



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 20

13th Assembly

HANSARD

WEDNESDAY, 'A 5M22Ž' 1996

Pages 537-582
Pagination reflects print edition

The Honourable Samuel Gargan, Speaker

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1996

Page 537

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Jim Antoine, Hon. Goo Arlooktoo, Mr. Barnabas, Hon. Charles Dent, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Hon. Samuel Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Hon. Don Morin, Hon. Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Hon. Manitoak Thompson, Hon. John Todd

ITEM 1: PRAYER

--- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you. Good afternoon. Orders of the day, item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 65-13(3): Transportation Agenda Update (1996): Creating Opportunities Through Partnerships

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Assembly, in the Agenda for Change, the Premier presented 10 priorities of the government for securing the financial future of the Northwest Territories, improving our quality of life and creating new economic opportunities for northerners.

In his Budget Address, the Minister of Finance emphasized the importance of partnerships to create and exploit economic development opportunities.

The Department of Transportation has much to contribute in achieving these directions. Despite fiscal cutbacks, the department sees many opportunities to promote economic development while ensuring a basic level of accessible, reliable and safe transportation.

Fulfillment of opportunities in transportation will require the cooperation and input of other stakeholders who share these common objectives. They include other governments, the private sector, communities and transportation users. Opportunities can only be

fulfilled by establishing partnerships with these groups.

The development of the transportation system needed in the Northwest Territories for our economic development is a longer-term objective than the three-year planning horizon of the Department of Transportation's business plan. It is also a broader objective that is too easily lost in the financial detail of the annual budget process.

I would like to sketch for the Members some of the broader economic development themes I want to pursue through the transportation portfolio.

Transportation Infrastructure For Mineral Development

As the Minister of Finance stated, "responsible development of our mineral resources represents the single most important opportunity that we have for sustainable economic growth."

However, it is the lack of adequate road and port infrastructure that impedes mineral exploration and development. There are several promising mining projects in the East and West that will require new transportation infrastructure if they are to proceed.

I want to look for innovative solutions to infrastructure financing. This will require partnerships with the federal government and the mining industry. Finding a solution will not be easy but it is an objective we must pursue.

At the same time and in cooperation with the departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, I will be working on a resource access road policy. The policy will be aimed at encouraging economic development. It will provide a framework for evaluating the territorial government's involvement in the provision of infrastructure for mineral developments.

Extension Of The Mackenzie Valley Highway

Extension of the Mackenzie Valley Highway has been one of the department's long-term objectives since the 1990 transportation strategy was developed.

The lack of all-weather access to the Mackenzie Valley communities limits the people's mobility and impedes their economic development. There are also environmental concerns related to the annual construction of the winter road.

I will increase my efforts in pursuing a partnership with the federal government and communities for the construction of this highway. This will be pursued with the federal government as an employment creation initiative. In response to environmental concerns, I have proposed that funding be increased for winter road improvements.

National Highway Program

For a number of years, the provinces and territories have been urging the federal government to take the lead role in establishing a national highway program. In the Northwest Territories, the route from the Alberta border to Hay River and Yellowknife is part of the designated national highway system. Sections of this route are not up to current national highway standards. In fact, the gravel sections of Highway 3 are the only unpaved sections in the entire national highway system in Canada. The end result is increased operating costs and safety concerns for users.

Page 538

In the department's current plan, reconstruction of the highway will take a long time to complete. Additional funding to accelerate construction would be available if the federal government instituted a national highway program. I will increase my efforts, in cooperation with other jurisdictions, to persuade the federal government to establish a national highway program.

Marine Transportation

Marine facilities are required to support both community resupply and resource developments. The department will continue to improve community resupply facilities and will work cooperatively with the Department of Public Works and Services on initiatives to rationalize the marine resupply system in the Northwest Territories.

To ensure they remain a priority, I will work to raise the profile of northern marine transportation programs. The federal government must know that these programs are essential to the northern economy, especially to communities in the East. The level of service provided by these programs must be maintained to ensure safe, reliable and accessible marine transportation. In addition, I will pursue devolution where these programs can be more effectively managed by the territorial government.

Air Transportation

Reliable and low-cost air transportation is important to the North, particularly for off-highway communities. I will work with air carriers and communities to find ways of improving air transportation services and to provide appropriate airport infrastructure to reduce air travel costs in the North.

The federal government is responsible for the regulation of the air industry and for aviation safety. I will work to ensure that the unique aspects of air transportation in the North are accommodated in federal air regulations.

NavCan is the newly-created commercial company that will assume responsibility from the federal government for the air navigation system in Canada. I will work with NavCan to ensure a continued high level of air navigation services in the North.

Improve Transportation Safety

Safety is a basic, ongoing concern and objective for the Department of Transportation. One of the department's priorities outlined in its business plan is to improve transportation safety awareness and regulation to reduce injury and fatality rates in all modes of transportation.

I will work to improve transportation safety on our highways and on the water. This will be achieved through the

development and implementation of programs to promote small boat, ATV and snowmobile safety. Campaigns and programs will be undertaken to increase the public awareness of safety issues.

In pursuing the six initiatives I have outlined, I will ensure that the road, air and marine modes of transportation work in an integrated manner to provide the most effective service to meet the transportation needs of communities and to create economic development opportunities.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we must all pull together to accomplish the vision of our future described by the Premier. The Department of Transportation has a crucial role to play in building a healthy economic future for the people of the Northwest Territories. We look forward to doing our part. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Appointment Of Supreme Court Judge For Nunavut

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak in support of the appointment of the next Supreme Court justice as the new Supreme Court judge for Nunavut. Now that Justice Mark de Weerdts has moved to the Supreme Court of BC, there is a vacant seat in our Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to see a judge for Nunavut put in place and working in the present NWT justice system well before Nunavut is actually implemented. This will help ensure a smooth changeover when Nunavut is put in place in April 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Supreme Court judges are appointed by the federal government, but I also know that the federal government will consider the views of our NWT Minister of Justice and of a committee of the Law Society.

I know that when Mr. Kakfwi was Minister of Justice, he stated in this House that he would like to see the next Supreme Court judge a resident of Nunavut. That did not happen, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that the people of Nunavut are looking forward to the first resident Supreme Court judge in Nunavut. I know that, until very recently, the law required that our Supreme Court judges live in Yellowknife. This is probably why the last three appointments to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories have been practising lawyers and residents of Yellowknife. However, Mr. Speaker, I hope that in looking for the best candidate for what will be the Nunavut Supreme Court, we could somehow make sure we get the best talent, wherever it is.

For example, I have met Judge James Igliliorte, who is an Inuk judge of the Provincial Court of Newfoundland and Labrador. The people of Labrador are fortunate that for

Page 539

many years, they have had the advantage of having a judge who understands them well.

I was very impressed to learn that Judge Igliliorte was a school principal who was sent to law school by the provincial government especially to become a judge. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the spirit of the new Nunavut government, which I believe will be dedicated to serving the unique needs of its constituents...

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Baffin Central is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. ...in a very special part of Canada, I think it is time we appointed a Supreme Court judge for Nunavut who will be specially recruited for that very important job in the new territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement On Construction Of Hospitals For Inuvik And Baffin

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we reviewed the main estimates for 1996-97 for the Department of Health. Mr. Speaker, there was some good debate and clarification concerning the funding for the hospitals for the Baffin and Inuvik regions. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Roland, from Inuvik, articulated very well our position that the MOU signed in 1987 before the advent of division talks has to be honoured. The commitment yesterday, by motion and the allocation of funds for this year, by the 13th Assembly sends a strong signal that the hospitals are a priority.

Mr. Speaker, in the Baffin case, the catchment area is almost 85 per cent Inuk; thus, the funding for said new hospital as outlined in the aforesaid MOU will be funded 85 per cent by the federal government. In these times of fiscal restraint, we have to applaud the people who negotiated that initial agreement in 1987.

The chairperson of the Baffin Regional Health Board and myself were scheduled earlier this month to meet with the federal Health Minister, Mr. Dingwall, in Ottawa, to discuss the new hospital construction. However, two days before that meeting, the Minister had to cancel because he was called out of town. We are now trying to reschedule another meeting, but with the commitment as shown by this government over the past 24 hours and the ever-resource esteemed Health Minister, Mr. Kelvin Ng, the meeting may not be needed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Hear! Hear!

MR. PICCO:

I would like to thank my Delta colleagues, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Roland and Mr. Steen, for supporting the motion put forward yesterday supporting the hospital construction in Inuvik and Baffin. The motion was moved by my friend, the MLA for High Arctic, Levi Barnabas. Qujannamiik, thank you, Uqaqtii.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement On Need For Baffin Regional Director

MR. BARNABAS:

Qujannamiik, Uqaqtii. I rise today to express my concern about a shortage of one unit of staff housing in Grise Fiord, which may jeopardize the community grade extension in that community unless the problem can be quickly solved. I also wish to comment on this situation to show how complex our government has become today and to give this as a very good example of why I think the GNWT needs a regional director on the scene in the Baffin region to solve exactly these kinds of problems on the spot in the region without me having to bring this issue up on the floor of this Assembly.

Here is the story, **MR. SPEAKER:** School grades have been extended in Grise Fiord. Grade 10 is now in place and the community is looking forward to grade 11 being put in place next year. These grade extensions have put real pressure on the school for additional classroom space, but especially on the

requirements for staff housing. Three years ago, the Baffin Divisional Board of Education was granted what was described as emergency lease funding by Public Works and Services, to house their new school principal. A house was leased from the Grise Fiord co-op for that purpose. Now the board has been told that the emergency lease funding has run out. The divisional board then requested the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to provide what is called "build-to-lease" funding in order to get an additional house, since teachers had to live in the nursing station because nothing else was available. Although the board was promised that funding, the lease was never tendered. Now the board is told that to replace the emergency lease funding, which has run out, they can use the "build-to-lease" funds. That leaves Grise Fiord one unit short for their school staff requirements next year. I understand that the Grise Fiord Co-op has sent a proposal to the Housing Corporation to build a small, new unit for lease, but they have been told there is no money available.

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

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for High Arctic is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Conclude your statement, Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Mr. Speaker, the Grise Fiord Education Council are very concerned about this series of events. It seems like their hopes are raised and then they are disappointed. Mainly they are disappointed that even though grades have been added in the community and extra

Page 540

teachers can be hired, the government cannot seem to provide housing for the new staff.

Continuing to borrow space in the nursing station, which is needed for visiting health personnel, is not acceptable.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Tough Decisions In Times Of Fiscal Restraint

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said before in this House, I believe when we all took on the task of becoming Members of this Legislative Assembly, we did so thinking of the ways and changes we could help bring about that would help the people of the NWT live better lives.

Mr. Speaker, it was with great difficulty that decisions were made through the business plans to reduce existing levels of programs and services. It was really hard to reduce the support to areas like cultural programs, income support, non-profit organizations, health boards and alcohol and drug treatment centres. What we tried to do in making the reductions was to encourage new ways of doing business, such as asking for a new approach to alcohol and drug treatment, which would make better use of the limited funds available while recognizing the need for intervention and prevention.

One of the hard things about being a Member and making the tough decisions is that no one notices when we add a bit more to a prevention program or a bit more to the housing. Unfortunately, the attention tends to focus on the unpopular decisions. We each have concerns in our constituencies which need to be addressed. There are also many opportunities we know about which could help this government in addressing problems which face the residents.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. O'Brien.

Member's Statement On Congratulating Baker Lake And Arviat Graduates

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the interest of your request to economize our Member's statement, I will forgo my long dissertation. I will cut to the quick. Mr. Speaker, last weekend, I attended the high school graduation in Baker Lake. It was the first time the Baker Lake high school held a graduation and I would like to acknowledge the students who did graduate. They were Jeremy Ford; Janice Hilu-Scottie; Craig Simailak; Jamie Misheralak; Quentin Lahure; Christopher Iglookyouak; Abraham Iglookyouak; and, Paul Cook, junior.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the students who will graduate this weekend in Arviat. They are Elaine Owljoot; Elizabeth Issakaik; Ronald Suluk; Jimmy Main; and, Barney Kalluak.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my honourable colleagues will join me in congratulating these students and wish them only the best in the future, as they are the future leaders in Nunavut. Thank you. Matna.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Reinstatement Of Public Speaking In The Classroom

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to suggest something to my colleagues that I have been thinking about. I thought it was an original idea, but since I have mentioned it to a few people, I found out that it is done in other jurisdictions in the country and probably other countries as well.

When most of us ran for public office and perhaps served in public office at a municipal level previous to this, when you talk to people, one of the big drawbacks they have about getting into public office is that they have a fear or an apprehension about speaking in public. I don't know about the rest of the Members, but when I was a student in school, we used to do public speaking as part of our curriculum. We had to stand up in front of the class and speak. For some time, I thought it would be good to initiate some program where we would reinstate a public speaking contest in the schools.

I have an idea of initiating a program whereby we could invite students, perhaps at the grade 7 level, to conduct a public speaking contest from each of the ridings and the winners of those public speaking contests could possibly be brought to Yellowknife and be given the honour of being an MLA for one day in the place of the sitting Members. It is something I want to pursue with the Members. It is an idea at this time. Perhaps if you got the cooperation of a

business that could sponsor bringing them here and reintroduce the public speaking in the classroom. Thank you.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 277-13(3): GNWT Representative On Nanisivik Mines Monitoring Committee

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Barnabas on May 21st regarding a GNWT representative on Nanisivik Mines Monitoring Committee. Mr. Barnabas asked who will be representing the Government of the Northwest Territories on the Nanisivik Mines Monitoring Committee once the Baffin regional director's office is closed.

The deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources has served as a member of the Nanisivik Mines Monitoring Committee and will continue to serve as this government's representative on that committee.

The Baffin regional superintendent for Education, Culture and Employment will also be attending meetings of the monitoring committee scheduled for Arctic Bay this June. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 257-13(3): Maintenance Of Staff Housing In Nanisivik

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Barnabas on May 21st regarding maintenance of staff housing in Nanisivik. Mr. Speaker, on May 17, 1996, Mr. Barnabas, Member for the High Arctic, asked an oral

question about the plans for government staff housing in Nanisivik.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation, through the Arctic Bay Housing Association, assumed maintenance responsibilities April 1, 1996, for GNWT-owned units. All of the GNWT units in Nanisivik, and throughout the NWT, are being offered for sale as per the Financial Management Board's decision to sell all GNWT-owned single detached units

Mr. Speaker, I have another return, if I may.

Return To Question 204-13(3): Local Housing Organizations Funding

Mr. Speaker, this is a return to a question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on May 13, 1996, regarding local housing organizations funding.

Mr. Speaker, on May 13, 1996, Mrs. Groenewegen, Member for Hay River, asked an oral question about LHO funding. There is no direct connection between LHOs running a deficit and the economic condition of a community. The amount of rent people pay depends upon their family's income, therefore if local economic conditions take a downward turn and people's income falls, their rent is adjusted accordingly.

Any decrease in LHO rent revenue is adjusted in the following year. The experience of the corporation in these situations has indicated that these changes are minor with respect to the overall contribution to the community.

The \$6 million in rent arrears is cumulative, created over a number of years. Adjustments for these arrears have been made in previous years. While these accounts are removed from the books of the LHOs, we continue to collect these outstanding arrears. Furthermore, with the block funding arrangements with the communities that I recently announced, there are additional incentives to collecting arrears. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the current situation regarding staff housing and the government's move away has caused major concern in my riding and in other communities in the NWT. The units we are giving up leases on and those that were offered for sale, in many cases our employees cannot either afford to purchase them or afford to rent from an owner on the open market. My question for the Minister of FMBS is have we fully looked into the ramifications of said sell-offs and lease terminations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me deal with the issue twofold: one on selling the houses and, two, on the leases. It's the policy of this government to get out of staff housing. As part of our overall budget implementation strategy or deficit elimination strategy, that's one factor that has to be taken into consideration. We're going to continue to pursue a fairly aggressive approach to selling the remainder of the staff housing -- which I spoke about the other day, I believe -- which is somewhere around 560 units. We are, of course, going to, as we have consistently done, encourage the tenants in that housing to purchase them. We will once again go out with a general call to each of the individual tenants asking them to purchase them.

Page 542

I know there is some concern in Mr. Picco's riding, particularly with respect to the leases. I believe there was a letter drafted from somebody in the Housing Corporation which I really think was an error more than anything else, and we are currently reviewing our whole lease policy right now. I believe the leases in question that Mr. Picco talks about are still in place on a month-to-month basis until such time as we've developed a comprehensive policy as it relates to leasing of units, not purchasing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the concern here is that many of our employees in staff housing are not making \$70,000 or \$80,000 a year and will not be able to afford to rent or purchase on the open market. Maybe some of them don't even want to get into home ownership. Thus my supplementary question for the Minister is have we developed a threshold of home ownership by dollar income, or a rental amount for same, for employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I want to differentiate between the selling of houses and the leasing of housing. Unless my numbers are incorrect -- and I think they are correct -- we believe that most tenants could afford to purchase housing. I would suggest, if I may be so bold, that they would be silly not to because these houses are given at well below the market value, in most cases. So we would encourage our staff to purchase these units because, in some cases, the purchasing and mortgage costs are actually less than the rental costs that they're currently paying.

On the lease arrangements, I concur with my colleague that there is a problem there, particularly with new construction and the cost of new construction and how the rents reflect that. We're going to have to take that into careful consideration and that's what we're doing at the present time. I'm trying as quickly as possible to try and find some reasonable solution to that so that everybody has the opportunity to have a roof over their heads at a reasonable cost and can continue to function in the civil service. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what Mr. Todd said about the leases, but if we're selling off 560 houses, the concern here is the mortgage. If you're just carrying the mortgage, that would be one situation. The problem we run into, Mr. Speaker, is I make a good salary. The lease cost, for example, for my lot in Iqaluit is over \$3,000 a year -- \$668 every three months -- the O and M costs of running houses are cost-prohibitive to a lot of our employees. Will these employees be eligible for social housing if they cannot afford home ownership or renting on the open market when they are discharged from that staff house unit? The problem being that our social housing units have a long waiting list at the present time; so where are these people going to go? My question to the Minister then is will he look at letting these employees -- who cannot either afford home ownership because the house is let, sold or if you don't have a place -- to stay in the unit?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This problem, I think, must be unique to the Baffin, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps Iqaluit. In my own riding and in other Members' ridings, we don't have any problem with people being able to purchase the houses at the prices that we've determined. But yes, we're sympathetic, and yes, if there are problems and if they are identifiable, we will certainly look at them on an individual basis. But the policy of this government is get out of staff housing. As part of the deficit elimination strategy, we're projecting \$15 million to \$20 million, over a two-year period, of revenues derived from the selling of the 560 units. So it would be unfair for me not to say to my colleague that the policy is to continue to sell the staff housing, but we will certainly look at the individuals who are suffering, as Mr. Picco has alluded to. When he provides us with the detail of those people, we will examine it at that time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate hearing that from the Minister and I will be receiving that information in the Hansard tomorrow and I'll be passing it on to the constituency. By selling off staff houses and ending leases, will we have houses for our needed staff when we do the recruitment in small communities? So if we don't have any more houses, we've sold them off, we've ended the leases in the smaller communities and our staff are needing houses in those communities, will we have the units available for said staff? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 283-13(3): Rationale For Sale And Lease Of Staff Housing

HON. JOHN TODD:

Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker, so he can also send this to his constituents in Hansard. We are not getting out of the northern lease arrangements that we have at the present time. We're re-examining them. I said earlier to another question that the letter written by the Housing Corporation district manager was in error and a miscommunication. We're going to continue -- and I've

Page 543

spoken to some of the individuals who own these units in Mr. Picco's riding -- to make lease arrangements with them. We're examining that. When we have a full policy statement to make on it, I'm prepared to discuss that with my honourable colleague. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 284-13(3): Criteria For Sale/Purchase Of Staff Housing

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, my colleague, Mr. Krutko, asked the honourable Mr. Todd about the sale of government houses to the GNWT employees. The honourable Member may know that in Rae we have a very nice house that is one of the government's first homes in the community. The

house has traditionally been used for the doctors who have lived in Rae. This house is now up for disposal. There are a number of GNWT employees in Rae who are interested in purchasing this unit. We have been told that there will be a priority list made of these staff members. Will the Minister please inform the House as to what criteria this will follow? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not familiar with the particulars of this one particular unit. I must apologize to the Member on not being able to respond to him today. I will take the question as notice and get back to him in the House tomorrow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 285-13(3): Interaction Between Premier's Panel And Resource Management Committee

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the honourable Premier. In his discussions yesterday when he announced the establishment of a panel to look at economy and employment ... I fully support the initiative of the Premier for establishing that, but we have also established a system of committees within the Legislature in which I am the chairman of the Resource Management committee, which is also looking at the economic opportunities and the amalgamation of the departments of Energy, Mines and Resources, Economic Development and Tourism and Renewable Resources. With regard to being responsible for that sector, as the chairman of the committee, I would like to ask the Premier if there is an appropriate time down the road, once he has a chance to sit down with this committee, that he can make a presentation to the Resource committee with his panel?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 285-13(3): Interaction Between Premier's Panel And Resource Management Committee

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the start of this term of the 13th Assembly, we changed the way this

Legislative Assembly operates, we changed the committee structure so that committees and the Members on those committees are fully involved in the things this government does and in developing budgets. I also expect that Members of this committee, especially the chairperson and deputy chairperson, would be involved in this panel. That way, we would have open communication and the left hand will know what the right hand is doing and we'll move on. I expect that his committee would have involvement in this panel. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 285-13(3): Interaction Between Premier's Panel And Resource Management Committee

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Premier for making that statement. The concern I have is that as a committee, as a whole, we are also looking at such subject matters which will affect how government does things, especially in relation to the other process we're under with regard to the amalgamation of the three departments and how that is going to change how we deliver programs and services with regard to Economic Development, Renewable Resources and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. By amalgamating those three departments, there will probably be some effect on the recommendations that will come out of your committee and also on the committee that is overseeing that. I would like the opportunity to have the Premier's panel to make a presentation to the committee once you have something to present.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 285-13(3): Interaction Between Premier's Panel And Resource Management Committee

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be chairing this panel myself, so I have no problem at all with making a presentation to the committee at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 286-13(3): CBC Report On Possibility Of Civil Service Strike

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday there was a question directed to the Minister from Mr. Ningark that was in relation to the possibility of a strike. I have a letter from a constituent of mine who is concerned by the reporting on CBC which indicated that the honourable Minister of Finance had indicated that a public service strike is inevitable. I don't believe that's what was said, but it's on page 1190, at the bottom. Could the Minister of Finance please clarify what he had indicated in his response to the possibility of a strike?

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Page 544

Return To Question 286-13(3): CBC Report On Possibility Of Civil Service Strike

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did hear the news article earlier this morning by a CBC announcer, where he had implied that we were advocating a strike. Nothing could be further from the truth. I think I make it clear yesterday that this government believes in the collective bargaining process, has made a sincere and conscious effort to negotiate with the union to reach an appropriate compromise where we all take our appropriate reductions. I think that's what we tried to conclude. Unfortunately, we couldn't come to an arrangement with the UNW, but both parties agreed that we would present our final offer and that the union would take it out to its membership. I'm told and advised that the union will be going out. It's imminent that the union will go out with the final offer any day now. I'm also advised that they will be recommending to their membership to vote no. What I said was, if

there is a no vote, it will then mean we have to go to mediation, which takes about 21 days. I want to make it clear that the offer we made to the union was a final one. There are no additional dollars other than what we brought to the table earlier last month.

A no vote, to me, means a strike vote. I think that would be unfortunate, but that's what it means to me and perhaps that's what my colleague's constituent was alluding to today. I think it's very important to explain to the public at large and to this House that this government is not advocating a strike. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 286-13(3): CBC Report On Possibility Of Civil Service Strike

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I heard correctly, the Minister of Finance is indicating that, in actuality, voting no to this package would be voting in favour of a strike. Is that correct?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 286-13(3): CBC Report On Possibility Of Civil Service Strike

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just remembered the CBC reporter's name; Mr. Miller, I believe. Yes, in my interpretation of the current situation, given the fact that I believe there is no other further window of fiscal opportunity to make any additional offer, a no vote, after 21 days of mediation, would ultimately lead to a strike situation which, again, I think is unfortunate. I do appreciate my colleague giving me the opportunity to clarify that today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 287-13(3): Financial Assistance For Medical Students

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Health and Social Services. There was an article in the paper this week that there was burn-out at the health centres. I would just like to make reference to a couple of items and then pose a question. Nurses at the meeting said there is a lack of doctors in northern communities and that forces the health workers to carry out more responsibilities and more job stress. I think we all know the need for good medical services in all the communities, and certainly in the regional centres -- and no doubt, there is difficulty attracting doctors to the North as it is, keeping doctors in Canada, because so many of them are being enticed and lured to the US because of the potential of making larger dollars and bigger research money available, et cetera, wherever they go. However, the Minister stated the government may be looking at subsidizing tuition for doctors in return for an agreement to work in the North when they finish medical school. Personally, I think that's a tremendous incentive, and hopefully we can attract some people in the North in that way. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what he has in mind as a commitment and a contribution towards the doctors' fees to get through medical school.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 287-13(3): Financial Assistance For Medical Students

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as it stands now, it is just a preliminary investigation into the possibility of retaining physicians. We recognize that there's a shortage and a big demand throughout the Northwest Territories and we're competing with other jurisdictions for these services. It's just a preliminary look at some of the options that might be available to secure some of these physicians on a longer term basis, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 287-13(3): Financial Assistance For Medical Students

MR. OOTES:

Thank you. I can't remember the name of the doctor who came from New York and went to Alaska, and

there's a TV program on that. While it's dramatized, the idea of such a program would be excellent. I would highly encourage the government to pursue it. I would like to know if the Minister could tell me what his process is from here, in following up on this idea.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 287-13(3): Financial Assistance For Medical Students

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be in discussions with the NWT Medical Association to get their points of view on what they would recommend. They could identify some of the problem areas that we could

Page 545

try to resolve in trying to move this issue a bit further, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 287-13(3): Financial Assistance For Medical Students

MR. OOTES:

I also wonder, Mr. Speaker, certainly we want to encourage our northern students to be the first ones to take advantage of any such program, but there may be other areas where we need such expertise. I wonder if the Minister could tell us -hypothetically, in the medical field -if he would entertain such a process for not only doctors, but perhaps even nurses since we need nurses as well from the North.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 287-13(3): Financial Assistance For Medical Students

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are putting some effort into recruitment and training of nurses for our NWT health care system as it stands now. We're certainly open to any suggestions and any

opportunities that can be identified and investigated as far as retaining any of our professional people for longer periods of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of NTPC updated this House concerning the loss of the generator in Iqaluit. He said that a replacement had been found in the deep south. Can the Minister inform this House when said generator will be in place and running in Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, a used replacement has been purchased from a supplier in Texas and it is currently enroute. It will be in Yellowknife very shortly. NWT Air's Hercules has been chartered to fly the unit to Iqaluit by this Sunday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is this a new generator or a secondhand one?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the unit is a used unit, but we're assured that it's in very good condition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that these generators aren't readily available. There are a lot of places now driven by hydroelectric power, as we know, and diesel generators are out. Do we have any type of warranty with this secondhand generator? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of there being a warranty on the unit, but I think that diesel-driven generators are not that uncommon. We have a lot of them in service in the North, and I think that work will have been done to ensure that the unit is serviceable and that we can expect a reasonable amount of life for the amount of dollars that we're spending on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess the dollar value, making sure that we get the most value for the dollar we spend ... What was the cost of this secondhand generator?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent,

Further Return To Question 288-13(3): Replacement Generator For Iqaluit

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's above the credit limit on my credit card so I couldn't put it on that to get the warranty that you can sometimes get for 30 days. The total cost for replacing the generator, Mr. Speaker, is estimated to be at around \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Whew!!

HON. CHARLES DENT:

This will not, by the way, affect rates for Iqaluit customers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Page 546

Question 289-13(3): Responsibility For Maintenance Of NWT Highways

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier and it's in relation to the document that the Minister of Transportation referred to today in his Minister's statement. I think there are some very good points in this six-point strategy. A lot of it requires the cooperation of the federal government for input. It states, for example on the highway program, it requires the cooperation of other stakeholders, but certainly the federal government is the principal one because they are the one who will presumably provide the dollars.

One of the areas of concern I have is, for example, the Mackenzie Highway is being used right now by a lot of the trucking firms shipping materials to the potential new mine sites that will be developed here. Hence, there is a lot of usage and a lot of wear and tear on our highways. The federal government is the one that's going to be the beneficiary of those mines, from a royalty factor, to the tune of around 14 per cent of every dollar produced. If we get one or two mines going, that could contribute in excess of \$100 million a year. However, we, as a territorial government, are

paying for the wear and tear on our highways. I wonder if the Premier could tell us if he will bring this to the attention of the federal Minister and also have the Minister of Transportation discuss it with the Minister of Transportation on the federal side.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 289-13(3): Responsibility For Maintenance Of NWT Highways

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my understanding that we have a good working relationship with the federal government, between the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Transportation. I'll make sure that the Minister of Transportation raises your concern when he next meets with his counterpart, and I will also raise that concern as a whole strategy or part of the strategy of developing the northern accord. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 289-13(3): Responsibility For Maintenance Of NWT Highways

MR. OOTES:

Thank you. At one time, the federal government had a roads-to-resources policy. Could the Minister tell me if that is still in existence or if that is no longer in existence, because it involved programs such as new highway construction and development of the Mackenzie Highway?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 289-13(3): Responsibility For Maintenance Of NWT Highways

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government also has a transportation strategy in place and is being updated now through the Minister of Transportation.

I'm sure that he will share it with the Members once he has it updated to reflect this new government's

direction. I also understand that there was a strategy from the federal government; roads to resources. I'm sure Mr. Ootes would know about that. That's way before my time.

--- Laughter

I'm sure we could look into that, as well. But I've heard about that from old-timers in the North, so I will take a look at that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 289-13(3):
Responsibility For Maintenance Of NWT Highways

MR. OOTES:

I would like to carry on with a question, but let me just preamble that with a short statement, if I may. There was a program called 'hire north,' which was extremely successful and it worked from Fort Simpson up towards Wrigley. That program contributed tremendously to the employment. I guess my question to the Minister would be, how old does he think I am.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 289-13(3): Responsibility For Maintenance Of NWT Highways

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know for sure that he's older than myself. I can vaguely remember the work north, was it called?

--- Interjection

HON. DON MORIN:

Hire north? It was called 'work north' first, when the late Rudy Steiner first ran it in Hay River, then it went to 'hire north.' That was an excellent program. We do have more heavy equipment operators trained, per capita, than any other place in Canada, I believe. Hopefully that will start to pay off with mining development now. Any opportunity that we do have to extend the Mackenzie Valley Highway up to Tuktoyaktuk, that would be the proper approach to

use; use northerners to build it, do training programs and try to get the best bang for the dollar. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. 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. Mr. O'Brien.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Report On Bills 7, 10 And 12

MR. O'BRIEN:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bills 7, 10 and 12, and wish to report that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, and Bill

Page 547

12, Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, are now ready for Committee of the Whole. Further, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 10, Budget Measures Implementation Act, 1996-97, is now ready for Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the following document: Tabled Document 52-13(3), Nunavut Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement Interim Implementation Measures, Article 24, NFA.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. I also wish to table Tabled Document 53-13(3), Report of the Auditor General of Canada that deals with other matters arising from the audit of the accounts and financial statements of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the year ended March 31, 1995.

Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 14: Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act, No. 3

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, May 24, 1996, I will move that Bill 14, Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 3, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97; Committee Report 1-13(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 2-13(3), Standing Committee on Infrastructure Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 3-13(3), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; Committee Report 4-13(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates; and, Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation, with Mr. Steen in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will call the committee to order. Perhaps someone could give me some indication as to how you wish to proceed. Mr. Ootes. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will continue the departmental review of Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97. We were doing the Department of Justice with Mr. Ng. We would like to continue with that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Bill 11: Appropriation Act, 1996-97 Department Of Justice

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Very well. If the committee concurs, we'll take a short break while we organize the witnesses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We'll take a five-minute recess.

--- SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee to order again. Yesterday, we left off on the committee's comments on the department. I will now invite the Minister to bring in witnesses, if he likes. Mr. Ng, would you like to bring in witnesses?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee concur?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would ask the Minister to introduce his witnesses, please.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my immediate left is Don Cooper, deputy minister; to my right, Louise Dundas Matthews, director of financial management services; and, to the far right, Nora Sanders, assistant deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Welcome to the committee. I now open the floor to general comments. Mr. Enuaraq.

General Comments

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday, when you first started with your department, you had opening remarks with regard to the Department of Justice. The Minister indicated that in June, they will have 24 special constables going to Regina. I wonder if the bylaw officers are included from the Baffin region. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mr. Ng.

Page 548

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, all 24 of those people are by-law officers. I don't know if I have the breakdown. Sorry. The final list hasn't been done yet as to where they are going to be coming from, but they are by-law officers for upgrade training.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It indicates in the policy for anyone who is going to be incarcerated, they can no longer be in jail for more than 90 days in the community. Then there are matters where people who are going to get arrested are arrested on the weekend and are able to get out in the week. When this happens in the community, it becomes very expensive. I wonder if this type of thing has been considered. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, could I ask the honourable Member to repeat his question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Enuaraq, could you repeat the question?

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to say that under the Criminal Code of Canada if the accused is given not less than 90 days for their sentence, it can be called an intermittent sentence. When the intermittent sentence is served in the community, for example, on the weekends only, the cost of the sentence can be very expensive and tiring in small communities. I was asking the Minister if he has looked into this matter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, we have no say in what the judge sentences people. We try to work within the parameters of the system we are allowed. We would treat people in smaller communities who have intermittent sentences, no differently than those who are in larger centres; given that, we recognize it is a higher-cost form of incarceration as it stands now. That is one of the issues we are looking at through the community justice initiative for the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister also indicated yesterday that the correctional facilities are full to their capacity and he also indicated that the Iqaluit Baffin correctional centre is also very full ... (English not provided)

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

translation.

(English not provided) ... no

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister indicated that a lot of the correctional facilities are overcrowded and there have to be some additions made to them. I am wondering if the Minister can indicate that, instead of making correctional facilities bigger, have they considered if it would be better to make the correctional facility smaller instead? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The proposed capital estimates is not for expanding any of the correctional facilities in existence, but to upgrade them and bring them up to an acceptable level. In some cases, particularly in the Baffin situation, it was made as a minimum secure facility and over time, it has progressed where they are holding more medium to high-risk offenders in a minimum facility that wasn't designed to hold those types of offenders on a short-term basis. It is to rectify some of those deficiencies that are there. We don't intend to make any of these facilities smaller because of the demand and the overcrowding that we have now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am also concerned about legal aid. We do get support through legal aid. It is a very slow process in the smaller communities, especially if a person can't afford a lawyer. I am asking if we can get more support through legal aid so that it could go faster. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Legal aid is provided through the Legal Services Board. They try to provide the most effective program, given the resources they are given from our department. We recognize there is a higher demand because of increased caseloads throughout the Northwest Territories and it is an issue

that the Legal Services Board will deal with on an ongoing basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the jobs that are available for legal aid ... Regarding the Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik in Iqaluit and Pond Inlet, their jobs are getting larger and larger all the time. They are getting cut back as well. Their jobs are getting larger and I would like to ask, especially in Iqaluit, if you are going to be giving them more funding. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in this budget, generally speaking, there has been a 50 per cent reduction to the Legal Services Board and they have passed on that reduction in the contributions to regional legal aid clinics. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lastly, in the Baffin region, the coroners haven't had a workshop for a long time. They do have a very difficult job and they have to be updated from time to time. I would like to see them have more workshops for the coroners.

Page 549

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department was fortunate in visiting the targets, in recognizing that the social envelope partners had a tougher time in trying to reach their targets. We were given some additional funding back for the current fiscal year. Of that, \$450,000 was put back into the coroners' program to provide the training and to deal

with the increased caseloads in that area, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Minister is with regard to community justice committees. How many are there with regard to contribution agreements that you do have? How many justice committees do you have established to date and which communities are they in?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, I have a comprehensive list that I can distribute, versus reading it out, because we have lots. We have approximately 50 to 60 contribution agreements, from what I have before me today.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the contribution agreements, I have been hearing some complaints, especially from my region, about the length of time it takes for resources to be given to the committees to operate. The intention is good to have committees to assist judges in sentencing and things like that, but it seems that, in order for them to operate, they are always borrowing money from the band councils or other areas to continue to operate as a committee.

The other problem is when you sentence someone to an on-the-land program, they don't have the resources in place to assist those people. There was a case in Ontario where an individual was banished to an island, but there was some question of being able to guarantee his safety and who is responsible if something were to happen to him. How have you assisted communities in getting their resources and what obligation do they have to the individual they may sentence?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with respect to the timing of payments, if it has been a problem in the past, I am not aware of it. However, if he is speaking about this current fiscal year, there hasn't been any significant progress made because the budget hasn't been approved yet. We have given out some preliminary payments to some organizations. In the future, the way the funding for community justice committees and projects would be financed is, as we go towards community wellness and community empowerment, more of these things will be block funded to the local agencies for direct distribution. So we would get around that problem of having to report and request to have payments made on the contracts, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

With regard to the question of contributions, are there resources to assist the justice committees to have the resources in case they have to send someone out on the land, for the cost of setting up camp; food, gas, et cetera. Is that part of the contribution agreement or is that separate funding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under the current funding for community justice committees' programs and projects that we have, whether it is for fine options programs, conferences, funding diversion camps or day camps, to develop self-esteem programs or justice committees, they are all eligible under this program now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other question I have is with regard to camp facilities. This year, I believe two facilities are going to be established in Fort

Resolution and Aklavik. Are those still proceeding and what is the possibility of looking at alternative camps in other communities in other areas?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee Members know the Standing Committee on Social Programs recommended that we look at this issue with the overall community justice initiative that we're putting together now for presentation, hopefully in June. As it stands now, there are no concrete plans to go forward one way or the other. It's looking at some of the alternatives we have to deal with the community-based justice initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Before you proceed, Mr. Krutko, I would just like to remind Members that we are on general comments at this point, and if you have questions specific to an activity, at that point would be the appropriate time to question the Minister. If you could keep your comments or questions in a general nature, it would help to speed things along. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I would like some clarification of the Minister's statement. I believe that we've passed appropriation funding for the Aklavik project and the project for Fort Resolution. Are you saying that those things have been taken out since the passing of those appropriation bills?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was noted in my opening comments that, in June of 1995, supplementary funding was approved by the Legislative Assembly for the construction of community correctional centres. At that time, operations and maintenance funding wasn't provided for those facilities. As you will recall, when the last Justice Minister went before the Social Programs committee and since I've taken over, we haven't finalized the

method in which we're going to deliver on these community correction facilities with the funding that was put in place last year, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I have Mr. O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a point of clarification. Talking about the justice camps and alternative ways of dealing with offenders who normally would go, for example, to the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. The funding that's available; are we referring to the funding that would pay to set up these outpost camps where low to medium-risk offenders would go out on the land as opposed to going to YCC?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the community correctional centres were just that; they were correctional centres for minimum-security-type offenders who would have been able to stay within their communities. In the past government, there was substantive effort to try to place emphasis on that type of programming; however, as I indicated earlier, although some capital dollars were identified, there were no operations or maintenance funding identified and that lead to a dilemma for the department in how they would carry out this program given their limited resources. As I indicated before, that issue hasn't been resolved to date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You've indicated, Mr. Minister, that the issue is not resolved. Has there been a plan put in place for Nunavut and what kinds of dollars are allocated for the eastern area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, there currently is no plan put in place for the Nunavut area. What capital dollars have been allocated are in the main estimates before you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. O'Brien.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When does the Minister expect to have a plan so it can be reviewed here in the House? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with respect to the community-based justice initiative, we're trying to finalize a plan, as I indicated earlier, for early June. The Social Programs committee is interested in looking at that as well. At that time, we may be able to lay out some of the direction we're heading, in trying to keep a lot of our offenders within their own communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I have Mr. Barnabas next. General comments.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I asked this question before to the past Minister of Justice. The justices of the peace have not had training or workshops for a long time. This was going to be looked into in the past government. Has this gone ahead? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we're currently considering the appointment of a sixth judge who will be responsible for training of justices of the peace. In the interim, Chief Justice Halifax has been developing an ad hoc training program, utilizing court staff and members of the Bar to conduct training. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The new justice of the peace became a justice of the peace last year and he is unilingual. They would have to know about the justice system. Has this been translated or what is happening there? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department is cognizant of this fact that there is a lack of translated materials for justices of the peace. It's a matter of the timing of getting it done and the resources to get it done. As recently as January of 1996, we have conducted a JP training session. However, that doesn't address the need of the translated materials, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Ningark, general comments.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when we talk about reductions within the systems of this government, one item I was very concerned about, as well as the people of my area - I think most MLAs were also concerned, especially those who represent small communities across the Territories -- is policing. Mr. Chairman, having the presence of a law enforcement officer in a community is very, very, very important. There are many cases whereby, in a small community such as Pelly and other small communities, when the RCMP officer is on leave and there is no one replacing that person, petty crime increases, perhaps the use of drugs increases, the safety of the elders, women and children are at risk. When I talk to people in my area of Pelly, Gjoa and Taloyoak, the RCMP officer is not only in the community to lay charges when a crime takes place, he is also there to help the people in the area of crime prevention.

I've noticed in the small communities where there is an RCMP officer or two, the RCMP officer is involved in sports, teaching the kids how to play hockey. So I

was very pleased that, in his opening remarks, the honourable Minister indicated that there will be no reduction of RCMP policing in the small communities, either in this case or earlier when we met with the Minister of Justice at the time, Mr. Kakfwi. We told him over and over again, in the event that we make some reductions in this area, to keep in mind that having a

Page 551

police officer, especially in the small communities, is very, very important.

In the second area of community justice, I am a proponent of the community justice system. The community justice system, Mr. Chairman, we have talked about during the last five years now. We know there is a movement in this area, but I think the movement is much too slow. The people in the Eastern Arctic area know that the government is planning to empower the communities to give more responsibility to the communities in the area of justice. The ... (inaudible) ... program is perhaps equally important, giving the community some responsibilities in the justice system.

I am not saying, Mr. Chairman, that we should give the full responsibility of the justice system to a small community. Mr. Chairman, the western justice system is also important, but I think the community justice system is very, very, very important. I think we would begin to see those who commit petty crime, such as break and entry, in a community, would decrease if the community justice system was to take place in a community. I'll tell you why, Mr. Chairman. In our area, elders are a very important part of the society. Elders are respected members of society, elders are very close to their community well-being, elders are very concerned about young people. To have that closeness, knowing the traditional justice system that used to work for those people who broke whatever laws the community had, if it was not serious, I think in this case we would begin to realize that repeat offenders would decrease. I have talked to people in Pelly many times. When I have visited Gjoa Haven, I have talked to people.

In January of 1996, when I was in Gjoa Haven, I was in a truck and the local community radio station was playing. There was a young man from our community talking on the radio. He was not talking directly to me, but I'm sure he knew I was in the community. He indicated through the radio to the people of Gjoa Haven that the community justice system would best

apply when an on-the-land program was to take place. He has a very brilliant idea, Mr. Chairman. He indicated that perhaps those people who have broken the law by a lesser crime, were to be brought inland -- Gjoa Haven is on an island -- during freeze-up and there would be no way of coming back right away without a supervisor; some respected community member, perhaps. They would go out on the land, do some fishing or hunting. Those who would otherwise be incarcerated, would be used for community purposes. The meat would be given to the elders, Mr. Chairman. The meat would be given to the handicapped and the recipients of social assistance. At the same time, while on the land, they would be learning how to hunt and how to provide for their family. At the same time, they would be learning about their culture which they have missed for so many years, from the elders or someone who is qualified to teach that.

By the same token, Mr. Chairman, they would be close to the land and close to the Creator of the land and they would be in harmony with nature. At the same time, their mind would begin to clear. At the same time, their health would begin to get better. At the same time, they would begin to enjoy the real lifestyle which they have missed for so many years. Once they have come back to the community they would want to go back to the land.

It would take time, but I think we should move much faster than we have been moving in recent years, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps during the activity-by-activity review, I will be asking questions. That is all for the time being. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Briefly to respond to the honourable Member with respect to his comments on a community-based justice system, we're fully supportive of that. That's a direction we want to go. He mentioned sending people out on the land to help the community by harvesting on behalf of the community. I think that all falls part and parcel into the community empowerment and wellness initiatives that this whole government is trying to promote. I wouldn't have any arguments on that matter with him.

I think the issue he had raised on the value of RCMP officers, I think we all recognize that; particularly in the

smaller communities. There is a potential future problem there, in discussion with some of the senior RCMP officials with respect to their concern about the safety of their members. For single-detachment members, it's no secret that they've mentioned in the past about the possibility of having to look at closing down some of these single-member detachments because of the lack of support mechanisms for their members who are there. There is concern for their safety.

I think one of the things which is a positive step that the Department of Justice and other departments such as MACA have been working on, as I indicated in my opening statement, is the community constable training initiatives; trying to upgrade some of the by-law officer positions we have; trying to develop some of the aboriginal constable components that we have available to us; to try to provide some support to the RCMP members who are in these communities is critical to the overall policing system that we have in place. So I just wanted to point that out to the honourable Member, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, talking about the outpost camps, we have introduced a made-in-the-North approach to alter incarceration that is working, yet we are causing these camps to have to shut their doors and close down. I am talking about the outpost camps for young offenders. There is one in my riding, Mr. Speaker. It is the only outpost camp that is self-supporting in all of Nunavut. The problem seems to be that the occupancy rate is low. Statistics have proven that the young offenders who go to these camps are not repeat offenders. It is something like 10 per cent, whereas in the normal system it is a lot higher. So this made-in-the-North approach is working, yet we seem to be cutting the per them amounts for these camps, forcing these camps to close. Even though there are no people or young offenders staying at the camp, they still have to pay the insurance costs, the O and M to retain the building, at cetera. I know the Minister is just new

Page 552

in the portfolio and I hope he will review this, It is a very serious matter.

In my region, Mr. Chairman, there are three elderly gentlemen running this camp. They have their families there. They also built an alternate home for maintaining a traditional way of life at the camp. It has proven to be very successful. They are the envy of the people in the Baffin. Yet, because of a lack of the occupancy and having this camp go to a per them rate, they may not be able to operate because the costs will be too much. I would implore the Minister to review this situation to try to have the judicial system in the region put more people in the young offenders' camps so the occupancy rate could go up and the per them rate which is being offered, which is very low, may help them be self-sufficient. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I would like to thank the honourable Member for his concerns. With respect to the placements of whether they are in open or closed custody, that isn't for us to decide. The courts determine that. In the honourable Member's riding, he is referring to an open-custody facility. Although we recognize the value there, we can't continue to core fund these facilities. We are moving towards a per them payment that would recognize the amount of service that is delivered. We are also looking at opening up some of these facilities for adults as well, to try to increase some of the usage. If there are no young offenders in that type of a situation, the adults could be placed in there, provided we could arrange for that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, because I understand the situation with the funding and I appreciate what the Minister has said, what are we going to put in place to make sure that we can refer adults to these camps? The camps weren't set up for adults, so that might entail other things. Based on the per them rate, the only way for these camps to be successful is to have more people staying at the camps. One of the things that made the camp successful is that there would only be a few offenders there and the elders had an opportunity to spend

more time with these offenders. That helped them change and find the error of their ways. It is a contradiction, Mr. Chairman. In one way, we want to increase the occupancy by referral, but if we put adults or older teenagers in these camps, it would be very difficult for the elders to work with these offenders. I wonder what type of review the Minister has in mind to make sure that the teaching will get through. As we all know, if you have seven or eight kids and only three people there, it is very difficult to give them the support they need. That is what made this program work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that -- if I am incorrect, please correct me -- that facility can only take three clients at a time, whether it is a young offender or an adult. I don't know where his number of 11 people is coming from. Maybe he can clarify that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

That was my point. Because you are only allowed to have three, based on the per them amount that is going to be offered, it isn't cost efficient for these people to be running the camp. If you increase the number somehow and permit them to take seven or eight, then they would have enough money to run these camps because you have the per them rate. Then they wouldn't be able to do the service they were expected to do because the numbers are higher. So that was my point. Although we have said we are going to go to a per them rate because we can't fund them, it isn't feasible, Mr. Chairman, as the Minister has just pointed out.

Here we have a home-grown, in-the-North approach that is working. It is lowering the incarceration rate and repeat offenders. That is the whole point, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There was no question. Do you want to respond, Mr. Minister?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the past, this contractor has provided an excellent service to the department. We have been renegotiating a new arrangement with them as it stands now and we will continue to work with them to try to reach a suitable arrangement that won't jeopardize their operation while providing a realistic service to the department, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Mr. Chairman, the Minister is correct that the people who are running this camp have had an exemplary working relationship with the judiciary in our region. The staff and the people in the bureaucracy know that. Would the Minister be able to review it again and get back to me? That is a major concern in our region. Like I said, it is the only self-supporting outpost camp in all of Nunavut. It is based on the rate they were getting before. Because of the occupancy, even if they had the three people there, the rate would be too low for them to operate efficiently and support these people. They have even built an alternate house. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will commit to reviewing the situation and advising the Member on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments? We have Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a few general questions. Then I have a general comment as well. Are the justice committees involved at the summary conviction level and at the indictable offence level?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am told that, generally speaking, it is the less severe types of cases. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my second question and following comment is in relation to the ability for peace officers to make decisions on the spot. I am told that RCMP officers are not allowed to decide on their own whether to lay charges or not. That is entirely in the hands of the prosecutor. I would like to have clarification on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the RCMP have the authority to decide whether or not there are reasonable grounds to lay a charge. They don't have to consult with the prosecution. Although in special circumstances, that may be part of the process but, generally speaking, no.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would then suggest that some form of policy should be in place to encourage them to use better discretion. I refer particularly to a case recently in Tuktoyaktuk where one person was charged with aggravated assault for stabbing another person. The person who did the stabbing charged the other fellow with hitting him with a bottle and breaking the bottle over his head. Both cases went to court. One went to judge and jury. I believe the jury found him not guilty. I am sure both of them are wondering what ever happened there. They were both found not guilty. I believe between the two of them, they are sure that something happened. If the RCMP were allowed to use discretion as far as laying charges, maybe there wouldn't have been any charges at all. In

the end, these two people shook hands in court. This cost the taxpayer a lot of money to fly those judges and those lawyers back and forth. In the end, nothing came of it. Those people went home happily.

This is a good indication that our system is not really all that effective. I dare say from the point of view of lawyers, it is very effective. It supplies a good living. From the point of view of the taxpayer, it is costing us a lot of money and we have to find a better system whereby the RCMP who are involved would have the ability to make judgements there and have some kind of political back-up that these decisions are going to stick. This would solve a lot of our costs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we all know, not all charges that are laid and not all prosecutions are successful. I can't comment on the individual case that Mr. Steen is alluding to. You never know what the outcome of a court decision will be and that is why we have it so that the impartiality of the circumstances that are presented by the prosecution and the defence are laid out and the jury or judge makes their decision based on those facts. There are some discretionary decisions. The RCMP can lay charges,

but if the Crown prosecutors feel the charge may not stick or the probability of being successful might not be that great, then they can decide to drop the case. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, I don't bring these things up lightly. I have been a justice of the peace for 15 years. I know there were many cases in front of me in my court. The RCMP would have been just as happy if it had never come to court. On the advice or the authority of the prosecutor, they did go to court. I believe that if we look back in our records of the Territories, you will find that years back when the RCMP had more authority, there was much less crime and fewer repeat offenders. There was more success in the outcome of the court cases. That is my own opinion. I tend to support that opinion very strongly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, do you wish to respond?
That was a point.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to acknowledge the honourable Member's comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. If there are other Members who have not spoken yet, please indicate.
Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the camp to be established in Aklavik; has that been put off indefinitely?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the community correctional facility, that has been put on hold until the community justice initiative comes forward and we try to determine where the best use of those dollars could be, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So you are saying the money is still in the budget, but that project has been postponed? Are the resources still in the budget?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in my opening comments, the money that was approved last year has been carried forward. It is before you today in the main estimates. It is approximately \$1.074 million for those new projects. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

We are going to be here until the first week of June, so don't rush it. Regarding the question of the facilities, your predecessor did give me some assurances that this project was going forward. I find it confusing that you, as the new Minister, have made the decision on your own or

Page 554

did you receive direction from the previous Minister on exactly what has happened in that case? I did have assurance that this project was going forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is in line with the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Social Programs not to proceed with this project until the community justice plan came forward for review. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. I have Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Basically, the direction that you're going is based on the direction of the Social Programs committee, yet the dollars are still within the budget. Have there been any contribution agreements made with the community of Aklavik as to where this stands, or what correspondence has taken place? Are there any agreements in place for this project? This has been in the works for several years and, at this stage, it seems that it's kind of ironic that your predecessor supports the initiative, yet the Social Programs committee gave you direction that they didn't have a problem with the first round but now it seems that it's coming back to the budget and the resources are still there to carry out this project. I find it kind of confusing. Was this a personal decision?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated earlier on this matter, the capital money was approved but no operations and maintenance money was approved for these projects. Because of that, the department, within their current financial spending, didn't have the access to additional resources to operate these facilities if they were to be established. That was the reason they've been put on hold. There has been no contractual agreements made on these facilities with any organization, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$1.074 million is still on the books, yet your argument is that you don't have the resources to build these facilities. You have an increase of 449 per cent with regard to your capital projects for corrections. It sounds like a very large increase with regard to building infrastructure, yet that seems to be the only thing you seem to be taking a run at.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I'll try again. The money was brought forward from last year because it wasn't spent last year. That was for the construction of the facilities, the capital end of it. There is no money for the operating end of establishing those community-based correctional facilities. As such, the Department of Justice can't go forward with constructing them at this time without that in place, because you can't

build any facility and not have any money to operate it, thus have a facility sitting empty. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you. I find it kind of ironic that you're saying it won't be filled. Probably 60 or 70 per cent of the people in YCC are from the Mackenzie Delta area.

We are also sending our young offenders as far away as Iqaluit. Yet you say you won't be able to fill these facilities. If you're talking about bringing justice closer to the communities so people can deal with their problems, yet it's okay to pay the cost of transporting these people half-way around the country, from one end of the Territories to the other. We're probably the only region in the Territories which does not have a facility. For the number of people we have incarcerated, we're giving the city of Yellowknife an economic benefit due to having these people in their facilities here because of the spin-offs of the costs to run these facilities in the South Slave, Yellowknife, Iqaluit and other areas like that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I agree, there are a lot of people from the Mackenzie Delta at YCC, just like there are from the Kitikmeot area, as well, which also doesn't have any type of correctional facility, nor does the Keewatin have any type of correctional facility. Regardless of which area has or doesn't have facilities, the fact remains that if these facilities were to be built there are no additional dollars for operating them. No matter what you're spending on travel to get the clientele to the facility, no matter what you're paying now for the correctional workers, the additional correctional workers who would be required for these facilities is where the bulk of the problem is, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a small comment to make to support Mr. Picco's earlier statement. In the Baffin region, we know of two individuals who have committed an offence and who are in young offenders' outpost camps in Pond Inlet and Iqaluit. I don't know whether their contracts will be continued. For the last two years, they have had contract problems for maintenance of these facilities. The current contract has been revised from the previous formula and they now have to fill out the contract for the work done, rather than for per them rates. They said that Justice would set up proposals for contracts that would be much simpler than the

previous formula used. They would require more clients to fill those facilities so they can operate those facilities. Maybe the Minister can review the contract for Adamie in Iqaluit, as well as Elijah Erkloo in Pond Inlet. We're operating young offenders' camps to see what kinds of contracts can be arranged. The local people could assist the Inuit camp operators who operate young offenders facilities. Since they were supposed to be aboriginal camp operators, what is the problem on the contract that was supposed to be formulated for young offenders' camps? What are they doing now that their contract is no longer in effect?

Page 555

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with respect to Mr. Elijah Erkloo, he decided not to sign a new contract based on a per them basis. In that respect, we will be looking for another contractor. With respect to the Tungait contract, that was renegotiated successfully under the new per them funding. I believe that was the one Mr. Picco was speaking on, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on some of the comments we're heard here this afternoon, I don't know if this is appropriate or not, but ... As a Member of the Social Programs committee, when we went through these business plans, I would like to assure everyone here there were no personal positions put forward. It was based on information given to us that we made these decisions. Hopefully, at the end of the day, everything will fall out that it was a decision that we had to make at the time.

I had another comment in the area of youth justice. Knowing that the Minister is going to be looking at bringing forward some plans on community wellness and community corrections, is there anything in there to deal with the youth in the system today? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with respect to some of the alternatives and some of the diversion issues, yes, youth would be a part of that planning process, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister is with regard to funding for legal aid. I understand, from the Minister's statement, that that is decided by the Legal Services Board. I wonder if the Minister still has the authority to rule the Legal Services Board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, no, there is a Legal Services Act. It's an independent board and we have a representative on it because of our funding. As it stands now, they are an autonomous board that makes their decisions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. General comments. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question is with regard to a concern I have where I understand that my communities of Holman Island and Paulatuk no longer have legal aid services. I'm wondering how the Minister expects these communities to be serviced from the legal aid system if they don't have a representative in a community. I believe at one point in time each community had half a position.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my understanding, all individuals throughout the

Territories have access to legal aid. The honourable Member may be referring to court workers, I'm not particularly sure if that's the issue or not, but legal aid covers the whole Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, I don't understand the difference between a court worker and legal aid. Isn't that the same person?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Legal aid is the financial reimbursement to individuals who would have to hire a lawyer to represent them, whether it's a civil or a criminal matter. A court worker would provide some of the support services and get some of the information ready in trying to assist the individual to access legal aid through the application. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, I guess I am referring to the court worker, where a court worker assists the client with legal aid. That, apparently, is no longer available. I was wondering how the people in those communities would be served.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, the regional clinics determine where the court workers go in the communities, based on what they feel is the highest demand and obviously within the fiscal parameters they operate under. I think in the instance where a community wouldn't have a court worker, that the social service worker would assist that individual to put forward the application for legal aid and coordinate that matter on behalf of the client. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. General comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Detail.

Line By Line

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

We are reviewing Justice, page 6-8, directorate, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.296 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Page 556

Law Enforcement

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Law enforcement, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$28.183 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

I want to know who is going to pick up the costs of sending these people to Winnipeg with regard to the by-law officers. It has been stated in your comments over the last couple of days about sending them to Regina for training. What's the cost of that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's Regina, not Winnipeg. It's sponsored through Municipal and Community Affairs and the RCMP. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Law enforcement. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Could you give me the costs? Since it's coming from the RCMP and since we're paying for that, what are the costs of that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Minister of Justice, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, our Department of Justice isn't paying anything on this, it's Municipal and Community Affairs that is paying the cost of the training and the transportation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Law enforcement, total operations and maintenance, \$28.183 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

With regard to the program that was established in Fort Good Hope with special constables, is that program still available to other communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The program is in Fort Good Hope and Coral Harbour currently. There is an evaluation being done on the program. Although we don't have specific dollars for that, it is something that we are looking at in trying to expand that program to other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, \$28.183 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Legal Services Board

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. On page 6-10, Legal Services Board, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$5.102 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the question I raised a couple of days ago in the House with regard to the way money has been allocated and distributed -- based on need or based on the number of applicants for the delivery of services -- and the numbers that I put forward with regard to the Mackenzie Delta -- it's somewhere in the range of \$6,000 plus versus other areas; it is a lot smaller: Is there any way that you, as the Minister, can have input into how those monies are allocated to be fair to the regions? Shouldn't there be some sort of per capita distribution versus the way it's presently being allocated, with regard to the numbers of users of the service?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After the honourable Member brought it up, I checked back into the matter, and there had already been a request made by myself to the legal services board to take a look at this matter. They are meeting this weekend, and it is on their agenda to take a look at the fairness and equity of the distribution of their Legal Services Board dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, \$5.102 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Lawyer Support Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

On the next page, and we are dealing with Justice, 1996-97 main estimates, lawyer support services, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$2.229 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Registries And Court Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Flip the page over. Registries and court services, operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance, \$9.424 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Community Justice And Corrections

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Community justice and corrections, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$21.695 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the community justice committees, could you tell me how much money has been allocated with regard to the 50 to 60 contribution agreements you said you have? What is the cost of maintaining all those agreements?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

Page 557

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just trying to get clarification if the honourable Member is referring to the administrative component to oversee the contracts or if he's actually referring to components within the contributions? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Clarification, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was with regard to the cost of the number of contributions you have out there. You have somewhere from 50 to 60 contribution agreements with community justice

committees. What is the cost to operate these justice committees?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know the cost of operating the committees. I can say that the contribution amounts in 1995-96 were \$918,000, distributed throughout the Northwest Territories for these agreements, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Community justice and corrections. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

So you are saying that there is \$918,000 to run 50 to 60 contribution agreements. Do you think that's a little low to do justice to such a program; for the communities trying to take on the program of empowering themselves, having more say with regard to sentences, how individuals will be dealt with in their communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Sorry; was there a question, or is that a statement?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

The question was, doesn't that seem a little low for that many contribution agreements in order to do an adequate job within those communities, especially when you're spending in the range of \$14 million for salaries and wages? Yet, for grants and contributions, you have about \$1.3 million, which doesn't seem to be that high a rate, especially for the communities that have taken on this responsibility. It seems like there are just never enough resources in that portfolio to do justice to the people in the communities who are making an effort to sit on these committees, and also to give them the authority, when they do make decisions, to have the resources to carry them out.

You do spend a lot of money, especially with regard to the top end which is salaries and wages, and also with regard to O and M. Yet, when it comes to grants and contributions, it seems like there is...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Within this activity, the salaries and wages include all the salaries and wages of the correctional institute employees, which is a total of \$19 million of the total operations and maintenance portion of \$21 million, Mr. Chairman.

With respect to whether or not it's perceived as being low, I would generally say that, similar to all other programs, the funding would have to be substantiated. If there are additional needs that are justified, then it will be an issue that will have to be addressed when it comes to that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Community justice and corrections. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

The cost to fund day camps and things like that, does that come out of your O and M costs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Minister of Justice, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it's in this activity summary under other O and M. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. and corrections. Mr. Krutko.

Community justice

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could you tell me the cost of running these day camps and what not, since it's coming out of O and M out of the \$5 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a combination of different funding sources. With respect to some of the day camps, there is funding within community justice committees' programs and projects, as I indicated earlier, of that total of approximately \$900,000. They are broken out into different categories.

But there is also, with respect to what the Member may be referring to, the open-custody and the custodial -placement cement camps; the other O and M expenditure of which there is \$1.8 million. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. We have Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Ootes for this page. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to know what is the purpose of incarcerating people. What purpose does it play?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There would be a court-imposed sentence for the protection of society. That would be the reason for incarcerating individuals. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, perhaps I should have been more precise. Is it for the purpose of punishing people or to attempt to have them finish their sentence as a better person and perhaps not recommit a crime?

Page 558

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's not so much for punishment of the individuals. Primarily, we're trying to instigate some rehabilitation of the individuals and also for the deterrence of other individuals who may be in that same type of situation. And, of course, as I indicated earlier, for the protection of society as a whole. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I missed part of that. Did the Minister indicate that one of the purposes is to rehabilitate inmates?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Community justice and corrections. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How is that rehabilitation done? Are there programs that are put on by the corrections people?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, generally we provide some basic upgrading, educational programs, some counselling programs, psychologists, there are some treatment programs that we can access when available, and there are also some work programs to try to provide some skills upgrading and training. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. and corrections. Mr. Erasmus.

Community justice

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are quite general and they don't really indicate where each of those things occur. I assume that all of these things happen at each of our correctional centres.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have information on the Yellowknife Correctional Centre, which has the most extensive programs, but I'd be willing to provide a list to the Members on what programs are available at what institution. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the Minister's statement yesterday, he indicated that our correctional facilities across the Territories are suffering from serious overcrowding. How serious is this overcrowding, centre by centre?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mr. Erasmus, you had further questions? Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I don't have the specifics right here. I can provide that information to the honourable Member, unless he wants to wait while I fumble through the briefing notes here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Would it be beneficial to take a break and let you find the information? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the Minister's staff could find the numbers. In the meantime, how does the overcrowding affect programs that are available for rehabilitation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Generally, Mr. Chairman, it restricts the amount of programs that can be run at any given time because of the fact that program space is taken up by dormitory space because of the overcrowding. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it safe to say then, if our correctional facilities are seriously overcrowded then this seriously affects our rehabilitation capabilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman, because of the fact that you wouldn't be able to provide all the programming for all of the clientele who would desire it. You would have to stage it and coordinate those programming spaces. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the Minister have available the effects of intermittent sentencing; people who serve their jail terms on weekends? Is that expensive to do?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, no, we don't have those statistics here. Generally, as I indicated earlier, it is an expensive form of incarceration. Again, we have to provide that availability in small communities just like we do in the larger ones. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the serious overcrowding in our facilities is seriously affecting our rehabilitation efforts, and if intermittent sentencing is expensive, why is the Minister refusing to try electronic monitoring to keep some people out of those correctional facilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Erasmus, could you do away with the word "if." "If" is a hypothetical question; could you rephrase that without using the word "if"?

I,-

Page 559

MR. ERASMUS: It's not a hypothetical question, Mr. Chairman, because I am just going by what he told me.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister has indicated that serious overcrowding seriously affects rehabilitation. He has also said that intermittent sentences are expensive. In that case, then, I want to know why the Minister refuses to implement electronic monitoring to reduce the amount of people who are in our correctional facilities and perhaps to keep people away from doing intermittent sentences.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Because the honourable Member brought this up previously in the Assembly, we did some background work on the numbers and on which inmates could be eligible for electronic monitoring.

You have to take into consideration that wouldn't include inmates who are obviously serving sentences for violent offences. They wouldn't be inmates who were convicted for drug trafficking. Of course, the possibility of it working would only be in the larger communities which have existing correctional facilities where the possibility of using correctional staff to monitor the inmates could be utilized in order to reduce the possibility of additional staffing costs.

We found that, of the 35 inmates at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre, of those inmates who are from Yellowknife who could possibly be on electronic monitoring, 29 of those were serving sentences for violence, four were convicted for trafficking in narcotics, so there is only one person who would be eligible for electronic monitoring in the Yellowknife situation.

The situation of the 23 inmates at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, again, those from that community who would possibly be eligible for electronic monitoring, living in that community, 14 of those were serving sentences for violent offences, leaving 9 who could possibly be eligible for electronic monitoring.

In the Baffin Correctional Centre, there were no inmates who would have been eligible for electronic monitoring.

So it came down to the fact, Mr. Chairman, for the limited amount of inmates, it would be cost-prohibitive to establish this program for that.

Recognizing what the honourable Member says as far as the possibility of individuals on intermittent sentences being in that situation, the possibility of it working in Yellowknife increased slightly, but it still, to me, didn't justify going to the expense and the work of establishing this program at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng.

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for that information since he didn't seem to want to give it to me the other day and since there was not one word of that in the information that was provided to me from his staff, which was rather inadequate. Now that

I know that, I can think about it and let some other people ask some questions. Perhaps I will pursue it further. Like I said, I wanted to thank the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. I have Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The NWT has approximately 51 inmates incarcerated at Bowden, Alberta, and they are there because sentences are presumably more than two years less a day. I am wondering if the Minister could tell me who pays for that incarceration? Is that a federally-funded program or is it paid for out of territorial funds?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Any sentence of two years or more is a federal sentence and, as a result of that, the federal justice system kicks in, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ng, I think the question was two years less a day.

MR. OOTES:

Two years plus a day.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Oh. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Several years ago, the subject cropped up as to the possibility of repatriating those inmates to the North, and there were a number of reasons for that; one being that the Northern inmates are then put in with what is felt to be a lot of hardened criminals. Additionally, there is an argument to be made for the fact that if inmates are incarcerated here in the North, they are closer to their families and their homes. The effort to repatriate those inmates and to have an institution built here in the North was not pursued and wasn't followed up on. I am wondering if the Minister could tell us if that may be a possibility and if his department would look at that possibility?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The honourable Member is correct. In the past, there was the possibility of a federal institution being established in the North to try to address some of our needs and try to reduce some of the federal inmates going to southern institutions. But as it stands now, those discussions were withdrawn by the federal Justice department. I don't know exactly when, but I know it's not on the table as it stands now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Since it costs the federal government, no doubt, substantial sums of money for transportation, because those inmates would have to be escorted down to those institutions, I am just wondering if it would be feasible to look at the possibility of what was originally considered to add on to the institution here in Yellowknife and put in a maximum institution here. Since the federal government is paying for this program anyway, would they not consider the possibility of putting infrastructure here?

Page 560

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, for the record, I just wanted to clarify that it was not the Minister of Justice but the Solicitor General's Office of Canada that deals with correctional services.

I think Mr. Ootes probably has a valid point. However, I think there is significant financial pressure on the federal government, as well. It's something that I am certainly willing to take up, but as far as the substantiation for it and the economics of them putting in major capital dollars, that may be an issue that they might not view too favourably, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I can appreciate the Minister's comments that the federal government will not appreciate having to look at extra expenditures, but there may be situations where there is overcrowding in institutions. I understand that Bowden has 600 inmates and that's likely reaching maximum capacity there. I'm not sure at what other institutions we have inmates incarcerated across the country. The federal government also has to consider the cost of transportation. As I mentioned, in a lot of cases, it requires escorted transportation of inmates. I'm wondering if the Minister wouldn't entertain reopening discussions with the federal government to look at this possibility, if the feds are looking at expanding institutions or they're overcrowded. If they could put in a small addition to the Yellowknife Correctional Institute, the facilities are all there, then we could handle the inmates here.

AN HON. MEMBER:

Shame, shame.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the Solicitor General's office were looking at expanding some of the facilities to address some of their capacity levels, certainly I would be addressing the issue with the Solicitor General. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I have the honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when was the last review of the community justice system done and the role of the community justice specialist that we have in place in the communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there have not been any reviews done of the community justice specialist and the overall community justice system we have now. That's one of the things that we're looking at in this report that we're going to be providing, hopefully in June. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

In this report that we will be looking at in June, I would gather from your statement, Mr. Minister, that in reality we are looking at having some type of review on the community justice program as it is now and the specialists that we have in place in the communities. Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's more of a review of what we've done to date or the lack of what we've done to date, depending on how you want to perceive it as far as community justice programming goes. It will be trying to outline the direction in which we're trying to head in future years, to establish or make this program more successful in trying to keep more people in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng.

MR. PICCO:

So this will be an internal review, I would assume. Will this internal review be made available to the Members of this House?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, through the Social Programs committee, I would think it would be available to all Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one question for the Minister. Does the Minister have any idea how many people are currently incarcerated for non-payment of fines or very minor crimes?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I don't have that information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Would the Minister be able to get that information, especially to look at issues like community justice and diverting people out of the system? If we have any numbers at all of people in jail for non-payment of fines, can we afford to run a debtors' prison? Are there more constructive ways to make people pay their debt to society? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, we'll try to get that information for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to indicate that my comment after my questioning last time

about the information that the Minister had provided, I know it didn't come from him, it came from his staff. I didn't quite have the information I wanted, so I wanted to make it clear that I was thanking him for that new information.

If the department is not willing to look at electronic monitoring, how does the Minister purport to ease the overcrowding in our correctional centres?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think through the community justice initiative we're trying to establish and create diversional alternatives for individuals, instead of having to send them to our existing correctional facilities and trying to focus more on restorative types of programming by keeping them in the communities and having them work with community groups. It's not just so much as trying to take some of the pressure off the existing system, but not to add to it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I saw in the paper that a very authoritative person was quoted as saying that people are stacked like cordwood in the correctional centres. How long is this going to take to be effective?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's not an overnight solution. It's a way of doing things that has to be developed and nurtured, and it's more of a longerterm process. With respect to being stacked like cordwood or the overcapacity at our institutions, I recognize the problem. I don't have the solutions overnight to the problem. I know we don't have the capital dollars to continue to expand facilities or establish new facilities just to meet the demands. It's one of the major problems that our government has to deal with. All of us, as Assembly Members, I think it has been recognized, the stress and demand we're

creating on our government's fiscal resources. Justice is no different than Health and Social Services or Education because it's just the escalating clientele of the programs within our departments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering how old a facility the Yellowknife Correctional Centre is. How soon will it have to be replaced?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe it was built in the late 1960s. I can't tell you when it would have to be replaced. I know there have been dollars spent in upgrading it as required. The state of generally all the correctional facilities is not excellent, it's not good. I would say that they're adequate as they stand now, given our current demands on these facilities, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister indicated in his speech that his department was doing a plan on community justice and the new community correctional centres that are being proposed. I was just wondering when that framework or that plan would be available for the Social Programs committee to address.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we identified early June as having the report ready and that's the timetable we're working on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will the department be able to meet this timetable? Will it be the first week in June, the second week in June, or what does he mean by early June?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the original date was June 1st and we're on schedule for that date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Minister is with regard to the statistics on the number of individuals who you categorized as high risk, low risk and in between. Do you have statistics on those individuals who were sentenced to serve their time in YCC from the Mackenzie Delta?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have those but I don't have that information here. Maybe we can provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

At the appropriate time, I would like to have a copy of that. My question is similar to the question raised by Mr. Erasmus with regard to finding alternatives to save this government some costs. Perhaps we can find ways to use the process of monitoring people and also the new initiatives such as sentencing by community justice committees. I do believe that we have to find new arrangements to deal with the clients

who, many times -especially in the community systems -- may be charged with a minor offence, yet the court costs and the costs of the individuals being sent to Yellowknife or wherever, it seems that in the past it hasn't been taken into consideration. You basically went to court, the judge would ask you how you plead, usually you had a lawyer who was generally not from the community who had only talked to you for 15 minutes before you went into the room. You would have a choice to plead guilty or not guilty. A lot of people would plead guilty just to get it over with. Then it blemishes their record because once you're found guilty, you were sent away from home.

Page 562

Hopefully with these new justice committees and also with new initiatives, through the ideas which have been put forward by my colleague from Yellowknife, Mr. Erasmus, about finding a system of monitoring; I think we have to seriously look at that. For the costs that we are paying, especially in this envelope with one of our highest costs -the costs of incarceration -- we have to find ways of cutting. If we're talking about cutting in this Justice portfolio, I believe that's one area we have to seriously look at. We need to assist the communities and the regions to deal with the whole question of justice sentencing and also look at other avenues to assist individuals once they have been sentenced to do their time, and to assist them to get back into the system in relation to what the community also wants. Now we're finding the process of involving the communities, but we have to allow them to take on more responsibilities. You mentioned the community empowerment program.

With regard to the amount of resources that are there, I know we are having some financial problems, but that's an area we have to seriously consider. Any ideas that are out there, we should seriously look at. Will the Minister allow communities, through their justice committees, to take on more authority? He mentioned community transfers and empowering communities by community wellness. How far are you willing to go? Are you willing to just allow them to deal with the sentence, or are you willing to look at sentencing and also monitoring? The resources have to be there to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, generally speaking, I accept all the recommendations or the comments of the honourable Member. As I indicated earlier, we are trying to get the decision-making and the handling of individuals who have to face the judicial system at a community; that is what we're trying to do. We feel that it will provide a more effective form of dealing with individuals in these types of situations. We plan on giving them as much flexibility and as many resources as possible, from what we have. Particularly in the area of monitoring, that fits right in line with the community supervision initiative that is within the department.

As far as some of the sentencing aspects, it depends a lot on the circumstances. From my understanding, even in the circle sentencing model that some aboriginal communities use, their recommendations to the court system on how to treat individuals would be considered by the court and recognized and dealt with at that level. I don't know if we would have that flexibility to allow for the actual sentencing issue to be dealt with by community officials, it would depend a lot on the circumstances. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to allowing communities authority for how people would serve their sentence and to assist them; especially in a lot of the smaller communities, you have a lot of cases of assault, family disputes, or incidents that seem to keep recurring. If there's a possibility of having an avenue there where the individual community justice committees could sentence a person to take a particular treatment program as part of their sentence.

I'll use your other favourite subject, the Tl'oondih Healing Society; say there is an opportunity for a family to try to resolve this issue because it might deal with family violence. Because a particular individual was charged with assault, instead of sending the individual to YCC to serve his time, send him to the camp to be dealt with in a more productive manner with regard to dealing with the problem. That may be a way of resolving the whole concept of the violence question and also assisting the family to deal with the problem that they've probably never had the opportunity to deal with. Instead of just sending the individual to incarceration and serving his time in jail, he will be serving his time in the sense of the word,

but he will also be getting treatment. Is that part of the process that you can look at as a possibility for the community justice committees to take into consideration when they do sentence people?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when situations arise of cases being diverted to the community justice committee to look at the issue and deal with it, that's when this would come into play where it's not so much a sentencing issue, I think, as a healing issue; restorative measures and trying to address the individual's problem by referring him to programming or to remedies they feel might assist that individual. I don't think I'm arguing with the Member on this matter. It's in line with what we are trying to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

The reason I raise this point is that my colleague from Yellowknife, Mr. Erasmus, raised the question about services people get when they are incarcerated. You mentioned that they do see counsellors and psychiatrists. Since that process is happening here, why couldn't it also be done with the communities? You did state that in Yellowknife there are all the programs with regards to access to Arctic College, the hospital and things like that. Counselling is no real problem here but I think we have to look at the other areas, especially in relation to people in the regions, and start using the regional facilities to deal with these things at that level. It would give them the same opportunities people have in the larger centres such as YCI, to serve their sentences closer to the community and try to get them back into society sooner and assist them during their time of crisis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't argue with that fact. I think those types of services would have to be integrated through the other social

envelope programs: particularly, Health and Social Services; and, possibly through income support through Education, Culture and Employment, depending on what initiative they were trying to undertake or depending on what program of treatment would be referred or recommended for any individual. Thank you.

Page 563

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. We're on page 6-13, community justice and corrections, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$21.695 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Detail of capital, page 6-14, community justice and corrections, buildings and works, headquarters, total region, \$1.228 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Buildings and works, Fort Smith, total region, \$618,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Can we go back to the first section, \$1.228 million? With regard to the \$1.074 million, what was that allocated for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was the item that we discussed in great detail, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Could the Minister describe the item that he just discussed in great detail and exactly where these items are located?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These items are not located anywhere. It's the capital carryover of dollars from the 1995-96 fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Can the Minister give me some assurance that those dollars will be made available to the community of Aklavik for a project that they have been working on for a number of years?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can't give any assurances at this point, until I can identify where some of the operations and maintenance dollars may be coming from to support some of these facilities or until the community-based justice report comes forward and there's healthy debate and discussion on it with the Social Programs Members, to try to flush out if the direction that the department is heading in is the right one with respect to that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

You're saying that this item is on hold. Does that mean that all other items in this envelope are also on hold?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

No, Mr. Chairman, it means just this specific item and the capital estimate is on hold. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You stated that it seemed to be coming down to a question of O and M. So you have no problem with the intention of building these facilities, but it's just a matter of having the resources to run and operate these facilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the O and M is a significant factor in the issue as far as these community correctional centres go. The other issue is exactly how it fits in with the community-based programs that we're trying to seed and support, towards trying to keep our residents closer to their home communities. It may also be the fact of the magnitude of the capital project within this area and it depends, like I said, on some discussion on the direction we are going to be heading that I plan on with Social Program committee Members and with other Members of this Assembly. I would be happy to keep the honourable Member informed of where we are heading and would invite input on the matter from him.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Could I get assurance from you that these funds will not be reallocated and be kept in the budget for the reasons they were there the first time? I don't want them removed from this budget and I do want them kept on the books for those particular items.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can't give that assurance at this time. As I indicated earlier, it depends where we are heading and what the needs of the department are. Having said that, Mr. Chairman, ultimately, I am accountable to Members of this Assembly for the decisions I make. At that time, if there are problems with any decisions within the department, then Members can challenge me on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Buildings and works, total region, \$1.228 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Buildings and works, Fort Smith, total region, \$618,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

Page 564

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Buildings and works, Baffin, total region, \$1.166 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko, which one are we on? Baffin?

MR. KRUTKO:

Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the upgrade of the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre, was there the possibility of moving the facility

from Fort Smith to Hay River? Is that still in the works? Why are we putting money into this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there was, as many Members know, an option to close down one of the correctional facilities. There was the possibility of Hay River being one of them. The other one was the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre in Fort Smith. However, I have made a commitment to keep the facilities open for this current fiscal year in trying to identify how we are going to address some of our fiscal targets for the next fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

What is the River Ridge security upgrade for, for \$548,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I didn't get the last part of your question. What was it?

MR. KRUTKO:

I was asking what the \$548,000 was with regard for the security upgrade for River Ridge.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Generally, it is to upgrade some of the security surveillance around the building, as it was deemed to be deficient in a recent review of the facility. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

What is the facility used for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the facility is a triple designated young offenders' facility. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Total region, \$618,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Buildings and works, Baffin, total region, \$1.166 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Total buildings and works, \$3.012 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Total activity, \$3.012 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Details of grants and contributions; grants, \$46,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Contributions, \$3.068 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Do you have a breakdown with regard to the funding, for each legal aid clinic, of the \$1.68 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mackenzie Court Workers, \$467,500; Keewatin Legal Services Centre, \$200,000; Arctic Rim/Delta amalgamated, \$280,000; Kitikmeot Law Centre, \$202,000; Maliiganak Tukisiiniakvik, \$469,200, for a total of \$1,618,700. There is a reserve of \$61,300, for a total of \$1.68 million. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Contributions, \$3.068 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We are now on page 6-16, details of grants and contributions, total department, \$3.114 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Detail of work performed on behalf of third parties, total department, \$991,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree that we defer consideration of the program summary until consideration of Bill 10, Budget Measures Implementation Act, 1996-97, has been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I thank the Minister and his witnesses. May I suggest a break at this time?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

--- SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I call the committee back to order. How would the committee like to proceed at this point? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I didn't hear the question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I said, I call the committee back to order and I asked how the committee would like to proceed at this point. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Chairman, we would like to continue with the review of Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97, and with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would then like to invite opening comments from the Honourable Manito Thompson, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Minister's Introductory Remarks

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 1996-97 main estimates of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs works in partnership with municipal governments and communities. MACA works with communities by providing training and technical advice and support on a wide range of municipal programs and services.

For the 1996-97 fiscal year, operations and maintenance and capital estimates of \$106.153 million are proposed for the department. This amount is a decrease of 2.6 per cent over the combined 1995-96 main estimates.

The department has cut five person years, all at headquarters; from 141.8 to 136.8 person years.

Mr. Chairman, the department is proposing 1996-97 capital main estimates of \$35.562 million; a reduction of 10.6 per cent over the 1995-96 main estimates. The department's 1996-97 capital estimates proposes 31 per cent, or \$10.3 million, for constructing new water and sanitation facilities to maintain a safe water supply and good public and environmental health.

About 19 per cent, or \$6.1 million, is planned to construct arenas, community halls and gymnasiums, which are important to the quality of life and the social and leisure time activities of community residents.

A further 16 per cent, or \$5.4 million, is identified for land development. Another 12 per cent, or \$4.1 million, of the proposed capital estimates is planned

for the construction of new firehalls, community offices, municipal parking and maintenance garages and warehouses.

These estimates also include capital carryovers of \$3.2 million for 18 capital projects which, owing to construction or other delays, could not be spent in the 1995-96 fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, the department is proposing operations and maintenance main estimates of \$70.591 million for 1996-97. It is important to note that over 80 per cent of the department's budget is transferred to community governments or other organizations, or is spent on community infrastructure.

As the lead department for community empowerment, MACA will build on its partnerships with communities and other departments to increase local authority and control over programs and services.

Over the next few months, MACA will be talking with community leaders about opportunities for community empowerment. We are already working with several communities that have indicated an interest in taking on increased responsibilities.

MACA is also currently leading an interdepartmental effort to identify and eliminate legal, legislative, administrative and other barriers that stand in the way of community empowerment.

Mr. Chairman, community empowerment is what many communities have been requesting for many years. My Cabinet colleagues and I are determined to see that communities have equal opportunities to make this a reality.

In many communities, more training and support will be required as communities assume greater responsibilities. MACA will work with communities to identify these training needs and to ensure that they are met. MACA has identified

Page 566

\$1.6 million for community training, which represents 34 per cent of the department's other operations and maintenance estimates. This amount does not include training for departmental staff.

Community planning is another important part of community empowerment. We need to bring all the groups together to plan for the future. MACA is working with all the other departments to ensure that

developmental support and the resources and tools to support community planning will be in place.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening comments. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that the Members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I will now ask the deputy chairman of the Infrastructure committee, Mr. Henry, to give the comments of the committee.

Committee Report 2-13(3): Standing Committee On Infrastructure Report On The Review Of The 1996-97 Main Estimates

Standing Committee On Infrastructure Comments

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my pleasure to present the comments of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure regarding this department.

The standing committee appreciates the efforts of the department in reducing the 1996-97 capital spending by deferring a number of capital projects. As well, over the course of the business plan review process, the department also introduced further O and M reductions, bringing their efforts in line with those of other departments in the infrastructure envelope.

The standing committee felt that further capital cuts might be possible in this department. However, the Financial Management Board disagreed, saying that the department had already done its share. Committee Members appreciate that reducing capital programs in this department will have a noticeable impact on our communities. But committee Members would rather see arenas and new subdivisions cut before nursing stations or schools. Many of the programs offered by the department are of a lower priority than the social programs offered by the government, and reductions to the government's overall budget should reflect that.

The standing committee did appreciate the emphasis on community empowerment. Committee Members agree that greater responsibility and accountability should be transferred to municipalities. This can have significant advantages, both for providing services more efficiently to NWT residents at the community level, and for reducing the strain on the government's limited financial resources. However, the standing committee urges the government not to use

community empowerment as a way of dumping programs on communities and then reducing contributions. Downloading programs at the community level should carry assurances of appropriate funding levels.

The standing committee noted a number of training initiatives being undertaken by the department. Committee Members agree that the effectiveness of community empowerment will be directly related to the quality of the training and education available to elected leaders and administrators in the communities. However, committee Members also want to see that training initiatives are efficient, cost-effective and appropriate for the needs of NWT communities. The standing committee recommends that the department provide details of all current training initiatives to the committee for review.

Committee Members noted the work done by the department last summer in helping communities build firebreaks to protect from forest fire damage. However, the committee was concerned that this effort seemed somewhat unplanned and ad hoc. The committee recommended that the department consult with the Department of Renewable Resources to develop a clear set of policies and procedures for building firebreaks around communities. Discussions are apparently under way between the departments, and the standing committee recommends that the final plans be presented to the standing committee before June 1, 1996.

The standing committee approved the elimination of the home owners' property tax rebate program. Committee Members do recognize that home owners generally contribute significantly to local economies. However, the original purpose of this program was to encourage home ownership. Committee members do not feel that a rebate of \$300 or \$75 is sufficient to potential home owners to justify the continuation of this program.

The water and sewer subsidy program has been a source of concern in the past. Not only has there been tremendous growth in the expenditures of this program over the last few years, but committee Members were concerned that the program was not encouraging efficient delivery of water and sewer services in municipalities. The standing committee agreed that growth in this program should be stopped, as proposed by the department, and also recommended that a further five per cent be taken out of the program. As well, the committee recommended that the department should

identify the amount of subsidy by community and introduce further proposals towards a more user-pay system. The reductions in this program should be implemented in such a way as to encourage efficient delivery of water and sewage services and discourage inefficient delivery.

The department has now put forward a plan to introduce block funding for water and sewer services to communities and intends to implement that plan by June 1, 1996. The standing committee looks forward to seeing its effects on the efficiency of water and sewer service delivery. I think that should be the efficiency of water delivery and sewage pick-up.

Finally, committee Members recalled an item briefly discussed in the review of the first draft. Members had expressed some concerns regarding the fact that leases for Commissioner's land are \$250 per year, no matter what size the lease is or its planned use. The department mentioned that they intend to develop a strategy for recovering the actual costs of leasing the land, especially administration costs. The department also discussed bringing in a user-pay policy for land developed by the department in non-tax-based municipalities. The standing committee agreed that fees paid for the lease and development of land should be paid for by the users of the land. The standing committee recommends that the department develop user-pay strategies for development and lease of land and provide those proposals to the standing committee by June 15, 1996. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. We're now five minutes into the scheduled break. Does the committee agree that we have a break?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

We will return at 6:30 p.m.

--- DINNER RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I will ask the Minister to introduce her witnesses, please.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Penny Ballantyne, deputy minister; the ADM for MACA, Vern Christensen; and, Jim France, director of finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I will now open the floor to general comments from the Members. Mr. Ningark.

General Comments

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Municipal and Community Affairs is one area that I'm very interested in, as it relates to three of my communities. One area that I would like to speak briefly on is community empowerment and block funding. I think the two go hand in hand.

Mr. Chairman, I have mixed feelings about this area, there are pros and cons. Mr. Chairman, ever since the day Pelly Bay became a settlement and then became an incorporated hamlet, we have had an elected membership in the community to deal with the community problems, look after municipal services, at cetera. People have begun to talk about the decisions that are made, are made from a distance. People talk about having decisions made at the regional office in Cambridge Bay. People talk about having decisions made in headquarters in Yellowknife. I think the community empowerment will allow the communities, such as Pelly Bay or any other community in the NWT, to decide for themselves what is right for the community and what infrastructure should be built. I think block funding will allow the community ... The community talks about a funding formula coming from this government, but there isn't enough input from the community. The decision about funding is made from the region or regions, or from headquarters. I think block funding will allow the communities to make their own priorities in the area of funding.

I'm not seeking an answer at this point in time, but my question is if, in fact, a community chose to go to block funding from the government, how would the funding be given to the community? Would it be monthly, quarterly or does the community have to produce a financial statement before that community is given block funding? Would it be a portion of block

funding given to a community for a year? I don't know. Would the community be given the ability to get into term financing? By that, I mean, would the community be able to put money in the bank. If the community is in fact given quarterly financing, then the community would be able to put money in the bank and retain the money made from the interest. Will the community be able to prioritize their own programs? I think this block funding would allow the community to prioritize their own programs.

What happens at the end of the year, as has happened many times in the past, is communities in the Territories have gotten into a bad financial situation and have ended up with a deficit. In many cases, they have had to bring in a person from outside to do a recovery program. By that, I mean a manager from outside of the community has to go to the community and try and help the community out of the financial situation. In many cases it has been very successful, Mr. Chairman. In fact, if the community is in a bad financial situation, will the users of the municipal services -- water delivery, garbage, road clearing, at cetera - will the community suffer because perhaps the community has gotten into mismanagement?

Mr. Chairman, the hamlet of Pelly Bay is now getting into taking over the housing association. Before the hamlet council of Pelly Bay was able to take over the housing association, I was involved in the public meetings, I was involved in the council meetings and so on. The hamlet council of Pelly Bay has initiated, prior to taking over the operations of the housing association, a business plan and have gone over this many times in order to ensure that once the hamlet council takes over the operation and administration of the housing association, they wanted to be sure they would start on the right foot. I think that is one area we should look at.

Page 568

A community has to be ready, a community has to be willing. If, in fact, a community chose to go into the empowerment block funding, will that community retain the services of the regional municipal administrator; a person who comes from the MACA regional office to a community to do a monitoring program among other things such as checking out the books and accounts, at cetera?

Mr. Chairman, during the life of the 12th Assembly when the government was talking about the community transfer, we were given the assurance of

that government that the community will have to come out first in order to take over the programs and services and what have you. There has to be training in place before a community is able to take over many of the programs. I believe that community empowerment will do the same thing.

Mr. Chairman, we were given the assurance that the amount of money that was given to a community before the community transfer initiative takes place was not going to be less than what it was prior to that time. We were also given the assurance that a community taking over the program would be phased in. The community has to be ready.

Mr. Chairman, I am in favour of community empowerment to a degree, I am in favour of block funding to a degree, but many questions have to be answered; one of them being is the government downloading because we are in a very serious cashflow situation within the government. I believe that many of my communities, especially Pelly Bay, are very interested in taking over the programs and services -community empowerment and block funding -- but they are also concerned about the ability of that community to take over the financial management process.

We have to make sure that any community that wishes to go to block funding will have to have a very capable management staff. The community will have to have a very capable, very qualified, very understanding member of council. The community has to give the residents of that community the assurance that the community will not suffer from the lack of essential municipal services because the municipal council happens to be in a bad financial situation. Will the government monitor, very closely, the process that is taking place, even after the community has taken community empowerment, block funding, at cetera? Will the resources from MACA be at the regional office, even when the community is taking over all the programs that the system allows that community to take over. Will the resources from the regional office or headquarters be there to monitor what is going on in that community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Mrs. Thompson, would you like to respond?

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand fully what the MLA has brought up. While we have been discussing these opportunities for community empowerment, the communities have been involved. I'm not sure if I remember all the questions he raised, but the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will definitely have to monitor what is going on and there will be training that has to be provided. We are

working towards that. (Translation ends) ... Cabinet Committee for Social Programs and Community Empowerment. This committee has taken leadership on the community empowerment. We have been talking a lot about the concerns that the Member has raised. He has raised a lot of questions and has asked a lot from the communities that are wanting to take on more responsibilities, as well as take on transfers from programs in their communities.

There will be monitoring going on from the regional offices, so that this community empowerment and transfer goes as easy for the communities as possible. I strongly believe in training, so there will be some training going on at all levels and also to the staff at the community level. The communities are very worried about taking on the responsibility and falling into a deficit situation, but we are going to make sure we are committed as a department that this won't happen.

Are we offloading to the communities? The answer is no. Funding for any transfer will be based on what a community spends for the programs and services. Funding will be available for training, community development and implementation costs. Community empowerment should mean that things are done more effectively and efficiently in the future. This should help in the future to fight increasing costs. If the communities are worried that the transfers are going to be complicated, the aim of the review of community empowerment presently under way is to make it possible to transfer the greatest amount of authority along with the greatest amount of flexibility in the most efficient manner. Any unnecessary red tape will be cut.

I know a lot of the communities are ready to take on community transfers and also community empowerment, to take on more responsibility. I know they are worried and the department has done everything in their business plan to make sure that we can be there when they need us, so that we can help them whenever they need us and also monitor along the way.

In terms of funding these communities through block funding, we just did block funding with the town of Fort Smith. I just came from there this morning. We did a three-year block funding arrangement with them. The money would be coming to the community on a monthly basis. The community would have more flexibility and more to do with their programs.

I don't know if I answered all the questions, but there were quite a few. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, 1, as a politician, will not get in the way of one of my communities wishing to get into the programs. I will support the community. Mr. Chairman, I hear the honourable Minister indicating that, in the area of funding, the community will be given funding on a monthly basis. To me, that doesn't allow the community to get into financial management by putting that portion of money not being used into the bank and able to yield money to do other

Page 569

programs. I would have thought that perhaps funding was going to be quarterly or even bi-yearly. Of course, it isn't up to me to determine how the funding is going to be released to the community. I don't have any more questions, Mr. Chairman. That concludes my general comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Would you like to respond to those comments, Mrs. Thompson?

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will be looking at ways to allow communities to invest their dollars in the near future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. I have the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The community empowerment strategy is a welcome development for the people in the West. The people have been asking for years to be able to take over programs and services. I am in total support of allowing the communities to provide their own programs and services, particularly through the use of block funding. That will allow communities to choose their own priorities and to move in the directions that they wish, provided that maintain certain minimum standards.

At times, the empowerment would have to be done at the community level and it would also have to be done at regional levels as well. The best way to ensure the success of the implementation of the community empowerment strategy is to utilize the existing aboriginal organizations that work and preside over certain areas. Those organizations already exist. They meet periodically and, for the most part, the people in those communities see them as the regional government.

I know that the social envelope has been working on a community empowerment framework. I understand that it is being completed. It is extremely important that the MLAs get a briefing on this framework before we go back to our communities; before the others go back to their communities, since I live here. I feel it is important that this briefing happens before people leave because if it doesn't happen, there won't be another opportunity when everyone is here for quite a while. I don't think we should go until September or October before people receive a briefing on community empowerment.

There are a lot of meetings in the West that occur with the aboriginal organizations. They meet in the summertime and have their general assemblies, and those are really good times to visit with the people and to discuss community empowerment and any other initiative that we wish to relay information and generate discussion on.

However, the other thing I wanted to mention is that we have other initiatives such as the community wellness initiative, the community justice initiative and now the community empowerment initiative. All of these initiatives seem to go hand in hand. It seems to me that we should have them all working together and that the easiest way to do this would be to have all those initiatives in the same envelope. Perhaps it's time to look at some way of doing

that. Is it time to move MACA into the social envelope or something like that? It must be difficult for two

different envelopes to be meeting. I'm sure the social envelope people must be meeting with MACA in order to strategize, and it would be a lot easier if all people involved were in the same envelope.

So I would like to hear the Minister's thoughts on particularly the briefing, and also the possibility of having these community initiatives all under the same envelope structure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the MLAs don't keep me here until September or October, we can do a briefing. We will be talking to the MLAs on community empowerment, if they would like to have a briefing while we're here for the session. I will ask my deputy minister to give more detail on the envelope structure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Mrs. Ballantyne.

MRS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, MACA currently does attend all of the Social Program committee meetings and we have done for some time. There is a lot of effort put into trying to coordinate community empowerment with community wellness, with income support reform and with the early childhood development initiatives in Education. We're currently coordinating all of those efforts by making sure that all the progress reports are dealt with at the same meeting, that we have the same people working on the team. There is quite frequent and close communication between the different deputies who are working on these initiatives.

MACA isn't formally a member of the social envelope, but I can certainly assure Members that we're fully involved with the social envelope and communicating very closely at the DM level and at the other levels, as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. I have Mr. Krutko for the Mackenzie Delta.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is with regard to the meeting that was held in Inuvik regarding the tax-based municipalities. They had some concerns regarding the transfer. I believe it was that there should be some legislation to back up those transfers. I would like to know from the Minister of the status of that motion that was passed at the tax-based municipalities meeting,

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The recommendations for legislative changes that were given to us from the meeting, we will be dealing with in legislation. The more complex ones will follow shortly after that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Krutko.

Page 570

MR. KRUTKO:

Regarding the whole question of community empowerment and also areas where you have large band councils and also municipal councils; in order for the transfer to take place, I believe there has to be a mechanism where both groups work hand in hand and are in full support of any of those initiatives, especially where there are duplicate services taking place. An individual group or organization may want to look at that. Where there is dialogue going on between the bands and the locals, for the bands and the hamlets to look at the possibility of establishment of community councils within the communities. In the case of Fort McPherson, there were deliberations on that. I would like to ask the Minister what is being done in that area, especially with regard to where that process has been initiated and they are also looking at community transfers. Will that process be completed prior to these transfers taking place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has to be one governing body for the transfers to take place in a community. For some communities where they have a

band council and a settlement or hamlet council or a Metis organization at the community level, they would have to work together in order for this to happen. Aklavik is a very good example where the band, the Metis and the hamlet have decided to work together on empowerment, and we support that, that there should be one body willing to work together so we can filter the government funds through that body. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My other question is with regard to having adequate resources and the human resources in place to assist the community in speeding that up, so they can try to have a community council structure in place so when they take the transfers over they do have this body in place. As I mentioned, McPherson is presently in the process of reviewing that. They have met with MACA out of Inuvik and discussed this, but it seems that, in order for them to take advantage of these initiatives of this government, they have to speed that process up to conclude it so they can't take as much benefit as they can by these transfers that this government is initiating. How soon can those negotiations be completed and also have the adequate resources in place to assist them in those negotiations?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to community transfer initiatives, we have allocated some funds to the regions to hire somebody to help the communities that are ready to do community transfers. The regional superintendents have been meeting on community empowerment. I would like this to be done as soon as possible, so we are working on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I have the honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few brief comments, and mine are related, as well, to the whole issue of empowerment, which I see as the main vehicle of the 13th Assembly in terms of making the changes that they're talking about, other than division.

There is a need and a desire for people in the communities -I know for sure in Fort Smith -- to actually see something in writing that outlines very clearly what we mean when we talk about empowerment, There is a great interest in this whole initiative, and I know in Fort Smith, we're planning on having a major community meeting in the fall to which we would like to invite senior people from the department to talk about this whole area.

I see MACA as being the lead department, by virtue of this initiative, in the regions, and having to play -- in addition to the role they play delivering their other services -- a coordinating role, possibly as a lead department, that would try to bridge and coordinate other departments and government services in the region now that we have no more regional directors.

The whole issue of empowerment to me relates very closely to the whole idea of self-government, and this is actually making it work. It's taking it out of the area of the abstract, out of the area of discussion in the political realm where there are high-level discussions, and you're talking with communities on how you make life better for people in the communities, how you take control over those services. So the key to me is having something that we can go out with in our hand to show the people. Nobody is willing to proceed without it that I know of. They know how words can disappear if they're just spoken and not written, and I've been told very clearly by the community leaders in Fort Smith that they really think the initiative has merit but they are not willing to turn one wheel or take a step in dealing with the government on something of this magnitude, of this importance, until they have a very clear idea of what we're saying and what we mean.

So I think this is a critical initiative and one which I will fully support. I think it's critical to this 13th Assembly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I fully agree with the Member from Fort Smith. We have a community empowerment steering committee and we will be coming forward with a plan on community empowerment, and I will be making a statement on community empowerment in the next few days.

We fully support that the communities need to see how it's going to be done or how they will want it to be done within their community. There will have to be a plan for them to understand and be able to proceed with their plan, so there will have to be some community development workshops happening in the communities at the same time. The staff

Page 571

will be available to go into any meetings in the region to promote community empowerment as presenters; so, just to let the Members know that we will be available for any meetings that will happen in the future, we will be coming forward with a plan from the Community Empowerment Steering Committee that has been established which is chaired by Penny Ballantyne of MACA and other DMs from Health and Social Services, Economic Development and Tourism, and Public Works & Services are also involved. I agree with the Member: There has to be a plan in place, and we are doing that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I have Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to follow up on the comments made by Mr. Miltenberger that this initiative is also receiving some attention in Yellowknife by the city fathers here. I attended a community leaders' conference, and this was the subject of discussion there: What exactly does community empowerment mean? At a follow-up meeting at which the other three Yellowknife MLAs also attended, it was again discussed, and there is no clear understanding of the implications of community empowerment and all the particular areas that could include. However, there does seem to be interest on the city of Yellowknife's part to participate in this if there are programs being considered to be transferred.

But to carry on with the comment made by Mr. Miltenberger, it would be tremendously helpful if we

did have something in writing to explain exactly what community empowerment means and what particular programs we are talking about. I understand, of course, that MACA is the lead department, but what programs in the various other departments are affected by this, and what is envisioned to be affected?

So far, what I have seen is that we have announced that we are going to have community empowerment, and yet I think there is sort of an assumption that everybody loves this stuff. I don't disagree that perhaps people in the community love this stuff, but we need successes to go along with it, and we have to monitor that success as we go, as well. We can't just say, okay, we have a program of community empowerment; now, continue to do it. We have to be cautious that we don't get into this stuff and then two years down the line we have handed everything over and we've got nothing but disasters by people in the communities running these programs.

I think that we have to be, in my opinion, very careful about how we do community empowerment. I don't think we should take the attitude that you can just hand things over to people just because people ask for it and just because we say they should have it and that we are willing to hand it over to them. I think that would be irresponsible. We have to make sure that those programs that are handed over will run efficiently, continually and to the best of the needs of the people of the communities.

So I see a lot of areas here that, to me, are still quite blank. We don't have a published program. I don't think I've heard yet that there's this coordination at headquarters between departments about community empowerment and about transfer to communities of programs. So those are my comments, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mrs. Thompson, would you like to respond?

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that a lot of the communities are wanting to have programs and infrastructure transferred into their governing bodies, and this is what the communities have been asking for. They want more control of the programs and also infrastructure in their communities, and they want to have a say in how the program is delivered in their communities.

I agree with the Member on his comments. There has to be monitoring of the transfers going to the governing bodies so that it doesn't fall apart. Our department is fully committed to make sure that, when community transfers start in the communities, that the community is ready for it and that we're there to help them so they don't fall apart and that they don't fail. That's our commitment as a department, that the staff will work with the community to develop a community plan on what their priorities should be and what departments are available to them within their community, and what programs they should take on. There will be a lot of resources available to them from our department. We are committed to make sure that this is successful at the community level, for all the communities that would want to take on community transfers. I know that for a long time the communities have been asking for more input to the programs within their communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I appreciate the Minister's comments and I want to thank her for them. I would like to refer to a community such as Yellowknife, which is a little different than a community that in the Baffin or in the outlying areas of other parties of the Territories. The city of Yellowknife would also be interested in community empowerment; however, I want to advise and make a comment on the fact that, yes, the city is interested, but they fully realize that this has to be funded to the degree that the service is being provided at now. That may be a little more difficult to identify and to transfer than it is in the smaller communities. I just want to make sure that it is understood that the city and the larger communities are also interested in this, but they're not going to be as quick in wanting to take over these services because, in order to do so, there are complications with them taking them over, probably mostly centred around financial reasons. So if we're going to have community empowerment, we can't just do it in one location. We have to make sure that we also look at centres like Yellowknife and do so with some fairness. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

I would just like to say whether it's a city, a town or a small community, they have the same types of concerns with finances. There might be

Page 572

a few more complications at the city level, but the small communities are also quite concerned about the same frustrations that a city might have. I think the bottom line is instead of the government deciding for the community where the cuts should be, the community should be deciding by itself where the priorities should be and where the cuts should be if they're given that responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. I have the honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to say that it's good to see the department taking on this community empowerment with moving on the issue. At the same time, it's unfortunate that it happens to fall in a time of financial restraint. I guess that's where my comments will be heading. It's good to see that communities are going to be able to take on more of the responsibility of running programs themselves, but there is concern there, as well, as to funding of certain areas of that transfer. I know at the NWTAM in March, there was some apprehension expressed by the communities of all of a sudden being able to take over the control, especially in these times.

Further on that, the transfers that we're talking about block funding -- the water and sewer programs -- I have a concern there, especially since in Inuvik there has been the implementation of water meters in the previous year. I don't think anybody has exact numbers or fairly accurate numbers of the actual cost of running the program since installation. Some of them are still ongoing, I believe, or just finished up. As I've heard the figure of speech, a "yardstick of efficiency" being used and calculations that have come about with that, seems to be adding some concern to the municipality as to what has actually come about at the end of the day when it comes to taking over the program. Not only is there a reduction in what they were receiving before, but the added burden of monitoring the system that was put in place by this government. I know the municipality of Inuvik was not in favour of installing water meters for a long

time but it became part of the program. So there are some concerns there at the end of the day of how much it will actually cost. Would the installation of meters mean a further reduction in what they would normally get because of the cost of monitoring the system? That's a key part of their discussions that I believe they will be having with your department.

I think it is good to see that we are, as a government, starting to take the steps necessary to provide the communities with the power to control themselves. I guess adding to that, you'll have some communities that will be able to take on a task with minimal support, then others that will need a fair bit of support, and that's expected. But at the same time, as throughout every other program, there is concern that the ones that manage themselves well shouldn't be penalized more for the sake of others that don't manage themselves well. That's going to be another area of concern.

If one community can take its funding and make it go further and supply more services, more power to them; but it wouldn't be good to see communities that manage themselves well lose more because other communities that do poor management require more.

My main issue, as we go along through this program, will be on the transfers, block funding that's proposed by the department for water and sewer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Honourable Minister, Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

I would just like to thank the Member for his comments. I don't have any comments to him.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. I have the honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Picco. General comments.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have some of the same concerns with community empowerment as Mr. Ningark expressed earlier, about downloading and dumping of programs. As this government fiscally pulls back, that would be my fear; that some communities might be set up for failure. I have expressed that in the committee and outside the committee.

I wonder if MACA has come up with some type of means test to see if a community is in the position ... There are two things: what we want and what we need and what we can do. Does MACA have some type of means test to see in actuality what the communities can take over within their logistic framework at the present time or at the time that they want to assume control of program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There needs to be an assessment at the community level of what the communities can and would be willing to take. That would have to be one of the first things that we will do with the communities, going in there and assessing what they are able to take within their community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I have the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been listening to some of the comments here and I think there have been many question posed without answers. It may be appropriate -- I have minimal comments -- but I think it would be more appropriate to go to line by line because I think that would give the Minister an opportunity to respond to what I think are more than comments but questions. I think it would facilitate the discussion if some of those comments were responded to or asked as questions for the Minister to respond to.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

You would prefer to ask general questions?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that we go to line by line.

Page 573

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are dealing with MACA which deals with a lot of communities. I would like to report progress so that we can deal with this when we are not tired. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have a motion on the floor to report progress which is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Some Members voted twice so I'm going to call the motion again.

--- Laughter

All those in favour of the motion to report progress? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

--- Defeated

Line By Line

Directorate

We are on page 10-14, directorate, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$5.544 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Page 10-15, detail of capital, buildings and works, headquarters, total region, \$30,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Total buildings and works, \$30,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Equipment acquisition, headquarters, total region, \$30,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Total equipment acquisition, \$30,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Total activity, \$60,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

--- Agreed

Community Development

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Community development, page 1016, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$59.702 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question to the Minister is with regard to the health and safety of communities. I have raised this issue in the House with regard to the whole problem that we're having with the water treatment plant in Fort McPherson. It has become a health issue because of the problem that has occurred this spring and over the last couple of years.

I would like to know if the Minister has considered that as a priority emergency measure and are there resources available to consider a way to resolve that issue? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to refer this to Mr. Christensen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're aware of the concern that's been raised in Fort McPherson with regard to the water quality this spring and we know of the concern locally. As it was reported previously in the Assembly, the department has in its capital plan for 1997-98, \$40,000 to do planning work related to the water supply in Fort McPherson. What we would propose to do as a department, though, given the concerns that have been raised and the urgency and priority that's being placed on this project, would be to advance that work to this fiscal year so that we can, sooner than later, look at the options that are available. In spite of the fact that the treated water coming from the treatment plant does meet the drinking water standards, we do want to respond to the concerns that have been raised on the Fort McPherson water supply.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to having adequate resources to deal with a crisis such as this, do you have anywhere where you can move these resources to areas where there is, say, an emergency; such as a health matter because of the contamination of water. Do you have the ability to move these resources from a capital project that may not be as much of a priority, to an area where you have a crisis such as this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

Page 574

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that question to Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Mr. Chairman, the department has the amount of capital resources it has within its budget and clearly, if there is an emergency, the department tries to respond. Sometimes there is an opportunity to reallocate resources within the capital budget that we do have, if we have certain projects come in under budget. If there aren't surplus resources available, then the department has two choices, I suppose: one being to negotiate a delay in another project that has already been identified for a particular community; or, to seek the assistance of the Financial Management Board for supplementary funding, although, given the fiscal situation that we're in, that would be difficult. But there is some flexibility within the system to respond to emergencies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to your statement, is there a possibility you may have to allocate funds from the other projects to assist McPherson at this time of crisis, with regard to the water problem that they have? You have grants and contributions of \$55 million? Maybe there is a possibility of moving some of those resources to that particular project because, as it stands right now, you have stated there is \$40,000, but \$40,000 to fix that problem isn't going to do anything to it. Can you move those resources in the short period of possibly the next couple of months for that project in McPherson?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that the Member has been concerned about this water problem during this time, and I will be sending staff up there as soon possible to work with the community to see what

options there are for them with regard to their water supply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. I have the honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of community development, more for information, what is the size of a community or the population of a community that is required when it comes to the upgrade of facilities; for example, right from your basic level community, up? At a certain number of population, does the facility increase and the level of facilities within a community increase; for example, the community of Sachs Harbour and Inuvik, in comparison then to, say, Yellowknife?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to refer the question to Vern Christensen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no population figure per se that determines the communities eligible for funding under our capital programs. What determines whether a community is eligible or not is whether it's listed as one of the eligible communities in the policies that we have; our settlement capital assistance policy or our municipal capital assistance policy. They range from small communities to large communities. Within each of our capital programs themselves, there are, depending on the size of the population, communities eligible for certain sizes of facilities. For instance, if a community has a population greater than 400 people, it becomes eligible for a community arena. If it's less than 400 people, it's only eligible for an outdoor skating rink, for example, according to our standards and criteria.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does this funding also apply to O and M, this sort of a breakdown?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Christensen to reply to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Mr. Chairman, we have two complementary funding programs to the capital funding programs: again, a settlement operating assistance policy and our municipal operating assistance program. For the non-tax-based communities, the funding, again, in those instances is related to population and related to the facilities that they have in the communities. So it's dependent on population and the types of facilities they have in the communities, primarily. The larger municipalities -- the villages, towns and cities -- receive funding by way of a grant in lieu of property taxes and equalization payments funding which is structured differently on a formula basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, I take it that in all of these formulas, whether a settlement or a community or a tax-based municipality, the population doesn't play a role in any of this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the population plays a role. I will ask Mr. Christensen to reply to that also.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Yes, on the O and M funding, population is a factor as it's one of the factors that needs to

Page 575

be put into the formula, and the more people there are in the community, the greater the funding is that's provided.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, when you start working the population into these figures, is there a certain number that changes? For every 200 extra people who are within a community, a town or a city, does the rate increase?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Christensen to reply to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Mr. Chairman, the formula has a number of factors in it. Perhaps I could cite one example being a calculation relating to protective services. If the population is less than 350 people, there is a certain amount of money that's added in the formula. If the population is between 350 and 700 people, there is another amount; or, if it's greater than 700 people, it's a different amount again. Those populations will be different for different parts of the funding formula. Other parts of the formula are just directly related to population on a per capita basis, and the amount of funding per capita doesn't change. It's just the number of people times a factor to equal the amount of money that would be distributed to that particular community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could you use an example of one of your programs and the population and the numbers that would change accordingly? You are telling me that there are different amounts, but I would like to know what these amounts are.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that to Mr. Christensen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Mr. Chairman, we don't have the worksheets with us on a community-by-community basis, but we could certainly provide an example showing how it is calculated for a community. Just to point out another feature of the formula is that we use all of these factors in the formula, then it allows us to distribute the funding allocation that we have on an equitable basis amongst communities. This formula doesn't generate a dollar amount immediately after going through this calculation for the community; it becomes part of another formula which is a distribution formula for a fixed amount of money that we

have available for municipal operating assistance funding, for example.

I have here a blank of the formula, but I don't have numbers in it to offer as an example.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. I have the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start off by commenting on community empowerment. I believe it's a motherhood issue; people being able to decide for themselves at a local level, I think, is important. At the same time, as Mr. Picco suggested, I also have concerns about community empowerment. The first question I have is the Minister mentioned earlier on in

some comments that she had a committee set up to deal with community empowerment. How many people are on the committee, what does she see as a role for them and how many communities does she intend to do community empowerment programs for this present fiscal year? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

The Cabinet Committee for Social Programs and Community Empowerment has been established and this is chaired by Penny Ballantyne of MACA. Included in that committee is the Cabinet secretary, principal secretary, special advisor to the Premier, secretary to the FMBS, DM of Justice and the DMs of Health and Social Services, ED&T and Public Works and Services, who chair the three envelope committees. A coordinating team has been struck to coordinate the empowerment initiatives, and report to the steering committee. Three task teams have been established by MACA to advance the empowerment priority. These are the community development task team, the community opportunities task team and the infrastructure task team. These task teams have representatives from various GNWT departments and a workplan has been identified to assist the task team in meeting some of the deadlines recommended by the Cabinet Committee on Social Programs and Community Empowerment.

I'm just going to ask Penny to add on to that because I know she has been involved with this committee since it started and she's chairing that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mrs. Ballantyne.

MRS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the steering committee that I chair is the committee of deputies and senior bureaucrats. We coordinate, in addition to the community empowerment initiative, the community wellness initiative, income support reform and the other related initiatives that are currently either under way or in development.

In addition to the steering committee, there have been a number of working groups established to do the

preparatory work for community empowerment. Part of this involves

Page 576

looking at all of the programs and services currently delivered by our government at the community level, and identifying those programs and services that would be appropriate to transfer to communities and those which would require the GNWT to retain some level of interest or involvement in. That work is not yet completed, it is under way and we expect to have it completed within the month.

We report on a regular basis to the Cabinet Committee for Social Programs and Community Empowerment. We take our progress reports to that Cabinet committee and they provide us with ongoing direction. We are aiming to bring an action plan to Cabinet by the middle of June, with the component identified; the tools that have currently been underdeveloped and are being developed right now include a community planning process that would be tailored to the needs of communities of various sizes and degrees of capability. It's very much modeled on the kind of community leaders' conference that the city of Yellowknife undertook, where the city council worked with community leaders from other groups; for example, voluntary organizations and non-profit groups. Leaders from those other types of organizations work together with city councillors. That's the kind of model that we really want to encourage at the community level and to facilitate as one where the elected officials work with other leaders in the community to identify community needs and priorities. From them would flow the assessment of the community's capacity to undertake those priorities it has identified. That was referred to earlier by the Minister.

So we are extremely busy at the present time trying to get these tools developed, so that what we take out to the communities will really be useful for them. In addition, a full communication strategy is being developed to ensure that communities have information about what the community empowerment opportunities might be for them. We're very much looking forward to getting into a dialogue with communities so that we can make sure that what we're providing in the action plan is really going to meet their needs.

I would be pleased to provide more information if the Member wishes, but I'll stop there for now. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One question I didn't detect getting an answer to was in how many communities do you intend this fiscal year to initiate community empowerment strategies.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'll refer that to Mrs. Ballantyne.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mrs. Ballantyne.

MRS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, MACA currently is involved with a number of communities. I apologize for not having the list at hand, but we could certainly provide it to the Member of communities where transfers are in progress or have been completed. Off the top of my head, that would include Cape Dorset; Holman Island, where we're just concluding; Pangnirtung; Fort Good Hope. There are a number of them that are currently in progress. It's our plan to have those opportunities made available to all communities within the next few months, so that any community that is interested will have the opportunity to get involved in community empowerment. We've been listening to the concerns that have been coming from Members and communities about the pace of change. We're also getting concerns from communities that it's not going fast enough and they're quite anxious to get on with it.

So I think the opportunity will be there for every community. In terms of how many are actually going to take up the opportunities this year, I think that really remains to be seen. But the opportunity will be there for all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the department any strategies in place to alleviate cherry-picking, if you will; picking nice little parts, maybe water delivery but not sewage pick-up, that type of thing?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mrs. Ballantyne.

MRS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The answer to the Member's question is yes. Departments are identifying those programs that need to belong together and we would be presenting those programs to communities as a package. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Ms. Ballantyne. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

You had mentioned earlier about three task force groups. Which one of those will be working with communities to provide training and ongoing facilitation of the training component of community transfer?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The task teams that I mentioned earlier are just the planners. They'll be the people that will plan. The implementation will be done by the regional departments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

What were the regional departments doing before if they're going to have this time now to assist communities to implement the community transfer initiative?

Page 577

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to refer this to Ms. Ballantyne.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Ms. Ballantyne.

MS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the regional departments have always been involved in the provision of training to community staff. What is different about this initiative is that we are trying to develop some of the tools that the regional staff and community people have been telling us they need.

We are also trying to provide that training in a more coordinated way. Right now, each department has its own approach to training at the community level and we're seeing a fair amount of duplication in some areas. For example, many of the departments have community structures in place: Education has education committees, Housing Corporation has housing associations, et cetera. What we're seeing is some duplication in the approaches so we're trying to identify those things that are common to all of the training that we are doing and looking at a way to do that in a more coordinated way so that we're not duplicating each other's efforts. That would be one change.

Another change would be to identify, at the regional level, where we have skills and strengths in our own staff. Again, right now, we're trying to be all things to all people in each department and we feel that by working as a team at the regional level we can make better use of the skills that are there without having to go outside to bring them in from outside the department; we can look to our colleagues internally to provide it. The difference is really in the coordination of the approach and in the development of new tools that currently don't exist but which are required to make this work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Ms. Ballantyne. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it safe to say, then, with community empowerment totally devolved to a particular community, that there would be no need for MACA anymore and MACA employees could

potentially become employees of the community?
Hopefully, the training would be completely finished.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of MACA would still be there to monitor the communities, do evaluations and make sure they are not going into deficit. The department would still be supporting the communities in that way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Continuing on community development, page 10-16, detail. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

The question about monitoring came up several times in the presentations. How do you look at the accountability? Do you look at it every year with regard to the audited statements or do you look at it with regard to the ... Because in the past, especially in the development of residential areas such as Inuvik where they did run into financial difficulties because of overspending in certain sectors, the government had to come in and bail them out to get them back on their feet. You keep mentioning the question about accountability. How do you see that happening? Is it going to be based on annual audits or is someone there going to be going in there every three or four months just to see how they're doing? Perhaps you could explain that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Chair. The communities have their financial audits done and that will continue. Whatever has to be monitored in the community will be monitored. Communities will have to be monitored while this community empowerment is being done. Regional MACA departments will also monitor what is being transferred into the community. As these transfer increase of course it will always have to be continued, especially where they will have to be in charge of using the money. This department has to give them the opportunity to learn to operate

on their own but we will have to keep monitoring them so that they will not go into a deficit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chair. With regard to your monitoring, there was a question of how the money was going to be allocated, the core funding, to the communities. Was it going to be done on a month-to-month basis? Is that right? Is that one of the monitoring steps you were talking about; allocating monthly instalments to operate the communities?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Madam Chair. I went to Fort Smith to sign an agreement and I will use that as an example. We had agreed to three years of funding and it will be given monthly. If we agree with the communities, we will ask which way they would like to follow, whether it's on an annual or a monthly basis. After we agree with the amount of money that they will use for the three years, then we will have it available to the community monthly. That will last them for the next three years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The initiative that you just spoke about in Fort Smith, what do you have in place for hamlet councils like Fort McPherson, for example? How do you see these funds being distributed or allocated? You said there is a three-year agreement based on monthly

Page 578

or annual instalments. How do you see it operating in the smaller communities like Fort Smith, which is a tax-based community that has a large population, versus the smaller communities? What method do you look at using there?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, Madam Chair; there are only two of us, so it's kind of hard.

--- Laughter

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Sorry. Madam Chair, the option that smaller communities have is block funding. To be block funded is the option they have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Anything further, Mr. Krutko? Go ahead, please.

MR. KRUTKO:

When you say block funding, are you saying it's going to be done on a quarterly basis? Block funding to me means that you are going to give one big chunk of money and say, here, spend it. What's the process of allocation? Is it going to be done monthly or quarterly, straight cash or government bonds or cheques?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Block funding is for the programs. It would come to them in a block fund, and that would be coming to them on a monthly basis. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

To give the communities more responsibility and the ability to generate revenue from the funding they get from government, either by investing or putting it into short-term investments, 30-day or 90-day bonds or whatever, this doesn't give them that opportunity, because you are giving them on a monthly basis. Eventually, do you see that there's a possibility, like you said for Fort Smith, that there's a three-year agreement. One way that the communities can look at

being more financially accountable and also find new ways of generating revenues is to be able to use that extra interest it may be able to generate by having it sit in the bank for two or three months. But with the process that you are saying, based on a monthly pay schedule, they wouldn't have that ability. Would you look at the possibility of allowing them to do that in the future?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Was there a question there, Mr. Krutko, or was it just a general comment?

MR. KRUTKO:

I'll rephrase my question. We are talking about empowering communities and giving them the ability to be more accountable and be able to govern themselves. They have to consider the financial accountability and the ability to generate new sources of revenue; one way is putting money in the bank and basically using it for investment. But, the way it's scheduled now is that because these are monthly instalments, they will not have the ability to do that. So will the Minister of MACA consider looking at the alternative of allowing them block funding on a longer period of time than just doing it once a month, say, over three months or six months?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We will be looking at other options besides monthly funding to the community. MACA has included proposed changes to the municipal legislation to broaden municipal borrowing authorities, and these legislative changes will be introduced in the fall. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Krutko, would you mind if we gave Mr. Steen an opportunity to ask questions, and if you still have more, we will come back to you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is with regard to block funding. The way I understand it, block funding includes funding for capital works.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It could include capital funding, too. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. If a community is block funded, does that affect the formula funding process; in other words, the entitlement under the formula funding process?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will refer that question to Mr. Christensen.

MR. CHRISTENSEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The block funding would replace the formula funding, if that was what was being funded. The amount of the block funding would be based on the amount that would have been contributed through the formula or whatever other program is being considered for block funding.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Christensen. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chair, I have another question. I understood in the Infrastructure committee meetings that block funding was unconditional funding. Is this true? Is that a correct understanding?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

Page 579

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. That is true.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. If this is unconditional funding, why is it available on a monthly basis rather than on no condition?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. As I said earlier, there will be options to the communities, and we will be taking into consideration all the comments that have been forwarded tonight from the Members. I said there would be options.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Steen,

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would be interested to know how we intend to keep track of this funding for the communities if it's unconditional; if there's a plan in place that, for instance, that at a certain period through the year, certain things happen for X number of dollars being spent. For instance, if we are block funding communities for capital works that never get built, we might be building those works for a long time. Is there going to be a process to ensure that those capital works do happen?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Earlier on, I spoke about making an assessment of the communities and developing a community plan. Each community would have a plan in place before we block funded them. There would be a plan in place first for the community and what their capital dollars should be, before anything happened. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am glad to hear there will be some kind of plan. Do you suggest that the block funding agreement with Fort Smith did have a plan in place and does it include capital works?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The town of Fort Smith does have a plan. Yes, to both of those questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Madam Chair, do I understand that we are approving capital works for Fort Smith for next year already, by approving their block funding for this year?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

They are funded for the capital. The block funding agreement that I just signed down there was for a three-year block funding agreement. That includes capital. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that we are approving capital works for Fort Smith for two years when we are dealing with a one-year budget.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be asking Mrs. Ballantyne to answer that.

MRS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the block funding agreement with Fort Smith has a clause that permits the department to fund them to the extent that the department has the money. So their funding for the second year of the agreement is conditional on the amount of money we receive here in the Legislative Assembly for that year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. That brings up another question, Madam Chair. In the capital portion of the budget, in particular to my communities or to any communities that won't be block funded for capital works projects, I seem to get the impression now that we are going to be approving capital works for communities without really knowing what they are. They are all going to be hidden into a block funding lump. It is going to be kind of hard to tell whether each community is being dealt with on an equal basis. Is that a correct assumption?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mrs. Thompson.

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The community was ready to be block funded and I would encourage the communities to look into being block funded. They will have capital plans and all MLAs will know what is in their capital plans. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mrs. Thompson. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Madam Chair, I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

We have a motion to report progress. The motion is in order and is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Page 580

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 11 and Committee Report 2-13(3) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Ng. Your motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--- Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills.

Speaker's Ruling

Before I ask the Clerk to give the orders of the day, I have a ruling with regard to a point of order made on May 21, 1996, by Mr. Krutko. On May 21st during oral question period, this debate is contained on pages 1185 to 1188 of unedited Hansard. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko, was in the process of asking an oral question to the Minister of Justice on funding for the Beaufort/Delta legal services clinic. The Member for Mackenzie Delta had asked his initial question and had completed one supplementary question. On being recognized for a second supplementary question, the Member, Mr. Krutko, in the Chair's opinion, made a statement and there was no question contained therein.

The Chair indicated, and I quote from page 1187 of unedited Hansard: "Thank you. There was no question there." The chair then went on to remind

Members about their preambles to supplementary questions.

The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko, then raised a point of order and, once again, I quote from page 1187 of unedited Hansard: "**MR. KRUTKO:** I think there was a question." At that time, I indicated to the Member that he could ask a question to the Minister, but what I had heard was a statement. At the conclusion of the Member's questioning of the Minister of Justice, I reminded Members that questioning a ruling of the Chair is not allowed and that I would review the Hansard to see whether the Member did challenge the Chair. I have reviewed the unedited Hansard and find that indeed the Member did not pose a question and that my ruling that he had made a statement was correct. The Member, by raising a point of order, did challenge the chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Shame, shame,

MR. SPEAKER:

I have further considered the matter and can understand the Member's misunderstanding of whether he did ask a question or not and will not ask the Member to apologize.

I feel, however, that lengthy preambles to oral questions and supplementary questions are the reason that Members forget to ask a question...

--- Applause

... and illustrates why we do not allow preambles to supplementary questions. I thank you for your attention. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Meetings for tomorrow,

MR. SPEAKER: at 8:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs; at 9:30 of the Standing Committee on Infrastructure; at 10:30 of the Standing Committee on Government Operations; at 11:30 of the Ordinary Members' Caucus; at 12:00 noon of the Management and Services Board; and, at 1:00 p.m. of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development.

Orders of the day for Thursday, May 23, 1996:

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Prayer | 1996-97 Main Estimates |
| 2. | Ministers' Statements | - Committee Report 2-13(3), Standing Committee on Infrastructure Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates |
| 3. | Members' Statements | |
| 4. | Returns to Oral Questions | Committee Report 3-13(3), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates |
| 5. | Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery | |
| 6. | Oral Questions | Committee Report 4-13(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 1996-97 Main Estimates |
| 7. | Written Questions | |
| 8. | Returns to Written Questions | |
| 9. | Replies to Opening Address | - Tabled Document 1-13(3), Report of the Commission on MLA Compensation |
| 10. | Petitions | |
| 11. | Reports of Standing and Special Committees | 20. Report of Committee of the Whole |
| 12. | Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills | 21. Third Reading of Bills |
| 13. | Tabling of Documents | 22. Orders of the Day |
| 14. | Notices of Motion | |
| 15. | Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills | |
| 16. | Motions | |
| 17. | First Reading of Bills | |

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, May 23, 1996, at 1:30 p.m.

--- ADJOURNMENT

- Bill 15, Loan Authorization Act, 1996-97
- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
- . Bill 17, Business Corporations Act

Page 581

- 18. Second Reading of Bills
- 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and

Other Matters

Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

Bill 11, Appropriation Act, 1996-97

Committee Report 1-13(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the