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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2001

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bonjour, mon collègues.

Speaker's Ruling

Prior to proceeding with the orders of the day, I would like to provide the House with my ruling on the point of privilege raised by the Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee, on Friday, March 2nd.

Upon review of pages 2788 through to page 2790 of unedited Hansard, the Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee, raised first a point of order then a point of privilege. At the time I ruled that Ms. Lee did not have a point of order and reserved my decision on the point of privilege.

Before giving the House my ruling on the point of privilege, I think it is important to remind the House of what is a point of order and what constitutes a point of privilege.

A point of order is a question raised by a Member who believes that the rules or customary procedures of the House have been incorrectly applied or overlooked during the proceedings. Members may rise on points of order to bring to the attention of the Speaker, or if in committee of the whole, the chairperson, to any breach of the rules, unparliamentary remarks, or a lack of a quorum. Members are able, virtually at any time in the proceedings, to rise on a point of order, provided the point of order is raised and concisely argued as soon as the irregularity occurs. Points of order must be raised promptly and before the question has passed to a stage at which the objections would be out of place.

To assist Members, I would like to give some examples of what is the incorrect use of a point of order. It is not correct to use a point of order:

1. As the basis for a further point of order;
2. To gain the floor to participate in debate;
3. To direct a question to the Member speaking;
4. For a Member who has already spoken to clarify a part of his or her speech which has been misquoted or misunderstood;
5. To dispute the accuracy of facts stated in debate;
6. To move a motion; or

7. To request the Speaker to rule in anticipation or on a hypothetical matter.

A point of order concerns the interpretation of the rules of procedure; it is the responsibility of the Speaker to determine its merits and to resolve the issue.

Once again upon reviewing the unedited Hansard on pages 2782 and 2788, I confirm my ruling that Ms. Lee, the Member for Range Lake, did not have a point of order.

To the point of privilege raised immediately after my ruling on the point of order, Ms. Lee indicated that the comments of the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Joe Handley, in replying to Ms. Lee's question, were a breach of privilege. I quote from page 2789 of unedited Hansard:

"That anything that happens in this House somehow infringes and interferes with her ability to do her job as an MLA."

I heard debate on the point of privilege and the Members for Mackenzie Delta, Yellowknife South and Weledeh all spoke to the point of privilege.

The Chair feels that it is important to once again put on the record what are the privileges of the Members individually and the Legislative Assembly collectively. The individual privileges of Members are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers.

Improper interference with the personal rights of Members individually, or with the corporate rights of a Legislature collectively, may constitute a breach of privilege.

Among the principal privileges of a Legislature are:

- Freedom of speech;
- Freedom from arrest;
- The power to discipline;
- The right to have the attendance and service of Members; and
- The right to regulate its internal affairs.

Contempt of parliament is closely related to, and is dealt with, as a matter of privilege. Contempts, while not breaches of specific privileges, are offenses against the authority or dignity of a legislature. Any act or omission which obstructs or impedes a Legislature in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of a legislature in the performance of his/her duty or which has a

tendency to produce such a result, may be treated as contempt even through there is no precedent for the offense.

A true question of privilege should arise in the Assembly infrequently. To constitute a breach of "privilege", generally there must be some improper obstruction to the Member in performing his or her parliamentary work in either a direct or constructive way, as opposed to mere expressions of public opinion or criticism of the activities of the Members.

Matters frequently raised as matters of privilege which in fact are not matters of privilege, include:

- Points of order;
- Disputes between two Members about questions of fact stated in debate;
- The failure of a Minister of the Crown to answer a question; or
- Statements made outside the House by a Member.

Members should note that parliamentary privilege is concerned with the special rights of Members strictly in their capacity as Members in their legislative work.

The Speaker's role when the matter of privilege is raised is to satisfy himself or herself whether or not:

- a) The matter is being raised at the earliest opportunity; and
- b) Sufficient evidence of the alleged breach of privileges of the House has been presented to warrant giving the matter precedence over all other business then before the House;

And having done so, to rule whether or not debate may proceed.

Only the House itself, by consideration of a motion on the matter, has the authority to decide whether or not a breach of privilege has occurred.

I apologize for this lengthy ruling, but I felt it was important, as I said, to place on the record the elements and importance of points of order and privilege. I rule that there is not a prima facie case for a point of privilege as alleged by the Member for Range Lake.

If I may also express a concern of the Chair, it is that points of order or privilege raised during question period do tend to take up the time allotted for questions and answers. The House may wish to consider, as in other jurisdictions, that points of order occurring during question period are permitted to be raised upon conclusion of question period. I will leave that matter for the House to determine through the appropriate avenue of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Déclarations de ministre. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 69-14(3): Meeting with the Honourable Paul Martin

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon I met with the Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of Finance for Canada, and the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Secretary of State for Children and Youth and Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic.

I am pleased to report that our meeting was very positive and very productive. Mr. Martin, Ms. Blondin-Andrew and I discussed a number of issues. We talked about the NWT's economic prospects and their positive implications for the Canadian economy. Mr. Martin was impressed with the activity that is taking place in the Northwest Territories. He also conveyed his compliments on this government's fiscal position and on what he felt was a sound budget plan.

We discussed the federal/territorial formula financing agreement and have come to an agreement regarding an outstanding technical issue. Finance officials will be finalizing the details as soon as possible. I am confident that this issue will be resolved to the benefit of the GNWT.

We discussed the need for the federal government to play a larger role in investing in and preparing for NWT economic growth and development. Mr. Martin has reviewed the GNWT's Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy and says that he is impressed. He is prepared to support the initiatives it includes when they are brought forward through federal departments. He also recognizes the GNWT's commitment to move ahead on infrastructure developments. He has agreed to increase our borrowing limit to allow us to proceed with our proposed Highway Strategy. We have agreed that our officials will sit down together to work out the appropriate amount.

Finally, we discussed the need to transfer to NWT governments the responsibility for and the revenues from the NWT's non-renewable resources. He acknowledges the importance of this issue. Although DIAND is the lead federal department, Finance Canada has a major role to play in the discussion of revenue offsets and the formula financing agreement. Therefore, we have agreed to direct officials from our respective departments to undertake preliminary work -- reviewing forecasts of revenue potential, developing principles for revenue offsets and determining a meaningful time line for completing work on fiscal offsets. I would stress that these discussions will focus on how any Government of the Northwest Territories' share of revenue resources will offset our formula financing grant and will not touch on the broad issues being discussed at the Intergovernmental Forum.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, our meeting was very productive. I would like to thank the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew for her work in preparing for this meeting and for acting as such a valuable advocate for the NWT's concerns within the federal government. Mr. Martin has indicated that he is prepared to meet again to continue discussions on these matters. I look forward to following up on these important issues with him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Déclarations de ministre. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 70-14(3): Dogrib Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiations

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the first day of this session, I provided Members with an overview of lands, resources and self-government negotiations in the Northwest Territories. Today, I would like to provide the House with a more in-depth update on the negotiation of a Dogrib final agreement.

Recently I met with DIAND Minister Robert Nault, the Dogrib Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and the Dogrib chiefs. Dogrib leaders said they would like to conclude a final agreement in time for their summer assembly. Both Minister Nault and I agreed to work towards that target.

At the same meeting, Minister Nault assured us that Canada would pay 100 percent of the agreed-upon incremental costs needed to implement the final agreement. This commitment from Canada was welcomed by the GNWT, and from our perspective will really help the three parties move towards concluding a final agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the House today that I believe negotiations are proceeding well and that reaching an initialed, final agreement by this summer seems possible. Our negotiating team recently returned from a successful negotiating session and have reported to me that the Intergovernmental Services Agreement is near completion, and that the main working groups have developed detailed work plans aimed at completing the necessary work on time. The Intergovernmental Services Agreement will enable a Dogrib community services agency to deliver education, health and social programs to all residents in the four Dogrib communities.

Mr. Speaker, in order to reach this target, all three parties will have to complete a substantial amount of work in a short period of time. The GNWT has made the commitment to assign additional staff to work on outstanding Dogrib issues, primarily the modelling and costing exercise, which will determine the incremental costs of implementing the final agreement. As well, Mr. Speaker, the main negotiating table has agreed to lengthen several of the upcoming negotiating sessions in order to accelerate the pace of work on all outstanding tasks.

Mr. Speaker, there are other significant issues that must be resolved before initialing the final agreement. For example, Canada and the Dogrib must reach agreement on the matter of certainty. Certainty refers to the federal policy requiring that the settlement of aboriginal and treaty rights to lands and resources create certainty of title to the lands and resources once and for all. As well, Mr. Speaker, the Dogrib must resolve overlap issues with both the Deh Cho and Akaitcho First Nations. In addition, the GNWT is responsible for developing the legislation to establish the Dogrib community governments and the Dogrib community services agency.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the GNWT, Canada and the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council will each do their utmost to meet the target of having a final agreement to bring to the Dogrib Assembly this summer. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Déclarations de ministre. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 71-14(3): Aurora College Programs Successful

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later today I will table the Aurora College Annual Report for 1999-2000. Aurora College is the higher education and training centre for the Northwest Territories. The three college campuses in Fort Smith, Inuvik and Yellowknife, in addition to distance learning opportunities in many other communities, help to ensure that Northerners have the skills and training they need to move confidently toward the future. The college is enjoying success in many areas.

More than 70 students are enrolled in the Aurora College Teacher Education Program. This is a significant increase over recent years and will be reflected in increased graduation rates by 2003. This year, approximately 100 former graduates are teaching or are in education-related positions in the Northwest Territories. Three of these are new school principals and one has recently become a director of a district education council.

The college also takes pride in its nursing program. In December, 12 students completed the Aurora College Nursing Program and became registered nurses. Their accomplishment will be recognized when they convocate on May 5.

Equally significant is the revitalized social work program currently being delivered at Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith. This program is delivered in partnership with the University of Regina and college graduates will have two years of fully transferable credits to the U of R's Bachelor of Social Work program. Currently, 11 full-time students and 14 part-time students are enrolled in the program.

At Aurora College in Inuvik, training courses related to the oil and gas industry have taken off over the past two years. Currently, there are 26 students enrolled in oil and gas related training, an 18 percent increase over last year. The college has recently hired an industrial oil and gas training coordinator in anticipation of expanding training needs in that industry.

This new position is part of a larger industrial training team that has recently been assembled by the college. Industrial training coordinators are now in place at each campus. Mine training will be coordinated from the Yellowknife campus. General trades training will be coordinated from Fort Smith. This new team will work directly with industry to ensure training programs lead Northerners to employment in the Northwest Territories workforce.

All these activities support the Government of the Northwest Territories' goal of maximizing northern employment. The college is preparing Northerners for the workforce. The Government of the Northwest Territories will do its part by guaranteeing employment to all graduates of the teaching and nursing programs. Term employment within government will also be provided for those graduating from other programs.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate past, current and future graduates of Aurora College. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Déclarations de ministre. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Minister's Statement 72-14(3): Nursing Education in the NWT

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide Members with a progress report on nursing education in the Northwest Territories.

As Members know, one of the objectives of our recruitment and retention strategy is to attract more Northerners to the nursing profession. Nursing is a noble profession and attracts people who are motivated to help others. There are many opportunities in the Northwest Territories for nurses to work in a variety of settings -- hospital wards, community health centres, public health clinics and home care, to name a few.

The foundation for developing a well-trained, highly competent northern nursing workforce is a strong nursing education program, developed and delivered here at home. Over the past two years, the Department of Health and Social Services has partnered with Aurora College and the Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association to fully develop nursing education in the Northwest Territories. The shared vision of these partners is a flexible and progressive range of programming that allows both first-time students and experienced nurses to pursue a full range of nursing education, from basic through to advanced, without having to go south.

I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that we have made significant progress towards that vision.

Members already know of the successes of our current nursing program offered at Aurora College. The Legislative Assembly was there to applaud the first graduating class of 1998 where every single student passed their national nursing examinations on their first writing of the exam. We have recently seen the same level of excellence with the class of 2000. Mr. Speaker, this high calibre of academic achievement is seldom seen elsewhere in Canada. Since the program began, Aurora College has graduated 57 nurses, with another 12 to graduate this year. I am happy to report that almost all of these graduates are working in the Northwest Territories.

There are also new developments in nursing education. This fall, registered nurses will have the ability to pursue their bachelor's degree in nursing through studies offered at Aurora College. This additional level of education has been made possible through an agreement between the college and the University of Victoria. Also this fall, Aurora College will offer registered nurses access to an accredited 16-month nurse practitioner program in partnership with the Centre for Nursing Studies in Newfoundland. Together, these advanced studies offer our nurses the ability to increase their skill levels and competencies so that they can better meet the challenges of nursing in the Northwest Territories.

In addition to these advances in educational programming, we have also established initiatives to help new graduate nurses successfully make the transition into the Northwest Territories nursing workforce. Under the Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative, new graduates will be guaranteed employment, as well as on-the-job orientation and mentoring. Ensuring that new nurses have effective support, training and backup during their

first few months of employment and the opportunity for ongoing professional development will also help with retention.

Mr. Speaker, these are indeed exciting times for nursing education in the Northwest Territories. With each year, there will be more northern nurses graduating from Aurora College to fill the vacancies. The introduction of the Bachelor of Science nursing degree program and accredited nurse practitioner program provides northern nurses with ongoing opportunities to enhance their skill levels and knowledge base.

With the fast-paced development of new technologies and treatments, lifelong professional education for nurses is a necessity. It will be important for us to continue to support investment in quality educational opportunities for all nurses, and to ensure that our young people are encouraged to consider the wonderful opportunities offered by a nursing career. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Voices of Constituents

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had time and reason to reflect on a number of things over the weekend. One of them being what transpired in the House last week. I thought of the very first statement I made in this House on Wednesday, January 19, 2000, and it really says what I would like to say today. If you do not mind, I would just like to repeat it.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure I speak for all Members in the House when I say what a singular honour and privilege it is to be elected by the public at large and to be given the mandate to serve them in this Legislature.

As I walk through the halls of this great place of meeting, I hear the voices of my constituents, which guide me now and will continue to guide me throughout the days and months to come. I hear the voices of moms and dads talking about their children's education, of the teachers', doctors' and nurses' working conditions. I hear the voices of laidoff Giant Mine workers talking about the fairness in the settlement of their pension and severance packages.

There are so many more voices, Mr. Speaker. Voices of small and large business owners and stakeholders, voices of women and men, youth, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, the weak and the sick, whose voices we must hear and act upon. Mr. Speaker, I understand my mandate for the next four years is to bring life to these voices and to work with my colleagues in and out of this Chamber to find solutions to their concerns.

I also appreciate that behind you, Mr. Speaker, and the 18 other Members of this House, sit 42,000 voices of our Territory, which also must be heard and be brought to life.

As I begin this task in earnest today, it is with a firm belief that it is our collective task to set the course of the path for our new Territory towards unity and prosperity, not necessarily because

we have a common interest in all issues, but because it is in our common interest to work together for solutions.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell this House that this is the credo that I live by everyday. I will continue to live by it for the rest of the Assembly. I would also end by advising you that we had the occasion to meet this morning and had a very productive discussion on what transpired in this House last week. I am happy to report that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Clawback of Income Support Payments

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring up an ongoing issue that has never been adequately resolved. This issue is income support and the clawback that occurs on money that is considered unearned income.

As the Minister clarified to my colleague Mr. Braden last week, unearned income that is clawed back by the territorial government includes IBA payments and the federal fuel rebate of \$125, which was just issued to low-income earners throughout Canada. It seems to me that an injustice is occurring by clawing back the money to people on income support. They are the people most in need of funding to maintain a basic standard of living. They are the people who are the most directly affected by any changes in funding, in the sense that they are negatively impacted.

It sometimes appears that all the income support is doing is creating a paper-pushing job for someone to process payments in one area and clawback in another. The people who need the money are not seeing it.

The issue of what makes up unearned income for income support recipients needs legal interpretation. I have raised these concerns with my colleagues and the Minister and the issue has remained unresolved for quite some time. I have taken the first step in getting this issue resolved. At the appropriate time, I will be tabling a legal interpretation of this matter in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on International Women's Day

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Thursday, March 8th, people around the world will celebrate International Women's Day. For over 90 years, International Women's Day has been a symbol of women's efforts to shape a better world. Mr. Speaker, in 1977, the United Nations passed a resolution to officially recognize International Women's Day. There are a number of important women's organizations in the North that contribute significantly to our social fabric, like the Status of Women Council and the NWT Native Women's Association. In Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, we

have groups like the YWCA and the Yellowknife Women's Centre, both of which contribute tremendously to our society.

This week in Yellowknife, several local groups and individuals have planned events throughout the week in celebration of women in our society in honour of International Women's Day. The events began last night with a potluck feast and also include a daily art display at Centre Square Mall.

On Thursday, the Status of Women Council of the NWT will be presenting the 2001 Wise Women Awards. The awards recognize and honour women who dedicate their time and energy to improving the lives of other women and families in their community.

Mr. Speaker, although there are only five award winners from various regions across the Northwest Territories, each of the 25 nominees are positive role models and have displayed qualities that make them an inspiration to us all.

I would like to salute a woman who lives in my constituency, Deleigh Rausch, who is one of the nominees. She is a very active volunteer in our community, most notably with the Girl Guides of Canada, and very deserving of this honour.

Mr. Speaker, I hope everyone will find a way to take part in some of the activities this week in recognition of International Women's Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Aklavik's Request for a Curling Rink

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we talk a lot about health and the well-being of people and residents of the Northwest Territories, especially in our small communities. Mr. Speaker, one of the most important activities in all of our communities, with the isolation and long winters, is possibly curling. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the community of Aklavik does not have a curling rink since the one they had has been condemned.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, knowing that recreation probably plays one of the most important roles in our lives when it comes to health and well-being of our residents. In order to have healthy people, we need to have healthy bodies and healthy minds. I for one feel that it is essential that wherever possible, we support recreation facilities and the opportunities for people to compete, not only within our communities and within the regions, but also at the territorial level.

Mr. Speaker, sport is a fundamental aspect of all our lives, as children, as adults and even as elders. Elders still play an active role in regard to the curling activities that take place in our communities, such as community and family bonspiels. I feel it is essential that this government makes the effort in assisting the community of Aklavik by trying to meet their goals by allowing them an opportunity that most communities take for granted. It is important that we invest in the health and well-being of our communities, knowing that the cost of health and

the social well-being of our communities has a lot to do with good health, good recreation activities and also good living.

Mr. Speaker, I for one feel that the community of Aklavik's request to this government to find ways to assist them in building a curling rink knowing that they feel left out, knowing that Fort McPherson, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk and other communities within the region have curling clubs and are actively participating in territorial and regional events.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of MACA questions in regard to supporting Aklavik's endeavours to get a curling club. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Slate of Cabinet Minister Meeting in Fort Smith

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, March 3, 2001, there was a full slate of meetings in the community of Fort Smith. Attending the various meetings were the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister of RWED and Finance, Mr. Handley, and the Minister of Justice and Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Mr. Speaker, the meetings started as soon as the plane came in from Yellowknife with a brief meeting with the mayor and SAO. We then moved into the very important meeting with the Premier, Deputy Premier and the Minister of Finance with the South Slave Metis Tribal Council. We then had a very healthy lunch at the Western Arctic Leadership Program, followed by a public meeting where the Premier made a very positive statement about Taltson. This was followed by a short meeting with the Salt River First Nations Band. The folks got on the plane at four o'clock, after about five hours of continuous meetings.

Mr. Speaker, the focus of most of the meetings was the need to proceed with the Taltson project and the need to garner political support to let the people in the public meeting know what the plans of the government were on this very important issue. I think that goal was achieved. There is a sense now that we have to move forward to get the detail and the facts that we need to put on the table so that the public, the aboriginal governments and the territorial government can sit down and start looking at how we move ahead.

I would be remiss, of course, not to acknowledge the fact that while the Deputy Premier was there, she had the opportunity to take part in the graduation over at the SALT program where there were some classes being graduated out of the Pentecostal Sub-Arctic Mission school. We had the benefit of her being able to do that. The Minister of Justice also took the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to tour the justice facilities and see how things were running in that part of his mandate.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministers for coming down, as well as the staff they brought with them, for giving up their Saturday. They were very important meetings, very important topics, and I think it was worth the effort. I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank them for coming to Fort

Smith to take part in these meetings and help move that critical Taltson project along. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Inuvik Transition House

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend I had the opportunity to go home and on Saturday afternoon, I had a couple of meetings with constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I met on Saturday afternoon with the executive director of the Inuvik Transition House. I have raised this issue in the past in the previous Assembly and raised it with this Minister during, I believe, the Department of Health and Social Services' budget review. Mr. Speaker, the transition house provides a much-needed service in the community of Inuvik and for the region. It provides shelter for women and children who end up in the unfortunate situation of having to leave their homes from either the community of Inuvik or other communities surrounding Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, they have struggled for many years. As long as I have been a Member of this Legislative Assembly and the 13th Legislative Assembly, I have always worked with them to try and ensure they had enough funds to make it through the year. They have had a lot of volunteer support from the community to help them make the year end.

Mr. Speaker, the concern continues to grow that they will either not make the year end or they will run into problems very early into the fiscal year, as the dollars do not flow immediately after April 1st. Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Transition House in Inuvik and compare it with other shelters in the Northwest Territories, the Inuvik Transition House is under-funded compared with other facilities when you compare them bed for bed.

Mr. Speaker, I have tried to raise this issue before the health boards were transferred the funding from the department but to no avail. I think at this time, hopefully with this Minister, we can work towards achieving some balance here with other shelters in the Northwest Territories. Without this much-needed facility, Mr. Speaker, we will be paying much more as a government when you count transportation and other factors in there.

At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Community Language Award Recipient Margaret Vandell

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge a constituent in my riding who has recently received an award from this government. Every year, the Department of Education provides community language awards to recognize the work of individuals and groups that

have worked towards the preservation and use of official languages in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the selection is made based on recommendations from the language communities in the North. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes, has announced the winners for the year 2000. This year, Miss Margaret Vandell from Fort Providence has received this award. Margaret has dedicated many years of her life to teaching the youth the advantage and significance of their language and culture and its relationship to the land. She has passed on stories of the elders and researched legends and names of historical sites.

Mr. Speaker, Miss Margaret Vandell is a valued and respected role model in our community. Although she has now retired, she, along with her husband, Norm Vandell, still continues to contribute their time to the youth of Fort Providence. They help the school every year with the spring and fall camps and she is the elder in residence for Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School. Margaret also works with the children through the circle program and does traditional counselling. Mr. Speaker, lately Margaret has been very busy spending a lot of time with her own grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, this lady is very worthy of this award because of her commitment and dedication for so many years to preserving and maintaining the language of the Deh Cho Dene.

As the MLA for Deh Cho and on behalf of the people of the Deh Cho, I would like to say thank you and congratulations to her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. McLeod. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Time Lines for the Reopening of the Stanton Regional Hospital Surgery Ward

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just took a press release off the fax from the Stanton Regional Health Board and it is entitled Stanton Making Progress Toward Opening the Surgical In-patient Unit. I think what it signifies for the Members of this House and our constituents is that in fact, Stanton has been unable to reopen the surgery ward full-time for March 5th, which was originally the publicized date.

We all know the history. There was an amalgamation of surgery and pediatrics, which probably did not take place with the proper consultation. There were concerns from constituents raised. For instance, you could be at the hospital having surgery needing your rest beside a bed that had kids who obviously do what kids do, running around and being active, which nobody would criticize, but it clearly did not seem to be a good amalgamation.

Now we are trying to scramble to get surgery reopened, but since there was no hiring taking place for the past few months with the assumption that there would be a closure, we are obviously up against it. So the published date of March 5th will come and go without reopening.

It leaves the question unanswered, I guess, as to whether or not this was a reasonable date given that for spring break

typically the operating room closes, as does surgery. So one wonders if we were going to simply reopen for a week only to close for two and then reopen on a full-time basis, Mr. Speaker.

If there is any hope, I guess lately it is that there have been media reports across the country that nurses seem to be coming back to Canada after testing the waters in the United States and not finding that it was to their liking. I hope we can see some of the benefit of nursing coming back, Mr. Speaker.

However, I think we all know that the real hope is that northern nurses, northern residents trained in the North, will be able to find employment at Stanton. I am glad to see the press release suggests that these northern nurses will certainly be welcomed. I think it is important, Mr. Speaker. I hope this is not just lip service. I hope there is a commitment to using northern nurses because we all know that it can be a revolving door, the recruitment and retention, and we have a much better shot if we use people who grew up in the North, who are trained in the North and who are certainly capable and qualified.

I am interested in hearing from both the board and the Minister what the updated time lines are and I will pursue that further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Accidental Deaths Related to Alcohol

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week we spoke about how FAS can be prevented by not drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Today, I wish to draw attention to another problem in the North. That is the number of alcohol-related deaths.

Alcohol is a factor in 59 percent of all accidental deaths in 1999, Mr. Speaker. As you can imagine, many of these accidents were likely affected by impaired judgment. Males accounted for 82 percent of the accidental deaths. Drowning and cold exposure were the primary reasons for accidental deaths. Our coroner, Percy Kinney, says he wants people to make informed choices when they drink alcohol. He will be speaking at an upcoming CYAID conference, Canadian Youth Against Impaired Driving, that will be held here in Yellowknife. He will be talking to students about high-risk behaviour when drinking. His presentation is called Partners in Prevention. A doctor will also speak on emergency room techniques, while 300 students and adult advisors from across Canada are expected to be at this conference. This is the first time they are expecting representation from every province and territory in Canada. The coroner has already given this presentation in Fort Liard and Inuvik and is willing to deliver it anywhere in the Territories. BC coroner Larry Campbell has already been up here before to deliver a similar presentation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, helping young people with conferences such as this is a proactive approach to dealing with this problem, a good model that can be used to educate people in dealing with the huge problem of FAS/FAE in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Déclarations des députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on the Marriage of Hay River to the South Slave Region

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address an issue I have raised in this House on a few occasions. The issue is that of the South Slave region and how Hay River fits into the region. Mr. Speaker, I would like to compare this fit to a marriage, as it has often been referred to just that.

Mr. Speaker, I know from 30 years of marriage that it takes two to tango. In order to make marriages work, you need commitment, trust, communication, cooperation and a sincere willingness to make them work.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that when all of these qualities that I have just mentioned are not present, the end result is a bad marriage and inevitably, bad marriages usually end up in divorce.

Presently, Mr. Speaker, Hay River is in a marriage with the regional government structure in the South Slave. Mr. Speaker, from Hay River's perspective, this marriage is not working now, has not worked in the past and from all indications will not work in the future. Mr. Speaker, this marriage has been referred to in the past as a marriage made in hell. Mr. Speaker, this was at best a shotgun wedding.

-- Laughter

The fact that this marriage is problematic is not news to this government. In fact, it has been brought to their attention on numerous occasions.

Recently, the government undertook a review of the regional structure. By their own admission, things were simple until they got to the South Slave region. Mr. Speaker, the fact that it is problematic and difficult to deal with is not a reason to do nothing. As in most problematic marriages, there are always available services, such as marriage counsellors. Through these services, some marriages may be salvaged. Mr. Speaker, I suggest this government play the role of marriage counsellor, but approach it from a perspective that something has to be done, as the present arrangement is doing nothing to enhance its vision of community empowerment and regional capacity building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement on Inuvik Annual Career Fair

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the concurrence of my good colleague from Inuvik Boot Lake, I would like to talk about an annual career fair to be held in Inuvik later this month.

Career Fair 2001 will be held at the Midnight Sun Recreation Complex on March 19th and 20th of this year. The organizers of this career fair are expecting possibly 40 booths, which will

have representation from the oil industry, post-secondary institutions and both the public and private sectors. Over 500 people are expected to attend this fair. Over 400 of these will be youth coming from the community of Sachs Harbour, Holman, Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson. Former professional hockey player and PhD candidate Joe Pinto-Dragon from Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development will also be in attendance to give a motivational talk to the youth. I wish the organizers all the success in the career fair and hope they will have a good stay in Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Oil and Gas Activity in the Beaufort Delta Region

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last little while, we have heard many news reports on the return of the oil and gas industry to the Beaufort Delta area. Much of this activity is taking place in and around Tuktoyaktuk. For instance, the seismic companies are cutting 1,500 kilometres for three-dimensional seismic lines within a radius of ten miles around Tuktoyaktuk. I am told anyone who wants work gets hired, skilled or unskilled.

Mr. Speaker, shortly this flurry of activity will shut down for the season and all this equipment will be stored in the outlying camps, such as Swimming Point. Mr. Speaker, this particular camp is a prime example of cooperation, good planning and investments by aboriginal organizations and businesses.

Originally this camp belonged to Esso Resources and was located in Tuktoyaktuk, where it stood vacant during the recent downturn in the oil and gas activity. Last summer, this 110-man camp was purchased through a joint venture of E. Gruben's Transport and the Inuvialuit Development Corporation. These two Inuvialuit firms set up a firm called Arctic Oil and Gas Services, or AOGS. This containerized camp was relocated to Swimming Point and set up to serve as a logistics support base for Petro Canada's operations in the Beaufort.

Utilizing mostly Inuvialuit firms, this camp was made fully operational again by December 11, 2000. Employment at the campsite was 70 percent Inuvialuit, including many managerial positions. Mr. Speaker, this campsite consists of an airstrip, large storage yard for pipe and bulk material, as well as an office complex and a huge modern workshop.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to encourage more of these types of cooperation between the exploration companies and aboriginal groups if we are to see a pipeline up the valley in the near future. There are great expectations out there now.

At the end of the last oil and gas boom in the Beaufort, the exploration companies left and the oil and gas stayed in the ground. This time around, the people of the Beaufort are hoping the decision-makers get it right. The oil and gas people will stay and only the gas will leave the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 370-14(3): Compliance With Water Quality Guidelines

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question 370-14(3) asked by Mr. Krutko on February 22, 2001, regarding the timing for response to a non-compliance order respecting the colour of water in Tsiigehtchic.

The Department of Public Works and Services has initiated further testing of the water to confirm the source of the problem and the type of treatment that will be needed to correct it. Based on the information obtained, Public Works and Services will provide recommendations to Municipal and Community Affairs on the capital investment required. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great deal of pleasure for me to acknowledge many of our pages who are serving with us in the gallery and have been for the week, Mr. Speaker. They are pages from one of the schools in my constituency, Mildred Hall School. I would like to acknowledge them: Dominika Dombajova, Tanchay Desjarlais, Tyler Gould, Colin Matthews, Geraldine Maloney, Michael Kowakzyk-Squires, Katherine Meyer, Alyssa Hoeft. Of course, we have Vital Manuel serving with us as well. He is here on a consistent basis, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Indeed, welcome to all of our pages. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I raised the issue of how some income support clients in the Northwest Territories are unduly affected by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's decision to clawback \$125 in federal fuel payments without notice.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of notice caused huge hardship for some families. I would like to ask the Minister, can he advise what action his department is considering to address the impact on clients as a result of the clawback? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This funding is considered unearned income and therefore is taken back, Mr. Speaker, but this issue came to our attention immediately upon issuance of cheques. I took some action on Friday to help alleviate the situation, Mr. Speaker.

What we decided to do was, because the amounts were relatively small, we decided that the money would be, and it is a one-time solution, that the clients would receive a rebate but we pay it over a number of months, rather than taken all at once, Mr. Speaker. This would be keeping with the regulations that we have in place, which we must do. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I understand the Minister correctly, that is very welcome news. I would like to confirm that clients who have had this federal payment taken will have it restored, and then taken back in increments over a period of months. Could the Minister confirm that and advise how this will be managed, how the clients will be advised and repaid this amount? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is being done in the event there are hardships amongst some of the clients, so they have an opportunity to have some time, Mr. Speaker. The fashion in which we will do this is we will offer an opportunity for the clients to take it over ten months or less, and it will be a decision made by the clients. They cannot take it or repay it over a shorter period of time. Notification should be going out to them as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear that. It is good news. It shows the department is listening and is prepared to correct a very hurtful situation. On the broader issue now of what should and should not be applied as unearned income and therefore taken from income support, the Minister advised us that a review process is underway. What criteria are being used in considering these criteria? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned to Members last week, I have directed the department -- I did so previously and reconfirmed the direction the week before last -- that I want to have a look at some of the shortcomings and the gaps that are in the Income Support Program so that we can have a look at that.

Departmental officials will bring forward a report to me in that area. I will share that report with the Members for discussion purposes and proceed from there. For example, I did meet with some of the NGOs on Friday in Yellowknife. Some things come to light when we speak about certain matters. The issue of payments from sources other than the GNWT that come unexpectedly, how are they treated, and so forth. These are all areas that we need to have a look at. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has indicated that he is talking to people outside of the department in the field and on the front lines, and that is great. Will there be further opportunity for these people to have input in this review and bring something in that is really going to make sense in the long run? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 442-14(3): Federal Fuel Subsidy Recovery

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want the opportunity first, Mr. Speaker, to have the report back to me and be able to discuss it with my colleagues on the other side, rather than a full-fledged public debate on this. I think it is best that we gather the information, see where the gaps are, have some discussions with the MLAs. I think that is the appropriate process and then work our way from there with some recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As in my Member's statement, my question will be directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if she would be prepared to look at the funding situation for the shelters across the Northwest Territories.

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

Return to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been raised in this House numerous times that the people who work in the area of family violence prevention are underresourced, and currently within the department we are working on the Addictions and Mental Health Strategy. The broad framework for this has just recently been shared with the Standing Committee on Social Programs last week. Under this strategy, we plan to address the issue of family violence prevention and consider the resourcing of that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that there is some work in there, but specifically to transition houses and shelters, as I referenced the one in Inuvik in my statement. When the responsibility was transferred from the department down to the health board, even at that time the funding allocation for the shelter in Inuvik was much lower than those across the Territory. That is the issue I would like the Minister to address. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the information that I have before me today indicates the number of beds in the various communities and the variety of services available. It does not have a breakdown of the funding that is provided to each of these activities, each of these shelters. I would undertake to look at a comparison on the basis of beds and see if in fact the Transition House is underfunded. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had opportunity to review information that the Transition House has provided me. Hopefully that would be the same information the Minister would be able to look at. If she does find there is a difference there, will she commit to review that and adjust it? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are certainly committed to fairness and equity in terms of these programs. Based on the size of the facility, the number of beds and the number of clients it serves, we would look at and consider a request actually from the Inuvik Health

and Social Services Board, if more funding is required for the Inuvik Transition House. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister stated that the request would have to be through the health board. So is the advice then that the staff at the Transition House make the request through the health board and then the health board to the department?

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

Further Return to Question 443-14(3): Funding for NWT Shelters

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that would be the process and procedure to follow. We will try to be of any assistance we can to the department in preparing for such a submission. Thank you.

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

Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of MACA. It is with regard to my Member's statement and the importance recreation plays in our communities, especially in Aklavik where it has been three years since they last were able to curl because of the curling rink being condemned.

Mr. Speaker, in the five-year capital forecast, it is not going to be until the year 2004-2005 that they are looking at a replacement. What is the possibility of moving up that capital item to 2002-2003 in the five-year capital plan?

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

Return to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we go back to Hansard on pages 28, 35, 36, 37, we outlined some of the processes we can use in terms of how we can push the specific project up. I think it spells out the intention of us to work closely with the municipality to achieve that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have Hansard with me and I do not believe the people in Aklavik have received the Hansard yet, so I ask the question again, is it possible to revise the five-year capital forecast to

move up the curling rink in Aklavik from 2004-2005 to 2002-2003?

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

Further Return to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have set out a method in how we can achieve that. We had stated on Friday that we would look at it, if they want to exchange one capital project for another. For instance, we said if we wanted to exchange moving up their curling rink for a piece of heavy equipment they have on their five-year capital plan schedule, we are prepared to consult with the community to see if that is a feasible exchange. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to work with myself and the community of Aklavik to work into the five-year capital plan having this curling rink constructed during the period of 2002-2003?

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

Further Return to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if we can commit to that level of detail, but I am willing to sit down and consult with the Member as well as the community to see if we can. I am sure if it is possible, we will do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he is available to meet with the community of Aklavik in the last week of March, so we can sit down and start the deliberations and discussions on how we can do that?

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

Further Return to Question 444-14(3): Aklavik Curling Rink

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am more than prepared to set up a schedule of dates to meet with the communities in his riding to work out not only the idea of a curling rink, but all those outstanding issues we should be addressing. Thank you.

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

Question 445-14(3): Metis Health Benefits Administration

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister is aware, the Metis Nation has been responsible for administering Metis health benefits. I got a call from somebody who has been trying to register his newborn. He sent away an application two months ago and in his words, it appears it sort of went into a black hole. I am wondering if it has something to do with the fact that the Metis Nation office is on the verge of closing down, if it has not already. I was wondering if the Minister could advise at all if she knows anything about this administrative problem? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 445-14(3): Metis Health Benefits Administration

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, there has been some confusion around the delivery of Metis health benefits of late because a question did arise over which Metis organization should be responsible for validating the membership eligibility and providing information to members. So in the interim, the department has continued to have the insurance delivered by Alberta Blue Cross, but the membership is being maintained by the health services administration office within the department until some of the other issues around this are resolved. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 445-14(3): Metis Health Benefits Administration

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that information. I wonder if, for the benefit of people outside of here, because I will be contacting the person who called me, but I wonder if the Minister has any plan to make this information public by way of public announcement or something? I am sure there are a lot of other people who are affected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 445-14(3): Metis Health Benefits Administration

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a very good suggestion and I will talk to the department about perhaps public service announcements, either through radio or television, to make beneficiaries of Metis health benefits aware of this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 445-14(3): Metis Health Benefits Administration

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could just take it one step further, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could make

available to us in the House the phone numbers and sections of the department, just because government departments are very big and it would just save us some work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 445-14(3): Metis Health Benefits Administration

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will undertake to provide all of the Members of the Legislative Assembly with the contact numbers and names for constituents who may be enquiring of them about their Metis health benefits. Thank you.

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

Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and it is with regard to the devolution of the Student Financial Assistance Program from Yellowknife, headquarters, to the regions and communities. The Minister has always steadfastly refused to contemplate that, making references to capacity and improving the current system.

When we did the budget for Aboriginal Affairs, the issue came up during the discussion on the budget. I was led to understand that the reason for not wanting to devolve SFAs was because it may be part of self-government talks. Therefore, it was thought to keep it consolidated and easier to parcel up, that should be part of the programs agreed to through self-government agreements. I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if in fact that is the case. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have discussed this a number of times. I have indicated that we have made moves already to ensure that the career centres in the various regions have the ability to assist students. We have trained our career centre staff on our CMAS system, that is our computer system that Education uses for student financial assistance. We have made a significant step already, Mr. Speaker, towards ensuring that there is regional capacity to deliver this program, other than cutting cheques.

Mr. Speaker, as well, there is the opportunity shortly for students to apply on-line, which is the coming way to do business as well. We are making moves more and more towards ensuring that the services are available regionally. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to confirm either yes or no. Is the reason that they have refused all these years to devolve the program because of the need to keep it together for self-government talks as opposed to the reasons that the Minister has pointed out, as they give incremental autonomy to the regions? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, that was not the reason that it was not devolved, Mr. Speaker. It was a case where it was best handled at a central point for the time being. As I stated, we are now making the moves towards that. As we go, there is no doubt that discussions for self-government are entering into the picture as part of all issues with regard to program delivery of the territorial government, be it education or health and social services. It becomes part of the self-government negotiations as we go. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to ask the Minister if he could be specific in terms of a time line when the program will be fully turned over to the communities, the larger centres that have the capacity through their career centres to do the work, to cut the cheques, so that applications do not have to be vetted and addressed at headquarters but can be dealt with in the communities where the students are. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The ability is there now for the career officers to assist students and to input and draw up students' names off the computer system, Mr. Speaker. There is not yet an ability to cut cheques at the regional level. I think that is the question the Member is asking, when will that be done.

Mr. Speaker, that is still premature for me to answer at this particular point until I have the opportunity to ensure that this is working very well at a regional level from an advice side, from an assistance side and from an inputting side. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Minister. Mr. Miltenberger, your final supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not a new issue. The problem comes not with the information at the regions and the way things are pulled together or addressed, the problem comes that it all funnels up to what are seen to be anonymous people sitting at headquarters making decisions on students' lives. I would like to ask the Minister, will he commit to coming forward with a clear plan of when he will devolve that particular service out to the regions and communities where it belongs so that the students can get the best possible service? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 446-14(3): Decentralization of Student Financial Assistance

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are dealing with an administrative process to some extent here. There is no doubt that over the past several months, we have made tremendous strides in that area and we are making improvements. I think we have made some good steps already, Mr. Speaker, with regard to ensuring that more and more is done at the regional level and at the community level where there are career offices. I think that is a good step that we have taken. I will assure and reassure the Member that I will look at this again to see whether cheques can be cut at the regional offices. I do not know whether that can be done, but I certainly will check into that. Thank you.

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

Question 447-14(3): IBA Payments Classified as Income

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes. In the November sitting of the House, I asked the Minister whether recovering earned monies the department considers to be earned income for the income support recipients was decided as a result of legal advice, or whether it was the department's interpretation of the Social Assistance Act. In early February, the Minister informed me that he was having the social assistance regulations legally interpreted to ensure they are being correctly administered with regard to IBAs. I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell me if he and the department have received an interpretation yet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 447-14(3): IBA Payments Classified as Income

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member did ask in the fall with regard to IBAs, how this was treated. It is treated as unearned income and, as such, we are obliged to recapture that by regulation, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to the legal interpretation of that particular aspect of the regulations, we have asked for a legal interpretation. We have an informal reply to that which I have not yet formalized, or has not yet been formalized, but I do have an informal opinion in hand. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 447-14(3): IBA Payments Classified as Income

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say that it took my lawyers three weeks to do an analysis of the IBAs and the Social Assistance Act, and the Minister has had since November to get this information. I would like to ask the Minister when he would have this available for us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 447-14(3): IBA Payments Classified as Income

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can certainly check to see if we can formalize that interpretation. I can certainly have an answer for the Member within the week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome in our visitors gallery some visitors from the Federation Council of Russia. The Federation Council is Russia's Upper House. They are nearing the end of a week-long visit to the Northwest Territories, having just come back from Inuvik to here. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Ilya Semyonovich Rozenblyum, the chairperson of the Committee on the North.

-- Applause

Yefim Lvovich Kerpelman is the deputy chair of the Committee on the North.

-- Applause

Aleksandr Vasilievich Zhuganov is the chief of staff, Committee on the North.

-- Applause

Nataliya Ivanovna Peresyphkina is the specialist on Committee on the North.

-- Applause

With them, the interpreter, Vadim Fotinov.

-- Applause

No stranger to our Assembly, having been here before, with him as well is Geoffrey Dubrow, the program manager of the Parliamentary Centre in Ottawa.

-- Applause

I would like to bid you a very warm welcome, and we hope that you are able to enjoy question period. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 448-14(3): Outdated Website for GNWT Boards

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Premier. It is in relation to various boards of our government. I have constituents who go on our website to look at the various boards that this government has and look at vacancies. The information on the website currently -- and I just pulled it off a few minutes ago, Mr. Speaker -- says revised March 2000, and there are oodles of outdated information. I was wondering if the Premier can let us know why we have what amounts to year-old information on the website. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The question is directed to the honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 448-14(3): Outdated Website for GNWT Boards

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it is outdated, we shall commit to updating it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 448-14(3): Outdated Website for GNWT Boards

MR. BELL: Thank you. I can assure the Premier that it is outdated. I would like to also ask him about expiry of terms. There are various terms that appear to have indefinite expiry dates listed. I am wondering if the Premier can explain if we do in fact have indefinite expiry dates for certain board appointments. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 448-14(3): Outdated Website for GNWT Boards

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand all appointments to boards have a beginning and an end. They terminate on a certain day and are subject to renewal or extensions or terminations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Questions supplementaire, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 448-14(3): Outdated Website for GNWT Boards

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was my understanding as well, but as you go through the boards on the website, there are various members appointed to boards who have an appointment date, sure enough, but under expiry date, it says indefinite. Can the Premier speak to this? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 448-14(3): Outdated Website for GNWT Boards

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, none of them are for life. That is for sure. We will clarify those as we are updating the information on the website. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Premier. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for Finance on the release he put out today on his visit with Mr. Martin. He states that Mr. Martin was very supportive of going ahead with infrastructure development and has agreed to increase our borrowing limit. He then goes on to say that we have to agree that our officials sit down together and work out an appropriate amount. The highway infrastructure proposes to borrow \$100 million. Was that the figure that was talked about with Mr. Martin? Did he agree to that figure? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, that is the amount of money that we talked about. As Members may know, we would not borrow the full \$100 million up front. We would borrow it as we need it. I believe that even that is dependent on how well the toll program performs. That is the amount we did talk about. Mr. Martin indicated that he would like his staff to work with our staff to look at it in more detail. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could tell us if there were other areas addressed. As far as the borrowing limit, if we want to improve on the infrastructure, say for hydro development, were there any amounts discussed there? What was the Minister's take on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Two questions there, Minister Handley.

Further Return to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we did not talk specifically about borrowing for other major infrastructure projects, although clearly the message from Minister Martin is that show us a reasonable plan, show us that it makes sense, economically, politically and so on, and I am willing to look at it. He left the door very much open, saying "I am prepared to meet with you on any of these, either here in Yellowknife or in

Ottawa." As a businessman, he is saying give us a good proposal.

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

Supplementary to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take it from his discussions that the Minister has agreed that the amount increasing our borrowing limit will have no bearing on our funding from the federal government now. I was wondering if the Minister could inform us if that is in fact the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is the assumption that both Minister Martin and I are making. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If in fact that is the case, if the Minister has agreed that it will not affect our monies coming from Ottawa now, does that eliminate the need to set up a trust fund for handling this highway infrastructure money? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 449-14(3): Federal Highway Infrastructure Funding

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the trust fund is that it is a vehicle or a mechanism that we would use as a way of ensuring the public that we are spending the money raised through the tolls on highway reconstruction, repair and so on. Legally, it is not required, but I think it is a good way of ensuring everybody that we are not using the money elsewhere. Thank you.

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

Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services. It is in regard to his response to my oral question. I would like to ask the Minister for Public Works in regard to the information that has been collected to date, in which he basically states in Hansard that based on the information compiled, they will be providing recommendations to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs and community services, could the Minister tell me what

recommendations were put forth to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware if the information has been compiled at this point. The response said the information would be compiled and then a recommendation made to Municipal and Community Affairs based on the information. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell me exactly if he could confirm what the source of the problem is?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information on hand. All I know is that there was a problem with the colour of water. It does not meet Canadian standards.

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

Supplementary to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister commit to myself that he will be providing me with the recommendations that his department finds before he submits it to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Public Works will be making the information available to MACA as soon as we have compiled all of our information. In the process, we will be informing the community and the MLA as well.

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

Supplementary to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister also give us an idea of what the cost is going to be to make this capital investment in the community of Tsiigehtchic in dealing with our water problem?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 450-14(3): Public Works Recommendations to MACA

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that is going to be part of the recommendations in the report to Municipal and Community Affairs. We would identify a cost figure in there.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 7-14(3): The Need for a New Curling Rink in Aklavik

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of a need for a new curling rink in Aklavik. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 135 signatures of Aklavik residents. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request the assistance of the Government of the Northwest Territories to provide a new curling rink in Aklavik to provide recreation for elders, youth and families.

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

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 21: An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act, and wishes to report that Bill 21 is ready for consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 115-14(3): Aurora College Annual Report, 1999-2000**

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Aurora College Annual Report, 1999-2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Tabled Document 116-14(3): Minister of Transportation's Report to the Legislative Assembly for 2000 - Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act (1990)

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Minister of Transportation's Report to the Legislative Assembly for 2000 - Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act (1990). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 117-14(3): Business Credit Corporation 2000 Annual Report

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Business Credit Corporation 2000 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 118-14(3): Legal Opinion on Impact Benefit Agreement Payments Relative to the Social Assistance Act

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have here a legal interpretation of the Social Assistance Act and the relationship of IBAs and unearned income. Although the document indicates that more interpretation is required, it does state that a case can be made for the money being paid to the aboriginal people from Diavik and BHP agreements being the result of Treaties 8 and 11. This legal interpretation would make these monies exempt from being...

MR. SPEAKER: I will interrupt the Member. Under tabling of documents, you just give the title and you do not read the whole document. That is a very long title. Just table your document, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Everything I said was the title because there needs to be interpretation, it has to be expressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Okay. This legal interpretation will make these monies exempt from being considered unearned income and therefore not eligible for clawback by income support. There is my document.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable Members. In interpreting the rules, I would just like to advise Members that when you table a document, you just give the title of the document and table it and leave it up to the Members to read.

Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 19-14(3): Support for the Protection of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, March 7, 2001, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories is ardently opposed to oil and gas exploration and development activity being carried out in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and its coastal plain;

And further, that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Premier of the Northwest Territories, communicate this resolution to the Right Honourable Jean Chretien, Prime Minister of Canada;

And furthermore, that the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada, through the office of Minister of the Environment, be encouraged to continue to vigorously oppose any threat to the shared natural resources of northern Alaska, the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Motion 20-14(3) Terms of Reference for the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on March 7, 2001, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the following provisions be adopted as the terms of reference for the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-government and the Sunset Clause:

1. The special committee, in undertaking its review, adopts the following as operating principles as articulated by the 14th Legislative Assembly in Towards a Better Tomorrow:
 - a.) The special committee is committed to the development of a system of government in the Northwest Territories that recognizes and protects the rights of all residents, balancing individual citizens' rights and collective aboriginal rights;
 - b.) The special committee recognizes that aboriginal and other northern leaders working together in support of a common vision and strong sense of identity is the foundation for a better future for all residents;
 - c.) The special committee holds that aboriginal people must have greater self-determination over their social, cultural, economic and political destiny;

- d.) The special committee recognizes that aboriginal and public governments have unique, necessary and complementary roles to play in serving territorial residents; and
- e.) The special committee recognizes the need for strong, effective aboriginal and public governments operating cooperatively;
2. The special committee is further committed to:
- a.) providing information to aboriginal governments and seeking their input on issues related to the achievement of its mandate; and
- b.) an open and public process that provides opportunities for stakeholder groups, elected bodies and the general public to receive information and input their views on issues related to the achievement of its mandate;
3. The special committee shall:
- a.) In relation to the Sunset Clause:
- i.) Provide information to Northwest Territories residents concerning the intent and effect of Section 2 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, as to the need to address Section 2 before the next election and to solicit input and options; and
- ii.) Make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly concerning the sunset clause;
- b.) In relation to the implementation of self-government:
- i.) Consider how the Legislative Assembly may be impacted by the implementation of self-government in the areas of legislation and appropriations;
- ii.) Review the models for implementing self-government in the Northwest Territories currently being negotiated;
- iii.) Review the impact implementing self-government agreements will have on the Legislative Assembly operating structures and procedures;
- iv.) Review legislative initiatives that would implement self-government agreements;
- v.) Make recommendations as to how existing and future legislation, policies and practices of the Legislative Assembly might be amended or developed to reflect the concurrency of jurisdiction between aboriginal and partnership governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories,
- vi.) Make recommendations on ways in which the budgetary process might be modified in form and process so as to reflect the duality of interest resulting from the implementation of self-government agreements,
- vii.) Make recommendations on transitional measures which could be introduced to prepare for the implementation of self-government agreements.
- c.) Consider how self-government may impact the Government of the Northwest Territories with respect to the functions of policy, programs, services, financing and administration over the immediate and long-term:
- i.) Evaluate the impacts self-government will have on the authorities contained in the Northwest Territories Act and Territorial Statutes (legislation);
- ii.) Investigate and advise on the impact self-government will have on the public governing structure on the Legislative Assembly and Government of the Northwest Territories and its powers, functions, programs, services and finances; and
- iii.) make recommendations on transitional measures, which could be implemented to prepare for the implementation of self-government agreements.
4. Mr. Speaker, the special committee, in carrying out its terms of reference, will use best efforts to ensure that its discussions and activities support, complement and otherwise not overlap with or in any way interfere with self-government negotiations or discussions taking place at the Intergovernmental Forum;
5. The special committee shall establish processes for providing information to and affording the residents an opportunity to make their views known;

6. The special committee shall have access to such persons, papers and records as necessary to the conduct of its business;
7. The special committee shall be provided, through appropriations, with adequate funds to carry out its terms of reference and assigned responsibilities;
8. The special committee is authorized to employ such staff and/or consultants and contractors as may be necessary to carry out its responsibilities;
9. The special committee may consider other matters referred to it by the Legislative Assembly; and
10. The special committee may make recommendations it considers desirable through interim and a final report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Motion 21-14(3): Terms of Reference for the Special Committee to Review the Official Languages Act

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on March 7, 2001, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that the following provisions be adopted as the terms of reference for the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act.

1. The special committee, in undertaking its review, adopts the following as operating principles:
 - a) The special committee will respect the right of language communities to represent their ideas and needs to the community in the official language of their choice.
 - b) The special committee is committed to having amendments to the Official Languages Act introduced within the term of this Assembly.
 - c) The special committee is committed to an open and public process in reviewing the act and to provide opportunities for stakeholder groups and the general public to participate in the review process.
 - d) The special committee is committed to strengthening the official languages of the Northwest Territories and carrying out its duties related to the act in a manner that is consistent with this commitment.
 - e) The special committee is committed to public consultation, which will occur in each of the language areas of the Northwest Territories and with representatives of each recognized linguistic group of the Northwest Territories.
 - f) The special committee recognizes the value of elders in relation to aboriginal languages and

will ensure elders participate fully in the review process.

2. The special committee shall:
 - a) review the provisions and operations of the Official Languages Act;
 - b) examine the objectives set out in the preamble to the act in the extent to which the objectives have been achieved;
 - c) examine all provisions of the act, including the rights and responsibilities established in the act and the extent to which they have been effective in supporting the achievement of the stated objectives;
 - d) review the administration regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Government of the Northwest Territories designed to guide through implementation and interpretation of the act;
 - e) examine the effectiveness of the act's provision in relation to the general public and the governing departments and agencies charged with providing services;
 - f) evaluate the specific needs related to the official languages in the Northwest Territories;
 - g) examine the extent to which the public understands the current act and current language rights;
 - h) examine and consider the role and responsibilities of the Languages Commissioner;
 - i) examine and consider other acts that have reference to the official languages of the Northwest Territories; and
 - j) evaluate official language acts, policies and programs in other jurisdictions.
3. Upon the conclusion of these considerations, the special committee shall provide the Legislative Assembly with interim reports and a final report to determine whether or not the act requires revisions regarding:
 - a) the objectives of the act;
 - b) changes to any provisions of the act;
 - c) changes to current and related policies; and
 - d) the implications of the Education Act, the Jury Act and other territorial legislation.
4. The special committee is committed to working in partnership with the Languages Commissioner and the Office of the Languages Commissioner who shall provide all reasonable assistance to the special committee, including acting in an advisory capacity, providing relevant studies or reports and forwarding

information, concerns or issues raised by the public regarding language legislation;

5. The special committee shall establish processes for providing information and affording Northwest Territories residents an opportunity to make their views known;
6. The special committee shall have access to such persons, papers and records as necessary to conduct its business;
7. The special committee shall be provided through appropriations with adequate funds to carry out its terms of reference and assigned responsibilities;
8. The special committee is authorized to employ such staff and/or consultants and contractors as may be necessary to carry out its responsibilities;
9. The special committee may consider other matters referred to it by the Legislative Assembly; and
10. The special committee may make recommendations it considers desirable through interim and a final report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 16, Bill 19 and Bill 20, Committee Reports 5-14(3), 6-14(3) and 7-14(3), with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 4-14(3), the House is resolved into committee of the whole to sit beyond the time of adjournment until the committee is prepared to report.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call committee of the whole to order. We have a number of issues to deal with in committee of the whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that the committee continues consideration of Bill 19 and Committee Reports 5, 6 and 7 concurrently, specifically to deal with the budgets for the Department of Justice, followed by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We will call a short break and then come back for Bill 19. Thank you.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee to order. We will deal with the Department of Justice. Mr. Minister, do you have any opening comments?

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes I do, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to introduce the 2001-2002 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice has a challenging mandate to administer justice and maintain safe and secure communities in the Northwest Territories. These are issues we are all very concerned about.

In Towards a Better Tomorrow, the Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly developed a vision for the future of the Northwest Territories, a vision for a prosperous future that includes safety and security for all citizens. I believe that it would not be possible to work towards that vision without a stable, legal framework, a functioning and independent judiciary and the programs and service that the department provides.

The departments' programs and services are supported by the following proposed budget for 2001-2002.

The operational budget for the department is \$67,120,000. The total net book value of capital assets and work in progress is estimated to be \$28,631,000. The estimated revenues are \$8,141,000 annually.

Members will notice several changes in the operational budget from the fiscal year 2000-2001 including:

- An increase as a result of the collective agreement settlement. This results in a requirement for an additional \$1,781,000.
- The salary increase of the RCMP. This is the final increment of a salary settlement approved by the Treasury Board of Canada two years ago. The increase in 2001-2002 amounts to \$186,000.
- Increased operational costs associated with the new adult and young offenders' facilities. The estimated amount is \$2,948,000.
- Increased funding to offset the shortfall of offenders being sent to the Northwest Territories from Nunavut. Another \$1,060,000 has been added for this reason. At the same time, the revenue budget has also increased by \$350,000 as the department is now able to house more federal inmates. This revenue will rise substantially once the new facilities are operational.

There are reductions in some areas compared to last year's operational budget. These are primarily related to one-time funding for projects that are to be completed in the fiscal year 2000-2001. The two one-time projects were:

- Start of money for the probation services program; and
- Implementing a new computer system to administer the new personal property securities program.

In 2001-2002, a large increase is planned in capital investments of close to \$17 million, bringing the department's capital acquisition plan up to \$20,205,000. Construction of the new female young offenders' facility in Inuvik and the new facilities for both male adult and young offenders in Yellowknife account for this increase.

Design work has been completed for both projects and a construction management company has been hired for the male adult and young offenders project. Site preparation is scheduled to begin in late February or early March; on the female offenders' facility in early April. The department's plan is to open both young offender facilities in February 2002.

Aboriginal advisory committees are assisting the department in all of these projects. Last fall, a blessing ceremony was held on the site of the new male adult and young offenders' facility and there will be further ceremonies as the project develops. This is part of the department's efforts to reflect the cultures of the North in programming.

For the past few years, the department has supported community efforts to find alternative solutions to justice issues. We intend to build on these accomplishments in the upcoming year by expanding training for community justice committees and by helping to set up two new justice committees in Yellowknife and Detah. This will be done within the current budget allocated to the community justice division.

The department and I will continue our review of the wilderness camp program. A report has been received from consultants on a cost analysis of camps and the program overall, and a copy was shared with the Standing Committee on Social Programs. We are continuing discussions with the standing committee and I welcome their efforts to help us develop an improved program.

The department, with assistance from consultants, is also moving ahead to develop evaluation criteria. Based on the work done to date and the advice of the standing committee, the department will shortly be producing a report on its review of the wilderness camp program.

This report will identify the findings and conclusions to date. It will set out a work plan for the ongoing development of a sound policy and evaluation framework for this program.

In the area of policing, we were expecting more progress in getting federal support for First Nations policing. I met with the Solicitor-General Laurence MacAuley just before Christmas to discuss this issue. I am pleased to see that Mr. MacAuley is continuing as solicitor-general, as I believe that northern concerns are well understood by him.

Late last year, we made public the proposed Northwest Territories Human Rights Act. This is a major initiative for the department and people in the North. As a next step in our consultations on this project, the Department of Justice will soon be distributing public consultation materials across the Northwest Territories. We will also be holding a series of public meetings for people to discuss the proposed act.

Overall, Mr. Chairman, I believe the activities described in the main estimates support the priorities of this government and will help make the Northwest Territories a safer and more secure place to live and to work. I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have. Mahsi, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would like to ask the committee who is responsible for reviewing the department under consideration to make comments with regard to the committee's review of the department's estimates. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met on January 19th, 2001 to consider the 2001-2002 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice.

There were a number of increases over the previous year's budget, including \$1,781,000 to cover additional expenses arising from the collective agreement signed with the Union of Northern Workers; an increase of \$1,060,000 to cover the budget shortfall caused by the lower than anticipated number of Nunavut prisoners; \$74,000 in forced growth for utility costs at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre; and \$2,727,000 to cover costs associated with young offender facilities opening in the upcoming fiscal year.

Wilderness Camps

The standing committee has consistently expressed support for the wilderness camp program. The Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs appreciate being provided with copies of the final report on the cost analysis of the Corrections Wilderness Camp Program. While there are concerns with some of the conclusions in the report, Members believe the report will allow discussion to take place to revise and improve the wilderness camp program.

The committee looks forward to the promised briefing from the Department of Justice and an opportunity to provide input before final decisions are made about changes to the wilderness camp program.

Human Rights Legislation

In early 2000, when the Department of Justice first announced its intentions to develop human rights legislation, the Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs began asking questions about the extent of public consultation that would take place on this very important territorial legislation. During the October review of the department's business plan, additional questions were raised when no consultation plan was available and no dollars were identified to support appropriate consultation on the draft Human Rights Act.

As was noted at that time, other departments undertaking major legislative initiatives usually provide detailed information on cost and a consultation process. The Department of Justice has not done this with human rights legislation.

The committee is still waiting for details on what public consultation process the Department of Justice plans to undertake for the draft human rights legislation. In the absence of a clear consultation plan, the standing committee would like to suggest that, as a minimum, the department make an effort to consult with all aboriginal governments and organizations, all municipal governments and all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are territorial in nature. This would include those NGOs that are not headquartered in Yellowknife.

Members are concerned that the department will not make a substantive effort to be proactive in the consultation process. This could lead to problems when the bill comes forward that could have been dealt with during the consultation phase.

Members of the standing committee would like to receive a briefing prior to mid-March on how consultation will be carried out for the draft human rights legislation and how the department plans to ensure residents and organizations in

smaller NWT communities have a chance to participate in this important dialogue.

Aboriginal Policing

The committee supports the department in its efforts to build a police force in the Northwest Territories that is representative of the people it serves and sees First Nations policing as an important part of that effort. In discussions with the committee, the Minister talked about negotiations with the Solicitor General of Canada to increase funding to this program. The main estimates support this by mentioning "cost-sharing programs with the Solicitor General of Canada with respect to First Nations policing in support of aboriginal participation of the policing in their communities."

However, in examining the budget for the law enforcement activity, committee members note that the department has actually decreased the funding support for First Nations policing by \$34,000 this fiscal year and \$199,000 last year. Some committee members think the department should "put its money where its mouth is" by increasing funding in this area. We also question whether the Solicitor General will seriously consider negotiating an increase while the NWT Department of Justice is cutting its own contribution to First Nations policing.

Legal Aid

For the past year, committee members have raised concerns about the effectiveness of legal aid, based on comments from constituents and reinforced by media reporting of difficulties with the system. In particular, since the major cuts to legal aid in 1996, members of the committee from smaller communities have noted a continual scaling back of the services provided by Legal Services Board lawyers and court workers.

In June 2000, the department provided information showing a significant backlog of family law cases waiting for assistance under legal aid. After that meeting and before the October discussions on the 2001-2004 business plans, the Legal Services Board hired two staff lawyers, in part to deal with the backlog situation.

When this was identified during the business plan review, it raised questions for the Members. It was not clear how the Legal Services Board had the ability to finance from within and hire additional staff without any approvals beyond that of the board. Another question was why the backlog became an issue when the board had the ability to take action by hiring additional staff as needed.

From discussions that occurred during the review of the 2001-2002 Main Estimates in January 2001, it appears the committee's concerns were well-founded. Members heard that the Legal Services Board had already run out of money for the 2000-2001 fiscal year and had scaled back on the level of assistance its lawyers and court workers were providing. Members were also warned to expect a deficit for the Legal Services Board.

This lack of operational and financial planning calls into question the viability of the Legal Services Board as it now exists. While the backlog was cleaned up on a temporary basis, members are concerned about the long-term impacts of the decision to hire two new staff lawyers as services are scaled back to deal with the financial shortfall.

It has become apparent to committee members that it is time to examine how legal aid is delivered in the Northwest Territories. Members are very concerned that a sustainable legal aid system is not possible, given the current funding level and delivery mechanisms.

The standing committee will conduct its own research on the methods of legal aid delivery in Canada and will contact the Minister at a later date with some possible recommendations.

Victims' Assistance Program

There is a dedicated group of volunteers in Yellowknife and some of the other larger communities who provide assistance to the victims of crime. However, this support mechanism does not exist in the majority of our communities.

Members of the committee believe that government is not supporting victims of crime in most NWT communities. Committee members are aware of several cases where the victim of a crime refused to testify because he or she was afraid of their attacker or did not understand the court process. This adds to the cost of our justice system, with police, lawyers and judges dedicating time to getting a trial underway, only to have the case collapse without the victim's testimony. In some cases, all that is required is someone to support the victim and guide them through what can be a confusing and traumatic experience.

Members are aware that community wellness groups have raised this concern. The committee looks forward to a response by April 1, 2001 from the department, indicating how it will respond to the need for better assistance for the victims of crime. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the Department of Justice budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Just a reminder to Members of the House, if you could show some courtesy to Members when they are making their opening remarks. There is a lot of side bar discussions going on. Keep that in mind. I would like to call on the Minister and ask him if he would like to bring in any witnesses. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have witnesses. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Jim Antoine, Minister of Justice. I have with me today the acting deputy minister, Mr. Gerry Sutton, to my left. To my right is Ms. Louise Dundas-Matthews. She is the director of corporate services for the Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in looking at the Minister's opening remarks, it is nice to see that we are going to be moving ahead with the female young

offenders' facility in Inuvik. It has been a number of years since this was discussed. Work has been ongoing and there has been much said about what this facility will really mean, not just in the form of standard facilities where you just take someone in and you just put them in a facility for a certain amount of time. There has been much said about this and about the fact that there will be a lot of work done with the young offenders who go there and the programming that will be there to try to prevent them from becoming repeat offenders. Hopefully, we will see that.

The ability of parents, hopefully, and family members to become involved because they will now be much closer to their homes. Right now, the only other place is southern Northwest Territories. So with that, I will look forward to seeing the process. I will ask more questions in that area under detail.

One other area is in policing services and the demand that is placed on communities, for example, in the Beaufort Delta region. As we see the development increasing and a lot more people going in and out of the area, hopefully -- I know there has not been a lot of problems because of the increased work, but the concern is, for example, next year if this work shows good information, that we could see three or four times the increase that we have seen even in this year. So there will be a high demand put on all our infrastructures, people and resources. Hopefully that has been taken into consideration as we go through this budget process and look into the possibility of the future year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Minister, do you want to respond to that?

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, I will respond to the policing services. We are working with the RCMP to have a contract with us through the federal Solicitor General's office, and we have a very good working relationship with the RCMP. We will raise this issue with them and see what kind of plans they have to look at situations like Inuvik, where there is going to be an increase of activity because of the development that is there, and see what we need to do there to provide the necessary policing services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. We are dealing with the Department of Justice, main estimates, page 7-9, services to government, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7,613,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Services to government, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$70,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Contributions, total contributions, \$3,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$73,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Law enforcement, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$19,198,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, law enforcement. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Public legal services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3,344,000. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Minister could indicate, given the concern raised in the committee report, especially with regard to the funding levels of this particular activity, what the backlogs are with family law and other areas of backlog. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. In the legal services board activity, with regard to the funding that is there, members of the committee probably know that this was jointly funded to fund the legal aid services.

About 11 years ago, it was a 50/50 share with the feds and since that time, when the feds started to have some major debt recovery exercises, they have not funded the legal aid services in the North as well as throughout the whole country. All the jurisdictions throughout the country are going through the same problems with the legal services that are underfunded by the feds.

I think our share right now has increased. I think we are funding about 70 percent of the total budget ourselves and the feds are funding only about 30 percent of operations. Last year, the federal Justice Minister indicated that the federal government was looking at trying to find some more money to alleviate this problem. There was an election. However, I am told by the Department of Justice that recently, even as recently as last week, there was a deputy ministers conference call where this was raised again. They were assured by the deputy minister of federal Justice that this is high on the agenda. They are still promising these things, but we still have to see these things. I just want to get that information out, that there is work at that level.

In the meantime, we have a situation here, specifically in our own jurisdiction, where this program is having some financial problems. We are going to be in a deficit this year, maybe \$200,000. The last time this fund was reviewed was about ten years ago. I have instructed the department to start looking into how we could best approach this. We may be seriously considering doing a review of this service that we are providing. I am working closely with the board and they have advised me that they are doing the best they can to try to alleviate this problem. This is where we are at.

I would be pleased to receive any kind of recommendation that the committee may have as a result of its research as well. You may find that our jurisdiction here is doing really well compared with the other jurisdictions in the country with regard to funding legal aid. I thought I would mention that.

To answer your question, we need to do a review and look at how this is done. In the meantime, we have to keep working with our federal counterparts, as they did make a commitment that they know the problems that we all face and there maybe something there from the federal government some time in the future while we are doing our own review. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some significant questions arising around public legal services. Justice delayed is justice denied. The inadequate budget.

The question to the Minister was what were the backlogs in terms of cases under family law, civil law, criminal law? Mr. Chairman, we have all seen copies of the letter, at least one letter from a lawyer indicating the problems. I have talked to other lawyers and they are prepared to withdraw their services because of cuts to the fee schedule and such, which is already, as they have told us, quite low by lawyers' standards. There have been some schedules which were arbitrarily cut.

This is an activity within the Department of Justice that is in trouble. It is well and good to be spending \$30 million on new jails and that kind of stuff. We are contemplating palatial estates for the judges when we do not have adequate funds for the people who need it the most, the people at the bottom end who are least able to look after their own rights and look after their own freedoms.

Under the Canadian Constitution, this particular activity is supposed to be there to protect them. What we are seeing are people being backlogged and court cases being stacked up because there are insufficient funds. Of all the things in Justice, this is probably one area that is most problematic, that has caught the eye of the committee. I think it is important.

If there are significant backlogs and people are being denied justice and access to legal services because there is no money, then it is very problematic. I agree with the Minister that we probably do need a thorough review of how we provide these services. If it has not been looked at for ten years, then it is probably long overdue and shame on the federal government for abrogating their responsibility with justice and legal aid.

In this case, we cannot stand by and just blame the federal government. There are too many of our constituents, too many of our people who are not getting access to very critical legal services. Could the Minister indicate what the backlogs are, just so everybody can appreciate the gravity of the situation? Could he also speak to the latest instructions to cut certain parts of the billing available to lawyers who are giving legal aid? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in June of 2000, the Legal Services Board had approximately 120 family cases awaiting assignment.

As of October 2nd, 2000, its backlog was reduced to less than 50 cases through the actions of hiring two legal aid staff lawyers, one in Inuvik and one in Yellowknife, to handle the family law matters. Where appropriated, the executive director conducted case conferences with legal council representing legal aid clients.

However, in spite of these steps, as of February 8th of this year, there is a backlog of approximately 75 cases again. Without the measures taken above, the backlog would have been a lot higher than what it is today.

The Legal Services Board is continuing to monitor the situation to determine further steps that may be taken to try to alleviate the backlog situation here. I am told that we are not aware of any criminal case backlog. That is what I am told. So the problem was the family law cases.

For more specific information, I would like to ask the deputy minister, Gerry Sutton, to also add to this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to comment on the question relating to cuts. It is not really a case of cuts that were made by the board to the fees that are paid to lawyers.

The regulations set out the maximum hours that a lawyer will generally be paid for. However, if a lawyer needs more time to spend on a case, the executive director of the Legal Services Board has a discretionary authority to approve increases where he decides that they should be paid. Due to the anticipated deficit, the executive director instructed lawyers that discretionary increases would not be authorized, except in situations where there were compelling circumstances. So the restriction was more in the nature of how that discretion to approve hours beyond that established by the regulations would be exercised. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Sutton. Public legal services, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In line with the questions by Mr. Miltenberger on that same issue, I am in possession of the similar correspondence, or the same one from the lawyer, I think.

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could advise us as to what exactly the objective of this review that he is undertaking about the Legal Services Board or their legal aid program is? What is it he is trying to get at? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. The review is to look at legal aid. There is obviously a lot of concern by the users of this program, the lawyers as well as complaints from clients that are out in the communities. It is also to look at the deficits that this program accrues on a yearly basis and to try to identify that.

I guess it is to try to identify what is driving the cost and as well to try to determine the level of funding that is required to run the program. Those are the two objectives that we identified to do in this review. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my understanding of the level of services provided by this program is pretty minimal already. I am not sure if you are, by looking at it, going to find a room there that shows where the cost driver is, not anything that you would have any control of cutting, I would not think.

What I am saying is, already the cases that get approved for legal aid funding in the cases of criminal files, these clients will get the services that they need to defend themselves in the court procedure. Then for the family cases, I recall that the hours the lawyers are allowed to work on these files are very minimal. I would not think that you would find too much work in there that could be cut or anything like that. There is already a six-to eight-month waiting period. I think that these are cases where a lot of times, it is single mothers who are leaving abusive relationships or who are trying to get child support or something like that.

These are cases that really need some help and the lawyers are already providing the services at a very minimal pay level. They are really providing this almost as a volunteer service.

I find it curious that the Minister is saying our program up here is so much better than the rest of the country. I do not know. I think it is a question of a lack of money. I do not know if you need to get a study to tell you that.

Could the Minister clarify why he cannot identify the problem now? Does he not realize now without the study that it is the lack of money that is causing problems? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Legal Services Program, as you know, is handled by the Legal Services Board, which is independent of government, according to our Legislature. They set the tariffs for the lawyers. The tariffs, or rates paid to lawyers for their services, have regulations they follow to determine the hourly rates and the daily rates. There are different amounts for a student-at-law or somebody who has less than four years, four years to six years, seven years to ten years, ten years or more. The rate goes up with the amount of years you spend as a lawyer. So they have set that rate and they follow that rate. That is a set rate. If that is a problem for the lawyers, then the Legal Services Board are going to be meeting with the law society to discuss this issue fairly shortly at the next board meeting this coming weekend, I believe.

So that may seem to be a problem there, but there are other factors as well. I am told that family law and criminal law are two different approaches. Apparently, not too many lawyers who are family law lawyers are in the North. It is less glamorous and it takes a lot more time to deal with family law issues.

So there is a difference between criminal law and family law in that regard. So that could be the reason why we see a bit of a backlog in the family law cases and we do not see them in criminal cases. We are aware of what the concerns are and what we perceive of the problems that are there.

Of course, it all comes down to dollars. As I indicated earlier, the whole program is supposed to be a jointly funded program with the federal government. They have not been giving their fair share for this program. Every increase that we put into this program is coming from our share. We need to look at that and we need to review that.

The indications are that the federal justice department is aware of this problem not only from here in the North but throughout all the jurisdictions in Canada, that the legal aid programs

throughout the country are underfunded. We need to also see if we could get additional funding from the federal Department of Justice in this regard. I would like to see a review of this whole program.

Apparently, the last time this program was done ten years ago, there were a lot of good recommendations that came out of it to improve the program and keep that direction. I think it is about time that we do another review. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that there are times when reviews are necessary. I just want to make sure the Minister knows what it is he is trying to get at. I do not want this review to be a means to delay the need to deal with something that needs to be done right away.

I would also like to encourage the Minister to work with the federal government. I do not know what can be done there to get more funding, but I really do not believe there is a lot of fat there to cut in terms of the legal services people get under legal aid. It is a lot of money being spent already, but when you are sitting on the receiving end, it is not a very luxurious legal service you get for the hours the lawyers get to work on these.

Mr. Chairman, I have one more question and that has to do with a question that Mr. Miltenberger asked earlier regarding the notice that went out stating that there will be no further discretionary funding in the legal aid files. I think it went out in January, which was three months before the end of the fiscal year. The deputy minister indicated earlier in answering questions that this was above and beyond the hours already allocated on the regulations. I would think we could think of a lot of examples where because of the allotted time the lawyers have to work on a file are so few to start with, it is not too hard to get over that, especially because every case is different. If you come up against anything unique, chances are many files will require contingency or discretionary funding.

My question is whether or not the department knows the impact of cutting out discretionary funding in such a way and also what is the department planning on doing to avoid the situation from happening for funding next year? I am not sure when he is expecting to have the review ready. I do not know if next year's budget will incorporate whatever he finds out from the review. I am sorry for the number of questions there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specifically on the lawyers' fees and so forth that the honourable Member is referring to, the Legal Services Board, even though funded by the Department of Justice, is an agency that runs this program. It is a challenging mandate in trying to manage its budget and at the same time provide legal services for residents. Because of the deficit position for the fiscal year, the executive director in his letter indicated that he will not authorize the discretionary funding unless very compelling circumstances exist. So it is still there. If it is really needed, then he would approve it. The lawyers have to state their case.

So it is not a unilateral cut to all the discretionary needs of the lawyers. Having said that, until this budget is approved and we get into a new fiscal year, the Legal Services Board will be

reviewing that specific policy early to determine that and revisit it again. We will probably get back to how it was before.

The bigger review that we are talking about will also address the exact questions the honourable Member has in trying to determine how to improve the existing program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My concern is in a similar area dealing with public legal services. I raised concerns at the last session and some of those concerns were addressed by the department to a certain extent. There are still many, many things that need to be done. This government is a government that creates laws and laws get broken or people get charged for breaking laws. If we have a public legal service that is designed to protect people's constitutional rights but we have a system that is ailing because of a lack of knowledge, as Mr. Miltenberger says, it is justice denied.

I understand there are under ten lawyers practicing in the family law section of the public legal services in the Northwest Territories and there is a significant backlog. People separating is one of the causes of family law. Our economy in the Northwest Territories is based on, for the most part, non-renewable resource development, which takes people out of their homes, out of their communities into the work environment for an extended period of time. That puts a lot of stress on the family, which will result in some family break-ups, putting more pressure on the legal aid system.

My understanding today, and I would like the Minister to confirm this, is that property issues are not covered under legal aid. Is that correct, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the case of family law and property, if children are involved, then the property issue would be dealt with in family law.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I say property, I am talking about homes, equipment, tools and toys, snowmobiles, boats, et cetera. Those are property and I just want to refer to that specifically. Also, what happens if there are no children involved?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Antoine, Minister of Justice.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: If there are no children involved in the family when there is a break-up, then the property issues are not dealt with in that case. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. Just to be on the same page, Mr. Chairman, can the Minister elaborate on what he means by property? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is usually involved in a break up is a division of property and that includes all property. It includes lands, personal properties as well, vehicles and so on. The Legal Services Board does not fund legal aid in situations where it is simply a division of property.

However, as the Minister said, they will fund division of property when children are involved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, deputy minister. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you. Is that all property, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): For clarification, the deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that includes all property.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the department, when they are thinking about doing a review, are there any time lines at all here? This is a present issue in the Northwest Territories and has a significant backlog as my colleagues have indicated. Are we going to continue for a while under the pressurized environment or are we going to deflate the pressure and do something about the problem?

The legal aid system seems to be the next major crisis in Canada. We are experiencing a crisis with the health professionals. The legal system seems to be the next one. If we have a heads up here, maybe we could take a leadership role in the Northwest Territories that the rest of Canada could follow.

I would recommend the legal-aid system and the public legal services of the Northwest Territories and the problems associated with this get addressed as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. This review that we are talking about, we would like to do it right away. We will aim towards the fall for completion of the review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just a reminder to the Members, Rule 12(10), no food or beverages other than water are allowed in the House. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to also get on the record with my concerns about legal aid. I know that I have been contacted by a number of constituents who have been very concerned about the administration of the program, particularly since there seem to be more and more limitations on what is covered.

From the answers Mr. Nitah received, it sounds like the only civil legal services that are now covered would have to do with the break up of a marriage, particularly where children are involved. Is that the case? Those are the only civil cases now where there would be some coverage allowed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. I would like to ask the deputy minister to reply to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of family law, I think the answer is correct, but there are other areas in the civil area where there is coverage. I am trying to think of what those are.

I believe there is coverage in certain cases dealing with child protection, for example. So I would not say that it is the only area in the civil area that is covered. However, coverage is definitely restricted in the civil area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know the constituents I have talked to have said they have talked to lawyers who have said that previously, the same types of cases had been covered by legal aid. So there has obviously been a tightening up of the whole provision of assistance. Is this done through regulation, or is there a limitation on what coverage is provided by statute?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: The coverage would be set by the Legal Services Board and it would also be covered to some extent by regulation as well. However, it is the Legal Services Board that decides what is covered and what is not covered. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that the rates were cut in 1997 and there has been no increase since then. We know too that there has been some limitations put on the number of hours now that are allowed for each case. I was wondering if we could get an understanding of what specifically was the rate decrease? What are the rates now and how many hours are allowed for cases?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: I am looking at a document that identifies that there was a 6.5 percent reduction in the tariff in 1996. The hourly rates were for student-at-large, \$40; for a lawyer with less than four years experience, it is \$61; for a lawyer with four to six years, it is \$70; seven to ten years is \$86; eleven years or more is \$102. Those are the hourly rates. Then there is the corresponding daily rates for these different categories. For student-at-large, \$232; less than four years, \$352; four to six years, \$436; seven to ten years, \$516; eleven years or more is \$609 per day.

On the restriction on the number of hours, I do not think I can answer that with the information I have before me right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the message we are getting here is that we should encourage young people in the Territories to pursue trades. They would be much better paid.

We are not able to get the hours limitation right now, but I have heard from lawyers that there is a real concern among the legal fraternity that people who are perhaps facing a decade in jail are not getting very much in terms of compensated hours by lawyers for representation. I understand lawyers are in effect

subsidizing the legal system by providing a lot of service free of charge because they cannot bill.

However, it really does call into question the protection to the individual in terms of whether or not they can get adequate representation to appear in court. I think we are getting into a dangerous situation here.

I recognize the Minister has said this is supposed to be a shared area between the feds and the GNWT in terms of expenses, but we are going to have to get much more aggressive with the feds or we are going to have to be prepared to cough up. Otherwise, we are in significant danger of having a number of people incarcerated who maybe should not be because they have not been able to get adequate representation.

Justice delayed is justice denied. I think that is true, but somebody who does not get adequate representation is also being denied justice. Whether that is because of a lack of time for somebody in a small community to meet with a lawyer so that the whole story is available, or because of a lack of adequate facilities for translation. In any case, whatever the cause, I think it is unacceptable and people are going to jail when they might not otherwise do so.

As you know, a number of us think this is a serious area, Mr. Minister, and would encourage you to get on with the study. You are going to have to find more money, and that either means get to work on the feds or else we are going to have to cough up ourselves. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you for the comments. We are all concerned about this particular program that is very much needed here in the North by a lot of citizens who cannot afford it on their own. The board is very concerned as well. I have requested that the board do a budgeting exercise that is realistic. They are preparing a reasonable budget for future years.

We all recognize that the services provided to the public of the Northwest Territories are very critical, and we must keep pace with the different federal legislation that is in place now. We have the gun legislation, there are different criminal codes, there is the proposed Youth Criminal Justice Act, and there are a number of things we are facing here legally, and we need to keep pace with it.

I know the hourly rates for the younger lawyers are very low. I think the board also sees that as well. There are a number of very critical things that we have to do at the same time. I think it is very necessary to do a review to make sure we do not start picking it off here and there. If we do a comprehensive review, we can look at all these things that are out there that are of concern to everybody.

In the meantime, the board is doing a realistic budget and we will see probably, if the feds do not cough up additional dollars, that we will have to seek it from within our system shortly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Public legal services. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of final questions, but first I would like to briefly speak once again to the issue of the services. We have talked about backlogs and we have talked about the impact on lawyers, but I would like to make the case for communities outside of Yellowknife, especially those who do not have lawyers. There is fly-in justice where the court party comes in. Many times, it is very quick. It is a sort of assembly-line justice. That is a complaint I have heard over and over again. There is physically no time and people are whipped through the justice system with, in some cases, unseemingly haste, as my colleague Mr. Dent pointed out.

The Minister has made reference to the need for a comprehensive review. That is something I think everybody would agree we need to look at. I would like to ask him when he anticipates he would start this review, how quickly can he get a good one done, and will there be an opportunity to have input? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we would like to undertake this review as soon as we can get it going. As I indicated earlier to the honourable Mr. Nitah's questioning, we would like to aim for some time in the fall for having something from the review done. We would like to seek all kinds of different input from everybody, especially from the Members of this Legislative Assembly, and other interested bodies and different groups out there that have an interest in this field. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Public legal services. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have two short questions. One is that the Minister mentioned earlier that he is planning on meeting with the board and the NWT Law Society. I would like clarification as to which one he is meeting with, or both of them. I think the law society would be a good place for advice. As well, I wonder if the Minister would meet with the local chapter of the Canadian Bar Association who, I believe, have been advocating and speaking on and have a position on the lack of legal aid funding in the North. May I ask for his commitment to talk to them as well, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Chairman, there is a meeting this weekend with the Legal Services Board and a meeting with the members of the law society, I believe, this weekend. It is a meeting between the two groups. I will not be there, but certainly I am prepared to meet with the Canadian Bar Association any time. I will seek a meeting with them as soon as we can. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, one last question. The Minister said earlier that our system is better funded than most in the south, but I do believe there are cases where, especially in criminal law cases, an accused has a possible defence of lack of funding and lack of due process as a result of lack of legal counsel, that may affect his defence. Are the officials aware of any precedent cases that may show what the obligations and liability of this government are in terms of its responsibility to provide legal services? Are we anywhere near

that with the level of funding that we are providing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are quite aware that an accused in cases that are likely to involve incarceration, have to be represented. If legal aid funding was not available, it is at the discretion of the court to order counsel to be appointed at a cost to government. I am not aware of any situations in the Northwest Territories where that kind of defence might be raised. I think people in the area of criminal law are generally represented, so I am not aware of any situation where that kind of defence might be raised in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Public legal services. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3,344,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Public legal services, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Registries and court services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$8,605,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for the announcement he made about the fact that PPSA is going to go into effect very soon here. Can the Minister confirm again when that service will be in place? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. It is going to be in place by next month, in April. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From what I understand, the PPSA legislation was passed quite a few years ago. At the same time, there was training given to the local bar to get acquainted with that process. I wonder if there is any need or any plan in place to get that updated and have that necessary training done so the system gets used properly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. I will give you some background information. This PPSA was passed in 1994. The automated system that was developed by the previous supplier was inadequate, so we had to develop a new system with another group. The project team will soon be doing some seminars and doing some workshops and hands-on training to

the systems for the interested stakeholders. This is a different system and a different group. It is a better system I am told and there is a lot of security in it. We will probably have to ask the people who may have taken the previous training to do some more orientation with this newer system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my understanding that the process to set this up was conducted by this government in partnership with the Nunavut government, but along the way the Nunavut government moved ahead of us. I understand they implemented this a few months ago.

I also understand that might have resulted in our government having to pay more money to get this into gear, whereas if we would have done it at the same time as the Nunavut government, then we might have saved some money. Is there any truth in that? If so, what is the money that we lost?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: No, this is the first time we have heard about that. I do not think there is any truth in that. As a result, we have not lost any money. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Registries and court services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$8,605,000. Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Registries and court services, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$3,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on page 7-22, under maintenance enforcement. That is the first that I have seen this. I wonder if I can ask, what is the process that is followed in this activity? I have been getting calls from constituents. I have two cases right now and I wish to protect the confidentiality of these people, so I will give you enough information to identify the problem here.

In one case, this woman has outstanding support payments that her ex-husband owes to her. She feels there is not enough followup in this office, the maintenance office, when her ex-husband falls behind in the payments. This woman is also familiar with the Alberta process. She said the Alberta office seems to do more in terms of following up with telephone calls or whatever. However, in the territorial maintenance enforcement office, in her opinion, all that gets done is sending an e-mail to wherever. I think the money from her ex-husband comes from outside of this jurisdiction, so she has to contact wherever that jurisdiction is. This office has to contact the other office to follow up, but she feels there is not enough support behind it.

I have not verified the facts here. I do not know the background. I do not know how this office in the Northwest Territories works and I do not want to make any judgments about that. I am sure they are hard-working people here in Yellowknife. I wonder if the Minister could advise me as to anything so I could tell my constituent. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the maintenance enforcement office is responsible for the enforcement of maintenance orders when a court order is made. Once this is done, our office takes over according to our maintenance enforcement program to collect child support. I am told our office is very effective, that we have low levels of complaints, but we finally got one here. I think that there are others out there. It would be good to know the specifics of this case, because every case is different from each other.

In the case where a victim lives in the North and the former counterpart or whatever is living in another jurisdiction, it is the responsibility of the other jurisdiction to do the collection. We do have reciprocal agreements with other Canadian jurisdictions and countries to allow other jurisdictions to enforce orders made in the Northwest Territories. However, we need to know what the specifics are so that we can address them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should have stated that in the situation of this woman, she is familiar with the Northwest Territories system and the Alberta system. I think her current partner owes money to the Alberta government or owes money to his ex-spouse, who lives in Alberta. They feel that whenever he falls behind payments, the Alberta maintenance office is after him, writing letters, calling him and does all that that needs to be done.

Whereas this woman's ex-husband is in the Northwest Territories jurisdiction, and when her ex-husband falls behind a payment, she just feels not enough is done to get her ex-husband here to pay the support payments.

I am aware this office does a lot of good work. It does very important work. I felt maybe they were overloaded with cases or something, so they are not able to follow up on the cases as quickly or as strongly as possible. I guess I have to take the Minister's word for it. He says he is not aware of any complaints that might have been received by this office. I do not know. I think I have to also give the benefit of doubt to my constituent who is calling me.

Mr. Chairman, I have another question. I guess the previous one was a comment. Maybe I will follow up with the Minister and give more detailed personal information on that other case.

My second question has to do with enforcement of judgement. I have a constituent whose husband has outstanding child support payments of upwards of \$15,000. She has obtained a court judgement, but her husband is a sole proprietor businessperson, so she is hoping his assets or his salary or bank accounts be seized in time to collect this \$15,000 so he does not dispose of his assets.

I am wondering, what is the policy or procedure within the maintenance enforcement in terms of how they act on seizing properties or enforcing a judgement? Is this too much of a specific question? Can I get that answered?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The maintenance enforcement office will seize property if it is possible. It is usually easier to collect if wages are involved. It is harder, as I am sure the Member knows, when wages are not involved. The

act does contemplate the seizure of property can take place. I am sure that is one of the things the maintenance enforcement office would look at in attempting to collect. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To enforce a judgement, that has to be given special consideration? Should that be my understanding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would not say that it is not routine. It is one of the tools that the maintenance enforcement has to collect on a judgement. The more common situation, however, is the attachment of wages, but it is not uncommon or out of the ordinary to seize property if it is feasible.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister assure me that this office does what it has to do to enforce a judgement when it comes to maintenance payments? In cases where the debtor does not have a salary, his wages cannot be garnished, that they always look at other options including seizure of property wherever possible? That any delay in this process is just a matter of this person getting her turn?

I just want to be assured that as a matter of routine procedure within this office, this office looks at all options to collect the maintenance payments, including the seizure of property. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: I would like to assure the honourable Member that the maintenance enforcement office will look at all of the options available to them according to the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act, so that they enforce payments for spousal and child support according to the act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Registries and court services, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$3,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$3,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 7-25, community justice and corrections, budget summary. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a question about the community-based programs or projects that are involved in corrections centres. I was wondering if I could get some information on how many correction centres run programs or projects that are of a fundraising nature in communities where they are set up?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in Hay River, the Mackenzie Correctional Centre does

programs and projects that raise money, like firewood and other projects that they do. I am not too sure about Yellowknife. I know they use some of the crews on different projects, whether it is fundraising or not. I will have to get back to the honourable Member on exactly how many of the centres are doing these projects to raise money in the different communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These programs that are run within correctional centres, are they meant to be a business program? What I am getting at is, is it their intent to set up as a business, to get a business licence and run in competition with the private enterprise? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, it is not the intent to set up business to compete with private enterprises. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So they are not businesses then, they do not have business licences and operate as businesses?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: I do not know if I can answer that, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure if they have the business licences or not. I would have to get back to the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey, could you just clarify your question? I do not think it was clear.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I am trying to get at is this; I understand the programs that they run for inmates, they are make-work projects, basically. Sometimes they benefit the community. The concern I have is there have been a number of complaints, going back over quite some time, that projects that are run through the centre oftentimes compete with private enterprise. They obviously do a lot of work cheaper than what private enterprise can do.

For example, the woodcutting business, lawn maintenance, brushing, whatever, if they have equipment paid for by the corrections centre, have crews that go out for \$4.50 a day, private enterprise cannot compete with that.

It is my understanding, and I am not sure, but there may even be a business licence involved in the one in Hay River, so I am wondering if that is the intent, or should the program operate at arm's length? Private enterprise should be able to set the price for services, and if there is room, go in and sell products. Where does this money go and what is it used for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the money that is raised goes into the inmate welfare funds in each institution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the wood business, it has been brought to my attention that the centre in Yellowknife is going to get involved in the wood business. I was wondering if and when they do get set up, they are going to be going with the going prices in Yellowknife or are they going to be undercutting the operation that is here now?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Sutton.

MR. SUTTON: I am not aware there was that plan, but I would have to check to be sure. It is news to me if that is the intent. Mr. Chairman, it is not intended that the programs would be setting up entities that would compete with private enterprise and undercut private enterprise. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Delorey, do you have any other questions? Corrections, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have some questions for the Minister about the Victims Assistance Program, which is not available in every community. It provides a significant support service to victims of crime and is labouring along on a shoestring budget as well.

I would like to ask the Minister if he could indicate what the plans are in terms of looking at that program. Could it possibly form part of the review of services, such as legal aid and victims services? They are distinctly related. Thank you.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know the support to victims of crime through victims services have been there for some time, and we know there is a need to increase support to victims of crime.

We have already undertaken to try new initiatives to try to alleviate and to provide those services as widely as we can in the North. We announce a new initiative like new forms in plain language. We have a part-time staff being hired to assist program review and implementations. We are working to try to establish funded programs in Hay River and Inuvik as well.

We know there is a need to provide those services on a wider basis than we have, so that is what we have done. We are hosting a major conference here at the end of this month on March 28th to 29th. There will be representatives of different victims services agencies from around where we have that program as part of the planned committee, to try to draw different organizations there that are very concerned about this area to come to this conference. It might be a starting point to see what the concerns are out there, and hopefully we will have some good recommendations and directions from that conference.

We did not talk of doing a review of that. Perhaps the conference will be attended by people who would be there to give us direction. If there was a need for review as a result of that, we will certainly consider it at that time. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As with the issue of legal aid, I know there are people who are working long and hard in this field. There are probably going to be a lot

of suggestions, but it is going to come down to, as it is with legal aid, adequate funding, especially if you want to expand the program to other communities.

I would like to ask the Minister, does he have any more specific time lines? I know he said they are hosting a conference, after which they hope to come forward with recommendations. Does he have any idea when he will be able to come forward with a fairly well laid out plan in terms of how the Victims Assistance Program is going to fit within the other constellation of Justice programs and services? Thank you.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we will know better where we stand as a result of the conference. Between now and the conference, we will do some planning on what the next step will be from there. This program, like the honourable Member for Thebacha has indicated, is similar to legal aid service in the way that it also needs money to run. We are aware of that.

We are anticipating very soon that victims of crime initiatives of Justice Canada will be making an announcement, perhaps in providing more funding to supplement our internal funding for our department's initiative in this area. So we are anticipating that Justice Canada will be making an announcement for additional funding for its particular initiative. So there are a number of things we are doing in this program.

We have not really talked of doing a review of identifying any time lines on this for when we would have more of a concrete plan of where we are going to go in this area, but in the meantime, we are doing a number of different things to try to alleviate some of the problems. This program is not available in all the areas in the North and we are going to have to address that. I am sure the conference will come out in developing a plan of action as we go. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the department's business plan, which is a public document, in one of the sections called community supervision, the plan states that one of the most effective alternatives to incarceration is community-based supervision or probation. That is a statement that I think we can all readily get behind and support. Yet in the budgets that are proposed here under the heading community justice and corrections, we look, for instance, under community corrections. We are actually looking at a very slight decrease in the neighbourhood of just over \$2 million. In community justice, it is a very marginal increase in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 million. I guess I am contrasting that, Mr. Chairman, with what we are about to get into with this department, which would be the start of a multi-year, \$42 million construction program for correction facilities.

I just wanted to try to build a bit of a basis there for a comparison between what we are investing in community corrections, community justice, alternative justice systems perhaps, which seems to be quite constant, has been for some time -- it is not going anywhere -- yet we are investing amazing amounts of money in jails and secure facilities.

My question is to what degree are we really going to start investing in these community-based and alternative systems of justice and supervision and probation? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member's question is a good one. In the Department of Justice, we also handle corrections and the whole area of community justice is new. It is a new area in terms of the amount of years that it has been there. We are developing the concept as we go along. My own position on community justice is I am very supportive of it because it incorporates people in the community being involved for the minor cases.

Where it is working effectively, it involves dedicated people, community people and it has helped the community heal. Not too many cases come forward to the more established correctional system and court system. It helps in that way.

It is a new area and I would like to see more focus put on that area and to try to build that up. The people who have been working on it for the last few years, since it started, have contributed greatly to that program. We need to look at that and put more emphasis on it.

On the more structured institutions, I know there is a huge increase to that because of the young offenders' facility, we are compelled to do it. We cannot continue to use the Dene K'Onia Young Offenders Facility in Hay River for what we are using it for. We are given a certain period of time to move young offenders, young female offenders and young male offenders out of there. So there is a compelling reason to do it. We all agreed that the female young offender facility is going to be in Inuvik a long time ago. That will see an increase in staff and training and so forth. So there is a big bump in the cost in that.

In the male young offenders' facility, it was decided it would come here to Yellowknife. We also need to train additional people to run those two facilities. So by that, through the fire marshal's decision and the need to have better secure facilities for our young offenders, we have to go in that direction.

As for the jail, the correctional centre is in very bad shape. There was a decision some time ago to build a new one. We are following that course of action and that sees a huge increase in the capital cost, but the training in additional ongoing costs is mainly for the young offenders in terms of staff.

We need to do both. Perhaps the cost for the community corrections program is not as high as we would like it to be. It is something that is growing and we hope to put more emphasis and more thought into how it could work better. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is, of course, human nature. We are always going to need jails and replacing them when they wear out. It is a fact of life.

What I wanted to contrast, though, was the relatively static investment we are making in alternatives. In the big scheme of things, I do not have a lot of confidence that our present

system of justice and incarceration, punishment and treatment, is really making a difference or really making a dent in what our results are. I would like to think that if we are turning the corner and improving on that, the department would be the first to be telling us about it. I do not see any evidence of that.

The systems and the processes we have in place right now just do not seem to be making that much of a difference. I would really like to have seen it in this budget, but I hope we can see in future ones some more investment, some more emphasis and initiative on alternatives, especially in the community-based systems. I could not agree more that is where we really will, I think, be able to make a difference, bringing the communities onside.

That is my comment, Mr. Chairman, and I would just finish by pointing out a statistic in here that is rather disturbing. The majority of crimes in the NWT now are committed by people in the 16 to 25 year demographic area -- about 15 per cent of our population -- and it will continue to grow as a proportion of our population over the next several years. We have all the right signals before us indicating that we have a problem that is going to be growing. Unless they demonstrate some courage and some initiative, we are not really going to be able to expect too much in the way of improvement. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question in the area of grants and contributions. The area I am looking at is corrections, education support to the Inuvik alternative school program, and it is no longer identified here. If I can ask what has occurred here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will have to get back to the honourable Member on that one. It could be one or two different programs, but I am not too sure. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Minister can give me a time line as to when they might get back to me with that information? Thank you.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: I could get back to the Member by tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Page 7-25, community justice and corrections, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$28,362,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7-27, community justice and corrections, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$998,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total grants and contributions, \$998,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7-28, information item, active positions. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am just wondering about student summer employment. Since I do not see any seasonal or casual positions throughout the Department of Justice, does Justice typically hire any summer students? If so, what would they be classified under?

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, we do hire summer students. I think we classify it under casuals. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason for my question is that I do not see any casual positions identified under the main estimates. I am just wondering if that is a mistake or if in fact they do have some casual positions they can use for student summer employment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Matthews.

MS. DUNDAS-MATTHEWS: The funding for casuals for summer students is actually not budgeted specifically because they are usually hired in the program areas with filling vacations for full-time employees who are on vacation throughout the department. There is funding that is planned for summer students in the compensation services salary budget, but we do not actually identify the casual positions.

I am not sure if that answers your question, but yes, there always is a plan within the Department of Justice to hire summer students. We are just going through the process now of determining the needs and the numbers for this upcoming summer for the university students returning in April.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Matthews. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If they have not set the number of positions they are going to have for this year, do they know the number of university students who were hired last year? Do they also try and target those students who are taking law at university?

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: We do not have the numbers of students that were hired last year. We will get that number for the honourable Member by tomorrow.

Yes, we are targeting students who are taking law. We have a bursary program that we have that part of the deal is for them to work through the summer. Yes, we are targeting all law students. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When does the department expect they will have the estimates for the numbers

of summer students that they will hire this year? The reason I am asking this is I am little bit surprised that you do not have it right now. I understand the Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment has offered a briefing to one of our standing committees on maximizing northern employment. I would have thought that that would be part of this overall briefing of the summer student employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, we were hoping to have that information by the middle of this month, March. That was the deadline that was set for us. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For student summer employment, does the department strictly adhere to the Affirmative Action Policy when hiring summer students as well?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Dundas-Matthews.

MS. DUNDAS-MATTHEWS: My apologies, Mr. Chairman. I would say yes, we certainly do our best to make every effort to do that. Priority is given to P1 candidates, the affirmative action candidates, in any consideration for summer employment and residents from the North returning from schools in the south.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Matthews. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I have had a call from a constituent who expressed some concern that last year, the Affirmative Action Policy was not followed strictly. I think it is something that Members will be watching this year. I just wanted to know whether or not it was supposed to be followed. I take from the answer that the policy is supposed to be followed. I think returning students will be keeping that in mind. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7-28, information item, active positions. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under active positions, both in the North Slave and Inuvik regions, there is an increase in positions. I believe those would be in the Inuvik area as the young offenders' facility. North Slave has to do with the young male facility. Could I get some clarification on that?

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

MR. SUTTON: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is correct. It is mostly in both cases due to the new young offender facilities.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are these facilities to be operational this fiscal year?

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

MR. SUTTON: In the case of Inuvik, that is correct. It is intended to be operational in 2001-2002. I believe Yellowknife will be just shortly into the new year, towards the end of the year or into the new year. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, why would we identify positions in this fiscal year?

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

MR. SUTTON: That is because the staff have to be hired and they have to be trained so the facility is ready to open its doors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Sutton. Page 7-28, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7-29, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7-30, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 7-31, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$1,199,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go back to page 7-7, Justice, operations expense, total operations expense, \$67,122,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to capital acquisitions, page 11, Justice, community justice and corrections, total community justice and corrections, \$3,285,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for the record, earlier in the question, Mr. Sutton responded that the Inuvik young offenders' facility would be operational during the 2001-2002 fiscal year. Can we get some information as to what time we will see that construction completed?

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The construction of the Inuvik female young offenders facility is scheduled for completion by January, 2002.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are on page 11, Justice, community justice and corrections, total community justice and corrections, \$20,020,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Justice, page 12, total department, \$20,205,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go back to page 11, Justice, total community justice and corrections, total public legal services, \$85,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Justice, registries and court services, total department, \$20,205,000. Page 12, Justice, total registries and court services, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$20,205,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): That concludes the Department of Justice. Thank you to the Minister and your witnesses. We will go to the Housing Corporation. Does the Minister have any opening remarks? Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Yes I do, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present this Legislature with the 2001-2002 budget for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, I am confident the budget we are presenting today will assist in achieving the objectives of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation in support of the goals outlined in Towards a Better Tomorrow.

We have requested a total contribution of approximately \$45.5 million. This represents an increase of 5 percent from the previous year. The corporation will spend over \$90 million on housing in the Northwest Territories this year when we include Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other contributions.

With the funding included in this budget, projects will continue under our present initiatives. In its contracting procedures, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation works to ensure that Northern labour, goods, services and contractors are used in order to create jobs and economic activity in our communities.

Mr. Chairman, the 2000 Housing Needs Survey results show there is still a dire need for adequate, suitable and affordable housing in the Northwest Territories. The majority of those in need are aboriginal families. The total withdrawal of federal funding for new social housing has put a severe strain on the corporation's ability to meet the housing needs of our residents.

One of the most important challenges for the Northwest Territories, as well as for all provinces and territories, will be to ensure that the current level of federal funding to operate and maintain public housing units stays in the housing system. The long-term sustainability of our social housing stock depends on it. I intend to discuss this important issue with the federal Minister at our next meeting in August, 2001.

Mr. Chairman, the corporation is currently working cooperatively with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on integrating the social housing and income support programs. Key features of this initiative include harmonizing the income exemption policies of both the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and implementing measures to simplify and combine the delivery of our programs in communities.

Housing Corporation officials have just completed meetings with representatives from the community of Fort Resolution. We anticipate Fort Resolution will be the first community to pilot this joint Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Northwest Territories Housing Corporation initiative.

Senior Housing Corporation staff have just returned from meetings with their territorial and provincial counterparts from across the country. We are anticipating that the federal housing Minister, the Honourable Alfonso Gagliano, will be presenting the Remote Housing Initiative to the federal Cabinet in mid March and publicly announcing it by the end of March. Key aspects of this new initiative, such as cost-sharing and the amount of client assistance, remain uncertain at this time. I will continue to lobby my federal counterpart to ensure that this initiative meets northern needs and requirements.

Mr. Chairman, I have asked senior officials to continue their research into all historical housing agreements between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government regarding the funding associated with delivering programs on reserves, now that a second reserve is expected to be established in the Northwest Territories. Once this research is completed I will share it with Members of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Does the standing committee responsible for the Housing Corporation have any comments? Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met on January 23, 2001 to consider the 2001-2002 Main Estimates for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

The estimates saw an increase of \$446,000 from the amount presented in the business plans. This difference was to address the changes to the collective agreement with the Union of Northern Workers.

Federal Government Issues

Two issues dealing with the federal government's limited support for northern housing issues were of concern to committee members. The first was the federal On-Reserve Housing Program. Members of the standing committee are disappointed that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation are not prepared to live up to their fiduciary responsibility for on-reserve housing in the Northwest Territories.

The Members are disappointed in the apparent lack of effort by the Housing Corporation to lobby federal counterparts to ensure that the Northwest Territories receives a fair share of housing funding that targets aboriginal people, such as the On-Reserve Housing Program.

The standing committee, in last year's main estimate report, recommended that the corporation continue lobbying the federal government to access the On-Reserve Housing Program. It is apparent that the Minister ignored this recommendation.

In addition, committee Members are aware that the Minister made a commitment to the leadership of the Hay River Reserve to lobby on their behalf to access the On-Reserve

Housing Program. Members are not pleased that the Minister also ignored this commitment.

It is clear from the actions of the federal government that there is understanding of how different the Northwest Territories is from the rest of Canada where many aboriginal people live on reserves. Although northern aboriginal people do not, for the most part, live on reserves, they should have the same right to the funding and programs that other people living on southern reserves do.

The second issue of concern to the Members of the standing committee was the possibility of increased funding for the building of social housing. It was disappointing to hear that our initial optimism about a federal proposal was misplaced. While there was a proposal made at the federal/provincial/territorial housing meeting, we understand that the CMHC application process and conditions are so onerous that acceptance of the federal funding was not an option for the provincial and territorial governments.

The committee would like to see the Minister lobby the federal government on the On-Reserve Housing Program and on the need for a realistic funding program to build social housing. We look forward to receiving copies of the Minister's correspondence in pursuing these matters.

Business Development Activities

In recent years, the NWT Housing Corporation has been successful in marketing NWT goods and services and its expertise in the design, construction and operation of northern homes. There was a proposal to shift responsibility for this marketing to the NWT Development Corporation, but the transfer appears to be on hold. The standing committee is in favour of approaching any such transfer with care and caution.

The Housing Corporation has done an excellent job in developing new markets for its goods and services. This has included creating positive business relationships and a level of trust between the Housing Corporation as a supplier/contractor with its business clients. The Housing Corporation also has access to in-house expertise, history and knowledge that an outside marketing agency could not readily duplicate.

Members applaud the success of the Housing Corporation in this area and would like an opportunity to comment in advance on any proposed changes to the current marketing approach.

Harmonization of Income Support and Public Housing Programs

Members appreciated the briefing on the harmonization of the Income Support and Social Housing Programs. If the harmonization can be implemented with appropriate review and analysis in advance to iron out potential problems, the inequities between the two programs should disappear. While the change is not supposed to impact those on income support, it should remove the disincentive for people to work. Persons employed in low-paying or part-time jobs will now not face a penalty for trying to earn income.

The change, as proposed, will result in rent increases for a number of people, including seniors, who are occupying social housing and have significant sources of income. Any changes must be carefully communicated, as affected people will need

time to make the necessary adjustments to their personal financial arrangements.

Members noted in their last briefing that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation had not developed a communication strategy for the harmonization strategy. The standing committee expects to be provided with the details of a communication strategy at the next briefing on the harmonization strategy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Minister, would you like to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, I have prepared to bring witnesses with me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister is in regard to the pilot project that has been taking place, especially in regard to the log houses.

I for one have been requested by the chief of Fort McPherson to look at the possibility of working out a program with the community and the band council to look at the possibility of constructing log houses for the band members in Fort McPherson, similar to the housing units that have been constructed in Tsiigehtchic, and especially the one that we had the opportunity to fish with Mr. George Nevechy of Tsiigehtchic.

I for one feel that initiative was a good one. I think we should expand that project. Knowing that it was a pilot project, however, we were able to see that it is evident that we can build log houses cheaper than in the past. People should have the opportunity to make use of the materials around us, especially where we do have large timber supplies and are able to have the client go out and get their own logs as part of their contribution to their houses and also for them to construct log houses.

I would like to ask the Minister, will he consider the possibility of the band in Fort McPherson to work in partnership with the Housing Corporation to look at such an endeavour?

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the positive aspects of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is we have the ability to work on some new initiatives. One of these new initiatives is the idea of log-constructed homes, not only for Fort McPherson, but

also other communities across the Territories that have expressed an interest.

The way it works at the moment, the NWT Housing Corporation provides the building supplies and other needed amenities. From that, we also engage ECE in some of the training components and we have some investment from the local communities. The preference is that we support those local initiatives and we expect the potential homeowners to go and gather the logs and bring them into the specific community that is mentioned. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister tell us if it is possible for the band in Fort McPherson to take on such an initiative? We have seen that Fort McPherson is not part of your budgetary process for log homes. I feel that this project could go a long way, especially with the support of the band. They already have wood misers and equipment in the community and they have people with different skills. I think building them would help with the economics of it and being able to develop a skill that they could probably use elsewhere. It could allow them to expand the project to other communities within the Mackenzie Delta.

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I will speak to the manager of this because that has been widely requested across the Territories, to start looking at not only the construction of log houses, but also developing a training component. We do have an expert within the corporation who specializes in log construction and log building.

It is nice to hear the Member's question regarding whether we could deliver. I would like to give the Member the assurance that we have already begun the process not only in Tsiigehtchic, but in Deline and a number of other communities across the Northwest Territories where they have access to harvestable logs. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still have not heard a response to my question regarding the band in Fort McPherson being able to take advantage of this program. We hear about Deline and other communities, but this is an initiative the community wants to be able to get into. How is a community able to access such a program if they are not on the list already?

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just trying to give the Member an overview of how we can facilitate that community request. Again, to be specific, it only requires a proposal from the community. We will have our officials go into the community and discuss the potential of this request with them. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will put that forward to the band to put in a request.

The other area I mentioned is that a lot of people who have their own homes are trying to find alternative ways of bringing down the high cost of maintaining and operating their homes. One of the ideas I was approached on from the community of Aklavik was, what is the possibility of putting in another source of heat, which is wood, and having a program delivered through the Housing Corporation to use wood as a second source of heat, because of the high cost of diesel fuel and what not?

For some people, it is costing them over \$1,000 just to fill up their fuel tanks. You are spending somewhere between \$4,000 and \$5,000 just to heat the homes.

If there are ways of finding alternative sources of heat rather than diesel fuel by using wood, you will not be burning that much diesel fuel in your home and it would bring down the use of the furnace. It would not kick in as much and you would not be burning as much diesel fuel. Having a second source would really help with the high cost of trying to heat your home and the maintenance cost of that unit.

Will the Minister consider looking at that as a possibility of a pilot project or a proposal that could be put forth, so people who want to find an alternative to diesel heat, which is a high cost of almost 80 some odd cents a litre, it gets pretty expensive. Will the Minister consider looking at that?

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will provide this as a followup to an answer I provided in the House last week. We do already provide wood stoves. Also, I would like to mention to the Member that we will also offer it to those who want it. It is no big problem to us to offer to those residents who want to include wood heat as a secondary source in their homes. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way it stands right now, you have a choice between diesel and wood, but you do not have an opportunity to combine them so you can have both sources. I think that is where you have to make a revision to the program that is there now, because it limits you to one or the other. It does not give you the opportunity to combine them both. That is where I am coming from. In order to do that, you have to amend the program so it has that flexibility that you are not restricted. Will the Minister consider making that amendment to the program now so that you have the opportunity to use both sources of heat?

You may have a furnace today, but if this will bring down the cost of operating or maintaining the home, that should be the basis for it. If putting this in here will bring it down to a more manageable level for the homeowner so they can maintain their own homes, will the Minister look at that amendment or change to the existing programs?

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to inform the Members of the House that there is no need to amend the policy. We do offer both. I think what needs to be done here is we need to develop this as part of our communications strategy and make the people aware this program does exist. Again, the question was raised last week if we did have a communications strategy. We do and we will incorporate this very part of it, the heating element, to the communications strategy in the communities. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to bring up a couple of things. First of all, regarding the harmonization program, I think the concept of having everybody pay some sort of rent and try to encourage people to seek employment is a good one. However, I have some problem when it comes down to charging the seniors rent in the communities.

We all know that, for the most part, a lot of the seniors are having financial problems as it is. A lot of the seniors are looking after their children and some of them are looking after their grandchildren. The dollars they receive do not go very far. I wanted to raise that.

Also, the concept of having students who are in post-secondary school also pay rent. These students are making very little dollars through the SFA. Most of them are getting \$675 a month, I believe. That does not go very far. If we want to encourage our students to stay in school, we have to look at ways to help them financially. I do not think this is doing it justice by incorporating a rent that will create further hardship.

My other comment was regarding the EDAP program. This is a program that I voiced concern over several times now because I do not see it working in the communities I represent.

I do not believe we have very many houses that were built under this program. The ones we did get off the ground are facing very tough times. A lot of them had to be refinanced and last year, I think, we only got one in the community of Fort Providence. It is really not keeping up with the housing demand. I think we should be looking at this.

The way the program is set up, either you are making too much money or you are not making enough. So what happens in that case then is the dollars that are budgeted are, for the most part, going into the larger centres and we are not getting the houses in the communities.

In the case of the Hay River Reserve, they have a few houses under the IHP program, I believe, and Fort Providence has two. It really is not keeping up with demand.

In the year before last, we had 25 applications for housing in Fort Providence alone. We have only managed to put two IHP houses in there and one EDAP.

I really encourage the Minister to review this whole EDAP program and maybe look at restructuring it so we can accommodate more people in the communities.

One more thing I would like to mention, and it was raised to me by several seniors now, is a seniors' repair. We see a lot of cases where the seniors are getting houses through the IHP program. I believe there is going to be a senior strategy

introduced pretty soon where seniors will get independent housing. However, a lot of these seniors who are put into independent housing are now facing difficulties with mechanical repair and even smaller items, such as changing doorknobs and jammed windows and stuff like that. I think there should be something introduced that would allow for assistance for the seniors.

Those are the three items I wanted to raise, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. There are not really any questions in there, but does the Minister want to respond to those? Mr. Minister.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it is important that we do talk a bit about the harmonization policy, which is a joint effort between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and ourselves.

It is, of course, going to impact on the majority of the population. We are aware of that. It is a matter now of trying to see what is the best way of developing an approach that would alleviate some of the concerns. Those are not easy.

Secondly, in reference to the Member's statement in regard to his housing situation in the Deh Cho, our housing officials met with the Fort Providence Tribal Council and will work on trying to develop a community-specific program. We have the capability of doing that from community to community because everyone differs so much in how they approach the housing needs.

The last item on the EDAP program, in a lot of those non-market communities, it does not work. We are trying to adopt programs to do that. So what we have done in the last 12 months is to work with the communities in developing a partnership or working arrangement where we can join our combined resources to meet the objectives.

We know certainly EDAP may only apply in the tax-based municipalities where you have a housing market. Where they do not have a housing market per se, hopefully we will be able to work with the community in developing a housing market in that specific community. However, again, they are few and far between and we are aware of that.

Mr. Chairman, I think my three answers really capture the essence of the comments and the questions. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some general comments before we get into detail. I share some of the concerns already spoken about by a couple of my colleagues and it goes around seniors and the harmonization and the rent they would end up paying.

I am aware from previous discussions in the 13th Assembly when this harmonization package was being talked about, there was some consultation done with the Seniors' Society of the Northwest Territories. The Seniors' Society of the Northwest Territories agreed that most seniors agreed that some form of rent was acceptable to them. The figure that was being talked about was in the area of \$100. I hope that is remaining as it is and we are not going to go to our seniors and

tell them they are going to have to pay the same price as everybody else.

As we heard already a number of times, it is already extremely difficult for seniors to make ends meet. More times than not in the smaller communities, even in communities like Inuvik, the seniors take the role of helping out families when it comes to their grandchildren and even their children in some cases. That is the way it has been for a long time.

Changing the policy and direction will not change people's attitudes in the way they have lived and treated their families. So hopefully that area is not changing. If it is, I think we are going to run into some concerns from a lot of Members, especially those coming from smaller communities.

The other area I see here, looking at the capital plan and hearing from the Social Programs committee in the past as well as this year, is that a number of seniors units are going up. I am aware that in the past there used to be seniors units built between Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation that totaled eight units per year. I see that we are going 12 units per facility now.

There is one area of concern when it comes up and I will use a specific instance. Contractors that I have been hearing from in Inuvik referenced the seniors facility in Tuktoyaktuk that is supposed to be built in this fiscal year. I heard that a number of weeks ago and thought it was just rumors and did a quick contact with the Minister's office. At that time, I was told there was no decision. I was hoping to be kept informed.

Again, I received more calls from contractors stating that the information they were receiving was this project has been sole-sourced now. I would like to hear if that is the possibility. It is one thing to hear some rumours, but when the suppliers in the community are pricing out the cost of the facility already for one other contractor that supposedly has been sole-sourced, it is getting serious. At that point, it seems we are beyond rumours.

I guess in the area of contracting, I would like to know if the Housing Corporation has changed its stance when it comes to public tender or sole-sourced negotiated contracts. Those are the areas I have an interest in right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we could certainly assure the Member that there is no sole-sourced contract out there. Again, if we have done that, it is in contravention of the government policy. We are aware that there is no sole-sourced contract nor negotiated contract that can go out without Cabinet approval. We are very well aware of that. There have been a lot of rumours. I have heard the same ones as well. We confirmed with our officials that there is none. Our senior officials here will acknowledge that. From my discussions with them in the last several days and as far back as a week ago, there has been no contract let out to any particular group or business.

The question on seniors is going to be a very delicate one. I myself have said a year and a half ago when I ran for public office that I was here to protect the seniors. If there are some rental scales or increase in rents for senior, we have other options which we are looking at, Mr. Chairman.

One of them is to put them back to seniors' homeownership and there is a number of ways to do that. We are just trying to work out the mechanics at the moment and see what is the best way to fit them into a separate program. That is what we are working on at the moment. It is an ongoing issue and it will be. Again, if we are talking about consultation, we are at least working within that process at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One area that I would like to ask for a bit of comment on -- and I am sorry, I do not have all of my information at hand -- concerns the ability or the mandate of the Housing Corporation to assist with commercial developments.

The area I have heard from potential developers is when they go to banks to secure mortgage funds for commercial projects such as apartment buildings or that kind of thing, the amount of equity the commercial lenders want far exceeds their ability to get a decent return.

Where there may be a bit of a gap here is where the Housing Corporation -- or in days past, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation -- used to provide guarantees, mortgage lending at more attractive rates and at lower equity levels. This would in turn help make it more attractive for commercial builders to go into more remote communities such as the North and make investments, which would in turn increase the housing stock, increase the capacity in communities to be able to house people.

In the North right now, Inuvik and Yellowknife are hard-pressed for housing stock and employers are having a hard time finding places to put people. So in the area of commercial lending and helping to make a more attractive environment for commercial investment, what can the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation do? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get the president of the Housing Corporation to explain the particular details of this question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Housing Corporation has been given a loan guarantee capped by this Assembly. In the past, we have entered into a loan guarantee arrangement for interim financing to commercial ventures in order for them to construct residences in the community. At this time, we offer the loan guarantee based on a pre-approved mortgage and on an interim basis until the construction phase is done at a reasonable rate.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Commercial enterprises can access this funding, I take it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Yes. It is not income-tested or designed for under the social housing or people who are in need. It is for commercial ventures in order to create private market inventory or inventory for sale.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Are these terms attractive enough to invite commercial lenders? Have we got a lot of traffic in that area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: At this time, we have one loan guarantee out for a commercial builder in the city of Yellowknife. There is an awareness that this loan guarantee and interim financing is available. We have another commercial builder that is also interested in obtaining a loan guarantee from the Housing Corporation at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Finally, on this issue, is my understanding of this area generally correct? Do we have an unattractive lending or assistance environment to commercial builders? Are our terms just not attractive enough to get them going in this market? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: I am not sure if the terms and conditions from commercial lenders are unattractive, but I think it is the issue of equity as you have indicated earlier. What often happens is that maybe there is a requirement for a great amount of equity when getting involved in a commercial venture, especially for the private rental market. I think that is more the major drawback for people to go directly to commercial lenders to obtain interim financing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Housing Corporation considering re-evaluating those equity requirements in order to make it more attractive for commercial lenders to come into the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: It is not our conditions I was referring to. I was actually referring to the conditions placed on by the commercial lenders to private contractors that need to borrow the money in order to construct privately. What we are doing with the loan guarantee is facilitating the loan, so it is making it easier for the private builder to obtain the funding from the commercial agency, since we are providing a guarantee and not a loan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. General comments? We are on page 8-9, NWT Housing Corporation, operations expense, total operations expense, \$45,556,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-11, corporate summary, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-13, information item, executive. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-15, policy, programs and informatics, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-17, information item, finance and administration. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-18, information item, finance and administration, grants and contributions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-21, information item, debt repayment. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-23, information item, human resources. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-25, information item, operations. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-29, district operations, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-30, information item, district operations, grants and contributions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-31, information item, capital acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-33, information item, contributions to local housing organizations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-34, information item, contributions to local housing organizations, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-35, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-36, information item, lease commitments infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8-37, information item, performing income statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go back to page 8-7, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, operations expense, total operations expense, \$45,556,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): That concludes the Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your witnesses. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We shall rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of the committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002 and Committee Report 7-14(3) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Nahendeh. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 6, 2001:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
 - Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002
 - Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001
 - Committee Report 5-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 6-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 7-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Tuesday, March 6th at 1:30p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

