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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 24, 2003****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): Colleagues, I know that you join me in expressing great sadness over the recent passing of Mrs. Elaine Whitford.

Elaine was a wonderful ambassador who gracefully represented the Speaker's office, the Legislative Assembly and the NWT.

During their travels, both Elaine and Tony Whitford have made a deep and lasting impression on those who they have met.

Expressions of sympathy are being received from across the North, Canada and other parts of the Commonwealth. Our thoughts and prayers are with Tony and his family at this time.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Premier.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 20-16(4): Minister Absent From The House**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jim Antoine will be late arriving in the House today. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 21-14(6): Education Week 2003

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise my colleagues that February 24th to March 2nd is Education Week in the Northwest Territories.

This year's theme, "Choose to Move...Move for Health!" highlights a holistic approach to education and is a joint effort between the departments of Education, Culture and Employment, Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs, Sport North and the NWT Recreation and Parks Association.

Mr. Speaker, with almost 35 percent of our population under the age of 19 years, and the growing prevalence of obesity among children, this year's Education Week theme reflects the reality that we must emphasize an active lifestyle. Physical activity improves our health, our capacity for learning and enhances our experiences within families and communities.

Studies show that daily physical activity improves student performance in the areas of memory, problem solving, decision-making, reading and mathematical skills. There is also a proven increase in attention and productivity.

To help support schools and communities in their planning of Education Week, comprehensive resource packages were developed and distributed to all territorial educational institutions, recreation offices and health centres. In keeping with our continuing support of our official languages, the posters promoting the theme of Education Week were developed in English, French and seven aboriginal languages. Each of you in the House today will have received copies of these posters and packages for your use.

Schools have been encouraged to develop fitness trails as part of their Education Week activities this year. Today, as we launch Education Week, guests will be visiting the trail developed by the students of K'alemi Dene School in Ndilo. I invite each of you to take the opportunity to visit a school and actively demonstrate your support of physical activity by trying their fitness trail.

Our annual celebration of education is an excellent opportunity for each of us to reflect on the ways in which we can enhance not only our own well-being, but the well-being of our families, our schools and our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On The Need For Family Violence Protection Legislation**

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to Minister Allen last week as he made a statement on family violence legislation. I was impressed as he, early in his statement, clearly outlined the social benefits of such legislation. He correctly noted that such legislation gives people at risk of violence another legal tool they can use to protect themselves and their families. But then, Mr. Speaker, I was astounded to hear the Minister say: "We need to have public consultation on whether or not our residents want this legislation." This, Mr. Speaker, after groups ranging from seniors to members of the Social Agenda Working Group have said that we should have this type of legislation on the books.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister said we couldn't proceed with the legislation because people need to be trained to use it. Mr. Speaker, that would be a good approach, but it's not the one we take most often. Usually we pass legislation, and then set

up the administrative procedures to implement it. That's what we should do with family violence prevention legislation.

Mr. Speaker, let's put some teeth in our declaration of November 3, 2000. In that declaration, Members of this House unanimously said:

The Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly declare their intent to address the issue of family violence through their personal commitments to help stop family violence through their own actions in leadership and further support the collective commitment of the 14th Legislative Assembly to work in partnership with communities and their leaders to help lift the silence surrounding family violence and create caring supports for people experiencing violence.

Mr. Speaker, I checked with Alison MacAteer House, one of the women's shelters in the Northwest Territories. Last year, they had 404 admission inquiries; 153 women were turned away because they were full; 152 women were admitted. When you add in the number of kids who were admitted, that number comes up to 344. Mr. Speaker, it is time to act now. Later today, I will present a motion, seconded by my colleague for Hay River South directing the Minister of Justice to introduce a Family Violence Protection Act in June. Not just table it, as he has offered in his statement, but present it for first and second reading. Mr. Speaker, let's get serious about family violence protection. Thank you.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On The Need For Family Violence Protection Legislation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to address the issue of the need of family violence legislation for the Northwest Territories. Other Canadian jurisdictions have realized the merit of this type of legislation. It is time that we further demonstrated our commitment as an Assembly to the elimination of family violence by enacting legislation as well.

We've been talking about this for long enough. I do not believe that there are any credible arguments to be made for deferring or delaying the passage of this legislation during the life of the 14th Assembly. I am not deluded in thinking that this legislation in and of itself is the answer to all our problems with family violence in the Northwest Territories. However, I do believe that it could be a very significant piece of what needs to be a comprehensive approach to not just family violence, but to many of the underlying root causes which manifest themselves as violence. Things such as substance abuse, mental illness, frustration and societal indifference. One of the most important things that family violence legislation would accomplish, is to provide a tool which could expedite the process by which victims, mostly women and children, could be distanced from the immediate harm of the offender without involving lengthy channels normally used in dealing with criminal offences. This would enable law enforcers to assess the situation, seek timely approvals and remove the offender from the home. An

intervention could occur before an incident would potentially escalate to bring irreparable harm to the victim or children in the home, an intervention which would be logistically and emotionally less disruptive to the family. What would happen next is as variable as the circumstances and dynamics of the relationship. It might depend on how prepared the parties are to deal with the situation, how long it has gone on or what supports and remedies are available to assist.

I would liken it to a medical intervention. When someone is injured, remove the patient from the immediate threat of further harm, assess the situation and stabilize the patient. Hopefully removing the offending party would at least temporarily stabilize the situation long enough to assess potential options. With effective help, maybe a relationship could be saved; maybe the integrity of a family could be preserved. Everyone in the family loses when family violence goes unresolved. Mr. Speaker, violence of any type, especially family violence is a very complex matter. Situations get out of control and what ensues can be a very traumatic and debilitating force, both in terms of the obvious physical trauma, but also the more difficult to quantify psychological effect for both victims and even witnesses, often children.

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? You have unanimous consent.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you colleagues. I suggest to you that a means of timely intervention would most importantly provide assistance to the victims, but it would ultimately benefit perpetrators of violence as well, as most later regret what they have done to a loved one in the heat of anger or under the influence of alcohol.

---Applause

I was given to believe that family violence legislation would be passed during the life of this government and I would be the second to a notice of motion today to accomplish that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On The Need For Family Violence Protection Legislation

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The pervasive plague that is family violence is an enormous yet sadly under-recognized crisis in our society. In fiscal year 2001, 621 women and children were forced to use safe shelters in the NWT. Collectively, they spent more than 8,300 nights away from their homes. That's the equivalent to more than 13 years in hiding. They were fleeing the 424 spousal assaults reported to the RCMP that year. These are horrific numbers. Indeed our rate of demand for safe shelters is eight times, Mr. Speaker,

the national average. These are only the cases reported to authorities. When one understands that far more assaults, beatings and other forms of abuse go unreported, we begin to grasp just how broad and far reaching this is. We have an epidemic raging. It's been described as a tragic and destructive problem of grave proportions. What are we doing about it?

In 1994, the Legislative Assembly of the NWT made a declaration on family violence and this Assembly renewed it in November of 2000. In 1998, the Status of Women Council of the NWT held an interdisciplinary conference and from this was formed the Coalition on Family Violence. Sixteen agencies plus three departments of this government have pooled their collective strength to seek answers. Under the leadership of the Status of Women Council, they produced late last year a research project and survey called Family Violence in the NWT. Its 42 recommendations are based on extensive research and 104 interview surveys across the NWT. A protocol agreement is being circulated across the territory to gain support for this document and the development of an action plan on family violence that will flow from it. We will need to bring many skills together of many levels to really make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, if there is anything encouraging on the face of this devastating issue, it is that so many leaders in government, community and aboriginal circles are focusing on family violence. I want to sharpen this focus and, along with my colleagues, I want to see this Assembly take a stand on one part of the problem and that is to introduce and pass new legislation which, in simple terms, will reverse the process that we use today, which will cause the abusers, not the victims, to deal with the consequences of violent behaviour. I urge the Minister of Justice to proceed without delay in bringing this new bill before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Doctor Shortage In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact that Hay River mothers have to travel to Yellowknife to give birth has been allowed to continue since the spring of 2000 and it's time for this to end. As my colleague, Mrs. Groenewegen, indicated last week, Mr. Speaker, Hay River has a relatively simple solution to this situation. That is to hire two more doctors, so that expectant mothers and other residents of Hay River can be properly served by this government. With the addition of a GP anesthesiologist and a GP surgeon in Hay River, Mr. Speaker, the Hay River hospital will be able to commence birthing again and they can once again provide a wide range of services, including minor surgical procedures, to the South Slave region that have been traditionally performed in Hay River for many, many years. Mr. Speaker, the population that the Hay River Community Health Board currently services is approximately 6,000 and with deliveries, that population is sure to rise to 9,000. You cannot afford to ignore these numbers, Mr. Speaker. If Hay River was to acquire these additional doctors, this would enable Hay River's expectant mothers to stay at home when they give birth, close to their loved ones and you cannot put a dollar value on this.

I might remind everyone, Mr. Speaker, that Hay River is a tax-based community and this government is funded by tax dollars. Hay River residents have every right to expect that they can access primary health services such as obstetrics in their home community. Mr. Speaker, I have brought this issue up many times in this House and I will continue to do so until I find a solution to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, there is another service the Hay River hospital currently offers that is in jeopardy of being discontinued if we are not able to secure these two doctors, and that is dental surgery. The Hay River hospital provides dental surgery services for just about the entire NWT. Mr. Speaker, the dental clinic in Hay River has indicated that they could perform dental surgeries at the Hay River hospital for one week out of every month if we could secure these two doctors. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, there is a demonstrated need.

Mr. Speaker, whenever I rise in this House for more doctors for Hay River, I always receive the answer we are looking into it, we are aware of it, we are studying it, we've hired more consultants, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

The time has come to do something about it. I remember well the name of the final report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Hay River is seeking unanimous consent. Do I hear any nays? There are no nays, you have unanimous consent to continue on.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remember well the name of the final report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services from January 2000 entitled "Our Communities, Our Decisions, Let's Get on With It." Well, Mr. Speaker, it is now 2003 and I say let's get on with it, too, and allow the Hay River residents the quality of health care they so deserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Effectiveness Of Range Lake MLA Web Site

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this being the budget session, we have really been into talking about numbers. I don't have budget numbers of my own to deliver, but I do have numbers of visits to my Web site that I would like to report to the House. Mr. Speaker, since it was started almost three years ago, I have found my Web site to be a very effective communications tool. By updating it weekly and then daily during sessions, I can keep my constituents informed of what I say and do in and out of the House. It's also great to receive immediate feedback from my constituents on a number of issues, some of them more controversial than others. Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to hear when my constituents say they have my site bookmarked and visit it regularly and by going by the numbers, many others are visiting as well.

Mr. Speaker, my stats are based on the last 12 months from March 2002 to February 20, 2003. The total hits to the site were 238,867. Last month, I received 22,069 hits and this month thus far, the hits are at 17,450. The most hits I received in a month was during the October session where I received 23,261 hits in one month. The numbers do come down during the summer months or when we are not in session. The month of April had the lowest hits at 15,234 followed by August at 16,722. Taking this month of February as the most recent example, I can report to you that the maximum hits recorded in one day this month was February 14th at 1,501 hits. The average daily hits this month has been about 727 per day. The maximum hits I received in one hour this month was 864, but the average per hour spreads out to about 30. The maximum hits I received in one day was also during the October session where it reached 1,730 in one day. I also find it interesting that the most traffic occurred on my site between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning, then 2:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon. The last thing I would like to report is the fact that while most of the servers who visit my site are from the North, as indicated by the names of servers, there are others such as AOL and Google being the main search engines. I have had lots of visits from the rest of Canada and around the world as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Maintenance On Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say it's nice to be back in the House.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday I made a statement in the House when a point of order was raised. A ruling was made in the House on Friday that the words I used in that statement were inappropriate. Perhaps the words I used in the statement were strong, but as a result of that statement, the grader was parked on Highway No. 3 that evening to start with the work the next day.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yea!

---Applause

MR. LAFFERTY: Also on Friday afternoon, I noticed a new sign indicating a curve and posting a lower speed limit when turning onto the gravel surface. Mr. Speaker, because of the maintenance now happening on the road, Highway No. 3 is a little bit safer for the public to drive. I urge the Minister to ensure that this work continues this week as well.

In the past, I have stated that when the staff does work on the road, the quality of work that is done is good. It just needs to be done more often for safety's sake. Mr. Speaker, as an MLA, my job is to lobby for and ensure the safety and well-being of my constituents and I take this job very seriously. For three years, I have been raising concerns about the condition of Highway No. 3 in this House. It is sad that for the most of this time, my suggestions and concerns have been put in the ignore file. I have had numerous people tell me that my concerns about the

road are valid. What is of issue here is the safety of all Northerners. I urge all Members of this House to travel the whole section of road between Yellowknife and Rae and make up their own mind about the condition of this road. Highway No. 3 is a lifeline to health care and it is a link to the central goods and services for my constituents. It is critical that this road be monitored and maintained effectively. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The member Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement On The Need For Family Violence Protection Legislation

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. My condolences go to Mr. Whitford and his family for their loss.

Mr. Speaker, I am standing in support of my colleagues who will be introducing a motion for the creation of a Family Violence Act. Mr. Speaker, my colleague Mr. Braden spoke eloquently, and gave us some numbers that are disturbing. But he made one point that I think we should grasp. He is saying that this act would be one tool for our resource people to deal with family violence.

The numbers indicate to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is just not a problem that is sourced by one area. It's our low education rate, our high unemployment rates in the communities, our massive shortage of housing, isolation, FAS/FAE. All of those are contributing to family violence. Our numbers speak to that. I encourage the government to introduce legislation and go through the proper number of readings, so the next Assembly can implement the act. I also encourage the government to recognize that this is not a one-source problem. This is a territorial problem that is all inclusive. As I said, Mr. Speaker, it's isolation, the high cost of living, the shortage of housing, low rate of education, FAS/FAE. Those are all contributing factors. As we develop the legislation, as a government, I encourage them not to focus in on that one bill, but look at it holistically. I commend my colleagues in pushing this to the department and I will be supporting their motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Inuvik Badminton Player James Elias

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to congratulate one constituent from the Inuvik Twin Lakes riding who is competing in the sport of badminton at the Canada Winter Games. Mr. Speaker, this young person is James Elias, the youngest son of Albert and Shirley Elias who are previously from Holman. From what I have been told, James only started playing badminton 4 years ago at the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School evening sports program. This is quite an accomplishment for one individual which now takes him to a major event in New Brunswick.

Mr. Speaker, I was also told that young James was to have participated in the annual IRC hockey tournament scheduled this coming weekend, but he elected to attend the Canada Winter Games instead. I believe this is a wise choice as he will gain tremendous exposure competing at the national level.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great sense of pride when a young student can examine both sport and academic studies. James is known to be a hard-working student and also a dedicated student while attending Samuel Hearne Secondary School in Inuvik.

I want to extend my congratulations to this fine young individual and encourage him, as well as other young athletes like him, to pursue excellence in both sport and Canadian academic studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement On Congratulations To Canada Games Silver Medalist Mike Argue

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's just recently come to my attention that we have our first medal in the Canada Winter Games and it goes to a Yellowknifer, Mike Argue, who won a silver medal...

---Applause

...I understand, and he came second out of 50 participants with a silver medal in the 10 kilometre classic cross country skiing race. That's just tremendous to see and hopefully that is just the tip of the iceberg. I hope all my colleagues will join me in congratulating Mike. Thanks.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

DEPUTY SPEAKER: At this time, I would like to recognize Warren and Ian Whitford, sons of Elaine and Tony Whitford.

---Applause

Welcome to the House. I would also like to recognize a former Member of this House from 1976 to 1979, Mr. Richard Whitford, who is also here with his wife Betty. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Bell.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Culture and Employment and it's about capital standards and criteria for facility planning, specifically when it relates to new schools. There's been a lot of discussion in the community about the need for a new high school facility. I think the most recent enrollment statistics indicate that St. Patrick's High is at 132 percent utilization and Sir John Franklin is as well very high, also close to 90 percent, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering what utilization numbers have to come in before the department starts to plan for a new capital facility. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decisions with respect to additional school facilities to be built are based upon the enrolments overall in a community. In Yellowknife, while some of the schools may be at high capacity, other schools may be at much lower capacity and the capacity overall in schools in Yellowknife today is at approximately 80 percent, Mr. Speaker. So that would indicate that there is capacity in other schools to absorb some of the overload in certain other schools. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just so I am clear then, is the Minister suggesting that what we should do when we have 132 percent utilization at a high school is to move some of those high school students into a primary school? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd have to double check the capacity and enrolment of all schools that the Member has brought up. There are issues, for instance, that the William MacDonald School is not at full capacity. Can some of that be utilized for capacity that is over in other schools, for example? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

MR. BELL: Thank you. I'd like to get the specific percentage of utilization that the department requires in the community then. Is it 80 percent, 85 percent and do we take a proactive approach, let's say for instance, look at the number of children in Grade 6 or Grade 8 currently to try to determine what the high school need will be? Can the Minister give me the percent? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Normally planning discussions start to take place at 80 percent. Mr. Speaker, I just was looking for some of my capacity figures and utilization figures and perhaps, you know, Mr. Bell and I could meet on this because my figures are a little different than perhaps Mr. Bell's. My figures indicate Sir John Franklin High School at 89 percent and the St. Patrick High School at 100 percent, Mr. Speaker, but it indicates to me that there is some capacity in between other schools. As I said, the William MacDonald School is at 59 percent. We need to take that into consideration when we do planning for other schools and overall, yes the question is, at 80 percent, do we start looking at possibilities for additional schools and the answer to that is yes, we do. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have slightly different information, however, the information that I have in front of me here was supplied on request from the Minister's department to me and it has St. Pat's at 132 percent and Sir John at 89 percent. At any event, it looks like we are at least over the 80 percent mark as a community so I am hoping this will trigger the necessary planning for this upcoming budget cycle. Is that the case? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 76-14(6): Criteria For New School Construction

HON. JAKE OOTES: Well, Mr. Speaker, yes, I did address this issue in terms of notifying the department that we should proceed with the capital needs assessment process and that was passed on to the appropriate officials in FMBS and so forth. So it is not as though we are not aware of the need, Mr. Speaker, nor are we ignoring the fact that it needs to be put in the capital needs assessment. It all comes down to a question of availability of funding at this point, and at what point in time do we need an additional school in Yellowknife. Is that two

years from now or is that five years from now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. The Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is for the Minister of Transportation. This year, for the first time, a local company built a winter road between Rae and Edzo. This road assists in intercommunity travel and serves as an access road to the church and commercial core of Rae for people from Gameti and Wha Ti. The hamlet has not had the resources to build an ice road for the past two years, so they have had to use internal resources. I would like to ask the Minister, if Dettah can get an ice road, why can't Rae get an ice road between Rae and Edzo? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister for Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, let me clarify, first of all, the ice road to Dettah is a piece of the public highway system that was identified as such when we did the transfer from the federal government to the territorial government a number of years ago. In terms of an ice road from Edzo to Rae, I understand the hamlet has constructed a road over the past years. I will assume they will continue with that. If they want financial assistance to do that, then they are certainly eligible to apply under our community access road program. So they could apply for some more. We do that kind of support in a number of communities. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for the answer but I think community access road funding is only for roads that will be there for access all year round and not for winter roads. If Dettah can get a road, I don't see why Rae-Edzo shouldn't. It only takes 6.5 hours to push the road through and to maintain it would probably be just the same amount of time for the rest of the winter. To me, just a small portion of dollars has to be allocated to the Edzo road and if the Minister can maybe look at doing that instead of just giving me excuses. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Transportation.

Further Return To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, like I said, the hamlet, if they want, can simply apply for funding and community access road funding doesn't have to be just for permanent all year round roads. It can be used to help with winter roads if that's

what the community chooses to do. So, all they have to do is ask. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if they can start budgeting the Rae to Edzo access road in their transportation budget. It is not the responsibility of the hamlet to plow and build roads for public access. This would greatly help the community and also help the Minister's staff to travel to Edzo to go to work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Transportation.

Further Return To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have money in the budget to cover these kinds of projects, so the money is there. If the community wants an alternative to using the highway route and they want to go across Marion Lake, sure, they can apply for support for that road. The money is there. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, I would like to ask the Minister if he's talking about putting it into his next year's budget or if he is asking me to go back to the hamlet and asking me to apply for it through a different program. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Colleagues, at this time I would like to direct your attention to the presence in the visitors' gallery of Mr. Doron Bard, Consul at the U.S. Consulate General office in Calgary. He is here visiting Yellowknife and Inuvik. At this time, I would like to welcome you to the Northwest Territories. Welcome.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions, Minister of Transportation.

Further Return To Question 77-14(6): Winter Road Between Rae And Edzo

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have money in the Department of Transportation to cover these kinds of requests. I have no difficulty with doing it. I would have to talk to our staff in Rae-Edzo to see if they want to do it with their regular equipment. Most likely the preference would be to have the hamlet continue to build an ice road, as they have in the past, and if they want financial support from my department, let us know. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions, Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Member's statement, Hay River is desperately in need of two more doctors, namely a GP anesthesiologist and GP surgeon. This will alleviate the hearts of expecting mothers having to travel to Yellowknife a month ahead of their due date to give birth. Many of these mothers are having to pay that infamous co-payment as well I might add, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these ladies have to uproot themselves from their families and their support systems and stay in Yellowknife until they give birth. In this day and age, I can't see how we can allow this to happen. Would the Minister please advise if he is aware of exactly how much it costs to fly a pregnant mother from Hay River to Yellowknife and keep them here until they give birth including the flights, accommodations, meal costs and all the other costs that go with it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that specific dollar figure, but I would estimate that it's in the thousands of dollars. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that answer, but I would encourage the Minister to try to get a cost on that. I am told it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$4,000 for a mother to have to come to Yellowknife to give birth. Mr. Speaker, the Minister stated that there is \$8.3 million currently assigned for 10 general practitioners. I assume this is extraordinary funding. Would the Minister please provide this House with a breakdown of how these 10 doctors will be distributed in terms of what communities these doctors will be serving in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are three additional specialists going to Yellowknife. There are two for the Sahtu, two for the Dogrib, one for Deh Cho and the remainder we are devoting to Yellowknife. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't get the last one that he said, but it didn't seem to me that I heard Hay River in there. Would the Minister indicate why, of these 10 doctors, there are none slated for Hay River, the second largest community in the Territories with a demonstrated need for more doctors? Why would there be none for Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the recently concluded negotiations with the general practitioners, there is going to be as well an additional sum of doctors over and above the existing complement that is going to be allocated across the territory and Hay River will be factored in there. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in view of the demonstrated need in Hay River for two additional doctors, which would allow expectant mothers to give birth in Hay River, as well as the need for dental surgeries to continue in Hay River, will the Minister commit to providing the funding so that Hay River can acquire these two positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 78-14(6): Doctor Shortage In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the focus right now in the communities outside of Yellowknife and Inuvik has been on making sure we have adequate general practitioners and that is still the focus. We do commit to ensuring that Hay River, like Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Inuvik and Fort Simpson and the Deh Cho and the Dogrib have adequate doctor services. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 22-14(6): Response To Petition 1-14(6) - NWT Beverage Container Recovery Program

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 42(1), I wish to table a response to Petition 1-14(6) presented by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake and responded to by the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 5-14(6): Family Violence Protection Legislation

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, February 26, 2003, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South that the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake the necessary work to draft and introduce a Family Violence Protection Act in the Legislative Assembly by June 2003 for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 4-14(6): Setting Of Sitting Hours By Speaker, Carried

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favor? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motion 3-14(6), Mr. McLeod. Motion 3-14(6) will stay on the order paper until tomorrow. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 3, Bill 6, Bill 7, Bill 8 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6) and 6-14(6) with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I call the committee to order. We have a number of items to discuss in Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that the committee continue consideration of Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently to first finish up the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and then move into the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Chair is going to call a short break. We will come back with the Department of MACA.

---SHORT RECESS

Bill 3: Appropriation Act 2003-2004

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee back to order. We will continue with Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister wish to bring any witnesses, Mr. Steen?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my right is Debbie DeLancey, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and on my left is Sheila Bassi-Kellett, director of corporate affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Steen. Committee members will notice there has been an information item circled. That information was requested last week on sports and recreation and community allocation. I understand, Mr. Minister, you have some further clarification under capital, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on Friday when we left off under this underlined item activity, there were questions raised by Mr. Bell as to capital figures for the Rae water treatment plant and he was questioning the final figure, which showed the final figure of \$1.775 million for the water treatment plant in Rae as a total, but in fact that figure should be \$2.375 million and the reason for that, Mr. Chairman, I passed out a sheet explaining where the mistake was made. It comes under the Rae water treatment plant for prior years cost. It shows \$325,000 when, in fact, that figure should be \$925,000. That would then require us to have a carry over in June of \$600,000, which is not spent yet but then that brings the final figure in the end to \$2.375 million. Mr. Chairman, while I am on the subject, there is also

the same type of mistake in the solid waste disposal site for Rae Lakes, which is on the same page and shows a figure of \$208,000. In fact that figure should be \$308,000 because there is a carry over of \$100,000 as well. We couldn't complete the permitting because we couldn't get the permit from Indian Affairs to do the job, due to land claims negotiations with the Dogrib. So, the final figure on that line would be \$863,000 rather than \$763,000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you Minister Steen. You left off Friday on the Municipal and Community Affairs, cap 6, total regional operations, \$5.235 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$8.53 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Just before we do a total, I think this is the last chance anybody gets. Just for clarification, the Minister did say that the agreements with those four communities, they would have agreements made with the hamlets and not with MACA instead of Public Works. I would just like to know if that's the case. Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I understand the question is related to water and sewer agreements with Public Works. Is that correct?

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now, the four different communities have agreements with Public Works and Services. Are the agreements now going to be with MACA and the hamlet instead of Public Works and the hamlet? Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, we can't change the agreements from Public Works to MACA because MACA is funding the community to do the work. It is up to them at that time whether they want to sign an agreement with Public Works or whether they want to do the job themselves or whether they want to contract it out privately. It's entirely up to them. It's that type of arrangement that they have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now we have agreements with Public Works and it says whether or not the hamlet agrees with it; when the new agreements don't come into place between Public Works and the hamlet, the new agreement will come into place automatically starting April 1st. If I understand it right, AOC had said that the surcharge should be no more than nine percent. We said no, there should be no surcharge on services between government agencies to the hamlets. Somewhere, somehow, we got our numbers crossed because the original price was 6 percent. Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we did take into consideration the recommendations from the standing committees in relation to what percentage of administration fees they should be paying Public Works. Those communities that have existing agreements with Public Works would continue because of the existing agreements which are dated, I believe, 1988 show an administration fee of nine percent. Public Works reduced their administration fee proposal to nine percent, which is what is in existing agreements. In the case of Rae, we don't have an agreement anymore. Public Works doesn't have an agreement because we turned the whole facility operation back to Public Works. A new agreement would have to be negotiated and we are in the process of negotiating with the community. MACA is involved, as well as Public Works and we are bearing in mind what the committee is recommending. However, we have to keep in mind that other communities are paying an administration fee of their own. In other words, every community receives money from us, MACA, to cover these administration fees through its water and sewer grants. If we remove that from some communities, we would then be unfair to the other communities. That is our only hang-up with the recommendation from the standing committee, Mr. Chairman. At this point in time, Public Works is still in the negotiating process with Rae. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Minister is right that they are negotiating right now, and I think there are three other communities that are in the process of negotiating also, I would like to ask the Minister if he is willing to get the four communities together and try to get an agreement that will fit everyone. Although the work might be different, I think they are pretty similar with the contracts. All they had was the name changes on them. I have gone through two of them and they are word-for-word, the same. There are no changes. If the Minister agrees, then maybe that would be the best way to go. Whether or not there is a contract in place, DPW is coming in and they are going to try the new rate. That is the letter that I have in my possession that was given from one of his staff to the hamlet. I think I left it upstairs. It says whether they have an agreement or not, they are going to go with the new rates and that is the high rates. Can the Minister guarantee that won't happen unless there is a new agreement? Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am speaking as the Minister of MACA. It is my understanding that as Minister of MACA, that FMB gave direction to Public Works not to charge anything over nine percent. That's the understanding I have as the Minister of MACA. So I understand that's what Public Works has been working on. I also appreciate the recommendation from the Member that we have these meetings with the communities and we are planning that meeting already, so I really appreciate the suggestion and support from the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We will call out total department. Municipal and Community Affairs, total department, \$8.053 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Minister and witnesses for appearing.

We'll go on to the Department of Transportation. Does the Minister have any opening remarks? Mr. Handley.

Department Of Transportation

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to put before the Committee of the Whole the proposed main estimates budget for the Department of Transportation for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. The total operations budget for the fiscal year 2003-2004 is \$76.521 million, an increase of seven percent from the 2002-2003 main estimates.

For the most part, the proposed main estimates for 2003-04 project the Department of Transportation carrying through on its present course in the delivery of its transportation programs and services. The operations and maintenance component of the budget proposes a modest increase of about \$2 million. More than half of this increase comes as a result of the new collective agreement ratified with the Union of Northern Workers.

The present rate of growth in the territorial economy is having decided impacts on the Department of Transportation. Positively, the increase in industrial traffic has led to higher revenue projections of \$500,000 for licence and permit fee collections. On the operations side, a forced growth adjustment is aimed at sustaining our standards of highway maintenance in the face of the greater traffic volumes.

The proposed budget for 2003-04 includes an additional \$370,000 in anticipation of new legislation to amend the Motor Vehicles Act. The proposed amendments have been introduced and, modeled on programs developed in the southern provinces, are aimed at discouraging the incidence of impaired driving in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, the department intends to continue its work in 2003-04 on developing an airport investment strategy that will lay out the critical improvements we need to make across the territorial airport system over the next 20 years. The department also intends to continue exploring the commercial opportunities that transcontinental polar air routes might have to offer the Northwest Territories, such as intercontinental air cargo handling and the promotion of international tourism.

Continuing changes in air regulations, procedures and practices, are not only likely but also for certain. Over the next few years, for instance, Transport Canada intends to phase in the physical inspection of every piece of passenger baggage boarding airplanes at major airports in Canada. The imperative for strict airport and airline security has put new demands on our airport system both for current operations and future planning.

The limited availability of new capital dollars leaves a modest budget for new infrastructure projects. The proposed main estimates show a capital program of \$27.3 million in the 2003-2004 fiscal year; \$10.8 million of this comes from federal sources.

The Department of Transportation continues to pursue third-party sources of capital investment. The department has secured \$4.2 million in 2003-04 under the federal airport capital assistance plan for improvements to our airport infrastructure. It has also obtained \$2.25 million from the federal strategic highways infrastructure program.

In May of last year, the Government of the Northwest Territories submitted a plan, Corridors for Canada, to the federal government for funding through its strategic infrastructure fund. Over the past several months, the Government of the Northwest Territories and our private sector partners have lobbied the federal government vigorously to get what we consider our fair share of the strategic infrastructure fund. Although it falls far short of the investments proposed in the Corridors for Canada plan, the department has received a commitment from the federal government of \$20 million for new infrastructure projects over the next four years.

Last year, with the help of a \$3.8 million contribution from the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Department of Transportation was able to accelerate the completion of its Mackenzie Valley winter road bridges program. The program installed seven permanent bridges along the winter road system to the Sahtu region and its five off-road communities. The new bridges have added almost a month to the operating season of the Sahtu winter road network. We have recently submitted a new proposal to DIAND for further improvements to the Mackenzie Valley winter road system. We believe the federal department will respond positively over the next few months.

The Transportation budget proposed for 2003-04 includes a one-time \$1 million program for the improvement of the access roads that link communities to the all-weather public highway system. This continues the \$2.5 million that the department allocated to these access roads last year. This one-time program should help to upgrade these essential community links.

Smaller scale projects for building and improving community marine facilities and local access roads have been positive initiatives for developing community transportation infrastructure. The budget for 2003-04 proposes an increase of \$100,000 for the community marine program to \$315,000 and a \$250,000 increase for the community local access road program to \$837,000. These programs provide communities with short-term economic benefits that deliver better local transportation for the long term.

The Department of Transportation will continue to work in partnership with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation Ltd. for the construction of a bridge across the Mackenzie River at Fort Providence. Last year the department worked with the Fort Providence Alliance Group to confirm the viability of the original proposal and to refine it into a practical partnership arrangement.

There is \$250,000 in this budget proposed for the Deh Cho Bridge project. It will enable the department to retain the technical-professional advice it will need as it works toward a binding agreement. We plan to conclude an agreement by the third quarter of 2003-04.

The growing volume of traffic generated by the North's economic activity affects all modes of transportation. The greater frequency of ferry crossings, more aircraft landings, higher passenger volumes and a record level of commercial vehicle traffic presents the department with tremendous challenges. This budget proposal strives to match the public's demands for transportation services with the government's requirement for fiscal discipline.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, in these proposed main estimates, the Department of Transportation sets out how it intends to maintain and, even more, to improve the safety and reliability of the public transportation system. This budget achieves a careful balance in its allocation of limited public funds amongst many pressing transportation objectives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will call on the chair of the standing committee for comments. Mr. Roland.

Standing Committee On Governance And Economic Development Comments

MR. ROLAND: The Department of Transportation provides for the safe, accessible and reliable movement of people and goods throughout the Northwest Territories. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Transportation and his staff on January 14, 2003 to review the Department of Transportation's draft main estimates for 2003-2004.

Committee members made note of a net \$3.02 million increase in operations expense for the department. The department advised the net increase is due to: \$1.711 million in overall changes to the department's amortization estimates; \$172,000 to fund motor vehicle registry services in Yellowknife; \$250,000 to fund a design review and legal work required for the drafting of the final agreement for the Deh Cho Bridge proposal; \$167,000 in incremental costs associated with the administration of the Community Aerodrome Radio Stations, or CARS, on behalf of Nav Canada, net effect is nil as these costs are recovered from the third party; \$370,000 to fund the implementation of the new impaired driving legislation; and, \$350,000 in infrastructure contributions. The \$350,000 in infrastructure contributions is comprised of \$100,000 for community marine facilities and \$250,000 for community access roads.

The committee also noted a net increase of \$7.845 million in capital expenditures for the department from its business plans. This net increase is the result of: a correction or deletion of \$455,000 in capital funding for high intensity approach lights that had already been included in the budget for the Inuvik airport's taxiway and apron upgrade project; an additional \$4 million from the Canada strategic highway infrastructure fund for Highway No. 8, kilometre zero to 259, various Inuvik; a further \$3.8 million from the same fund for Mackenzie River road bridges, various Inuvik; a reduction of \$500,000 from \$1.3 million to \$800,000 for Highway No. 4, kilometre zero to 69.2, various North Slave; and an additional \$1 million for public highway access roads, various territorial.

Ferry Maintenance

It is generally accepted that proper preventative and scheduled maintenance would result in reduced operational and repair costs. Committee members suggested when replacing engines for ferries, either new or rebuilt engines be purchased. Adopting this value for money approach would be more economical in the long run.

The committee noted that many of the current ferry engines may be obsolete. Ongoing maintenance for engines that should be replaced is unreliable and inevitably more expensive. Long term savings from the use of new or rebuilt engines may result in funding for other essential programs and services.

Highway Maintenance And Snow Removal

Timely snow and ice removal on the highway system is essential to public safety. It was brought to the attention of a number of committee members that on some highway sections, snow and ice removal only occurs during regular work hours. Travel takes place at all hours of the day and throughout the entire year.

The committee suggested to the department that snow and ice clearing be done as soon as possible on all sections of the highway system to ensure public safety, even on weekends and holidays, and outside regular work hours.

Apprenticeship And Other Training Programs

Training and apprenticeship programs for Northerners have remained a leading concern for members of the standing committee. These programs should be easily accessible for all Northerners. However, committee members pointed out that apprenticeship and other training programs are almost non-existent in smaller communities and are mostly concentrated in regional centres. The committee is of the position that apprenticeship and other training programs should be available in all communities, regardless of population.

Committee members were also concerned about inadequate funding levels for training programs. The government's Maximizing Northern Employment Program, or MNE, offers very limited funding. Furthermore, many people are not even aware of the training opportunities that are available. The committee recommended that the government develop a more effective communications strategy that lets people know what training programs are available in the Northwest Territories and equally important, in their own region.

Within the department, employees must pass their one-year probationary period to obtain any significant training. Barriers to training must be eliminated or at least reduced. The availability of training and other educational programs contributes to recruitment and retention success and better overall program and service delivery. To these ends, the committee suggests the department encourage its staff to take better advantage of training and other educational opportunities.

Readable Signage

Readability contributes to overall safety for the travelling public, especially on our highway system. A number of committee members pointed out that the lettering size on the government's current road signs is not large enough and is difficult to read from a moving vehicle. The committee encouraged the department to make timely efforts to improve and replace the signage on our territorial highway system.

Public Highway Access Roads

The Department of Transportation received \$1 million in funding for the development and expansion of public highway access roads for 2003-2004 from its 2003-2006 business plans. The department is responsible for a number of access roads that connect communities to the highway network. These access roads are an integral part of the highway system. During the committee review of the department's main estimates, Members requested additional information from the department, including a list of communities that are eligible and the work that is planned for 2003-2004.

In a document provided to the committee, the department informed the Members, that eligible communities include Kakisa, Hay River Reserve, West Channel (Hay River), Fort McPherson, Jean Marie River and Nahanni Butte, all of which require additional upgrading and/or chipsealing. The department added that these planned improvements would improve access road safety, and decrease highway maintenance costs by reducing the blading, grader repairs, granular and dust control requirements. Improvements to public

highway access roads in all of the eligible communities are planned for the upcoming fiscal year.

Committee members observed that while some funding is available to make improvements to public highway access roads, more money is needed to complete the various projects. The committee concluded that more funding must be found but not from internal reallocation. Committee members suggested if the government receives new funding, a portion of it should be redirected towards the public highway access road program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That concludes the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development's report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does the Minister wish to bring in witnesses? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me are Peter Vician, deputy minister of Transportation; and, Lynn Cook, director of corporate services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments. Mr. Braden.

General Comments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Somewhat related here, especially on the capital side is the potential development going on in Nunavut with the Bathurst port and road development. I believe I asked some questions during the budget review last time within the last year, Mr. Chairman, just to see what the status of this project is, what our government's involvement is with it and what is the status of this fairly significant piece of transportation infrastructure for the North. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the proponents of the Bathurst port still continue to lobby and do as much work as they can to promote the development of that port. Nunavut, like our government, got limited strategic infrastructure funding so the ability to be able to do very much is certainly limited by their infrastructure funding.

The current status is that it's before Minister Nault. He has not yet decided if the project should be reviewed by the Nunavut Impact Review Board or under the CEA process or how it should be dealt with. The Government of Nunavut is expecting a decision sometime soon. It's a project that could have impact on us if it went ahead. It could result in some of the traffic that

we currently have being routed through the Bathurst Inlet port. That has a good side and also a downside on it. For one thing, it's less wear and tear on our roads. On the other hand, it would take away some potential revenues that we see as a result of traffic and business being routed through this current arrangement.

How likely is it that the project will go ahead in the next little while? It just depends on how much mineral activity takes place there. It's really hard to predict at this point.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the project has been defined and a decision has to be made on the regulatory process it's going to proceed under. I have had some discussions now and then with people, especially in the mining industry. It's interesting because there are some different perspectives on whether or not this project could, in fact, be a potential boon to the mining industry and the service industry in the NWT. I am assuming the thinking is that the creation of a Bathurst road and port is going to enable new mining development in Nunavut. That can only help our economy because we have so much of the logistics and the supply side and the airline support facilities are based here in the NWT. So I just wanted to raise that. There seem to be some interesting arguments that this, indeed, in the long run could be a very positive development for our economy. I wanted to see if the Minister has explored that aspect of it and is this a project that, with some vision, and certainly some risk, that we should be getting behind and supporting? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, my view and my department's view is whether this project goes ahead or not is going to depend on the economic case that can be put forward. It's not going to be a political decision. If it is worthwhile to invest the money that's needed, and our estimate or the latest estimate on the road and port construction is \$216 million to build a road and then it's got to be operated after that. If there is enough mining activity to justify that size of a road, it will likely go ahead. But if there isn't, I don't believe any government is going to put the money into putting the road there. The traffic that would be required for it is probably based largely on the base metals, Izok Lake is one major example. Base metal prices continue to be fairly low. Right now, they wouldn't be economic, but if base metal prices went up, we could see this project move ahead quickly.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. One other topic I wanted to ask about concerns the Deh Cho Bridge. Mr. Chairman, this is something that I think just about all MLAs in the territory or in this Assembly have some degree of support for, some of us more than others. This is certainly something for the economy of the North Slave and something that we are really looking forward to seeing happen. I want to compliment the department and the officials and my colleagues, especially Mr. McLeod, the Member for Deh Cho, in the work that's been done on this so

far. Perhaps a technical question I wanted to ask the Minister, how much funding has the GNWT invested to date in the Deh Cho Bridge project? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, to date, we have invested about \$200,000 in this project. This current budget, as I mentioned in my opening comments, shows another \$250,000 that we are willing to put into this project.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if this funding is money that will be, if you will, evaluated or incorporated into our eventual financing and takeover of the bridge? The deal, as I understand it, is over a long period of time we will be paying in a kind of lease-purchase arrangement. Will this \$450,000 be counted eventually as some of our investment in this project? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no. The money that we have put in so far into the feasibility of this, plus the \$250,000 we've identified in this main estimates will not become part of the money to be recovered. We feel this is our investment. The \$250,000 that's in our budget this year is for our own capacity to be able to deal with this proposal. So it's to enable us to be able to work with the bridge corporation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments. Detail? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure where else this would come up under detail, so I will bring it up now. It's not a really huge issue, but it is something that would affect the people who drive the highway, that utilize the Mackenzie River ferry crossing in the summertime. I have driven that road from Hay River to Yellowknife many times, probably in excess of 100 times in the last seven years. One of the things I find a bit curious in this modern day of technology is the fact that when the ferry is, let's say for argument's sake, not on the Fort Providence side but the other side and there is traffic coming, the ferry operator has no way of knowing when they actually depart the shore with a partial load that just a few short kilometres up the highway, there could be numerous cars that are close by. So just in terms of maximizing utilization of the ferry, maximizing the loads, is there not some way that vehicles passing by a certain point on the highway could alert the ferry operator that these vehicles are coming and if they only have one or two vehicles on board, that they could wait just a few more minutes and make maximum use of a crossing. I don't know if it would be a camera, something across the road, that would send some kind of a signal, something that would indicate that there is more traffic coming. It's just an idea and I would just like to know what the Minister thinks of that idea. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it's an interesting idea. I am not sure what the technology would cost us to be able to do that. It could probably, at best, be done only from the south side because on the north side, there are too many other alternatives, that people may not be going to the ferry. They may be going somewhere else and we would never know. The cycle time for the ferry is about 20 minutes. It is on demand and we try to keep it going about every 20 minutes. We could look at the cost of doing it and see how it would work, mainly on the south side. We have to look at what the technology would be and hope that every vehicle that trips the signal, whatever it would be, would continue on to the ferry and not stop to have a picnic someplace and us sitting there waiting. We can look into it, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a hit and miss thing. I heard the Minister say the ferry goes on demand, so they wait until their vehicles are all over. If it was on a scheduled crossing, then people approaching could also plan their arrival at the ferry crossing from the south side to coincide because they know the ferry is there, but it's always just a guess and quite often if you are wrong, it can make quite a significant difference to the time you are anticipating your trip to take. If you just arrived there as the ferry is taking off, it is a fairly lengthy wait there. I think the ferry service is excellent and I have even experienced on a few occasions where the ferry might have just left the shore and somebody will come and the ferry operator will come back and get you, which is very, very considerate. But they can only see so far from that wheelhouse up in the top of the ferry.

So either having it on a specific time frame, so we could plan for that or I don't think the technology would be all that expensive to send some kind of a signal that the traffic was coming. I don't think people would generally go someplace else on the south side, other than straight to the ferry. I would just like the department to consider it. I know they have a camera now at the ferry crossing that you can look at on-line. I think that's very progressive and very helpful. Certainly when it's the time in the season when the ferry runs intermittently, it's very helpful for people like ourselves who have to drive an hour-and-a-half or two hours to get to the ferry... I shouldn't say how long it takes. Let's say two hours to get to the ferry from Hay River. It does help us plan to be able to click online and I think it's probably helpful to the people of Hay River service station too because I am sure they are plagued by phone calls from people wanting to know what the status of the ferry crossing is at that time of year as well. The department has done some very innovative things and we appreciate that, but if we could count on the ferry service until such time as there is a bridge or something a little more than a hit-and-miss basis, it would be appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we will look at it and see what the technology would be to have some signal between the ferry and the vehicles at some point. We want to look at it carefully because we believe the bridge proposal is moving ahead very quickly and we are soon going to be into bridge construction and so on, so we don't want to invest a lot of money into something if it is expensive but we will look at it. The other issue of putting the ferry onto a schedule, the challenge for us there is that we have a lot of traffic sometimes and if we had it on a schedule, we'd end up having a ferry sitting there full waiting to move ahead and that would be even more frustrating for people. Our view is that since it is a short crossing with a cycle time of about 20 minutes being on demand is probably the best alternative there. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Someone has just suggested amongst my colleagues here, that Fort Simpson, the ferry in Fort Simpson, is on a schedule. Now, if it was full, obviously you would go, that might mess up the schedule, but if it is not a full load, if it could wait till the half hours, that would be helpful. But as Mr. Dent suggests, maybe we don't need modern technology, maybe old technology with gravel roads. The ferry operator could see the plumes of dust from miles away on a calm day. Anyway, thank you for considering. I have no further questions or comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Chair recognizes Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unlike, Mrs. Groenewegen, I don't want to go back to gravel roads. We are just trying to get them paved. I just wanted to go on the record on a couple of things. I have a couple of questions and a few statements. First of all, today I listened to, with interest, a question on the ice road for Detah and the discussion raised by Mr. Lafferty regarding Rae's situation. I also have in my riding a couple of ice roads and one I am fairly concerned about is the one leading to the Hay River Reserve. I was not aware that there's different methodology of how they are constructed and who constructs and who pays for them, so I wanted to ask that first question. Is the construction of the ice roads, the winter ice roads linking the communities together, the approach, is it consistent? I would like to ask that question, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to say, we only operate the public highway roads under the regulations so, we don't know too much of the details of when and how the ice crossing, for example in Hay River to the reserve, is done. That is an arrangement between the town and the band. We're not involved at all in that one.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it is still not clear to me how the Detah road can be considered a public highway when there is an alternate route. It seems the same for the reserve or the situation in Fort Rae, so I don't understand how one ice bridge got classified in a different category. So, maybe the Minister can explain to me how the Detah road has become classified as a public highway?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Detah ice crossing was included as a public highway under the public highway regulations at the time of the transfer from the federal government, and we have continued to maintain it rather than taking on the challenge of trying to have it removed from the regulations. It was done, I'm sure, at the time because of the condition of the Detah road in the days before the transfer until recently, because of the distance to travel, going all the way around the Detah road. So, it has always been there. We have not taken a look at pulling it off. It isn't a high expense to us. It's done with our own crews and equipment, it doesn't take a lot of time so we continue to do it as a service to the community. Thank you.

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

MR. MCLEOD: I don't want to go on with this issue but I think the Minister should take some time to review the situation because I don't see the difference and I don't think most of the people in the Northwest Territories would see the difference if we are talking between the Detah road and the reserve road and the road in Fort Rae and there are probably others. I do want to use up my time to talk about a couple other things.

For the record, I think we have been really working hard the last couple of years and the department has been able to do quite a bit of work in the area of community access roads and I think it is something that has been overlooked in the years prior. I know recently in the communities that I represent, that they are quite happy with the situation, however, there is still a concern that the funding is very tight and there has to be some new dollars identified. The reserve road is a project that is going to require about \$4 million dollars and, at \$200,000 to \$300,000 every year, it's going to be a considerable length of time before we can see that road paved or at least straightened. It's a dangerous road. We've demonstrated and proved and brought up the stats to show that and I was really happy this past year, we did some work and we would be happy to do a lot more so I wanted to go on record stating that new dollars or any new dollars that we see from within maybe should be targetted to this initiative.

I also wanted to raise the issue of stockpiles and the gravel requirements in the different areas and different regions across the North. In a lot of cases, other departments have to depend on highways to provide that crush material, and we certainly have been in some situations where we've had a lack of gravel for a number of years and we've had to use alternate material that is really not up to par and causes all kinds of problems on the roads and on the streets.

One area that I did raise in another committee that is quite a concern to me is in the area of training. I think in my opinion that Transportation is certainly in an excellent position to provide training in some of our communities. In a lot of cases, we don't have a lot of construction that is actually community based. The government projects and the government initiatives are in some cases the only game in town. That is the only activity that is going on. It's the only stable workforce that we can count on to provide some training. We've been quite fortunate in the community of Fort Providence where we've seen a number of engineers and a number of captains trained on the Merv Hardie as a result of the government and the company working together but I still think we can do more.

I know the department has created a couple of apprenticeships, apprenticeship positions but however, they are immediately located in the regional centers. That really doesn't do us any good in the smaller communities. I think every department has to try to target some positions that they can take in the communities. We have already been told that we will never see a big jail or a big hospital in smaller communities but maybe we can alleviate some of the problems with some full-time jobs, especially training positions if we can locate them there. With highways and with transportation having the shops and with trained expertise there, we should be able to at least have apprenticeships.

I've also been contacted by a number of people that feel that Transportation should also try to do more. There is very little in terms of training for their own staff and it's very difficult to get upgraded. Other departments have utilized programs like school or community government to upgrade their people in their communities and bring them to a different level. We don't see a whole lot of that going on in the communities with the Transportation staff and you kind of come into the game at one level and you stay fairly stable. I think there has to be more initiative in that area.

One final thing I want to bring up, Mr. Chairman, is I've noticed especially this year and it is something that is ongoing, when the ferry shuts down we have a lot of people that were intending to travel through and then are sometimes caught on one side of the river, especially when the ferry shuts down in the fall. It's not so much a problem on the south side because we have notifications, we have signs at Enterprise, but we don't have signs on the north side of the river. I think we should have one at least when you are leaving Yellowknife. You would not have to drive all the way to the community because sometimes notice is given while people are en route. Maybe even one at Rae. I am not sure where the best place would be to situate a sign, but I think we need that kind of notification to the travelling public. I would encourage the Minister to look at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will speak to part of this and then ask Mr. Vician to give more detail, particularly on the staff training. We are quite proud of the amount of effort and our success on staff training. I don't want to leave the impression that we aren't doing a lot because I think we are doing a tremendous amount for people in the department. First of all, on the apprenticeship training we agree with the

Member, Mr. Chairman, that we have to find ways of making our apprenticeship trades training more accessible to people in the small communities. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment have recently told us that they are reviewing the Public Service Career Training Program in order to try to make it more friendly to the people in the small communities. Probably in the small communities, we will have to have individuals who would be willing to do some of their apprenticeship training in the small community and then maybe go into a regional centre to finish off the training or take pieces that they may not be able to get, experience, in a small community. So there would be some movement back and forth. We agree with the Member. We are working on ensuring that at least in a situation like Fort Providence, we are able to do something there.

The current situation in Fort Providence is that Education, Culture and Employment have agreed to pick up 50 percent of the salary, the cost. We would have to see if we can identify something on our side as well.

On the signs, because of recommendations, or as a result of recommendations from the committee, we are in the process of reviewing our signs and some of the sizes and locations and so on. So we are in the middle of doing that. In terms of the ferry in particular, there is the toll-free line and there is also the Web site. On the Web site is the notification board, but if there are ways to improve that, we certainly want to do it for the convenience of people using the public highway system.

On staff training, I will let Mr. Vician speak to that one. The other one the Member raised has to do with the access road program we have to connect communities to the main highway system. We, too, wish we had more money to complete these projects. Some of them are fairly expensive, but we feel it's a good initiative. In this main estimates proposal, we put forward what we can. We've identified \$1 million to go into this program and we've tried to distribute it as fairly as possible to everyone. With that, I will turn it to Mr. Vician to briefly give us an overview of some of the main things we are doing in terms of staff training.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Transportation has a number of programs that serve to continue the training and development of its own staff, particularly the ongoing training and development initiatives that deal with safety, and programs that deal with areas of competency within the department for the individuals. Similarly, we have -- and we are quite proud of it -- a career development program that was initiated a number of years ago in the department. Currently 12 candidates are proceeding with the program, but that program provides what we consider to be enhanced training opportunities for department staff that wish to move on to new initiatives in the future, whether they be enhanced supervisor, management or further opportunities and we continue to have good success.

The program also provides a great opportunity for individuals in the affirmative action area and we are quite pleased with the response and the take-up on that program.

In terms of the apprenticeship program, as a result of discussions over a year ago and at committee, we did identify three apprentices in the trades area in the department. Those apprentices now currently are working through their journeymen process at the mechanic level. Again, individuals from the North who will become competent in the fields of heavy trades mechanic training. So overall with that and with the internal performance planning and training programs for staff, we are quite proud and pleased with the ongoing opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. The Chair recognizes Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to do general comments on the Minister's statement that he made. Just on the physical inspection of pieces of passenger baggage. I just heard on the radio this morning that they found on a plane a live grenade. Just previously, a few weeks ago, I was listening to a radio program where some independent studies were done and some of these new machines that they put out at airports, didn't work to the capacity or didn't catch some of those things they were putting through. So I wonder if we are going to be using the same equipment that is being used down south. Will we have the same state-of-the-art equipment to protect our people who are heading south? That is for the airports.

Now I would like to do the highway maintenance snow removal and the question is, are these employees in the union that they have to work 8:00 until 5:00 and they don't work on the weekends? I know some staff work on weekends. I have seen it happen. I have travelled all highways, actually. In a few weekends in 2002, I drove the highway from Alberta north and I noticed that the only beats that were working on the weekends or snow falls, was the Providence beat and the Edzo beat. So they were the only two that were sanding and plowing on weekends. There was nothing going into Yellowknife, there was nothing going to the border. I am not sure about the one to Hay River. I didn't go to Hay River or Smith on that weekend. It's just that some beats are different.

Some people work different times. We must have some kind of a mission statement that says "accessible and reliable movement of traffic", but it seems that all the highway beats around the territory are doing it. I think maybe it's time to look at our highway act or how we administer the highway manual or whatever they use to make sure they are out there when it is needed and not because the hours are 8:00 to 5:00. Like I said, I notice some people are working out there. I saw a Yellowknife crew work out there once on a weekend, but most of the time they don't. They do often work on Highway No. 4 on the weekends because I do my hunting in that area and I see them there all the time. It's very hard to drive with all that gravel on the road hitting your windshield, so I don't drive it too often.

I would like to touch on the Detah ice road. If I am correct, the Detah ice road was there before the road was put in place around land, an all-weather road. That was the reason it was taken over by Transportation from the federal government. If that is going to be in your budget, it's going to be in existence, then maybe you should put the other two areas that are of concern and put them in your budget or delete Detah and we will all apply for access funding at the same time. We will all

fight for the same dollars. What is fair for one should be fair to all the others. It's time this government was consistent in how they do things. Just because the federal government did it before doesn't mean we have to do it all the time. If the federal government identified extra special dollars for Detah, then maybe we should go to the federal government and ask for extra special dollars for the other two communities.

On safety, there have been a number of bison hits on Highway No. 3 towards Providence and Rae. So far, there hasn't been anything between here and Rae, but maybe one way of making it a little safer is that we should be putting some markers on the side with reflectors alongside the road that are flexible for snow removal, so you can see maybe every kilometre. Just from my experience of driving that road, a couple of times they had those reflective posts on the side of the road and if a bison crosses in front of it, it blacks it out and it shows that there is something that crossed in front of that marker. I know it's a lot of kilometres there, but maybe a few dollars could save a lot for motorists and maybe even save lives in the future.

The other idea that had cropped up and we were throwing around in here before was shooting the bison with reflective paintball guns. Maybe he can work with RWED for that and shoot the bison on the highway with reflective paintball guns so they will always be marked, wherever they move, you see them. Maybe he could work with the other department. That's an idea. It's safe and it doesn't hurt them and it gives them a little colour.

Under readable signs, like I said in my statement, I noticed a new sign on the gravel and pavement and "meeting gravel" signs, the new sign. That new design is great, but if you drive the Old Airport Road, you have this nice green sign that says "New" in the middle and that means there is a new sign up ahead. So, any time we have construction ending and going onto the old highway section, maybe we should have one of those new signs. That will tell people you have to look out for the new sign. That is not there now and I think that's one of the things we need to do.

Also, just looking at the chipsealing on the highways, last year's chipsealing, although they were chipsealed, some of them were breaking apart and some have to be redone. I know my section is still holding, the one going into Rae, but there was no preparation for the chipseal. The curves were not banked enough, they are all negative curves, most of them, and it's pretty slippery even at the 80 kilometre speed sign. It gets pretty slippery; you have to slow it right down. So in the future when you do chipseal, we should have a nice preparation before we put the chipseal down. Otherwise, we will be coming back and redoing them again. So it's not only in my riding, but in the Fort Smith area, Fort Res area, preparation, time and it would reduce costs for the department.

Other than that, that's all I have for general comments. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad that's all the Member has. That's quite a long list. Let me just go back to the main ones that I noted.

In terms of the inspections of baggage and so on, on aircraft, that is the responsibility of the Canadian Air Transport Security Agency. It's not our responsibility. They are doing it. They are checking all luggage at 89 airports across Canada. The only one in the NWT will be Yellowknife. They won't be doing all the little ones, it's too expensive.

With regard to the work hours for our crews, all of the crews across the Territories are on call 24 hours a day. They don't work 8:00 to 5:00. They will work as the demands are there. It's the call of the camp foreman to decide when the people have to be out on the road. We have good experienced, long-time people who are responsible and I see them out on the road. I do drive on Highway No. 3 as well as Highway No. 4 fairly frequently to have a look at what the road conditions are. They are out there. I realize they can't be everywhere at once, but the balance they put in is fairly good. So we appreciate the work that those people do. In fact, many of them are very flexible. We've had times when the superintendent himself is out operating a grader because they need to have extra people. There's a limit to what we can do in terms of cost, but generally we can expect conditions to be worse in the winter and our guys do a good job there.

On the Detah ice road, that one has always been there. It's not a high maintenance thing. We put the road in in the winter. It was like that when airports were transferred to us in 1984. That was long after the Ingraham Trail and so on was built, so it wasn't something that just happened before Highway No. 4 was there. It's been there for a long, long time. We just continued it.

Taking it away from Detah, I don't know what purpose that would serve. We do make the same service available to other communities. We will consider it anywhere. I am open to that. Some of them have historically been done, for example, the road at Hay River that Mr. McLeod was referring to earlier. That's been done by the town and the band. There has never been any request for us to become involved in that. We are open, though. So we will help the communities where we can.

In terms of the bison issues, we are working with a committee that involves RWED staff in Fort Providence to look at ways of making the road safer, given the number of bison along that road at times. The committee includes their biologists and they are looking at the way other jurisdictions are handling it across North America. I hadn't thought of hitting the bison with paintballs, but maybe that's a way. Maybe we can hang reflectors on them or something.

We are open to trying to keep that road safe and also keep the bison safe. Signs, we are working on, as a result of the Member's recommendations and the committee's recommendations. We want to improve our signs. I think Mr. Lafferty's suggestion to having a sign up to indicate that there are new signs coming up, we can do that. We'll take a look at it.

In terms of the chipsealing that we've done, we've done as much upgrading as we could. I know it wasn't done as completely as we would have liked, given the shortage of money, but we did what we could in terms of building a better

base on all the roads before we chipsealed. In some cases, not as much as we would have ideally liked was done.

On the Rae access road, that one was a resealing project, it wasn't a new chipseal. If there are any problems with it, those will show up in the spring and the contractor who did it will be responsible through the warranty to make those repairs. I think I have gotten most of the comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair will recognize Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few short general comments. Mr. Chairman, it's been quite a number of years that capital dollars have been difficult to come by with Transportation when we look at airports, highways, and infrastructure. They are capital intensive programs. The department has tried to make do with less and cover all areas. I think that is part of the problem as Members review that and see there are limited dollars going around. So it's good to see the department is actually taking some steps to look at alternative ways of building infrastructure, as the Minister highlighted in his opening comments. I refer to the Deh Cho Bridge proposal and they are continuing to work in that area. I would encourage him to ensure that as we go through this, we make sure that we are working through it in a very careful way. My interest is that we do it right so that when the other crossings come into play, it will be a good template to work from and I refer specifically to the Peel River and Mackenzie River crossings on the Dempster Highway. We know those are very important ones to us in our neck of the woods. I guess I would encourage the department to continue to work down that avenue.

The other, Mr. Chairman, that has come to my attention is the increased airport security, and the Minister, as well, has touched on this. From my end, I've had constituents ask what was going to be done at the airport in Inuvik, and I raised that issue with the Minister. I was informed that, for example, security services at that time were handled by airline companies and they would have to request that and have to deal with the costs of that, as well. But the Minister has highlighted there will be new demands on our airport system, both current operations and for future planning. So I'd like to know in that area what he's referring to and what more security initiatives might be put in place, and how many more airports would be affected by those. Those will be my comments at this time, anything further I'll wait for detail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. You had a lot of questions there but, Mr. Handley, do you want to respond?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, just a few comments in response. Yes, we're very limited by capital and that has meant that we haven't been able to do as much as we would like to do. We do look at the Deh Cho Bridge as a good example of how we might be able to afford to take on some of these major capital projects, where there is enough traffic and activity.

We have had some discussions with the people in the Inuvik region on the possibility of a bridge on the Peel River, so we are looking at that as a possibility and doing it similar with what we're doing with the Deh Cho. I don't know how the traffic counts will work out right now, but we assume there will be more activity in the near future.

On capital, it's been hard to come by. We've certainly done all the lobbying we could to get whatever money we could from the federal government. We recently got \$20 million through the Corridors for Canada, which is not as much as we wanted but it certainly helps. In addition to that, over the years we have got about another \$17 million over the last five years from various federal programs including the winter bridges money, the ACAP money, the SHIP, the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program, and through NavCan. So we keep pushing away and we do get a fair chunk of money. In total over the last four years, counting the first year of the Corridors for Canada, it's over \$21 million; almost \$22 million.

On the airports, the airlines no longer are responsible for security. That's through the CATSA, the Canadian Air Transport Security Agency. The extent to which they will put their services into airports is based on their assessment of risk, so it's not going to be something we're directly involved in. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair will recognize Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few general comments on the department. I'd like to speak a little bit about the Deh Cho Bridge permit and licensing fee, highway signage and YK airport authority. On the first point, Mr. Chairman, I just want to briefly comment that I'm happy with the progress that's being made on the Deh Cho Bridge project. I have been on record right from the beginning in the Assembly, for a permanent bridge over the Mackenzie River. I think it's quite remarkable that we're looking at entertaining, debating and deciding on legislation before the end of this Assembly. Obviously the details are going to be important, and through the process of debating it we will work them out. But I do believe that it is essential, and more essential now than ever before with the traffic that's travelling and the economic development projects that are happening, that we move forward with that as soon as possible.

I do believe that it is a crucial role of the government to build projects like that. In many ways, perhaps, this thing has been able to move forward as fast as it did because it's not really within the hands of the Assembly here. I don't mean that in a bad way, but it is really a work of various groups and governments coming together and making something happen. I know my colleague from the Deh Cho doesn't think that the Yellowknife MLAs agree with or support anything he does, but I want to let him know that I have been a supporter of this from the beginning and I will be until the end.

Mr. Chairman, another thing that I wanted to mention is something that the Minister mentioned in his statement. He speaks about the increase of permits and licensing fees due to the increased traffic on our highways. I think that's quite apparent. I've read it in the paper and I believe the Minister has indicated during our committee meetings, that the

department will be taking over the motor vehicles licensing operation. I have had inquiries from my constituents in this regard, and I have a question about this. First of all, is it safe to assume that it's the increase in traffic that's increasing the revenue by \$500,000, or it's going to be at \$500,000? At the same time, I'm wondering if I could ask the Minister whether there have been additional resources put into that section, given the increased workload. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the support on the bridge project. I think that's an excellent example of how private and public partnerships can be structured, and I think it will be a good model for other major infrastructure projects we eventually have on the books. Certainly the work by the Deh Cho Bridge Authority and the Fort Providence combined alliance worked to make this possible, and I hope our legislation also is supportive as it comes to this House.

On the licensing, our revenue from licences is projected at \$460,000. That's up from \$346,000. That's all through increased business. There hasn't been a change in the amounts that we're charging for licences.

On registrations, again, it's at \$2.369 million. That's what we're projecting and that's up from \$2.221 million. So that's all from increased business.

We are again trying to be fair, but also I suppose frugal in some ways in terms of our own department and the resources we put into the various divisions. We have not looked at adding more bodies into the licensing section of the department. We will continue to assess that though. If it seems that we need to add them, then we'll do that for the convenience of the public. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. First of all, maybe I should clarify whether or not permit and licensing fees being mentioned in the Minister's statement is the service that was offered by the registries service. Is that motor vehicle registration and licensing a different thing? Maybe I'm not understanding what licensing and permits are, because I was just assuming that that was something that the motor vehicles registry office handled as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the numbers that I've given -- and I didn't include the amounts for permits of \$256,000 -- are for all across the Territories. Every licensing office would be dealing with the licences, with permits and with registrations. So the Yellowknife one would have been handling its proportionate share, and Hay River and so on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Is the reason why there have been increases in the fees that you're collecting on permits and licences a result of

the commercial activity that's going on with the commercial trucks?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it's from volume. It's not any price increases on our part, it's just the volume. So there are more commercial vehicles, there are probably more private vehicles, but it's all volume. That's all related, of course, to our strong economy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. I wasn't necessarily assuming that the prices had gone up, I was talking about volume as well. My question is, given the level of traffic of commercial trucks and a lot of them being from the Yellowknife area, why was it that the private motor vehicle registry was not able to make a go of it? Or is there some other reason why they decided not to renew that contract? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, most of the big heavy traffic that comes through Yellowknife -- in fact, probably all of it -- would get their permits at the Enterprise scale, not in the Yellowknife office here. So that wouldn't add business to this office. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I realize I'm running out of time, so I'm going to come around once again but just a last question on this issue. I had someone in my riding conveying the difficulty that she had in getting a permit to have a commercial operation of trucking in the Territories. She felt that maybe with all of the increases in activities going on, that government or whoever she was talking to was not keeping up with the level of expertise that was required to accommodate this. I'm just wondering if the department or the Minister could advise me if there's a level of expertise required to provide information to the public about anyone who wants to operate commercial trucks in the Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think our procedures, our standards and so on are pretty comparable to across the country, but I'll let Mr. Vician give more detail on how we handle this kind of request. Thank you.

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

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The motor vehicle legislation that pertains is comparable with the national standards under the National Safety Code and the large carrier standards that are established for carriers across the country. The reason for that is because many of the operators operate inter-provincially, therefore, the requirements are national in context and we're required to keep up to that standard. Our

carrier inspection group monitors carefully the driver standards across the territory, and many of those operators came from out of territory. It's important for us to still stay in touch with that. Similarly our examiners that operate through the major regional centres conduct testing that's nationally recognized, and in comparison is the same testing across the territory. We have very good evaluators and if there are individual issues a person may have, I recommend that they deal with the regional office directly and I'm sure we can deal with the problems quite promptly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. General comments. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple in other areas and I'd like to get some response from the Minister, but maybe I'll start where my colleague left off with the motor vehicles registry office and the fact that we've now taken this service back from the private sector. Presumably, I guess the business case wasn't making itself for the private operator who was operating the service. I know the department has sort of billed this as a cost-neutral exercise, so that the additional fees that were being paid on top of the registration fee that I would go in and pay, the mark-up that was being collected by the private operator is now going to be collected or saved, that in fact will pay for the staff in order to carry out this service. That may have been a very convoluted and complicated way of explaining it, Mr. Chairman. I hope that the Minister understood what I'm talking about. I'd like to get some assurance from the Minister that the level of service that our constituents were receiving at the registries office isn't going to somehow be diminished now that we've taken this out of the hands of the private sector, and maybe he could speak to that.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The amount that is included in the licence fee that the operator of the licensing bureau retains is \$8.50. It has remained at that. It appears that the amount of money hasn't been enough to attract anyone to take on this business. When the last operator indicated that he wanted out of his contract, we had an RFP to fill it and there were no proposals at all so we have taken it over. We will operate and are operating the same hours as did the operator when it was private. The office opened this morning in the Laing Building. It has moved from the old location. I think we have the same number of staff. Our intention is to make sure that we do it as expediently as possible for everyone. Again, we encourage people not to come on the last day of the month, because there are days when it is very busy if people wait to the last minute. I think it will be just as good and will be cost neutral, as well. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. I had a constituent call me today and indicate that they had been down to get passport photos previously at the operation when it was located across from Boston Pizza, and I didn't realize it was the first day of opening today. In any event, they were down to the office today to try to get passport photos at the Laing Building and were told oh no, we don't do that anymore. We did that kind of thing when it

was privatized, but now that it's government we're not doing that and you're going to have to get a passport photo at a photo shop. Is that really the case and are we now making this so much more difficult to get a licence that somebody has to venture somewhere else to get the photos?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Department of Transportation licensing offices have never provided passport photos. You could get them when the private operator was running the outlet because he provided that service. But when it comes to the photo for your licence, we do that. For passport photos, people looking for those would have to go to one of the other outlets, the photography shops and so on that provide that service.

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

MR. BELL: Okay. I guess as long as we're obviously still providing photographs for licences, people will quickly come to realize when they stop now at the Laing Building that they can't get passport photos there and that will be that.

There's one other issue I wanted to ask the Minister to provide some public statement on, and that is the possibility of a new governance model for the airport operations. Coming on the heels of the airport authority workshop which was just held in Yellowknife, I have had a couple of constituents contact me with some concerns and I've been in touch with the Minister back and forth with a couple of letters about this issue. I guess the crux of the concerns really are about uncertainty as to what would happen should a new governance model be adopted, and what would happen to people who are employed out at the airport? Would they keep their jobs? Would they keep their pay levels? Would they keep their benefits?

I know in writing to the Minister to ask him for some clarification on this and ask him to send some sort of message to the people who are working out there and who may have significant investment in this community, bought homes and these kinds of things, he's indicated really he didn't want to put the cart before the horse because he has a panel looking at new governance models, we're not sure what's going to happen, they'll look at the pros and cons. I do have some concerns about the potential new governance model where it relates to the potential for costs being offloaded on the local taxpayers.

But that aside, I would like the Minister to make a public statement about his willingness to ensure that there is an effective employee communication plan in place, and certainly that in these negotiations and discussions about new governance models that one of the principles be that we ensure the interests of the employees at the airport is safeguarded during any sort of transition. I think that a lot of these folks who work out at the airport, there still are some who were with the airport when it was devolved from the federal government to the territorial government, and I think they're still fairly upset by some of what transpired around that process and the fact that they were shortchanged as far as benefits and pensions and some of these kinds of things are concerned, and certainly don't want to see it happen again.

So I'd like some sort of commitment from the Minister that we're going to involve all the staff in this process, and make sure that these people who made a commitment to this government and to this city are not going to be shortchanged, they're not going to be ignored and are not going to have something sprung on them at the last minute. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the Member and the public that there is absolutely no intention to spring anything on anybody, no intention to use this as a way of offloading anything onto someone else. Mr. Chairman, my view is that we have a very strong economy. There are a lot of things happening in the Territories. International polar flights have become much more common. I think we have an opportunity in the Northwest Territories to capitalize on some of these things. It may be long term, we could be talking 10 or 15 years from now, but it's never too early to take a look at what the alternatives might be. I don't have a preferred alternative in mind. I have struck a panel with a good cross section of stakeholders at the airport who are looking at that. They will be reporting back to me with some recommendations at the end of May. But there is no preconceived plan here. We're simply looking at what the options are, what the possibilities are, given the strength of our economy and our fairly bright future as a northern airport.

We will not spring anything on anybody. We have roughly 24 employees at the airport. If there was going to be a change in governance at the airport for whatever good reason, then we would certainly make sure that there's lots of notice. But I don't see anything happening quickly or overnight or anything like that. We want to make sure that the rights and benefits that our employees enjoy are not unduly jeopardized in any way. But clearly we don't want to spook anyone either. This is looking at the options. I'd like to wait until we have the recommendations from the panel, and then we'll certainly share those with the Members at that time and see where it seems to be pointing us. It may very well be that the recommendations will stay with the current model and nothing changes. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: I'd like to thank the Minister for those comments. I think that part of the concern really stems from uncertainty. I think there are some bright possibilities. As the Minister said whether it's now or in 15 or 20 years, no one is certain. I'm sure the panel will come to some conclusions when I look at the list of the people who are on the panel membership, and this is a group of talented people who I think can do some good work here. So that's very positive.

As far as reassuring the employees, I felt that it was necessary for the Minister to say something publicly about how they will be consulted. I'm wondering if the Minister would be prepared to meet personally with the group of employees at the airport to send this same message and reassure these folks that nothing has happened yet; there's a panel looking at this, and that they will certainly be kept informed and apprised of any developments. I think that this would go a long way toward reassuring people that we value the contribution they've made over the years, and look forward to their contribution going

forward. I think it would be a significant good sign and step if the Minister would agree to address these people himself. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll make a point of calling the UNW president and seeing if he has any concerns about it, or if he wants me to meet with the employees at the airport I'll be happy to do that. The airport manager I believe has been trying to keep the employees apprised of what's being looked at. But if meeting them would be of help, I'm certainly open to doing that when I have time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Chair will recognize Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up on the questions that I had earlier. Perhaps I wasn't very clear about what I was asking in terms of permits and licensing and so on that I was pursuing earlier. The question that I had has to do with the fact that Canada being a federation and especially motor vehicles being a jurisdiction of the provinces, when someone wants to move things or move a truck from one part of the country to up here, you have to go through a lot: every province to get a safety permit and permission to drive and so on. I'm just wondering where someone would go. Is there a well-known number that someone could call in Yellowknife if someone wants to bring a commercial truck from Nova Scotia to Yellowknife? Is this something too specific and should I be calling the department separately? That's the question I had on that one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the number that anyone would call if he wants to bring a commercial vehicle from another jurisdiction to the Territories would be at the Enterprise weigh scale. It operates from 7:00 in the morning until 11:00 each day, and they could call there. That's the point of entry for these vehicles. If there are other more complicated questions, I'm sure our director of motor vehicle licensing would be more than willing to help overcome whatever the complications are. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. I think I'll just leave that there. The point, though, is that we want these things to operate smoothly in a way that they don't have to call an MLA or anybody or a director of anything. It should be made in such a way that it's common knowledge for somebody who wants to do that could call. I'll follow that up separately.

Another point that I wanted to make has to do with the highway signage. I think my colleagues in this House might have noticed that I haven't been raising too many hot issues about Highway No. 3 lately. I have driven that road over Christmas, and it was a very good drive. It was icy and foggy and there were buffalo signs everywhere, but as long as you kept your speed I guess I came to accept the reality that the last leg of

Highway No. 3 will take its time in getting fixed. From the time that I was elected to this office, that distance has shortened considerably. I think we're looking at about 50 kilometres, and as long as you consider that as a little bit of a construction zone and drive accordingly, it's not too bad. But I did have a concern about the signage. One thing was there are not enough signs. I don't know if it's because you're driving a long, winding road, but it would be helpful that every so many Ks it would tell us the distance remaining to whatever destination we are heading to, whether it's Yellowknife or Rae or whatever. But I found myself constantly seeking that sign.

Another thing is the buffalo signs that were on Highway No. 3. Closer to Fort Providence, the buffalo signs are very clear. It tells you to beware of buffalo. But later on, and I don't know if it's because of the emergency situation that Transportation had to put up a whole bunch of signs to make people aware of buffalo or not, but they were non-descriptive, beige, big buffalo-shaped signs that didn't say anything on them. If you are from Yellowknife or if you lived here for a long time, you would make that conclusion that that's to warn you of the buffalo, but I thought for those not familiar with the area, it would be much more helpful if every sign that gets put up indicates that this is an area where buffalo are commonly found and it's not just this big buffalo-shaped thing. When I saw fog, I began to think they were buffalo themselves and not just signs. That's just a point of recommendation for the department to consider. Perhaps the Minister would like to comment on that and then I would like to ask some questions on the Yellowknife airport authority.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, signage is an ongoing issue and of interest to us, both ourselves and the department responsible for tourism. We also have an MOU with Alberta and we are working jointly with Alberta on signage to make sure we are consistent from one jurisdiction to another. I have had people tell me there are not enough Yellowknife destination signs from the Alberta side as you come into the territory. So for those kinds of suggestions for the travelling public, the national standard is one where, through the national uniform traffic control standards, they and we try to avoid as much linguistic signs as possible and have them more as symbols. They become universal signs. We would hope that people would understand that when they see the big buffalo signs, that what those means is you are possibly going to see a buffalo in that area without a long description of it.

On the other side, we want to look at our pull-offs and come up with something new that we can work with tourism on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't want to spend an extra 10 minutes again on the signs, but I need to clarify some things here. I do agree that in northern Alberta, there are not a lot of signs about Yellowknife and you have to assume that going to Enterprise or Hay River, I think Hay River is the sign that will take you to Yellowknife. The questions I had were to do with the signs on Highway No. 3, especially past Fort Providence. When you are driving in the dark and it's the last stretch, there just aren't a lot of signs to let you know that you are getting closer to Yellowknife or Rae or the remaining signs.

There are signs there, I am not saying there aren't, but they are just not... It would be helpful if they were more frequent. I don't know how expensive it is to put the signs up. I am thinking there are more signs now than there were even three years ago. Maybe it's a question of the budget being able to make it there or something, but I just wanted to add my voice to speak in favour of having more signs.

Onto the buffalo signs, there are other signs there that shows winding road, turning left, turning right or squiggly. Those are international signs with black marks on yellow backgrounds. I understand that. These buffalo signs are not. The initial buffalo signs past Fort Providence have very clear buffalo warnings on it, but the ones after that, and they were quite numerous, don't look like international signs where if you are in the Prairies, there are signs for deer, animals or something that are international signs. These are not. These are much bigger than international signs. They don't have a yellow background. It's just a shape of a buffalo and it's a huge sign and I appreciate that somebody just wanted to put it there to give us a warning, but they don't look that official. So I don't think you should assume that if you see a cardboard shape that looks like a buffalo on Highway No. 3 that you assume that that's what it means.

Perhaps that's right, but I think it would be better to err on the side of caution and get more consistent, more official looking signs. I don't think there are too many places around the world where you need to have buffalo signs, so maybe you don't have a standardized international sign. I do believe that this is not just a matter of asking people to understand what you mean. Signs have to say what they mean without asking too many questions and not having to guess too much. So I will end there and ask for another time. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in follow-up to the Member's earlier statement as well, I just wanted to point out that after this next round of construction on Highway No. 3, there will only be a little over 30 kilometres of unconstructed road. I believe that's to be done this summer and some the following summer. So we are getting that piece of bad road gradually narrowed down and we will have to find ways of finishing it quickly.

On the signs, we do have that special joint committee between ourselves, RWED and the resource management committee in Fort Providence looking at signage to warn people of bison. The big bison signs we have there now were developed jointly between RWED and ourselves. They are based on a standard that is used in Yoho National Park. There is no universal sign like that, like the little yellow and black ones and we do have some of those warning about bison, but we used what we thought was a reasonable standard. I'll take the Member's recommendations back to the committee and look at ways we can improve those signs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Before I go on, I would like to recognize a constituent of mine up in the gallery, Mr. Russ Look. He's no stranger to most of us. Welcome to the Legislature.

---Applause

The Chair will recognize Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to take too long here. I just wanted to make a couple of statements and ask a couple of questions. Mr. Chairman, the department has made some commitments and started some work last summer on chipsealing Highway No. 5 and Highway No. 6. My constituents in Fort Resolution were quite happy to see the chipsealing of Highway No. 6. It's good for the environment, good for tourism and good for safety.

However, Mr. Chairman, the Minister and his staff are quite aware that there was some dissatisfaction in the way the commitment was delivered. A very quick and dirty job was conducted last year, resulting in some problems with the chipsealing that the Department of Transportation, through their contracted staff, had to do the maintenance on.

Here is an opportunity where we've committed to the road and infrastructure of the road. By chipsealing it, we are protecting that infrastructure. We are protecting our investment, creating a safe product for the use of our constituents. We know we live in a very booming and economic time. We know the fact that community resources are in demand in the Northwest Territories. Here was an opportunity that was lost last season, but I think the opportunity still exists, as there are a number of kilometres of road that still need to be chipsealed, for the department to work with other government departments and other partners to develop a training program that will see people in training for engineering, for heavy equipment operations, surveying, traditional knowledge in determining where water flows and other environmental aspects of the responsibility get carried out. It's an opportunity that was lost for that short stretch of road that was chipsealed, but there's an opportunity for A Better Tomorrow, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask the Minister if he's given it more thought as this is not the first time and guaranteed this won't be the last time I will be bringing up this issue to the Minister of Transportation. Has he given more thought to those concerns that I brought to him and his department on more than one occasion? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Member and I have discussed this a number of times. I think generally it's a good suggestion. We want to continue to work with the current contractor. We are in negotiations now to finalize that for another period of time. So this is something that we'll take up with them because it would be part of their contract since they do the maintenance on that road for us.

When it comes to some of the more specialized areas like chipsealing, because there is a limited amount of chipsealing we are going to be able to do each year and the purchase of the equipment to do chipsealing is very expensive, we want to be careful before we enter into a contact with someone where they would buy that equipment where they would start doing chipsealing on a piece of road, otherwise they may find it's not a very good business venture to get into. Certainly on the training side, then yes we certainly want to work with the contractor over the longer term to do as much training as we can as we do our highway projects.

Because of limited money, I don't believe there is any chipsealing scheduled for this year on Highway No. 6. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess there is no rush in coming up with the training plan since there is no chipsealing. It gives us more time to come up with more resources, develop a better partnership and relationship with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment so maybe they could give us some of their dollars for training dollars. I would just like to ask the Minister, what has the department learned from the limited chipsealing projects they started last year? Does it make sense to drop the chipseal down after you grade the road? You may find in both cases, they would have to build up the road a little bit so that the investment that we put in today would have a lasting effect. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: We agree with the Member that you don't just take an old piece of road and just dump some chipseal on it, it just isn't going to last. We do as much upgrading on the road and drainage work as possible and as we feel is necessary in order to have a reasonably good chance at chipseal lasting. There have been some difficulties, particularly last year with some chipseal that was put on in the fall. We will go back and fix those areas this year. I think last year, and probably every year, people want to see the chipseal. We are always under pressure to do more chipsealing. If we just did a lot of upgrading and rebuilding roads, they would get frustrated with us because we are never getting the chipseal done. So we try to get a balance in there and that balance is determined by the condition of the road, as well as the amount of traffic on it.

On Highway No. 6, like a lot of our other highways, generally the chipsealing is good but there are some spots that have to be repaired and we will do those ones. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as part of the balanced approach, are we going to see some upgrading on Highway No. 6 and Highway No. 5 and the other highways that we are going to be chipsealing in a year or two? I do believe on Highway No. 6 particularly, those areas that were troublesome after the chipsealing project was done were the areas that needed some upgrading, but where it was not done. I believe that's the assessment made by the travellers on the road. People from Fort Resolution made that assessment based on their traditional and local knowledge of that road. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, we will work with the contractor. We will work with our own forces and try to improve on those areas. There are probably some areas where, in talking to some people, they could have told us putting chipseal down on this piece or that piece will not work. We will go back this year and fix all of those spots. In future years, we are budgeting \$500,000 for the four years beginning 2004-05 right through to 2007-08 to continue to do the upgrades on that piece of road. How much we will have to spend upgrading the road, how much we will have to put into chipseal, I am not sure yet.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, through our discussions with the Intergovernmental Forum on Devolution, hopefully we will have a little bit more resources to play with. In the meantime, I do agree that through consultation and talking with people with the local and traditional knowledge that road system, you would have avoided some problematic areas after the fact. I would just like to put that issue aside for a moment.

Mr. Chairman, I want to reiterate my concern, once again, about those communities that are linked only by air. Communities like Lutselk'e, Wha Ti and Wekweti and those communities that rely heavily on air traffic, our own transportation link, our lifeline that is the airports. I am still concerned that there is no training for specialized firefighting such as fuel fires. God forbid if there is ever a plane crash in one of our airports and we can't get that plane off the ground or off the airstrip, how we plan to deal with the emergency situation on that particular airstrip. Most communities don't have the equipment, let alone the personnel to do it. That's one area. I am not going to ask specific questions because I have asked questions in the past and they have never been answered.

The other area I want to ask the Minister to give some thought and to put it on public record, Mr. Chairman, is our position on asking for and receiving more over-the-Arctic flying schedules and routes. There is a concern that I have regarding greenhouse gases that the jet stream left behind by the jets stays up there, high above, 30,000 or 40,000 feet and doesn't disappear acting like a blanket over our northern environment. That's a theory that's been shared with me. I wonder if the department has ever looked at that theory, has ever discussed that theory with their federal and other provincial counterparts and if there is any validity in that theory. We should easily determine, since the fall of the Soviet Union and the increased traffic over the pole if there has been a difference in the environment. Last summer was a very depressing summer in the Northwest Territories. The rain never stopped. We are seeing more and more of those summers. We have seen more and more of those summers since the fall of the Soviet Union and the polar route has been opened up for air traffic. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, just on the issue about emergency services and how well prepared we are to respond to them, how well prepared the people are in the communities. Last November, the emergency measures organization, our department, did a tabletop or mock exercise on emergency situations. We found that the people in Lutselk'e were very well prepared to handle that kind of situation. We do that on a regular basis. We work closely with each EMO in doing that because a lot of the responsibility falls to that organization. We will continue to give that as much emphasis as we can afford to.

On the issue of the pollution from high flying jets and so on, the upper air space is under the jurisdiction of the federal government. As a department, we certainly do not get involved in monitoring what is happening and the changes taking place since the fall of the Soviet Union and so on, but those are issues that may be better directed to the Minister for environment, Mr. Antoine, because that is something that they would be dealing with the federal jurisdiction. Our department has not done any monitoring of that kind of situation. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Minister for his answer. I am glad that the people in Lutselk'e are doing well. I am still worried about not just Lutselk'e, but the other communities. Doing something in mock preparation it is easy to see that it is done well, but if a firefighter crew or community crew has not experienced a fuel fire before then it is pretty hard to make an assessment based on something that is not real. That is one concern. It holds true not just for Lutselk'e, but my concern is for all the communities that are all interconnected by the airport system.

My concern over the greenhouse gases over the arctic resulting from the over-the-top routes is environmental, but I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that it is the responsibility of the Department of Transportation. I am asking from a Member's perspective that the Department of Transportation gets into a discussion with the federal transport so that maybe somebody can ask from the Northwest Territories, by flying over the North are we seeing more greenhouse gases as compared to when that route was restricted significantly? And if it is the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development that has to ask that question, so be it. It is because the planes are flying, flight traffic is the responsibility of Department of Transportation at this point in time. That is the reason I am asking that question from the Minister.

Another area that I would like to ask a question is in the area of emergency response teams. You rely on the Canadian military to do so. Our chief coroner, Mr. Kinney, has expressed or made us aware of a gap where our emergency response teams from the Canadian military comes from outside our jurisdiction taking many hours to get into our jurisdiction. Just to use this code, Mr. Chairman, by the time they get off the ground it is no longer a search and rescue; it is a search and recovery. Has the Minister given this any thought? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, let me say that we do these mock exercises, table top exercises, live exercises on emergency response regularly. We do it at all 27 airports in the Territories and given the limited capacity in a lot of the smaller communities I think we are doing the best we can along with the EMO.

On the issues of the higher altitude pollution and so on, I will talk to Mr. Antoine about that one. I do not know. I do not know if the pollution stays there or if it is blown around. There are some pretty strong winds blowing at high altitudes, 100 and 200 mile an hour winds that are blowing it. So there is probably a lot more pollution all over the globe as a result, but it may not necessarily be caused by jets that are flying directly over us. It could be blowing in from anywhere. I will talk to the Minister of environment about it.

On the military and reliance on the military, yes, they come out of Winnipeg or Trenton, Ontario or somewhere a long ways from here. When they respond to emergencies they are on 24-hour call and they are off the ground pretty quickly if an ELT goes off or something like that. Again, we are not directly involved in it as a department. We understand that there is a joint committee made up of federal agencies responsible for emergency response in remote areas -- it includes DND and the RCMP and I am not sure who else on it -- that are looking at the issue that Mr. Nitah is raising with us. I think it is one that is looked at seriously by all of us. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had four things that I wanted to say and I was thinking that I could do it in the first 10 minutes, but this is my third time trying here. The last thing that I wanted to talk to the Minister about has to do with the Yellowknife airport authority and I found that I made a note of the fact that he did not mention it in the opening statement. There was no mention of it there. I am not sure if I have put this on record, but when I first heard of this concept I was intrigued by the idea and I think it is an issue that we should address our mind to. I think there could be lots of reasons for that and the Minister had indicated already very well about why we need to study this. It is the present and the future circumstances that we find ourselves into and we are aware of where the Northwest Territories and Yellowknife are located in terms of trans-Atlantic air traffic. With the end of the Cold War with there being a lot more freedom in the areas that planes from different countries could fly, we are really located now at the heart of air traffic. Any way we can look into to find how we can capitalize on that and make the Territories or Yellowknife or wherever the surrounding areas to become a player, I think we should look into that. I envision Yellowknife as being a major player in that and we have to get ready for that. At least to look at possibilities of it.

With the diamond industry in the North we are getting more connected to European countries in a way that we never were before and we have Europeans moving here and living here. Our Ministers travel to Europe more often maybe. So, there is a potential for tourism there. We could see a day when we could have a direct flight to Europe.

Also, every time I go out to the airport I see so many visitors from Japan and I would love to see a day when they could travel directly to Yellowknife from Asian countries and not have to go through Vancouver and Edmonton. With the time difference and the hours that they have to travel, the more they have to go through different flight changes the more need they have for interpreters and so on. So, I see so much potential for this. When I heard of the first forum a couple years back I went to it and I thought there were a lot of people out there too. So obviously this is an area of interest to everyone. Well, a lot of people in town.

I guess the wrinkle that puts into this is, we do not know what is going to happen with the security questions that are being raised post-9/11. I do not know if it is positive or negative, but also with the changes that are being implemented in the United States as to air travel I am not sure if there will be a decrease in the traffic going to the United States. These are all these fluctuating circumstances that we find ourselves under, but I think that is more of the reasons for getting ready for it and exploring what we can do and whether or not we should consider different ways of doing things at the Yellowknife airport.

Having said that, I support this in principle. I think that it is the kind of thing that we should be progressive about. Of course, I think what we could do better and the department could do better if we extend and widen the buy-in. Obviously whenever there is a change in governance structure, it does raise the concerns of employees and Mr. Bell addressed that concern very well. I would encourage the Minister to do everything he can to ease any concerns there as much as possible and work with the union. This is to address the concerns of the employees because without their support everything will become impossible. I am sorry, I understand that there is nothing there, this is just in the concept stage and it is just a step-by-step. We have to do a good job in making sure that everybody is informed about what is happening.

Another thing that was brought up to me in my constituency meeting at Tim Horton's, and this is sort of the underlying skepticism and question that is being raised by the public is whether or not this is an off-loading exercise. That the Government of the Northwest Territories is not able to perhaps where we do not have enough money for Yellowknife airport or something and this is being looked into as a possible way to off-load this responsibility. I think this speaks to the need for good information out there and having people understand why this is being done. I need to indicate that to the Minister. So, I am just wondering in that area, what is the game plan for the department in this area? Is the department just being a facilitator, a conduit for this exercise or does the department have a position in this area on this topic? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I said in my opening comments, I said we are continuing to develop an airport investment strategy that will lay out the improvements that we need over the next 20 years. I also acknowledge the commercial opportunities that exist there for us. So, we do not have any particular game plan in mind that we want to achieve an objective other than to maximize the potential that is here

for all of us. I do not have a preference in terms of the governance model. I know there are stakeholders out there, airline operators at all our airports, who do not want to see any costs off-loaded onto them because their businesses may be struggling as it is.

What we want to do here, and I know when we do it as a government it does make people nervous, we want to take a look at the long-term opportunities. I will meet with the employees, UNW. We would work it out with the UNW president to give everybody assurances that before any changes are made that we want to make sure that everyone's needs are considered.

This is not an off-loading. I know it makes people nervous that somewhere we are going to off-load the costs onto them. That is not the intention. In fact, I have said in answering questions last week that we are committed, if we do make changes, to keeping at least the same level of advancement that we currently in the airport operation in Yellowknife. We are not going to decrease that. So we are not intending to pull-out and somehow put those costs onto someone else.

There is a lot of potential. There is also a lot of need. If we are going to have international passengers coming to the territories, we need to probably have a 10,000 foot strip. It means extending what we have, ours is only about 8,500 feet. Now we have to build a 10,000 foot strip. Our airport terminal is too small and too congested right now. Same with the ramp space and so on. So there are some big investments that have to be made if we are going to get into the international airport league.

So, we want to look at these things. We are looking at them over the longer term. I do not have any conclusions that I want the panel to come to. We have given them a fair bit of latitude to do what they feel is best. They are going to report back to us in May and I will be happy to share the report with the Members and discuss it from there. This is clearly just aimed at trying to take advantage of opportunities that are before us right now, not to in any way off-load anything or take away benefits of employees or airline operators or anyone else. So I am open-minded on it. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that message has to be put out there clearly that government intends to keep on investing the budget and the money that they have in the books, it is just that we need to pursue other means of partnerships or other ways of governing to maximize the potential at that airport.

In that same area, I have a question about the task team or the panel. I was not aware when I went to the latest workshop the degree to which this project had advanced. Because last time, I guess the workshop was supposed to be in December and the task team was in and I was not aware of it at all. I am just wondering if the Minister can say how did he come up with the members of that task team? Was there consultation on who was going to sit on that task team and how did he go about choosing those members? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in terms of the panel itself, since the first meeting in December 2001, and we have been doing some background work on this, in selecting a panel there was extensive consultation with the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce, Northern Air Transport Association and with other stakeholders there. So we tried to get as broad a spectrum as possible. Following the original membership the Chamber of Mines asked to have a position or our panel suggested we have someone from the Chamber of Mines and we have since done that. The tourism association has been involved as well. So we did a lot of consultations with all of the stakeholders and the people who benefit from the airport. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ran out of time when I was doing general comments, but the most important item I have been working on for the last two and a half years was the all-weather road to the communities. The Minister has asked me to bring him BCRs, I do not know why I am the only one that needs to bring BCRs because I did not see a BCR for the bridge. I do not see a BCR for money spent on the Ingraham Trail. I do not see a BCR for Highway No. 3. But the monies are going ahead. The monies are being spent. Projects are going ahead. But for some reason to build an all-land winter road or all-land weather road to the Dogrib communities needs a BCR. I do not understand why we are different from anybody else when it comes to spending money. I do not know if they had BCRs for the Sahtu bridges. Wha Ti all-weather road would take two bridges, which the former Minister had committed to. We had even set up a committee to do a study and spend the money on this winter's winter road to bring the two bridges in, but all that fell apart because I did not have a BCR. That is a Band Council Resolution, for anyone that does not know what BCR means. For some reason I am the only one that needs it.

So, I would like to ask the Minister, what is it going to take for him to put this in his budget? Or is he willing to take it out of supplementary funding in a few weeks when session is over? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, whenever we do something new, like changing the route of a winter road or putting a bridge across the river, then we want to make sure that we have the support of the community that is impacted by it. With the bridge there is a process and we want to make sure everybody is involved. In that case, the band council and the mayor and council and the Metis Association were all very involved. In the case of the winter roads, the reason for the BCR was because we were asking to change the route of the winter road that would affect the communities who were serviced by that winter road. So, we ask that you make sure that they agreed with this.

We also have had, as I recall, some previous letters, at least, I do not remember if they were BCRs, from the chiefs in some of the communities saying they did not want to have an all-weather road through there. The commitment we made is that if we could get BCRs from the communities we would change the route and use the old Lac la Martre route if that is what the communities wanted us to do.

With regard to building an all-weather road in that area, the offer that was made by the previous Minister of Transportation was, if there was an agreement for an all-weather road we would work with the chief and councils of the representative communities in that area to put forward a proposal to the federal government. That offer still stands. We are prepared to do that. We do not ask this for on-going improvements to existing infrastructure. It is only where we are making a major change to it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Minister would look back at all the correspondence and all the information that I sent to him, there are some BCRs in there. The last time we did speak on this issue he said he needed new BCRs. He had BCRs, the previous Minister had BCRs from me and I gave him some BCRs. His department has that information.

As to the previous BCRs where the bands said they did not want a road, I think those date back 10 years or more when the cost of freight and travel was not so high. Now we have the cost of travel going up. It is going to go up even more once they build that bridge because the North Slave people have to pay for that bridge. We are the ones that are going to pay for it. Every truck is going to cost over \$500 to cross and everybody is going to pay six cents on top of every milk carton, egg or whatever in the North Slave. Especially the ones in the outlying communities like Lutselk'e and Gameti, Wekweti. They are going to take the big brunt of the cost because the cost of airline fuel is going to cost higher, so the freight is going to go higher.

So, somebody is saying it is not going to cost so much for North Slave. It is going to break even. It is not true. It might break even for Yellowknifers, but not for those four communities, the five communities around Yellowknife. They are going to take the big brunt of the cost. I would like to ask the Minister if he will work with the other Ministers to off-set the cost. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is the guy that is going to bring the food baskets up if it is needed up in the communities. He is the guy who is going to look at the food baskets. Then you have the thing of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, how it is going to affect the people in that region. It might be great for tourism. Maybe it is time that the road was built so that tourism could be in the rest of the North Slave communities and not just Yellowknife.

So, these are a lot of things that we have to look at. Sitting on a 10-year-old BCR and using that for an excuse, it does not fly with me, because you have had previous ones since then from all the communities and even from Rae-Edzo supporting them. So, I think maybe it is time to get off the old BCRs and take them where they belong. You have new ones to replace them.

Let us put the money, let us spread the wealth. That is what I mean. Spread the wealth. Put the roads in so the freight costs do not affect the people once the bridge is put in. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Member is right. He has given me quite a stack of correspondence and BCRs and so on from years ago. In some cases some of it is very old, some of it is more recent. But all we need, if you want to change the alignment for the road going on the old Lac la Martre road then we just need to know that the communities want that. I do not think it is terribly onerous, but the impact is huge if we change it. It may have a big impact on some communities. So, we just want to have that assurance.

On the all-weather road we are prepared to work with a committee and we will put a steering committee together to put together a proposal for the federal government for an all-weather road in that area. So, Mr. Chairman, unless I am going to rely on some BCRs, I forget the dates on some of them, but some of them are quite old. I think times are different, things are different now. Let us get some of those, if not a BCR at least a letter or something from the band councils indicating they want it and get on with business. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. I would like to ask the Minister if he is willing to put up \$250,000 like he did for the Mackenzie River bridge so we can do a study and start working with these communities? It did not take too much work to put that money forward. I think we can all accept the same thing. We all want the same things. We want access to all our communities and \$250,000 is doing great for our study for the study of geographic all-weather road to the resources through the Dogrib communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think the first thing we need to do is have the leaders in the communities agree that they want to form a steering committee. If they put together a steering committee, then we have the resources within our department to help put together a proposal for the federal government. If, as we move along, we find that it makes sense to make some investment, I am not sure it is \$250,000 or what it would be, but that is not out of the question. We will put in whatever makes sense, but it has to make good economic sense. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. The Chair recognizes Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: There goes Minister Handley again. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to follow up on my questions of earlier. He was asked the question about over the north route. That is all I am asking is that a question be asked or that a question can be asked.

The other suggestion and recommendation I would like to make is that concerning the small airports and the people who volunteered to deal with any emergencies. There is always somebody that is heading up that volunteer group. I would like to ask the Minister if he would invite those people responsible for those emergency situations in communities be invited to Yellowknife or other areas if there is training made available to those people? The people in Yellowknife are paid, they are professionals. The people in the communities are volunteers and are not professional. I think it would be good practice and policy for the volunteers in our communities that are not professional to have an opportunity to work with those that are paid and are professional. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, pretty well all of the emergency training is done through the lead of EMO and that is within the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, not in Department of Transportation. I am sure our government will make known to people that if there are courses that are being offered that they could benefit from. It is something that I am certainly prepared to talk to Mr. Steen about because it fits more into his department than mine. I do not deal with the emergency situations in terms of training people and paying the cost of that. That is why we have the EMO. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on a yearly basis, I believe, the Department of Transportation through their airport offices have a truck rally or rodeo, they call it. Do they invite anybody from outside of the capital? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, the participants or contestants in that are from all across the Territories. The airport maintainers in the small communities are made aware of it. They can compete if they want to in it. It is not at all a Yellowknife-based exercise. In fact, I think some of the, it moves around the territory and some of the strongest competitors have been up from outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's good to hear. It's through the band that the airport is maintained. That individual works for the band and not for the Department of Transportation or Municipal and Community Affairs. Would that individual be invited to this competition and if they are, is there any... I don't like to use the word "compensation" for the band or whoever is employing this individual, but a lot of times this individual can't afford the time to leave the community to participate. These jobs are usually restricted to the foreman's position and those guys are going six days a week, a 12 or 14-

hour day. The question is the airport maintainers, are they invited no matter who they work for? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, what we do is invite the contractor to participate, so that could be a band council, it could be a contractor. Twenty-one of our airports are operated by other than government crews. It is then up to the contractor to decide whether or not they want to have any of their employees participate in it. I suppose it's up to the employees to make it known to their boss that they want to participate and work on an arrangement. We have not, up to now, paid the travel costs or the lost time for employees to participate in this from contractors. It would be up to each contractor. We hope the contractor will see the value of having their employees participate as well. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be nice if those people could be working for the Department of Transportation, so there is no question. A lot of times the employer may not want to let go of their employees. It's going to cost them money, so what is the motivation for the employer, Mr. Chairman? That's not something I want to get into an argument about. I strongly suggest and recommend that the department do what it can do to get these people there. I know my constituents have never been there. There's got to be some logistical or financial or other challenges there. Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we go into detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. I didn't hear any questions there.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Corporate Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are on page 10-9, corporate services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$8.223 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Airports

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-13, airports, operations expense, total operations expense, \$21.442 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-15, airports, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Highways

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are onto 10-17, highways, operations expense, total operations expense, \$36.855 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Ferries

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-21, ferries, operations expense, total operations expense, \$5.264 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Community Marine Infrastructure

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-25, community marine infrastructure, operations expense, total operations expense, \$335,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-27, community marine infrastructure, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$150,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Community Local Access Roads

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-29, community local access roads, operations expense, total operations expense, \$837,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-31, community local access roads, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$627,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Road Licensing And Safety

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-33, road licensing and safety, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3.295 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-35, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-36, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10-37, detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$4.321 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Go back to 10-7, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$76.251 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go to capital acquisition, cap 16, Transportation, airports, total airports, \$6.523 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Cap 19, highways, total highways, \$20.193 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Cap 21, ferries, total ferries, \$280,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Cap 22, road licensing and safety, total road licensing and safety, \$280,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$27.276 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that we have concluded consideration of the Department of Transportation estimates?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing.

We have a number of issues in Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we continue on with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, at least to get through opening comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go onto Education, Culture and Employment. Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mr. Ootes.

Department Of Education, Culture And Employment

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am pleased to present the 2003-2004 main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Our 2003-2004 budget of approximately \$210 million supports the five strategic goals of our mandate:

- living northern cultures and official languages of the NWT;
- solid beginnings for infants and young children;

- children and youth with a healthy learning environment;
- life-long learning opportunities; and,
- maximizing participation in the northern economy.

The 2003-2004 main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment represents a \$14 million increase over last year.

Before I proceed, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and thank Members for their guidance and support during the development of our 2003-2006 business plan and our 2003-2004 main estimates.

Mr. Chairman, people are the NWT's most valuable resource. By investing in our people, we build a culturally rich and prosperous territory.

We are entering a time of unprecedented economic change and must continue investing to keep our people educated, prepared, healthy and ready to take their place in the North's future. With this in mind, we've developed our 2003-2004 budget. I would like to now address the department's budget specifically.

Early in its mandate this government saw the need to invest in its youngest citizens. You will see in the 2003-2004 budget an increase of \$230,000 for programs funded through the early childhood development plan.

The department will add \$4.7 million to the schools budget. This increase will allow the Department to complete its plan to:

- reduce the pupil-teacher ratio to 16:1;
- fund student supports at 15 percent of school funding; and,
- cover higher school enrolments.

For the upcoming school year, the department will contribute \$108 million to operate our school programs, a clear recognition of the importance of supporting students so they can succeed.

As well as succeeding academically, we know it is important for our students to have northern role models. We need to be able to attract our young people into the teaching profession. They, in turn, can then take their knowledge and skills back to their communities. This is key to stabilizing our teacher workforce, and to ensuring culturally appropriate education for all grades.

We have talked about the importance of a low pupil-teacher ratio. The department will complete its plan to reduce the PTR next year, and to fund student supports at 15 percent of overall school investments. The \$2.8 million investment in this budget to lower the pupil-teacher ratio and raise student support services will offer assistance where it's needed the most, in the classroom.

School improvement is a priority of the department. In the current year, eight schools have improvement initiatives underway. Our objective for next year is to expand this and include rural communities. Our plan is to continue our focus on overall school improvement until every school in the NWT is a participant. We are also excited that next year we will expand the range of senior high school courses available. Our goal is to offer every student in the NWT with a pathway that meets his or her interests, needs and career aspirations.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment deals with many board structures. We deal regularly with agencies that deliver our programs, such as boards and education authorities, as well as with other clients, such as child care societies, that operate independently of the department. We are committed to increasing capacity through training to these organizations.

Take for example our child care boards. All of the department's regional early childhood consultants are now offering workshops on board development. The department is nearing completion of a specific volunteer board development package that will be distributed to all licensed early childhood programs.

Training to support program delivery is also a stepping-stone to accountability. The department interacts regularly with its boards, their staff and teachers to ensure we have a common understanding of program design and delivery.

Our accountability does not stop with our schools, but continues throughout our learning network. Training is provided on a regular basis to the people delivering programs such as income support.

As part of the social agenda, we have committed to work with partner departments to examine service gaps and to coordinate our programs. We have established an annual process for examining income support levels for food and personal care items, and we remain committed to monitoring this regularly.

I am pleased to report that more people are working and fewer people need income support. Due primarily to increased employment, we have been able to reinvest \$1.6 million into education while ensuring that benefits are maintained for those in need. In addition, I hope by next session to distribute a plain language guide to our income support programs. This guide, much like the one offered in student financial assistance, will provide clear and concise information about the programs we offer.

Much of what the Department of Education, Culture and Employment does is tailored to meet Northerners' needs across their lifespan. Lifelong learning is a goal aimed at ensuring residents gain the skills and knowledge to participate in the workforce. Our emphasis on transferable learning that meets industry needs will pay off in NWT readiness for industrial development. Sixty percent of all NWT journeymen achieve Red Seal status. This is 22 percent higher than it was two years ago. Their qualifications are recognized throughout Canada.

In most cases, training to prepare for large projects is developed and delivered in partnership with industry. For

example, we have established an Oil and Gas Territorial Training Committee based on the model of the Mine Training Committee. Again, although Education, Culture and Employment is leading this, success will require many partners. This committee includes representatives of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), non-profit groups and the Aboriginal Summit. Through this partnership, we must continue to seek federal investment and a coordinated approach to implementation.

Under maximizing northern employment, there are opportunities for graduate interns to work for the public and private sector. In response to the social agenda, ECE will be extending the graduate internship program to the Aurora Research Institute. This initiative adds \$150,000 to the 2003-2004 main estimates.

The Student Financial Assistance Program also supports transitions through life-long learning and career development. We have approximately 1,300 students using our programs. In 2003-2004, the department will add \$474,000 to this program to help attract students to the nursing and social work professions. Another \$133,000 is being added to the budget to pay for rising travel and tuition costs.

In 2003-2004 the department's budget will see an increase of \$1.4 million for amortization. In addition, approximately \$5.2 million will be transferred from capital allocations to fund infrastructure projects such as:

- upgrading community library facilities;
- upgrading community museums and cultural facilities; and,
- renovating Mildred Hall School.

The department is proud of its employees who dedicate themselves to education and to supporting our people across the North. This budget includes \$3.7 million to fund existing collective agreements with our employees working for our eight education authorities, the college and our department.

In summary, over \$14 million will be added to the commitment of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for the people of the NWT.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, all the investments I have outlined support the goals of this government and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. This concludes my opening comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, any opening comments? Mr. Bell.

Standing Committee On Social Programs Comments

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met on January 14, 2003 to

consider the 2003-2004 draft main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Members note increases of \$150,000 to fund two positions with the Aurora Research Institute as part of the Social Agenda Action Plan and \$474,000 relating to the recruitment and retention remittance program for healthcare professionals as part of the Student Financial Assistance Program. Finally, committee notes that \$5.197 million was transferred from the capital allocation to fund infrastructure contributions. This is an accounting requirement and is not new funding. The infrastructure contributions are: \$4.955 million to Yellowknife School District No. 1 for renovations to Mildred Hall School, \$100,000 for local museum improvements and \$142,000 for improvements to community libraries.

Capital Allocation Concerns And Student Housing On Fort Smith Campus

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is very concerned with the capital allocation process. Members of the committee could not reconcile replacing and renovating student housing for the Fort Smith Campus of Aurora College, taking into account the equal or greater need for student housing on the Inuvik and Yellowknife campuses.

During the review of the business plan the department provided committee with information showing that more student housing units were occupied by residents of Fort Smith than from any other community. Conversely, there were no residents of Yellowknife or Inuvik occupying student housing in their respective communities.

The department did state that Fort Smith residents were only allowed to rent student housing on a semester-by-semester basis after students from outside of Fort Smith had their housing needs addressed. The department justified this because otherwise the units would be empty. By placing Fort Smith residents in these "surplus" units the college would maintain its revenue stream. The committee has been unable to determine, from the scant information provided by the department thus far, whether Aurora College is a de facto landlord for residents of Fort Smith.

If the units are empty and rented to students from Fort Smith on a regular and ongoing basis, the question then becomes whether or not they are needed.

Members of the standing committee were also made aware of the serious underutilization of Breynat Hall. This called into question the need to renovate singles housing in the Brown and Green apartments.

Unless the department can provide proper and thorough justification of the need to replace or renovate student housing in Fort Smith, the standing committee is inclined to support the building of student housing in Inuvik to take advantage of the economies of scale associated with the construction of the new campus.

This concern was passed onto the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and was subsequently conveyed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister's response indicates the department plans to proceed with the \$3.1 million renovations to the Brown and Green apartments, but will

review the options for the replacement of the other student housing in Fort Smith.

The response to the practice of renting housing to residents of Fort Smith indicates the department did not understand the committee's concerns over the appropriateness of such a practice.

NWT Arts Strategy

The Standing Committee on Social Programs was very pleased to see the level of support available in grants to NWT artisans and performers was roughly doubled to \$71,000 from last year's \$36,000. This is a good first step in showing our commitment to the arts and performing community.

Members of the committee look forward to having the opportunity to comment on the recommendations of the NWT Arts Advisory Panel prior to the government finalizing an NWT Arts Strategy.

Regional Reorganization

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has changed regional manager positions in the Deh Cho and Sahtu to regional superintendent positions at a cost of \$160,000 for salary increases and the hiring of administrative support staff.

The department has justified this change by pointing out this aligns the department's administrative structure with regional land claims.

In addition, the department pointed out the Departments of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Municipal and Community Affairs, Financial Management Board Secretariat, Transportation, Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation have either senior managers or board structures in place in one or both of the regions.

The standing committee is not opposed to regional reorganization but is concerned with the apparently ad hoc approach and the lack of co-ordination, planning and direction provided by Cabinet to the departments.

It is obvious that regional reorganization, whether official or ad hoc, has cost implications to this government. If the purpose is to align the administrative structures of the departments with land claim agreements, the associated costs must be part of self-government negotiations with the federal government and should not be absorbed by the GNWT.

This concern was passed on to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and was subsequently relayed to the Minister of Finance for a response.

The Minister's response indicates the government will be undertaking an analysis of incremental operating costs and entering into negotiation with the federal government for funding.

The committee hopes the government's optimism on negotiating federal funding is warranted.

Bachelor Of Education Degree Program

The members of the standing committee are pleased to note the progress being made on delivering a four-year bachelor of education degree in the Northwest Territories. Barring any

further complications, Aurora College will be delivering the fourth and final year of a bachelor of education degree at the Fort Smith Campus starting in September of 2004.

In the short term the native studies major for the bachelor of education program is appropriate, however Members note having only one available major will reduce the candidate pool once the initial need is addressed.

In the long term it will be necessary to develop two or three majors for students in the bachelor of education degree program to ensure the ongoing sustainability of such a program.

Gap In Services 16- To 18-Year-Olds

Members of the standing committee remain concerned with the gap in services experienced by 16- to 18-year-olds who are no longer domiciled with their parents or guardians.

On the face of it, it appears to committee members the departments in the social envelope, particularly the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Health and Social Services, are making a concentrated effort to address this issue through legislation and improved access to services.

Nonetheless individual Members of the Legislative Assembly are contacted on a regular basis by 16- to 18-year-olds who are having problems accessing the services they need to address their basic needs. Many of these problems relate to a lack of understanding of present government policy by front-line workers in the income support and health and social services fields and are compounded by the clients not knowing which agency to access for services.

It is clear that in addition to booklets, outlining how 16 to 18-year-olds can access services, there is a need to ensure that income support and health and social services workers are properly trained in how to help these young people.

Income Support Food Basket

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to thank the Minister and his department for their annual review and adjustments of the food basket prices in each community in the NWT, during the life of this Assembly. It should be noted that this is not something the department is legislated to do on an annual basis and the Minister is to be commended.

The committee looks forward to being informed of the results of the department's next survey on income support food baskets.

Teacher Turnover

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs are very concerned with the rate of teacher turnover in our smaller communities. The lack of affordable, suitable rental accommodation is one of the prime contributors to this crisis.

The committee is well aware of the government's policy of not getting back into employee housing. Members would, however, point out to the Minister that without educators who are committed to their communities for the long term, the quality of education we can offer our children will be forever suspect. Children need some continuity in their education and i

n some communities the lack of affordable housing means a new teacher every year.

Committee members look forward to being informed of the results of the deputy minister's recommendations on housing for professionals. The committee notes previous attempts to provide housing to professionals through aboriginal development corporations have been less than successful due to the high rent that must be charged to ensure a rate of return on the investment. Relying on the private sector to address the rental needs of professionals in our smaller communities may not be realistic.

The standing committee is aware that Yellowknife District No. 1 owns an apartment building they rent to their employees at market rent. It may be necessary to change legislation to allow other school boards to acquire or build housing for their employees in some communities. It could be argued that because education boards are arm's-length from the government this would not be tantamount to the GNWT getting back into employee housing.

Online Learning Opportunities

The Standing Committee on Social Programs has been supportive of the department's efforts to expand on-line learning opportunities to the communities. The more choices that students have in the courses they can take; the better choices they can make about their futures.

Members are concerned about uptake in our smaller communities and the department has promised to provide the committee with further information.

Oil And Gas Training

The Standing Committee on Social Programs acknowledges the work the department and industry have done to date in delivering oil and gas training to the residents of the Mackenzie Valley given the limited scope and resources that have been available thus far.

However, the members of the standing committee note the majority of training provided was focused on ensuring entry-level industry safety standards were met. It is time for oil and gas training in the Northwest Territories to go to the next level.

The proposal by the Oil and Gas Territorial Training Committee to the federal government appears to accomplish this. The long-term job opportunities and required training associated with the construction and operation of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline are identified along with the required funding to maximize northern participation in such a pipeline.

The committee supports the department in its efforts to access federal funding for further advanced oil and gas training for our residents.

Minor Capital Funding For Education Boards

Members of the standing committee have heard complaints from some education board members about the inadequacies of the current minor capital funding formula. In the case of the Yellowknife school districts, Members have been told it has not been adjusted in over 10 years.

Members were also concerned whether there was equity between the school boards that did their own maintenance and those that contracted with the Department of Public Works and Services.

The committee was pleased to hear the subject of minor capital funding would be the subject of negotiation between the department and the affected school boards over the next business planning cycle. The Standing Committee on Social Programs would appreciate being kept apprised of the results of these negotiations. That concludes our report, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Good job reading that report. The Chair will recognize the clock and rise and report progress.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will call the House back to order. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004 and committee reports 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a seconder? Mr. Roland, it looked like. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meeting of the Board of Management at adjournment today and at 9:00 tomorrow morning of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, followed by Caucus at 10:30 and then again of the Standing Committee on Oversight and Accountability at 12:00 noon.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 25, 2003:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognitions 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

Motion 3-14(6), Extension of Mandate of the Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004
 - Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act
 - Committee Report 3-14(6), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 4-14(6), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 5-14(6), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 6-14(6), Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's 2001-2002 Annual Report
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 25, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

