal government we focused not only on areas in the Northwest Territories where there was a considerable amount of resource development. We have also looked at other communities where the resource development activity is not there in terms of large traffic volumes or aircraft, but we also took into consideration that there needs to be good roads, safe, reliable roads, and a lot of these roads are starting to get on in age and have to be reconstructed. We included Highway No. 6 and we've included in part of the budget that was in our proposal, a \$2 million amount for a number of years, four years, because we feel that these communities need to have the roads, the good quality paved roads, such as that we're developing on some of the other highways. It also factors into the cost of living when you have roads that are...We have the good, safe, reliable system in place.

The negotiated contract issue is something I had responded to Mr. Menicoche on. I recognize and I'll say again, I recognize that there's still a considerable need in our smaller communities. A lot of times these contracts provide a lot of the training that happens in the small communities, and I know for a fact in Mr. Villeneuve's riding the company there has always done good work and has produced a lot of good equipment operators. But at the same time, it's been a revolving door for the diamond mines to pick the cream of the crop and the guys who want to go on and try other things.

We should point out, though, that negotiated contracts is something that's been focused on usually for the smaller communities. I don't believe we have any negotiated contracts in the larger centres. We kind of restrict them to the smaller centres. The larger centres have a good, healthy market or a good...There is good competition there and I don't think they would appreciate it to go in and negotiate a contract. Having said that, there are still areas of the Northwest Territories where there are a number of small communities where there's a lot of activity happening, and there's a lot of small companies and small aboriginal companies that are competing with each other. What has happened in some situations, it's made it really difficult for the MLA to sign off a support letter when you have three or four different companies asking you all for support, and it puts, sometimes, some of the politicians in a very awkward situation.

The Bear River Bridge, we have committed I think it's \$11 million. It's a portion of the \$25 million that was earmarked for this bridge and this is to pay for some of the engineering, the geotechnical, some of the work that has been, work that's required to do on this bridge, and also the start of the actual construction of this bridge. That's what this budget amount is for.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on the list I have Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I'd like to start off by showing my disappointment in regard to the Minister's opening statement, remarks. Basically I'm talking mainly about the access road to source 177, to the gravel source for the community of Tuktoyaktuk. This has been going on for quite some time now. You know very well that in Corridors for Canada I, there was \$15 million identified to source 177 for the access road. Looking at some of the research information that was provided to me, Madam Chair, I have a feeling where that money has gone to. I won't name any MLAs sitting here, but that money's gone to another riding that I'm sort of disappointed in. Highway No...well, I'll call it Ingraham Trail, anyway.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Highway to Weledeh.

MR. POKIAK: So that's my disappointment in regards to the Corridors for Canada I where the money was identified.

Further comments, Madam Chair, is I am glad that the department is looking at trying to access funds under Corridors for Canada II and also connecting Canada from coast to coast to coast. I will continue to lobby to get this access road built to source 177, Madam Chair.

With regard to the proposed \$2 million for the reconstruction on the highway between Prelude Lake and

Powder Point, I'd like to ask the Minister if there was any money or any funds requested by the diamond mines for the reconstruction of this access road, or with this road. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think it's important that the Member is clear that the \$15 million he's referencing is the number that was scoped out as the actual cost at that time. It's a 22-kilometre road to source 177. We did not get any money from the federal government. There was no money allocated through the SIF program for that project. There was some discussion about a cost-sharing arrangement where we would pay. It was two-thirds, one-third, and the Northwest Territories was required to pay two-thirds. We didn't think that was a fair arrangement, so we didn't accept that offer. So there was not, at no time was there money allocated through the Corridors for Canada that we used for constructing a road anywhere else. That road is projected to cost about three-quarters of a million dollars per kilometre and there was, I think, to date, one kilometre done on it and that was done by the community. The community has been applying for money through the community access road program at \$50,000 a year, and they use this money to construct that portion of the road.

As to the diamond mines requesting, Madam Chair, I'll have Mr. Neudorf respond to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$2 million a year for Highway No. 4 is for reconstruction upgrading of that road. It is in response to the general increase in resource, the diamond mine related traffic. Along with the high level of traffic, there's other use on that road. That's why it's a high priority for the department to address the safety issues. It's a bit of a challenging road from the geometric on it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up on that regard, I'm just wondering, I'm assuming, or I will think, that that access for that road on Highway No. 4, the main supply system would be in the wintertime when the diamond mines are operating. I'd like to ask the Minister, what about during the summertime? Like, I'm not from down here, so I just wanted to get a sense of how much traffic is actually going into that area in the summertime? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, I'm not sure we have the numbers readily available. We'll refer the question to Mr. Neudorf again.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do have traffic volumes that we collect on Highway No. 4. The volumes are quite high close to Yellowknife, in the

order of 700 to 1,000 vehicles a day, which, relative to the rest of our highway system, is very significant. It stays high until, well, I guess drops off as you get further out, obviously during the summer months. During the winter months, the resource traffic continues to be high and is increasing every year. That resource traffic obviously travels down the entire length of the road. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Just to move on to another one on page 5 of 7 in regard to the community access road. Looking at the numbers in the main estimates, I'm just wondering, there's been a reduction in the amount of money identified for that program. Is there a reason why that is, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, yes, there was a reduction. All our departments across the government had to do a one percent reduction and this is one of the programs we did take some money from.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. How long would it take in order for a community to access these dollars? I understand they're identified right now, but how long would it take for a community to access a program like this?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, our program is operated on an application basis and we normally like to have our applications fairly early in the fiscal year and a response is given quite quickly. We have a very high number of communities subscribing to this program, so it usually is something that the budget is all used up in most cases, most years. But the turnaround is fairly quick. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to go back to the Corridors for Canada II and connecting Canada, can the Minister indicate exactly when they will be able to hear a word from the federal government on these two documents for funds? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is a very good question. Madam Chair, we are only at the stage where we are making contact with our federal counterparts. As the Member is aware, there has been an election recently and the Cabinet was appointed in the last little while. We have to give some time for the Members, the federal Cabinet Members, to get briefed on their departments. We're hoping to make contact fairly soon, sometime within the next little while. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just the one last one here with regard to the airports. I just want to find out under this department with the Airports Program, they take care of the runways of the airports. Thank you. Before I ask my question...I'll ask, before my time is up. Recently the contract in Tuk was issued to a local business, so I'm just wondering if that contract is saving the department any money. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, the contract for the maintenance of the airport in Tuktoyaktuk had gone to public tender. There was a local company that was successful and is doing a very good job. We are still discussing with the municipality regarding the facility, the garage and some of the equipment. As to any cost-savings, there is not a significant amount.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the Minister and his staff for being with us this afternoon. I, too, have a few general comments that I'd like to make and I share the enthusiasm of some of my other colleagues about the money that is going into the infrastructure and the work that the department is doing to see that through. I guess this year the total is \$46.3 million and I think the Minister has to be commended, and his staff as well, for the work they've done and going out, and I know some of this money is cost-shared with the federal government. So going out there and getting the work done and getting some of these projects off the ground is really good for the future of the territory and I, again, want to say thanks for the hard work you've been doing on that regard.

A couple of things that I just wanted to mention while I've got the Minister here, I haven't mentioned the Kam Lake access road yet during this session, but I guess today is as good a day as any, seeing that it was in the local newspaper again today and it was part of the land transfer that went to the City of Yellowknife. I'm just wondering, maybe the Minister could just comment for me where exactly this road fits into his department's strategy, or if they're planning to work with the city on development of this road, or what exactly is happening there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, yes, I certainly would agree that the investment in our transportation system is something that we have to continue to ensure is adequate and we have at last filed a lot of resource development across the North and it's really strained our infrastructure and we continue to try to keep it to a level where it's safe and reliable.

The Kam Lake access road is a project that has been ongoing. There's been a lot of discussion over this bypass road, I guess you would call it. The city and ourselves have had discussions as recent as today. We still look at

the costing of this road and who would actually pay for it. In the land that was transferred over to the city, there was a corridor allowance for the city in the land. There is still some concern as to how we would secure the funding for it. We have it in our long-term needs and it's not something in our immediate future. We still look at it as somewhat of a municipal road and we continue to have those discussions. The city has some new dollars. We're not sure if they're at the stage of they're going to be looking and considering to spend this money on a bypass road. So we'll have to continue talking to them about it. We've done and looked at an internal engineering study on it, so we have firmer costs, but that's probably as far as we've taken it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Minister for the update. I guess if there's an opportunity here, I think there is an opportunity, even if the city -- and I know it was just the corridor that was set aside -- if the city doesn't have the ability to sell the land to finance the building of the road, perhaps another way to look at this, and I make this suggestion that we do need services, and I'm talking water and sewer, extended out to the Yellowknife airport and the sooner the better. Now, there may be an opportunity with the City of Yellowknife to have the Government of the Northwest Territories look at paying for the road in exchange for some work that the city could do. There could be a different way to go about this to get that road built and to get services out to the Yellowknife airport. I'd like to ask the Minister, has his department, has the Minister of Transportation, has he had any discussions with the city in regard to addressing the need for services at the Yellowknife Airport? Thank you, Mr. Chairman...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer to that is yes. We've had a lot of discussions with the city. We've also had a number of discussions with some of the tenants who are on airport land. The concern for water and sewer services is something that is a growing one. Right now, fire protection on some of the new infrastructure that is coming up is proving to be very costly as you have to be able to have so much retention of water available in the case of a fire. Our leases do not specify that we will provide water and sewer services. The city, up to now, has not been willing to do so and we've hired a consultant. We've set up a working group and have hired a consultant to look at the issue regarding the supply of water and sewer services, what is the best way to do this, what is the most cost-effective way to do this, and also how would it be paid for? So we have been working on this initiative for the last little while. We've just gone out to the public process of securing a consultant. So that's something we will be doing.

As to sitting down with the city discussing a trade-off or paying for another portion of infrastructure someplace else in the city, no, we haven't done that. Up until now, we have been looking at the Kam Lake bypass road. We have our reasons for extending that road up to a certain point. The city would like to see it extended right through into the Kam Lake area. We still have to have a lot of discussion over that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to hear the Minister say that. As long as the dialogue remains open and consistent. Like I said earlier, where there is a will, there's a way. There may be different approaches that might be able to satisfy both the Government of the Northwest Territories and the City of Yellowknife. So I would like to see you continue your work in that regard.

A couple of other things that I just wanted to mention. I know there is two million additional dollars going into Highway No. 4, the Ingraham Trail. Over the past 10 or 12 years, there has been a substantial amount of dollars go into that road. It's used extensively for resupply of the diamond mines. This government continues to put money into that road and rehabilitation of that road, and I would just like to ask the Minister how do we answer to the residents here? These big trucks are using this road every winter, tearing it up, yet every year we seem to be the ones left to pay for it. There is something about that that doesn't quite add up for me, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if there is any way we can try to get some funding from the resource developers that are using the road to help us pay for the reconstruction of the Ingraham Trail every year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the use of the Ingraham Trail, deterioration and wear and tear on that road I don't think is a lot different than some of the other roads we have across the Territories. The road upkeep and the road maintenance is our responsibility. In the case of rebuilding or investing more dollars for continued safety, straightening some of the corners and widening the roads, we are investing \$2 million a year. That money is part of the strategic infrastructure funding we have from the federal government. So it's quite difficult. I understand what the Member is saying, but that would be very difficult unless you were to start looking at a highway toll. I think that was something that was rejected some time ago.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the same could be said for a lot of our highways and the wear and tear that's coming as a result of resource development. Even Highway No. 3, I know some sections of it are new, and I know I mentioned this last year and I will mention it again, but that road in certain sections, it's like it was just laid on top of Jell-o. It's laid one year and the next year it's up and down. I know the Minister drives that road extensively; he knows what I am talking about. In certain sections, it's quite up and down like a rollercoaster. In some parts of that road, even in the summertime, I wouldn't say it's 100 percent safe. If you hit some of these bumps going 100 kilometres an hour, it could be dangerous in a small car, Mr. Chairman.

The other thing I wanted to just mention quickly so we can move into some other Members' comments, but the increased winter maintenance, I had to ask about this. Does this increased maintenance happen on statutory holidays? The reason I ask is the general public is typically travelling more on holidays. At Christmastime, on

December 26th to be specific, there was a foot of snow on the highway between Yellowknife and Chan Lake. It wasn't ploughed and this was all day. I am just wondering, does the maintenance stop on statutory holidays? How does it work on stat holidays?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, probably up until mid-January, when it came down to snowfalls and dealing with snow on weekends and stat holidays, we had to call our staff out on an overtime basis. With this new initiative, we are looking at having staff on Highways No. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 365 days a year. That includes stat holidays. This started January 16th of this year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few general comments. There have been some talks about studies and consultants and engineered plans for the roads. One of the roads that I think is going to be very majorly impacted by pipeline activity, and I think we need to be forward thinking and contemplate that that is probably going to happen, is the Mackenzie Highway between the new town and the old town in Hay River. I am sure the Minister is well familiar with the lay of the land in Hay River, but essentially to get to the tank farms, the more industrial section, the railhead, where fuel is offloaded and reloaded and all those sorts of activities, they all take place in the old town. The highway between the new town and the old town in Hay River is very narrow. There is quite a bit of traffic turning off at the airport. It has some large curves in the road and also the slope of the road is such that it seems like it wasn't built for big trucks loaded with materials and fuel. Before this becomes a really big problem, I would like to ask what historically has been done in terms of engineered drawings, studies or pricing on doing something to make that road safer for heavy traffic. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, we've had some general discussions regarding the infrastructure requirements for the pipeline and for resource development with Imperial. We've had some discussions as to what it would cost to ensure all the infrastructure is in place that would be required for this huge project. We've been able to price it out. We are estimating it's going to cost roughly \$100 million. Some of this discussion has also taken place through the socio-economic impact discussions that are being lead by ITI. As to the actual section that the Member is talking about, I would have to see if we have any information regarding concern in that area. I don't have that with me at this moment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some real deficiencies with that road in terms of traffic. There are a lot of people who live in the new town and work in the old town, so there is just a lot of vehicular

traffic, residents of Hay River on that road. Then you add to the mix the transport trucks that go there because the business they conduct is at the far end of that section of roadway. There is no turning lane at the airport, for example. You have school buses on there, a lot of different traffic. It's narrow and it's not sufficient. Even if there were not any further resource development and the pipeline didn't go, just the trucks that are hauling fuel, that are going to the mines, all those trucks pass through Hay River on that stretch of the Mackenzie Highway. I know the railway is planning a \$40 million upgrade and it runs parallel to the highway there. I think that if you don't have any costings or projections on that... That road belongs to you, Mr. Chairman. It belongs to Mr. McLeod. It may run through Hay River, but it's the territorial government's road. It needs some quite urgent attention if you don't have anything on the books on that.

Onto a different subject, there is reference to resurfacing some areas of road. There is capital being set aside for that. There is a lot of chipsealing that goes on over top of paved roads. One thing I have noticed, and I travel the highways here quite extensively, is that when roads are resurfaced with chipseal, quite often the markings on the road... I don't know what kind of paint it is, if it's supposed to just brighten the colour or it's supposed to be reflective or what, but it seems like the porousness of the chipseal seems to absorb the paint and it's not the same kind of contrast you would get on a paved road. I think we need to do something to address that because with the heavy traffic, anytime it has snowed and you get behind or even meeting oncoming transport trucks, there is quite a number of seconds there where you can't see the road at all, but better markings would certainly help a lot to be able to see where the centre line is and where the shoulder line is. I would like to register my complaint about the quality of the markings on the road.

Mr. Chairman, I heard just recently an article on the radio about provinces contemplating the demographics of people who are going to be on the road in the next while. The baby boomers are a large population which just keep moving through this world. It's a large number of people. In other provinces, they have been contemplating this change and when they are replacing highway signs, they are making them larger and they are making them more reflective. When they are replacing things, they are not going out and tearing every sign down and replacing it, but when they are doing their planning for highways and markings and that sort of thing, they are taking into account that the majority of drivers on the road in the next 20 years are going to be people who are older. I want to make sure that you're alert to that fact and we just become aware of that, so we don't have a certain type of system on southern roads and then we get into the Northwest Territories and everything is different. We need to be in sync, I guess. That's the point I am trying to make. I was wondering if the Minister was aware of that through his meetings with other provincial Ministers. Is he aware of initiatives to try to address this changing demographic in terms of highways and signage? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Before I ask the Minister to respond, can I ask committee members if they want to talk to each other, can they step out? At this time, I would like to thank Mr. McLeod. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, I have to commend the Member on her observations. Yes, there is no standard... The standard has not changed for the paint on the highways and normally what the Member is referring to is paint applied to a freshly reconstructed area and usually we get the second layer, which is done in the second year after construction. You will see that it's brighter and more reflective. But the first year after construction, it does go into the pours of the road, or the chipseal, and is not quite as bright. It's interesting that the Member would observe that.

In terms of the road in the community of Hay River, that's something we will make note of. There are other communities that also have raised certain areas in their community where they have concern where there is going to be high traffic volumes. Inuvik has done the same and Fort Simpson also has raised concern. We will continue to look at this. I am being informed by our staff that we haven't had the actual detailed discussions that are required to take place, or will be taking place, in terms of what is right in the communities, but those will be happening. We will try to bring that to the attention of the proponent and see if we can have some plan to resolve that.

Regarding the signs and larger lettering, that's something that there has been some general discussion at the national level. There is no new initiative in place. There are no new requirements in terms of new national standards to increase that, but it has been raised as a concern. There has been some general discussion and we will follow with interest. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a small point, but it continues to be an interesting topic of conversation, and that is Northwest Territories residents who I don't believe get reminders that their five-year term on their driver's licence expires. We've had so many of our people ending up on holidays and go to rent a vehicle and find out their driver's licence expired sometime prior to that and it just causes all kinds of havoc. I know it's difficult for the Minister to account for people's forgetfulness, but we used to rely on the goods services of the Department of Transportation to remind us when our vehicles were needing to be reregistered and also when our drivers' licences needed to be renewed. I would like to know the status of that initiative, which we didn't think was all that costly a measure but did provide a very important service to NWT residents. I would like to find out what the status is of those two activities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are planning to unveil our new design of our driver's licence hopefully sometime in late spring or early this summer. It's going to be a more secured document, a document that will be recognized throughout different jurisdictions in Canada and will be more readily accepted as a piece of identification than the previous one was. Somebody had asked about whether it's going to have a maple leaf. Yes, it will have a maple leaf on it. Is it a maple leaf or a bear? Oh, it's the flag on it. As part of

that, we will start to incorporate the reminders of the people who will be needing to renew their driver's licence. So those two things we are planning to bring forward fairly quickly, but it will more than likely be the latter part of the spring/early summer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next I have Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of comments I would like to make with a couple of questions for Minister McLeod. I like the work the Department of Transportation is doing. With the way things are going to be going the next few years, Transportation is going to be really affected by all the development that is going to be going on.

Mrs. Groenewegen spoke to the fact that Hay River is going to see an increase. The Minister mentioned that Inuvik will also see an increase. I know it's been a concern of the town council in Inuvik as one of the roads there, the bypass road, and then there is the road going down to NTCL where a lot of the stuff is going to get unloaded from the barge. I am glad the Minister mentioned that and it was something I was going to bring up.

I had a chance to drive along Highway No. 3, and hear some of my other colleagues speak about their concerns with Highway No. 3, and I found it to be a very good road. That's probably because I drive the Dempster quite a bit. I was surprised how wide the corridors were on Highway No. 3. I wonder if the Minister's department has much contact with the Government of the Yukon on their portion of the highway. Is there some talk back and forth as to how they can improve their portion? There used to be a time when you'd drive the Dempster and you knew you got into the Yukon side because the roads got a lot smoother, but now it's just the opposite; the NWT side seems to be a lot better.

I am glad to see that in the Minister's opening comments, he spoke to the fact that there is going to be \$5 million going into the highway. It can be a very dangerous highway in the summertime with the dust especially. The dust is terrible. We've had a few accidents on there. I am surprised there's not a few more because it is really bad when you drive that highway in the summertime. The dust is terrible. There is loose gravel on parts of the highway. They've widened the highway and maybe just because we can't get proper gravel or proper rock to cover the road with. I spoke on chipsealing and we'd love to see from Inuvik right to the Fort McPherson ferry, we'd like to see chipseal there. It would make driving that road much more enjoyable.

I'm a big supporter of the highway down the Mackenzie Valley, like most people I've spoken to a couple of times. I think it would really be a benefit to everyone down the highway. Right now, up in the Beaufort-Delta, we seem to have more in common with Whitehorse than we do Yellowknife, because we all have an opportunity to drive down there and Whitehorse seems to be the one that's benefiting from our big-ticket purchases, vehicles. We get a lot of stuff from Whitehorse. If you go down to Whitehorse at any given time, you see lots of people from the Beaufort-Delta down there. So the fact that we have a highway down the Mackenzie would really help. I think a lot more people would come this way, rather than go to Whitehorse. I think the Minister and his shop are probably the right people to have in place right now to push for our

highway. I would suggest that we name it after the Minister; McLeod Highway. It's got a nice ring to it.

---Laughter

I think the department is doing some good work. I have always had a concern with the Dempster, like a lot of people who drive it. I am curious, though. I heard a couple of my colleagues mentioning the Ingraham Trail and servicing the mines. I am just curious, Mr. McLeod, if the government, or Transportation, contributes to the winter road that goes to the mines, too. Thanks a lot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for his comments. The concept of connecting all parts of the Northwest Territories is something we really support, including connecting to the rest of Canada, and our submission is named after that whole idea of connecting Canada from coast to coast to coast. We will continue on working to improve the Mackenzie Valley winter road, regardless of what it ends up being called.

The Dempster Highway is a road that has been concerned in terms of the age and investment on that road, some of the maintenance that was deferred. We recognize that it's an area that needed significant investment and has to be reconstructed. There is also concern over some of the construction methods that were used a long time ago when this road was used, and the frost heaving that takes place on that road. So we've earmarked that this road be reconstructed over the next while at a rate of \$5 million a year, and we are working right now from McPherson to the Yukon border.

I agree there was a time when the Dempster Highway, the road on the Yukon side of the border, was very good quality and is not at the same level anymore. We've had a number of discussions with the Honourable Glenn Hart from the Yukon government. He holds the same portfolios in the Yukon government as I do. So we have the opportunity to have discussions and meet with him on a fairly regular basis. We've had discussions in terms of how do we improve the maintenance on the road overall; how can we avoid or how can we deal better with some of the real major storms that happen on some sections of that road; how do we deal with the high level of snowfall and get it off the road early; are there areas where we can share some of the responsibility? We have a camp and locations that are probably better suited for responding. So we will continue to have those discussions to see if we can come up with an improved plan to deal with the road, the Dempster Highway. We've also discussed about having our own forces doing it versus contract crews and the ability of who can respond quicker or better, which way we should be looking at going.

Highway No. 4 is something that was one area that was earmarked in our Corridors for Canada for investment. It was one of six areas that was identified to be impacted by heavy resource development. It was also, at the end of the day, when the budgets were approved, this was one area that the federal government indicated that we should be jointly investing in. Our responsibility for the Ingraham Trail, I should point out, ends at Tibbett Lake. The remainder of the road is not our responsibility. The

diamond mines share the costs on putting that road in every year and we don't pay for any part of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I only have a few comments to provide. I had the opportunity a little while ago to visit the airport and see the new development, the baggage handling area. I would like to say, from my perspective, I was happy and very appreciative of the tour that was offered of the facility. I think Ms. Lee and I were the only two Members who happened to make it down to see the conveyor belt system where the baggage has to travel through. I was quite appreciative of what was brought forward as I learned about what was being done there. I thought it was a great result that the baggage is being screened to ensure that it is safe, although I personally believe it's a little bit of overkill from the transportation point of view of Canada's position. But I see northerners are meeting the challenges that are being put forward to us, so I recognize that the ministry of Transportation is taking a higher directive through CATSA. I liked what was being done there.

To continue on the airport theme, I am also delighted to say that I like the development of the way the airport's been going. It was a major concern of mine that we shook the utilitarian look of that facility and bring in some windows, get some natural light in there and some feeling. I am seeing results of that, so I am very pleased the department is listening to concerns that have been raised some time ago, but they were heard, obviously. It has a nice personable feel to it. You don't feel like you were locked into a warehouse waiting for your plane. I am very happy to see that the department has responded. It's more of an enjoyable public place. I guess that's really what I can say.

As far as the highway is concerned, it's nice to see that Diefenbaker's dream from back in the '50s is hopefully coming to its last phase. I hadn't quite thought of naming it the McLeod Highway, but I certainly thought that; of either McLeods. The dream is finally coming true about opening the North to the rest of Canada. I think it helps to solidify our rightful place in Canada to show that we are truly part of it and the highway system, I think, demonstrates Canada's commitment to us as northerners and as Canadians.

Just quickly moving through, the last area I want to mention is the drivers' licence initiative. I brought this up a number of times with the Minister, as he knows. He's probably tired of hearing me bring this up because he will be quite happy when, as he pointed out, this spring he will finally come forward with a new driver's licence card. I am sure he'll say that's the last time I will have to hear from Hawkins on that matter. So he will probably be very happy.

I am quite pleased, as well, that the department is bringing back the service of notice renewal for this. I think that's a truly tremendous initiative being brought back because, through my perspective as an MLA and just a regular citizen, the people out there who I have spoken to feel that the revival of the service is a basic service. There is a feeling that this need is required. It's a small thing that people enjoy and serve. I am glad the Minister is listening.

I am glad the department is meeting the needs of the people. I think it's a basic service that our government can deliver in meeting the needs of the people. I am very pleased that that is coming back. I don't have to harp or lecture about how painful it was for people to remember after five years. They know the story and they are obviously finding ways to overcome the challenges where people sometimes forget their renewal.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, although I don't have a question at this time, I just want to say that I think it should be well stated that the Department of Transportation, from my perspective over the last little while, and I certainly see it as well in the future, is definitely meeting the needs of some of the requirements that we are putting here. From my perspective, that's all I am going to put forward at this moment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no real question there, but just to reply to some of the comments made by Mr. Hawkins, we are quite happy that we were able to get the baggage screening requirement all in place. The airport expansion has gone really well. There is just a little bit on the groundside that has to be completed and some other minor work that we are waiting to get done, including the walkway on the outside of the building. We are hoping to have all aspects of this facility completed by April of this year. I am not sure we have anything planned for an opening, but we certainly will offer to have more tours of this facility. I should also note that CATSA is doing a review of their security requirements again, so we are not sure what that will mean at the end of the day; whether it will mean additional security requirements in other airports or additional flights having to use the facility. We will have to wait until that happens.

The Mackenzie Valley submission is something that I think has generated a lot of interest. Also, this will require a lot of work, a lot of lobbying. We have a long way to go yet before that becomes a reality, but I am hoping that we will see something positive.

The drivers' licence issue I responded to Mrs. Groenewegen on this issue and indicated that it's something we will see in April/May this year and also bringing back the notice of renewal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I would like to recognize Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yay!

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. It's not debatable. All those who agree? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. I would like to thank you Minister McLeod for coming in and I would also like to thank his staff, Mr. Auger and Mr. Neudorf. I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to take our friends out, I guess.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007, and Committee Report 6-15(4) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Is there a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 16, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
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 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 15, Court Security Act
 - Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act
- Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007
- Committee Report 5-15(4), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
- Committee Report 6-15(4), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
- Committee Report 7-15(4), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process

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 Thursday, February 16, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:49 p.m.