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**HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 13, 2008**

Pages 273 to 310

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Hon. Paul Delorey**  
(Hay River North)

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(Tu Nedhe)

**Ms. Wendy Bisaro**  
(Frame Lake)

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Box 1320  
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784  
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

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## Table of Contents

<b>Prayer</b> .....	273
<b>Ministers' Statements</b> .....	273
11-16(2): Tourism Product Diversification and Market Program (B. McLeod).....	273
12-16(2): Human Resource Update (B. McLeod) .....	273
<b>Members' Statements</b> .....	274
G.W.N.T. Client Service Policy and Customer Relations (Abernethy) .....	274
Impact of G.N.W.T. Affirmative Action Policy on Persons with Disabilities (Bisaro).....	275
Devolution and Resource Revenue Sharing (Menicoche) .....	275
Peel River Bridge (Krutko).....	276
Infrastructure Requirements in Constituency (Beaulieu).....	276
G.N.W.T. Support for Northern Youth Abroad (Bromley).....	277
Economic Losses from Migrant Workers (Ramsay).....	277
Appointments to N.W.T. Boards and Agencies (Hawkins).....	278
Deh Cho Bridge Concession Agreement with G.N.W.T. (Groenewegen).....	278
Mackenzie Valley Highway (McLeod).....	279
Shortage of Adequate Housing for Teachers in Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk (Jacobson).....	279
<b>Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery</b> .....	280
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	280
4-16(2): Amber Mandeville — Fort Resolution.....	280
<b>Oral Questions</b> .....	280
60-16(2): Procedure for Acquiring Government Identification (Abernethy) .....	280
61-16(2): Operational Support for Sport, Youth and Recreational Facilities (Beaulieu) .....	281
62-16(2): Shortage of Adequate Housing for Teachers in Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk (Jacobson) .....	281
63-16(2): Construction of the Peel River Bridge (Krutko).....	282
64-16(2): Aftercare Programs for Alcohol and Drug Treatment (Hawkins) .....	283
65-16(2): Devolution and Resource Revenue Sharing (Menicoche).....	284
66-16(2): Deh Cho Bridge Concession Agreement (Groenewegen).....	285
67-16(2): Economic Losses from Migrant Workers (Ramsay) .....	286
68-16(2): Deh Cho Bridge Project (Bromley) .....	287
69-16(2): Barriers to Hiring Persons with Disabilities (Bisaro) .....	288
70-16(2): Construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway (McLeod) .....	289
<b>Tabling of Documents</b> .....	290
<b>First Reading of Bills</b> .....	290
Bill 2 - Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008.....	290
<b>Second Reading of Bills</b> .....	290
Bill 2 - Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008.....	290
<b>Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters</b> .....	290
Bill 2 - Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008.....	290
<b>Report of Committee of the Whole</b> .....	310
<b>Orders of the Day</b> .....	310



**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Wednesday, February 13, 2008**

**Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Hon. Norman Yakeleya.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

Prayer.

**Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Item 2, Ministers' statement., Hon. Bob McLeod.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 11-16(2)  
TOURISM PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION  
AND MARKET PROGRAM

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the new Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program was officially launched by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on January 7, 2008.

This program will provide N.W.T. operators with the knowledge and means to reinvent or expand their tourism products and operations, to capitalize on changing markets, and to better meet the trends and demands that we anticipate will provide growth for our tourism industry in the future.

As part of the investment outlined in the Tourism 2010 strategy, Industry, Tourism and Investment and Northwest Territories Tourism have been engaged for two years in gathering research and analysis on tourism trends, product development, potential markets, and the capacity of our own tourism industry.

We have learned there is a large and growing market among high-income baby boomers in Canada and around the world for authentic travel experiences that will put them in touch with nature. The rugged, pristine and isolated nature of the Northwest Territories is a perfect fit for these travellers — our wilderness, wildlife, aboriginal culture, fresh air and country food all appeal to this targeted audience.

The new Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program will provide N.W.T. tourism operators with funding for business planning, product and product package development as well

as marketing support, to position their businesses to meet this future market.

This program has been developed in close consultation with the entire N.W.T. tourism industry and reflects our Assembly's commitment to a diversified economy and to the development of sustainable local economies through the development of small businesses.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is a real take-it-to-the-bank example of our government's ongoing commitment to the men and women who make up the tourism sector in the N.W.T. and who are the face of N.W.T. tourism to the world.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 12-16(2)  
HUMAN RESOURCE UPDATE

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, in keeping with my commitment to provide regular updates to Members of the House on Human Resources matters, I'm pleased to speak today about a couple of areas where we have made progress in and about services in place as we move forward.

Since the summer of 2006, we have been implementing e-tools to improve the quality and accuracy of pay and information for employees and managers. In December 2007 Aurora College and the divisional education employees started using the self-service Human Resources information system. All government employees of the Northwest Territories are now on self-service, with the exception of fieldworker employees in areas such as firefighters. Employees can now enter their time and leave as they earn or use it and can keep their own personal information up to date.

This program also includes a feature which allows pay to be divided between more than one bank account. Approved overtime is now paid in the period it is earned rather than being weeks behind. This provides both quicker payment for employees and more accurate expenditure information for managers.

Through the Employee and Family Assistance Program, the Government of the Northwest Territories offers employees and their immediate family members access to a confidential

counselling and support service to assist with a number of issues in people's lives.

Over the past year one of the priorities was to increase active services for G.N.W.T. employees in all communities. The most recent quarterly report from the Employee and Family Assistance Program provider shows a marked increase in the number of employees accessing services from outside Yellowknife. Employees are also taking full advantage of the variety of service options, from personal counselling to online assistance.

Over the past five years the Northern Student and Graduate programs have proven to be very successful in bringing Northern post-secondary students and graduates into the G.N.W.T. workforce. The programs for 2008 and 2009 are already in the application and review stages, with applications being received from many students interested in summer work. In the Intern Program, departments are now interviewing potential graduates for placement beginning in the summer, and work is currently underway with planning for placements of nursing graduates.

This week all G.N.W.T. employees will be invited to once again participate in an employee engagement and satisfaction survey. This survey is part of a national initiative by all territorial and provincial jurisdictions which began three years ago. The G.N.W.T. is committed to doing this survey every two years. The survey results are then compared to the results from all other jurisdictions, allowing us to determine what areas we are stronger in and which areas need additional work. Survey results will be available and shared with Members in June 2008.

As we look forward to the weeks ahead and the difficult decisions that will take place around priorities, the Department of Human Resources is prepared to help mitigate the impact on G.N.W.T. employees. This government has made a clear commitment to the retention of staff through the Staff Retention policy, where the emphasis is on keeping the knowledge, skills and abilities that employees have gained during their time with the G.N.W.T.

We will work with deputy ministers to ensure we maximize opportunities for affected employees to find alternative work within the G.N.W.T. As well, individuals have been designated within Human Resources to support employees through changes that are affecting them or their workplace. As I've previously noted, employees have access to the Employee and Family Assistance Program, which offers a range of services related to personal and professional change.

Mr. Speaker, we are constantly working to improve human resource management programs and services. My door is always open to Members

about issues and ideas so we can improve services, address concerns and develop programs that support the recruitment and retention of a strong public service.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Abernethy.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON G.W.N.T. CLIENT SERVICE POLICY AND CUSTOMER RELATIONS

**Mr. Abernethy:** I continually hear departments in this government talking about providing quality customer service to clients of the G.N.W.T. This includes both internal and external clients. I believe that the vast majority of employees within the G.N.W.T. strive to deliver high quality and timely services to their respective clients. Unfortunately, sometimes this doesn't happen. Often when an employee fails to provide high quality and timely service to a client, it has less to do with the employee's willingness or desire to help; rather, it is due to strict or rigid guidelines or operational procedures put in place by the bureaucracy and a fear of retribution if the employee were to take some additional steps outside the policy or procedure to assist their clients.

Recently an example of this came to my attention. The specifics deal with the Department of Transportation, but it could easily relate to any department within the G.N.W.T.

A constituent of mine needed to obtain picture ID for her grandson. She went to Motor Vehicles. It was minus 37 degrees Celsius outside. She arrived ten minutes before the opening hour of 9 a.m. and found a lineup in place outside the door of people waiting to get in.

Now, although the office doesn't open until nine, it would have been reasonable to make an exception on that day when the temperatures were so extreme. I'm not suggesting that staff should have opened their desks and begun serving those clients until 9 a.m., but they could have let them into the lobby so they weren't outside freezing. When questioned by the constituent, they were informed the policy does not permit staff to open the office early. Where's the logic? In extreme weather situations, opening the door would have made good sense.

Once inside, my constituent was asked to provide identification confirming her identity to prove who she was in order to support her grandson getting his picture ID. She produced her fancy new driver's licence, which she had obtained from the Department of Transportation a few months prior — the one with a nice new hologram. She was

informed that due to policy, they were not able to accept it as a valid piece of ID and that she would need to provide another form of ID and a copy of her power bill to prove that she was a resident of Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories — exactly the same items she had produced when she got her fancy new driver's licence just a couple of months prior.

I'm sure the employee would have liked to accept the driver's licence. The employee was probably as frustrated as the client. However, policy would not allow her to use her own judgment and accept the current driver's licence. This is ridiculous.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Abernethy:** As a government we need policies and procedures to ensure the consistent delivery of services. However, we need to remember the human element and allow for flexibility. We need to empower employees and allow them some level of latitude so they can use common sense in providing services to clients. We need to be less bureaucratic and more human.

At the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister Responsible for the Department of Transportation questions concerning customer relations within DOT.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
IMPACT OF G.N.W.T. AFFIRMATIVE  
ACTION POLICY ON PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Bisaro:** I would like to bring to the attention of this House an inequality that exists in the N.W.T. public service. For quite a few years now, we've had an Affirmative Action Policy in place to enable the hiring of certain target groups of Northerners as G.N.W.T. employees. This policy is not working for a specific, disadvantaged group of N.W.T. residents who need to be recognized.

Persons with disabilities in the G.N.W.T. public service make up a paltry 0.4 per cent of the total number of employees. The percentage of persons with disabilities in the general population of the N.W.T., however, is 13 per cent — hardly an equal representation.

Statistics from October 31, 2007, show a total of 4,688 employees in the G.N.W.T. and only 19 persons with disabilities employed by the G.N.W.T. By comparison, the civil service in several other provinces have per cent employment for persons with disabilities at rates seven to ten times higher than ours. In this instance, the G.N.W.T. is at the bottom of barrel.

"But you can't compare provinces to the N.W.T.," they say. "We're not like them." How about the statistics for the federal public service in the N.W.T. then? That's a fair comparison. Persons with disabilities working for the federal public service in the N.W.T. are 4.3 per cent of the workforce. That's 11 times our rate.

The argument is often made that persons with disabilities must self-identify, so we really don't know the true numbers. All the jurisdictions I used for comparison also use self-identification, so I think it's fair.

The G.N.W.T. Affirmative Action Policy states, in part: "...committed to a public service that is representative of the population that it serves." We can't be that committed to equal representation when persons with disabilities are only 0.4 per cent of our public service.

The policy also references target groups and identifies persons with disabilities as one of those groups who should receive preferential hiring, but persons with disabilities are listed as P2, second on the priority list of three groups and in the same category as indigenous non-aboriginals, a rather large group.

Persons with disabilities are the most disadvantaged affirmative action group in Canada in terms of education, employment, income and so on. We need to remedy this situation as soon as possible.

I seek unanimous approval to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

We need to remedy this situation as soon as possible and can do that by removing barriers to hiring persons with disabilities. We must: (1) change the Affirmative Action Policy to show persons with disabilities as P1 priority — a no-cost budget item, and (2) establish a career assistance program for persons with disabilities. I can provide information on that to the Minister of Human Resources for whom I will have questions later on.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DEVOLUTION AND RESOURCE  
REVENUE SHARING

**Mr. Menicoche:** [English translation not provided.]

I just wanted to translate what I just said. It doesn't reflect here in the Member's statement, but just the fact that people are coming here and exploiting our available lands and resources and gas and oil, yet our government is in trouble financially.

As well, for the most part, for our population, our unemployment rate is not that high, especially in the regions and communities. Why are we in this situation?

People expect all of us as MLAs and our government to put us in power to act and govern our Territory, yet we don't seem to have the strength or the political will to continue with our resource-revenue sharing discussions. Today I'd like to let the government know. I know that Mr. Premier was down in Ottawa early in our term, and he says he was stonewalled by our federal government when he requested royalty resource revenue discussions as well as devolution discussions.

I think it's still up to us to provide the willpower to begin those discussions, to have an office here in the North, to talk with our other political organizations. We've got other aboriginal jurisdictions that we need support from, and I would urge our government to continue those discussions.

One of the ways, too, that I believe we can make headway is if we do pursue this heritage fund idea. Stop the flow from going to Ottawa. Put it in a trust fund until we as political organizations can agree how to spend those resource revenues that are leaving the North. I believe that's another priority that our government should concentrate on and pursue. Mahsi cho.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PEEL RIVER BRIDGE

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, we've been hearing a lot about the Deh Cho Bridge. But today I want to talk about the Peel River Bridge.

It's a bridge that's been around for some time. The Inuvik Chamber of Commerce was looking at the Peel River Bridge back in 1981. They contacted an engineering firm to look at the viability of building a bridge across the Peel River. They were looking in regard to finding ways to improve the transportation to the oil and gas industry in the Beaufort Sea, which was booming back in the early '80s and into the middle of the '80s.

Yet very little has been done by way of work from this government in regard to looking at other bridges, other potential transportation that links us across the Northwest Territories such as the Peel River, the Liard River, the Mackenzie River up around Tsiigehtchic. I think that as a government we're spending a lot of money on one bridge. But I'm wondering what are we doing to other bridges throughout the Northwest Territories. We had to cancel the bridge in regard to the Bear River because of cost overruns.

I'm wondering, as a government, what are we doing universally to ensure that we're looking at all our

infrastructure throughout the Northwest Territories to see exactly what the real cost at the end of the day is going to be to improve our infrastructure, to put permanent bridges in all across where the ferry operations are? That's an issue where we're basically having to look at alternative ways of crossing our river systems.

Again, going back to my point about the Peel River, which has been in the works for some 26 years, the Chamber of Commerce in Inuvik was looking at this item along with the community of Fort McPherson. For some time we've been talking about it, talking about it and talking about it. Yet as a government I'd just like to know how much resources have been spent on the Peel River Bridge, considering that we've spent in excess of \$9 million on the Deh Cho Bridge.

I think it's important as a government that if we're making these types of investments, we look at the total picture of the Northwest Territories, see what exactly the total infrastructure costs are in regard to our infrastructure from highways, bridges, roads, airports and whatnot. In that way we know what the long-term financial implications are going to be to this government.

I think it's important in this government that we do have this debate and that we do look at the possibility of the implications in regard to financial implications and how we're going to get the work done.

I will have some questions to the Minister of Transportation on this matter. Thank you.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS IN CONSTITUENCY

**Mr. Beaulieu:** [English translation not provided.] Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, back on November 28 I spoke about infrastructure needs for the youth in Tu Nedhe, the Tu Nedhe riding. On Monday I talked about providing support to communities to allow them to hire qualified recreation staff. Today I would like to talk about input that I have received to date on the issues from the communities.

In Lutselk'e they have a new arena, but they do not have the staff to properly maintain the facility. As well, the community is not fully prepared for the high O&M costs of running a community arena. And they still have no Zamboni.

Keep in mind that Lutselk'e is an isolated community of under 400 people. You can put the entire community population in the multiplex arena here and still have room to spare. It's clear that a community of this size will have a lot of difficulty to operate such an essential piece of infrastructure.



They simply do not have the human or financial resources to do so. They need help from our government.

If run and maintained by properly trained staff, sport, recreation and youth facilities can have a positive impact on the community. In Fort Resolution an example of this is from April to December '06. When the arena was closed, the local RCMP reported a total of 26 youths that had been charged with various crimes. When the arena was opened from December to April '07, a total of only four youth were charged. Unfortunately, the arena was closed again from April to December the following year, and 18 more youth were charged with various crimes.

The difference is significant, and it sends a message that is loud and clear. Adequate recreation for youth facilities run by properly trained staff can produce immediate results. In my October 19 Member's statement I briefly talked about resources, tools, expertise needed for communities to effectively address and deliver youth and recreation programs and services. Today I would once again reiterate the urgency to provide these supports.

Mr. Speaker, on the MACA website it states that MACA recognizes that sport, recreation and physical activity are essential to the health and well-being of citizens and the community. The department provides support by assisting the community to provide local support, recreation, physical activities and programs and services.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the department's mandate is clear: to provide support to communities, to provide local sport and recreation programs. According to my communities the support being provided is insufficient. The department needs to re-examine its priorities and provide efforts where the communities can see immediate, positive results.

Later on I will follow up my statement with questions to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON G.N.W.T. SUPPORT FOR NORTHERN YOUTH ABROAD

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, youth are our future and a clear priority of this Assembly. I rise to report on a highly successful program, that of the Northern Youth Abroad charitable organization. Through the

considerable hard work of many, many volunteers, this dedicated group promotes leadership, cross-cultural awareness, individual career goals and international citizenship to our youth across the Northwest Territories.

Northern Youth Abroad helps youth aged 15 to 21 to understand themselves and their personal cultural strengths and context within the Canadian and global societies. It provides a life-changing experience that's designed specifically to address the needs and aspirations of Northern youth.

NYA's unique model of education through work and travel is highly effective, stimulates increased education and contributes to a new generation of leaders for northern communities. Over 90 per cent of Northern Youth Abroad alumni have graduated from high school, with many in post-secondary education and some already leaders in their home community.

In 2005, its first year in the N.W.T., Northern Youth Abroad was 100 per cent funded by this government. However, it is on track to reducing the need for government support up to 25 per cent by 2009. This year they are counting on only 33 per cent funding from the G.N.W.T., this while increasing the number of youth participants.

I commend the Ministers of Education, Culture and Employment and Municipal and Community Affairs for their wise investment in the Northern Youth Abroad program. The organization has proven worthy, attracting support from industry, the non-profit sector, local businesses and aboriginal governments. Our key support provides the leverage needed for ongoing support from these partners. This year over 50 youths from throughout the N.W.T. applied for 16 spaces in the Northern Youth Abroad program, reflecting both the need for and response to their innovative and relevant work.

So let's ensure that this government continues to support the participation of our youth in this highly successful and territorial-wide program. The need is clear, and the return to our communities is huge. Mahsi.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ECONOMIC LOSSES FROM MIGRANT WORKERS

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to continue with the topic I raised yesterday in the House when I spoke about the need to address the 3,300 migrant workers and the \$350 million they take with them every year. I've recently been advised that De Beers Canada is, as of January 1, 2008, providing a \$600 per month allowance to employees living more than 500 kilometres from Edmonton, which they consider as the point of pickup.

I can appreciate that De Beers does have a business to run and does need to have some flexibility. However, when they are making things that much easier for employees to reside in southern Canada, then we as a government have to say something.

Ten years ago when I would travel home from the south and board a plane in Edmonton, I would know close to half the people on that plane. Today I'd be lucky to know three or four people, and I am in the business of knowing people. The planes flying into Yellowknife today are filled with migrant workers.

I'd like to say again today that something needs to happen to mitigate this practice. How closely are the socio-economic agreements being monitored? We still have high pockets of unemployment in our small communities, and opportunities need to be given to those who need them. I receive calls and e-mails from people, even here in Yellowknife, who can't get a foot in the door of the big three diamond mines.

We need to look at speaking to the mining companies to look outside the current catchment areas. Contracts with companies doing work for them should include workers from the Northwest Territories, whether they're from Inuvik, Fort Smith or Fort Simpson. If we need to look at community registries, let's do that. Training and opportunities are passing Northerners by in favour of relatives and friends from southern Canada. It is imperative that we identify those workers in our communities who require opportunities.

As a government we should also be trying to help communities like Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Inuvik and Yellowknife get a coordinated campaign together to attract workers to live in our Territory. We need to find ways to roll out the welcome mat to migrant workers. Our communities have lots to offer, Mr. Speaker. Let's help them get that message into the hands of the migrant workers.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of ITI at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
APPOINTMENTS TO N.W.T.  
BOARDS AND AGENCIES

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, as we all are aware, there are many appointments to boards, agencies and commission positions that are either the responsibility of the G.N.W.T. or are done through statutory appointments by this Assembly. I believe that, except for cases where either specialized knowledge, circumstances or skills are required, every effort should be made to appoint Northern residents to these positions and that a condition of

such an appointment require ongoing residency in the N.W.T. If a person moves outside of the Northwest Territories, as we've recently seen using the example of one of our legislative commission appointments, he or she should be deemed to have resigned their appointment immediately.

Furthermore, there are no real mechanisms to review a person in these positions until the term expires. If there are concerns with their effectiveness, ability or quality of work, we should be able to re-evaluate the position with justifiable reasons to overlook that concern.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that every year an increasing number of Northerners are furthering their education and developing skill sets that enhance their ability to serve the N.W.T. residents.

I strongly encourage this government and this Assembly to develop and adopt protocols to ensure that persons appointed to statutory positions or boards are residents of the N.W.T. for the term of their appointment. The boards and agencies review gives us a great opportunity to look at this and deal with this problem.

The residency issue has become an increasingly important element to the N.W.T. and has even been applied to MLAs, with the recent adjustment to the eligibility to be a representative. It isn't a stretch to require two more conditions to persons appointed by this House.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DEH CHO BRIDGE CONCESSION  
AGREEMENT WITH G.N.W.T.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, today I want to tell you how completely disappointed — and disappointed is not a strong enough word — I am with the leadership of our past and present government that would have allowed a process such as that associated with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to be entered into. As the details, which were so often withheld, now slowly come to light, the financial harm that our government has been exposed to is unbelievable.

The Deh Cho Bridge will be the most costly piece of capital infrastructure ever embarked upon by our government. And lest you doubt that it is our government — and our government alone — that will underwrite all costs and liabilities associated with this project, let me assure you that the walls between this project and full transparency and accountability under the guise of a private corporation is a farce.

The confidentiality of the details around this project for everything from the concession agreement to the expenditure of the \$9 million to date that the government guaranteed has been nothing short of a licence for representatives of our government to

enter into a deal that has ramifications for immeasurable financial harm to our government. But I'm sure the Finance Minister is already aware of all that.

This is absolutely wrong and flies in the face of everything that democracy and public accountable government stands for. The terms and conditions of this agreement have been secretive, and I'm just beginning to learn why.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to assure the public that I have become privy to agreements entered into by your government that will be exposed to the full light of public scrutiny. Some people may think this is a laughing matter. In view of the real, serious, basic needs of the people we represent and the fiscal pressures our Premier talks about, this is a matter of very serious concern.

Today I'll have questions for the Premier. Tomorrow morning, Mr. Speaker, I will be on a panel on the CBC radio phone-in show from 7:15 'til 8 a.m., when members of our constituencies can phone in and ask questions about this project. I'm sorry to report CBC has told me that our government has declined to have anyone on that panel to answer any of these questions. I would suggest they probably don't want to answer to the public for this.

Mr. Speaker, I want a full disclosure of everything that has transpired around this deal, and that is what I will pursue.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Premier's Sessional Statement with some interest. I'd like to propose today my partial solution as to how we can realize these five initiatives that the Premier mentioned with one project. And that project, Mr. Speaker, is the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

We could build our future by giving our residents training opportunities. We may end up with a trained workforce that could go to work in Fort McMurray because the mines don't seem to want them. We could reduce the cost of living, Mr. Speaker — and that's a given — by allowing products to be trucked in to all the communities.

By being part of the decision-making process and lending our support to this project, we could manage our land. We could maximize opportunities by giving businesses and individuals an opportunity to benefit from the construction of the highway with equipment and services and all the other related work that would come.

Ottawa speaks about Arctic sovereignty all the time, Mr. Speaker. This would give them an opportunity

to put their money where their mouth is and have a road from right up to Tuktoyaktuk because residents of the Northwest Territories are a little tired of lip service.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier mentioned in his Sessional Statement that these five initiatives would provide a road map for our future. I'm saying, let's give them a road that they can use the map on.

This project makes sense, Mr. Speaker. It makes more sense than a proposed Deh Cho Bridge. Let's do a project that would benefit all the Northwest Territories, instead of one project that would benefit just a few.

Mr. Speaker, give me the opportunity, and I will vote no to the Deh Cho Bridge, and I will vote yes to the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SHORTAGE OF ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR TEACHERS IN SACHS HARBOUR AND PAULATUK

**Mr. Jacobson:** Today I would like to talk about the lack of adequate housing for teachers in Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour.

As you know, attracting and keeping good teachers is a challenge in many of our smaller isolated communities. Housing for teachers is a major factor in the communities' ability to attract and keep good teachers. Some have been fortunate enough to effectively address this problem, and Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok are two such communities. Unfortunately, Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk are on the other side of the issue and in desperate need of adequate housing for teachers.

In both communities, at one time or another, teachers have been forced to look for housing in local housing organizations. In Paulatuk some teachers have rented privately, and the rent levels in the community contributed to short tenures in the community.

In Sachs Harbour some of the teachers found accommodations by renting spare rooms from the local Co-op. And when the situation was no longer viable, the teachers moved into the health centre with the nursing staff.

There are a number of units in the community that could be made available for teachers' housing. However, this could negatively impact the local housing market and then that organization would be facing similar problems.

The most viable option would be to have a teachers-only housing unit, such as a fourplex, in each of those communities facing teacher housing issues, such as Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour. As we all know, teachers are a valuable resource for

our communities, and they should not have to worry about housing issues.

Later today I'll be asking questions to the appropriate minister.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery, Hon. Norman Yakeleya.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** It gives me great pleasure to recognize four elders from Sahtu, specifically Deline Elder Andrew-John Kenny, Mr. Baton, Mr. Modeste, Mr. Alfred Taniton — four of the wise men of the Sahtu Dene.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 7, acknowledgements, Mr. Beaulieu.

### Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4-16(2)  
AMBER MANDEVILLE — FORT RESOLUTION

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Today I wish to acknowledge a young athlete and role model, 16-year-old Amber Mandeville of Fort Resolution.

Amber enjoys being out on the land, helping others, giving meat to elders, and taking visitors up the Talston River and Jean River. Last year, Amber was chosen as top junior ranger and was also a recipient of the Youth Award for Akaitcho Territory Government. She volunteers as a gym supervisor, coaching younger children in badminton and soccer. Amber is the only youth from Fort Resolution in this year's Arctic Winter Games.

Please join me in acknowledging and congratulating this young role model and dedicated athlete, Amber Mandeville of Fort Resolution. Good luck, Amber.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 8, oral questions. Mr. Abernethy.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 60-16(2)  
PROCEDURE FOR ACQUIRING  
GOVERNMENT IDENTIFICATION

**Mr. Abernethy:** My question could be directed to any of the ministers with services directly to the public, but I'm going to focus them on the Minister of Transportation, given that my Member's statement made specific reference to them.

I understand the value of policies and procedures. I understand why we have certain opening times

such as 9 a.m. But I would suggest, in situations where weather is extreme, that it might be reasonable to open the doors and allow the people into the lobby. Policies are not written that way, and they do not allow that.

I'd like to encourage the Minister of Transportation to review the policies on when doors are opened, to ensure that people aren't standing outside in the bitter cold.

**Some honourable Members:** Have a heart

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure Members of this House, specifically Mr. Abernethy, that the department does have a heart. The department is working on the schedule.

I want to thank the Member for bringing this issue to my attention. I will be reviewing this issue with my staff and ensuring that when there's specific issues such as cold weather, we have a provision there to allow people to come into our office a little earlier than the scheduled time we had posted for the public.

**Mr. Abernethy:** In my Member's statement I also talked about our lovely drivers' licences, the ones with the nice little holograms on them. To get those, you need to go in with a picture ID as well as proof that you live in the Northwest Territories, often a power bill. Once you get that card, you would think that would be a valid piece of ID, which suggests you wouldn't need to necessarily bring in a different form of valid ID when you come back again.

In the situation I described, the person went forward with that nice piece of ID, took it forward. They were told, by policy: "Not acceptable. We need you to bring in another form of picture ID and the same power bill that you brought in three months prior when you got your driver's licence the first time."

Once again, I'd like the Minister to commit to reviewing their policies to ensure that those lovely IDs that we spent so much money on creating, buying and delivering to our public would be useful as official ID within the government when people return with those same drivers' licences.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, again I thank the Member for bringing the constituent's concerns to my attention. I would look at the policies and reasons and be willing to work with the Member on this specific issue in terms of the new general identification cards and the policy that we have in place. I would be happy to work with the Member on this issue.

QUESTION 61-16(2)  
OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FOR SPORT,  
YOUTH AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Today I talked about the importance of providing adequate support to deliver sport recreation youth programs to my communities and to another riding. My questions are for Minister of MACA.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister going to do to assist the community of Lutselk'e regarding problems associated with the operation costs of a new arena?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** We have been working with the community of Lutselk'e for some time, since the beginning of this project, when we came forward with a partnership arrangement to build and construct the arena. That has been done. The arena's been opened for operation since January of last year.

Since then, we've continued to work with them on a number of different areas, including some of the deficiencies that had to be rectified. We also worked with them to identify, through their O&M dollars, priorities of investment for this facility. We've also provided, through the new deal, additional dollars for capital that they can utilize for enhancements such as a Zamboni or other things in the area of capital for the facility. We've also worked with them to identify an adequate source of utility funding for this facility.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** On a previous occasion the Minister replied to one of my questions about working for sport and youth infrastructure from different sources. Can the Minister tell me if he has worked directly with the communities of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution in regard to leveraging dollars from other sources?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, as indicated earlier, we had an excellent partnership arrangement with Lutselk'e on this facility. The community had wanted to see this facility a lot bigger than what we had initially targeted to build in the community. They came up with some of their own funding from their own sources to increase the size, increase the footprint of this facility.

We haven't worked directly with them to attract new dollars. We have worked with other communities such as Nahanni Butte to spend money on their gym, but in the community of Lutselk'e we haven't. Not as a specific community but through the gas tax program, we are working to try to expand the criteria so that the smaller communities and the larger ones in the Territories can utilize some of their funding towards recreational facilities. Thank you.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** In one of the previous replies from the Minister pertaining to the new deal, the Minister indicated there would be evaluations on the new deal. Can the Minister tell me if the evaluation of the new deal has been planned for Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution?

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the quick answer to that is no. The evaluation is something we plan to do. At this stage it's too early to go down and do the evaluations in the communities. We'd wait a little while longer before we start that.

QUESTION 62-16(2)  
SHORTAGE OF ADEQUATE HOUSING  
FOR TEACHERS IN SACHS HARBOUR  
AND PAULATUK

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Speaker, today I spoke about the shortage of teachers' housing in the communities of Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour and its impact on the communities' local housing market. I would like to ask the question of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Is the Minister aware of the shortage of teachers' housing in the communities of Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member for asking that particular question. Yes, we are aware as a department. As the Members will know, it is a Territorial-wide issue. Housing is a real challenge for professionals living in the community, whether it be nursing, health workers, social workers and most recently the teachers as well. So we are aware of it, and we are working with the communities and the N.W.T. Housing Corporation to find some solutions to this whole ordeal of housing shortages for the professionals in the communities.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister: will the department look at putting four-plex units into Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour to address the shortage of teacher housing?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we are working with different parties. We're doing a pilot project in one of the regions. We're doing design work and having the Housing Corporation guarantee financing as a third party because the G.N.W.T. does not get involved with housing. We are looking at options of how we as a department can get involved to find a solution to finding or building these units in the communities. We are looking for partners in the communities.

Just to let the Member know, my department staff has met with the Beau-Del board of education as well and also various parties from the Beau-Del area, and they did indeed stress this as well. So we are doing what we can as a department to work with that.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Minister, for your comments.

Mr. Speaker, would the Minister commit to immediately look at this urgent issue and meet with the communities and myself to discuss options for addressing this important issue?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, yes, it would be an honour to go visit Nunakput. We did arrange to visit the community, but due to circumstances, we couldn't visit. We are planning to make arrangements to visit the community. Probably after session sometime we'll make some arrangements to go visit the community. Mahsi.

QUESTION 63-16(2)  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
PEEL RIVER BRIDGE

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, in regard to my Member's statement, I touched on the proposal that was recommended by the Inuvik Chamber of Commerce to look at a bridge across the Peel River in 1981. Back then the estimated cost was \$2 million for a one-lane bridge and \$4 million for a two-lane bridge. They wanted \$20,000 to do the survey, the report and the assessment. Yet some 26 years later we're still talking about it.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation exactly what are we doing as a government to look at all our bridge crossings in the Northwest Territories and remove our ice bridges and replace them with permanent bridges?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, the Member for Mackenzie Delta is correct in terms of the needed infrastructure across the Northwest Territories, especially the issue that he's brought up. In the future I do see bridges across the Mackenzie, across the Liard, across the Peel, across the Great Bear. In terms of these needs, of course, we rely heavily on the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to the day when we can announce some of these bridges that are desperately needed to get across the rivers and to deal with climate change and the amount of traffic that's coming into our communities.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, as we all know, there are some major landfills in the Beaufort Sea in regard to oil and gas leases being let go. We start looking at the possibility of another boom again in the Beaufort. But in order to serve that industry, we have to ensure that we have the capacity by way of infrastructure to basically supply that industry, like we are with the mines.

I'd like to ask the Minister: has your department looked at any surveys for the Peel River in regard to a possible bridge?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the House and to the Member, we are looking at bridges in certain areas for communities and regions in terms of economic development, such as he mentioned. We are certainly looking at the area of Tsiigehtchic in terms of improving that crossing, in terms of having a plan, an initiative to increase the winter crossing there.

Certainly, the Peel River is high on our list in terms of looking at infrastructure to increase development into the communities such as the Bear River and other bridges that we see desperately need to be in place to support the economic development that's happening in the North.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I heard a yes somewhere in that answer.

This issue has been around for some time. I know the Gwich'in Development Corporation is looking at the possibility of a P3. Since we already have a patent down with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, if we get \$9 million to do this, we'll go ahead and do it.

I'd like to ask the Minister: is he open to looking at the possibility of a P3 initiative using the patented Deh Cho Bridge Corporation model so that we can go ahead and build a bridge for \$6 million, which is a lot less than \$165 million? I'd like to ask the Minister: would he consider a P3 for the Peel River Bridge with the Gwich'in Development Corporation?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, the Member brings up a very interesting proposal. With all the infrastructure in the Northwest Territories in terms of the Peel River crossing, the Mackenzie crossing, the Bear crossing, we have some models out there. We have industry wanting to come in.

This department is looking for partnerships in terms of improving our infrastructure down the Mackenzie Valley, the Beaufort, in through the South Slave. We're looking for partnerships. I'm interested in looking at partnerships. I'm interested in sitting down with the Member for Mackenzie Delta, with cabinet here, and looking at all the possibilities where we can see infrastructure being built in the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that pitch has already been made. There has been a request to look at this.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he can go back to his department and reopen those negotiations, since the proposal has already been issued and the request has been made. I'd like to have the Minister, along with myself, meet with the appropriate parties regardless — the bridge development corporation, the MACA group, whoever — and get on with this project, and we'll use the Deh Cho model.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, is the Member saying that we use the Deh Cho model? I'm not going to make the presumption that the Deh Cho model is a good model to use.

I'll commit to look at this request by the Member in terms of what's been done so far to initiate the Peel River Bridge project. I'll look at it, and I'll be happy to sit down with the Member. I'd like to have my colleague see if we want to proceed further. I'll ask the department to dust the information off and bring it to my attention. I'll be happy to sit down with the Member and talk about it.

QUESTION 64-16(2)  
AFTERCARE PROGRAMS FOR ALCOHOL  
AND DRUG TREATMENT

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services on the issue of aftercare to persons who have undergone addictions treatment, I quote from her letter to me dated February 5, 2008, which I tabled yesterday. The Minister says:

"Following discharge, as part of the post-treatment plan, the client is expected to take responsibility for contacting the referral service to ensure that ongoing treatment and support will be provided at the community level through the Mental Health and Addictions counsellors...."

I would like to ask the Minister what the letter means by "referral service"?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the Member may be able to understand the meaning of that if he just reads the previous paragraph, which reads:

"Part of the treatment process is discharge planning where the client is actively involved in and takes responsibility for decisions and planning focused on maintaining sobriety post-treatment. This involves identifying community supports and making pre-discharge contacts to prepare for return to the community. Counselling services, AA groups, supportive family and friends, etc., are identified and contacted, if that is the wish of the client."

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that post-treatment and aftercare programs are available, and the staff of the Department of Health and Social Services are actively involved. You know, we take the addiction issues and helping the people who want to address that very seriously.

I am very serious when I say that a huge part of recovery and healing is individual responsibility. I think the Member should give the people more credit in terms of controlling their own conduct and their own recovery process.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Well, I guess that if the Minister didn't want to answer the question, she could have just said no.

Mr. Speaker, my next question — and I'm hoping to get a better answer out of this. I would also infer from the response in that letter that, if the client does not contact the referral service, there is no follow-up at the local level by the Mental Health Addictions counsellors. So the problem is, what is the Minister's difficulty with the issue of the addictions treatment folks contacting the client to ensure that there's some follow-up? She seems to have some apprehension about it. What's the problem?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** There is absolutely no program — I mean, there is absolutely no problem. There is no problem. I'm happy to give answers to the Members, and I think that should be considered. The answer that I'm saying is that it's a partnership effort, it's a group effort. And our staff is ready and available and provides support as clients need them, the bottom line always being that it is always client focused.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate an honest answer from the Minister. There is no program, unfortunately. It's great that she corrected herself because probably she wasn't allowed to reveal that fact.

The fact is: what is the problem here with this situation? Do we hog-tie these mental counsellors and addictions folks to not contact their clients? Is there anything that stops them from contacting their clients? If there is nothing, then why don't we follow through on this and create a program that allows them to phone these clients? I am sure they are not that busy.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the issue of addictions and pre- and post-care treatment and the need for the Assembly to work really hard to address this issue in the whole spectrum is really serious. I would like to ask the Member to take that issue very seriously. This is not a game.

I am telling the Members that I sent in a two-page letter that explains the pre- and post-care program dealing with the addictions issue. It states very clearly what it says.

I am telling the Member again that clients are involved in all aspects of dealing with the addiction issue. They will have to take a driver's seat. Our staff are available to work with them in any way they want to have it done. I don't know what else I can say to that.

**Mr. Speaker:** A final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I wish to assure everyone that this is not a game by any standard. The fact is that this department seems to stonewall the approach of building up any relationship with these clients of aftercare. Mr. Speaker, I am sure we do better care

with follow-up of our capital assets and taking care of them than we do with these clients after they receive treatment.

Do we have a process that we can engage today that would allow, and set it up in such a way, that these addiction treatment counsellors, once they are done a program with these clients, we can continue to follow up with them from time to time?

Treatment is a two-way process. We don't have to wait for them to call. We should reach out and take their problems very seriously through aftercare. Like I said, we take care of capital assets a heck of a lot better than we do people who struggle with difficulties in their lives.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I am glad to hear that the Member acknowledges that treatment programs are a two-way process. That is precisely my point, Mr. Speaker. That's what my letter says.

I say it again: there are lots of programs and services available to those who want to take advantage of them. The success of dealing with addiction depends on the individual's motivation and their facility to deal with that. The 1-800 number the Member was referring to has to do specifically with messages to Nats' eejé K'eh, where those clients who had been there could use that number if they wanted to.

But it is expected that all of those who are in recovery programs develop their own personal contact and their own way of dealing with that. We have to respect them to do that. And when they want assistance, it is available.

QUESTION 65-16(2)  
DEVOLUTION AND  
RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING

**Mr. Menicoche:** The questions are for the Premier with respect to my Member's statement earlier.

In my language, when we say, Nahendeh it means: "This is our land." I believe that should be the focus of any discussions the government has with Ottawa or with other aboriginal groups: to build a focus around it. Mr. Premier had discussions in Ottawa which didn't go very well — if we can ask the circumstances around those discussions there.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, this gives me an opportunity, from the Member's question, to set the record straight and clear up some of the comments that have been put out there through the media about the fact that my discussions with the Prime Minister went badly and, as a result, I've come back home to say no devolution talks are occurring.

The fact is, early after the election, I had an opportunity to meet with the regional aboriginal leadership across the Territories. We had an

opportunity to sit down and give an indication of the fiscal environment we were in, as well as ask if there was support for moving ahead with the continued talks on devolution and resource revenue sharing. It has remained about the same as it had in the previous government, with some groups agreeing and other groups saying they had other interests at this time.

It was after that meeting that I said — and I stated at that point and, as well, informed Members — that reviewing our fiscal situation and where we are at with these discussions, we would be prepared, or at least from my end, to put that on the back burner. So it's not a result of our discussions with Ottawa. Ottawa, in fact, is favourable to continuing the discussion. But we have to make sure the deal we get is one that will actually benefit Northerners.

**Mr. Menicoche:** Indeed, that is the focus I was looking at. How do we best work together with all the partners here in the North? One of the ways of doing it, I would suggest, is we still have to have some kind of office or some lead personnel to address this issue, to work the North and garner support from all our partners.

I don't have to remind the House how many millions of dollars continue to leave the North, how many millions of dollars worth of carats, of oil and gas, et cetera. If I can get Mr. Premier to state what kind of plan does he have in place to address this very important issue of ours?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, one of the areas of building on the relationship we have in the Northwest Territories between the Government of the Northwest Territories itself and the aboriginal leadership is a commitment to sit down on a quarterly basis to discuss issues of common interest where we can move forward together and build on that. That process we started in November and are following up, potentially having a meeting at the end of this month or early March, if we can hold the parties together.

We are committed to a process that we will formalize, and work with our regional aboriginal leadership and this government, and commonly discuss issues that are of interest to all parties where we can build on the strength we have already.

**Mr. Menicoche:** To have common ground, Mr. Speaker — and I've always said that our common enemy has to be greater than our common differences here in the North. How is Mr. Premier going to...? What strategies does he have in place to speak with other aboriginal groups?

I know in the past we have talked about the heritage fund idea, and it's a really good idea. Has the Premier addressed this with other aboriginal groups?



**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, let me restate the fact that we have established a working relationship on a quarterly basis with our regional aboriginal leadership and the Government of the Northwest Territories. We're formalizing the process where both parties would put agendas on the items and build on those. I have initially addressed the issue of devolution of resource revenue sharing to see if there is continued support or if we can grow that support. And we'll build on that situation.

I think, first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, when we talk of ourselves in the North, we must also present a business case to the rest of Canada about the benefits of getting a deal in the Northwest Territories as well. We can't just get a deal for the sake of a deal. We have to ensure we get the proper deal, where we see lasting benefits. If that means we come up with the solution of a heritage fund, I would say that is something we should seriously look at.

But first and foremost, before we can even invest in that or put money into it, we have to ensure that any dollars that do come North don't get swallowed up by the existing system we operate in.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**Mr. Menicoche:** I guess one of the biggest things, Mr. Speaker, is that outsiders continue to make money from our land and our resources. And our people are tired of that.

I'd like to ask the Premier: what kind of hammer can he discuss with the other aboriginal groups so that we can stop this flow and start keeping some of the resources that rightfully belong to us and our land? Mahsi.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, the position that already exists is through land claims that have been settled. Through those claims, as a number of Members around the table here are aware — and they are aware that these agreements are negotiated with the federal government — there is a category. They do get resource revenue sharing as part of the package through the claims. It is not as large as we would like in the North.

But if you take part of the Dene/Métis Comprehensive Claim process and the resource revenue sharing piece of that, the federal government has gone through and given a percentage to each organization as they settled. My understanding is that it is equal to the amount they discussed in those early days of the Dene/Métis Comprehensive Claim. That is the process they're using now.

Our process is one where we see the rest of the revenue, and we need to get that addressed. Part of it was addressed, for example, during the

discussions around equalization formula financing and the inclusion or exclusion of resource revenues. That has been set at a 50-50 set-off.

QUESTION 66-16(2)  
DEH CHO BRIDGE  
CONCESSION AGREEMENT

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** My questions today are for the Premier.

We elect people to our cabinet to serve and protect the public interest. The Premier, as the former and current Finance Minister, must be fully aware of the demands on our limited resources. Today, as I speak, our high school in Hay River is closed because we have not had the capital required to do a mid-life retrofit on it, as one example. And there are so many more.

Our financial exposure on the Deh Cho Bridge could impact the financial capacity of our government for many years to come and our available capital dollars. Although it would cost us money to get out of this agreement for the Deh Cho Bridge, would the Premier please commit to seeking a way to determine that cost for us?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Cost overruns on a project — on any project in the Northwest Territories — are a real factor that we have to look at, in terms of the potential impact it may have on us as the Government of the Northwest Territories and our future ability. That's why, as part of the agreement signed during the previous government, a guaranteed maximum price was put in place, as were a pre-funded contingency, insurance, bonding, an independent engineer auditing the construction, and a project management board made up of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the lending agency that's involved in this. So those factors have been put in place.

As for the request to look at what that impact may be — if I understood the question correctly — of us withdrawing from the process, we shall endeavour to get that information.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I appreciate that response from the Premier because in order for us to really have an effective discussion and dialogue with the people of the North about this, that is a very key piece of information that we need.

The Premier outlined some of the precautions and undertakings the government has put in place with respect to this contract. But we've been told — and I need to understand this — that there is a fixed price on the construction of the bridge. I'd like to know what measures have been put in place in the agreement to protect this government in terms of cost overruns.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** In terms of potential cost overruns, I've gone over some of those areas where, as we've been at the table, we have been looking at the potential impact around that guaranteed price, the fixed-price contract. The pre-funded contingency is in place. The bonding, the independent engineer auditing the construction, and the project management board are also going to be put in place as this project proceeds.

Those are the general areas that are being looked at. As we deal with those, as well there are the eligible and ineligible costs that could affect the different firms involved in this. And that has also been put in place.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I am obviously worried about the eligible cost overruns because those are the ones that could very much affect the total price of this project.

To the total price.... We understand we have a business plan in place through a toll charge to recover much of the capital cost of this project. But to the integrity of that business plan and the business case and the projected volumes of traffic that are contained in the business plan, I'd like to know how our government has protected our interests by contemplating the effect of a private operator setting up a ferry on the Mackenzie River to haul traffic and also the possibility of a private contractor actually constructing an ice bridge over the Mackenzie to haul freight over.

What has been put in place in the agreement to protect us from seriously impacting our business case by that happening? I don't know why they couldn't do it. It seems cheap enough to build an ice bridge.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** We have to look at those scenarios. They have been brought up from time to time in discussions. But anybody accessing those areas would have to get proper permits to proceed with, for example, building an ice road or a ferry for construction. They'd need to work on landings and so on. We'd have to look at that piece to see what could be put in place, if anything.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** It seems, in other words, there has been no contemplation of such a thing happening. There's probably nothing stopping it from happening. The government's been able to do it for years and years. I don't see what would stop a private operator from doing that.

Mr. Speaker, we were promised many, many times during briefings that we would get a chance to have a look at the concession agreement that was signed in the last government. This concession agreement has been now made available.

But I would like the Premier today to remind me why that was not available previously, and why now it's only available to Members on a confidential basis?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I can't speak for what the previous government had decided on. I know the discussions at times were a negotiation back and forth, and the agreements had to be concluded. From our point, as I requested to sit before committee and deal with the issue of Deh Cho Bridge, requests were made. I made commitments, and I followed up on them.

QUESTION 67-16(2)  
ECONOMIC LOSSES  
FROM MIGRANT WORKERS

**Mr. Ramsay:** My question today is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. It gets back again to my statement from earlier today, where I talked again about the migrant worker issue here in the Northwest Territories, with the 3,300 migrant workers and the \$350 million every year that leaves the Territory.

In my statement I talked about De Beers Canada. I don't by any means intend to single out De Beers, but it's a real-life example. They currently have Edmonton as a point of pickup for employees working at their Snap Lake and Gahcho Kué operations. They not only fly them in from Edmonton, but as of January 1, 2008, they're supplying workers travelling a greater distance than 500 kilometres away from Edmonton \$600 a month to get to Edmonton.

This just doesn't seem right to me, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister if this is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the socio-economic agreement which they signed?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** As the Member knows, we have a socio-economic agreement that we negotiated with De Beers. As part of the agreement, there's an implementation provision that allows, for a certain period of time, for De Beers to provide these employees. Over the longer term, it is our expectation that De Beers and the diamond company as well will hire Northern workers to work in the mines in accordance with the socio-economic agreements that have been negotiated.

I should also point out that in each of the cases, the other diamond companies are also providing — I guess the Member called them migrant workers — out-of-Territory workers from the south and have advised us of that fact. It is our intent to, and we have already, communicate our concern with that.

We will be working with the mining companies to find a way to improve this situation to the benefit of the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the Minister is going to be communicating with the mining companies to try to combat this situation that's playing itself out right now.

Meanwhile, residents in our smaller communities and, as I mentioned, pockets of high unemployment in smaller communities are going without work. I think every opportunity should be afforded to residents here in the Northwest Territories first.

I'd like to ask the Minister: what assistance has this government given to communities like Hay River, Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Inuvik to market themselves to these mining companies and to the migrant workers that are frequenting our Territory?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** We are trying to work closely with those communities the Member referred to. As some of you may recall, in an effort to increase the attractiveness of communities like Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, in the past we have made the Down Payment Assistance Program available, whereby we assisted first-time home buyers to buy houses. That was with the intention of attracting mine workers.

We've also been involved with marketing programs. I think we've helped the communities put information advertising their communities at the various mine sites.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, again I thank the Minister for that. But some of that work was done over ten years ago.

I think what we need is an updated, coordinated approach by the government to the communities that I mentioned earlier, so that they could have a coordinated approach, a package to work with industry, to work with the migrant workers to attract them here to live in the Northwest Territories.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he could commit today to looking at ways and means to work with the community to get this type of package, as I mentioned, and type of marketing campaign off the ground so that we can attract some workers here.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** We certainly can commit to do that. Also, I'd like to point out that we're working very closely with the diamond companies. We think this is a problem for all of us to work together on to try to resolve this situation.

We met with diamond companies in early December. We will continue to work with them. We can also work with the communities to make them more attractive for workers who live in the south to relocate to the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday we talked a little bit, too, about setting up community registries

where we could identify communities and the individuals in those communities who are looking for opportunities for employment.

I'd like to ask the Minister today to commit to having a look at setting up a registry system in our communities so that we don't miss a single person who wants to work in the resource sector in our Territory, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** I understood that we had a registry at one time. I'd have to go back and check to see whether it's still in existence. I'll be working very closely with my colleague the Minister of Education on this.

#### QUESTION 68-16(2) DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, my question is on the Deh Cho Bridge, for the Premier.

I'm wondering, in the list of liabilities that we want to protect ourselves from — hopefully, we've had some work done on ensuring that — has there been an assessment of the workforce that would be required for the bridge and some assurance that the workforce would come from the North?

I'm concerned at this time with the shortage of labour. Would we be pulling our workers from the mines to work on the bridge? What would that do to the mines and so on? What sort of assessment and assurances have been made that the workforce is here and will benefit our Northern workers?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Maybe I haven't kept the Transportation portfolio, but specifically on that request, my information is that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation has done that work in an evaluation of the type of skill sets they will need and are looking at what the people will need to help build this bridge.

**Mr. Bromley:** Yeah, I understand that Transportation would have done some work there. I'm looking for some assurance that the benefits will accrue to us. I think that issue of migrant workers has been raised. We already know that we are shipping out \$350 million a year because of that. We know that there's a shortage of workers. I'm looking for some assurance that we're not just, again, piling on these projects that benefit the rest of Canada while robbing resources from the North.

So what are we doing to ensure that we're not exacerbating the migrant workforce problem? What assurances have we got?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, again, my understanding is that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation has done work on the area of the amount of people they would need. From what I

understand, approximately 100 people would be required at any given time.

They've looked at that skill set and where they could draw on that. As well, they've surveyed the communities in the region to look at the contractors that would be available to take up the work that will be required. So in the southern part of the Territory, Yellowknife as well, the contractors would be made to look at what is available for that construction period.

**Mr. Bromley:** Yeah, I appreciate that. I guess the concern is liabilities, in particular, if the bridge is delayed. I think if you talk to many businesses in the North, their businesses have experienced a lot of delays. We are experiencing a lot of delays in our capital projects and infrastructure and so on. My constituents are raising their concern. They are seeing a bridge that is half-completed and sits there and takes twice as long to build and so on.

Mr. Speaker, do we have liabilities, or do our costs increase if the period of construction extends significantly beyond the three years currently planned?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, as laid out in an earlier question, there is a number of factors that come into play when we look at trying to limit the liabilities that we could be party to. Some of the shared risk here is between the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, the construction company as well as the Government of the Northwest Territories because we're seen as the backstop to this project, as Members have correctly pointed out.

So those liabilities, again, include, for example, an independent engineer to audit the construction parameters of this as well as some of the eligible costs that may be covered, or ineligible, that would put some of the risk back on the construction company as well as the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to limit the risk of the G.N.W.T.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you for that response. I am concerned and will be interested in getting some more details on that.

I think I heard the Premier indicate earlier to Mrs. Groenewegen that he will be looking into what the costs would be for the G.N.W.T. to get out of this project or terminate the work. I'll be interested in that. Is there a date when we can expect the estimate on that cost?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, one thing we have to realize is, as I discussed with Members, as the lawyers are doing their work, there is a time frame that they have to meet as well. That is coming up before the end of this month.

We can pull the work together as quick as we can and try to get a quick view of it from FMBS on what the potentials are there and try to come back within a couple of days to see what we're able to provide.

QUESTION 69-16(2)  
BARRIERS TO HIRING  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to hear the Minister of Human Resources indicate in his statement that his department is currently determining areas of its mandate that "need additional work." I look forward to those survey results in June.

As I mentioned in my statement, I feel that there's a group of residents in the Territory that are currently disadvantaged in terms of employment. Where other jurisdictions can have far more persons with disabilities employed than can the G.N.W.T., can the Minister advise why we have so few people employed and why we have such a poor record of employing persons with disabilities?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I guess there's a number of reasons for that. I certainly concur with the Member that we need to do a better job to improve our employment of persons with disabilities. I guess the large part of the problem — and she's already alluded to it — is self-identification. I do know that we have employees who are not self-identified, but that doesn't make the situation any better, as the Member says.

I think that what we need to do is to work very closely with the groups that work with persons with disabilities and work with individuals to improve the situation. I think the Affirmative Action Policy that we have doesn't lend itself to improving the representation of persons with disabilities in the workforce.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the Minister is open to working with the Council of Persons with Disabilities. I'd be most pleased to help him facilitate that.

I mentioned in my statement that I believe that persons with disabilities priority ought to be changed. I would like to know whether or not the Minister would consider that for revision, changing the priority for persons with disabilities from P2 to P1?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I guess I would like to point out to the Members that we have been a bit proactive in this area. We have identified a special liaison person to deal with persons with disabilities.

I would have to look at the Affirmative Action Policy. I don't know whether that's the best way to improve the representation of persons with disabilities in the

government workforce. We're still working on our strategic plan.

In the past, governments have been presented with a draft employment equity strategy, which I think is more suited to dealing with these types of situations. As we go forward, I think I would like to present that again to see if we could get the support of the Members to go forward with it — I guess, specifically, to deal with persons with disabilities.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's reluctance to state an answer right here. But I would urge that we move forward on changing the priority.

For me, it's a no-cost item. We're simply encouraging. We are giving people employment who deserve it, and we're not actually spending any extra money.

One of the things I discovered in looking at this issue is there's an interesting item on the Human Resources department's online manual, which shows that, for management positions, persons with disabilities are not listed as P2; they're listed as P3. They come after indigenous aboriginals and women.

I wonder if the Minister can explain to me why we have a discrepancy between the priority for non-management positions and management positions for persons with disabilities.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** I would have to look at that. I think it is an issue of reporting. I don't think I said I ruled out the question of looking at having persons with disabilities listed as P1s or something. That is something we'd be prepared to look at.

QUESTION 70-16(2)  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE  
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway has the potential to be a very important project for the Northwest Territories and, I think, would go a long way into some of the Premier's initiatives that he spoke about.

I would like to direct my question today to the Premier. I'd like to ask him if, in his meeting with Prime Minister Harper, there was any discussion of a Mackenzie Valley Highway.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, with what we've proposed and previous governments have proposed — for example, in the document called *Corridors for Canada* — a number of infrastructure pieces were included in that.

My discussion with the Prime Minister did highlight the fact that if we are to take advantage of the economic opportunities available in the Northwest

Territories, we need to get key pieces of infrastructure like the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We need to work around that. We need to build on the partnerships through industry and the federal government. We know ourselves that there is no way that we would be able to afford to build this unless we put a 70-year time span on this, to try to do something — or even longer.

**Mr. McLeod:** I would like to ask the Premier if that document he mentioned and provided to Ottawa, was that our formal request to Ottawa for funding to construct the highway.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** If I understand that question correctly, the *Corridors for Canada* was part of our work in establishing projects with partnerships, in the sense of putting all this together with all jurisdictions. That was our contribution to that piece. The request was put on the table, and the formal response.... They have dealt with pieces of it from time to time.

I believe there is renewed interest in this area. Looking at the resources being taken out of the North, they should be reinvested in key infrastructure projects in the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. McLeod:** That kind of leads to my next question. Who at the end of the day would be responsible for the funding of the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, as we are aware, any new highway construction outside of the existing infrastructure that we have right now falls into the area of the federal government. They have kept up that area of authority, so we would say that has to be looked at. That's why we are talking about a partnership and having the federal government come to the table.

We believe this should also deal with the issue of Arctic sovereignty by having key infrastructure in place, by building on the economic development opportunities in the North and by keeping communities sustainable. This is how we can help the federal government in its challenge of Arctic sovereignty and its people.

**Mr. Speaker:** Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** I thank the Premier for that.

I would like to ask the Premier how we can help Ottawa make up their mind. Does this government have the authority, or could we introduce legislation, called the Mackenzie Valley Highway Act that would help in our case with Ottawa?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, we can look at introducing a piece of legislation that would affect us. We couldn't introduce legislation that would make the federal government do something, but we

could look at doing something that we would end up venturing into the area that the federal government right now holds as authority. If we decided to invest in this project, then we are entering into that field on our own.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for question period has expired.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents, Hon. Jackson Lafferty.

### Tabling of Documents

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled *Aurora College Annual Report, 2006-2007*. Mahsi.

Document 16-16(2), *Aurora College Annual Report, 2006-2007*, tabled.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the letter I referred to earlier in my statement.

Document 17-16(2), Letter to Inuvik Chamber of Commerce Regarding Peel River Bridge Crossing, tabled.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 15, notices of motions. Item 16, notices of motions for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills.

### First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 2 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 3, 2007-2008

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 2 read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 19, second reading of bills.

### Second Reading of Bills

#### BILL 2 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 3, 2007-2008

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008 has had second reading and is referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion carried; Bill 2 read a second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2) and Bill 2, with Mr. Krutko in the Chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** I will call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have three items to deal with: Minister's Statement 1-16(2), Minister's Statement 9-16(2) and Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008. What is the wish of the committee?

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** The committee would like to start off today by considering Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, and will proceed as far as we can with that today.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We will take a short break and begin with Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** I'll call the Committee of the Whole back to order.

As we agreed prior to the break, we're going to continue with Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008.

#### BILL 2 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 3, 2007-2008

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** At this time I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill, the Hon.

Mr. Roland, to give us his opening remarks and introduction of the bill.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, requests authority for additional appropriations of \$21.305 million for appropriation expenditures and \$7.951 million for capital investment expenditures in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

To clarify the contents of the bill, of the \$21.305 million in operations expenditure appropriations requested in the supplementary appropriation, approximately \$1.9 million is offset by federal revenues. That includes \$1.4 million for municipal rural infrastructure funding.

Of the \$7.951 million in capital investment expenditures requested in the supplementary appropriation, \$4.5 million is offset by revenues, \$1.7 million is in municipal rural infrastructure funding from the federal government and \$2.7 million is from Canada Infoway Inc. as part of the Canadian Electronic Health Record System project.

Major items included in this request for the operations expenditures are as follows: \$5.3 million associated with hospital and physician services to N.W.T. residents receiving services outside of the N.W.T.; \$2 million across departments to fund increased utility costs related to government operations; \$1.6 million for increased expenditures for supplementary health benefits, including extended health benefits, indigenous health benefits and Metis health benefits; \$1.6 million for additional costs incurred for dental premiums and medical travel assistance payments on behalf of G.N.W.T. employees; and \$1.2 million for additional costs related to the Territorial Power Subsidy Program.

Also of note on the operations side is a net increase of \$2.8 million for the environmental liability associated with government infrastructure as a result of 11 newly identified sites as well as a re-evaluation of some previously identified sites.

That concludes my opening remarks. We'll be prepared to answer questions Members may have. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be introducing any witnesses.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree that the Minister brings in his witnesses?

**Some honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** For the record, would you please introduce your witness, Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, joining me at the table is Ms. Kathleen LeClair, the secretary to the FMB.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Welcome, Ms. LeClair.

At this time I'd like to ask the Members if they have any general comments in regard to the supplementary appropriation.

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make a couple of general comments on the Minister's opening remarks.

Since I've been here I've seen a few of these supps come forward. I'm just a little concerned that when they do their actual budgeting exercise, it seems that they come back for some extra funding that wasn't asked for before. I'm just hoping that this is not an indication of not budgeting properly or waiting for a lot of the actual costs to come in before they realize they've budgeted wrong. I've seen it happen in a few other cases, where numbers are being budgeted, and when it comes down to the actual, we seem to be.... The estimates seem to come in a lot less than what it's actually costing us. I just hope this is not a trend.

I understand there's some stuff that we just can't get away from. There are emergencies and a few other things that weren't foreseen when they were doing the actual budgeting exercise. I just wanted to make a few comments to that effect, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the area of the supplementary appropriations is something that is, as well, shared, in the sense of the concern the Member has raised.

As this government starts its work, this is the first supplementary appropriation for the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. The process we're moving forward with is that the supplementary appropriation would be used for emergencies, unforeseen events that departments were not able to plan for.

As we begin our business planning process, we're working with departments to ensure that they build into their business plans the appropriate dollars for running initiatives that have been identified. We're looking to reduce the use of supplementary appropriations in the future.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Chairman, a couple of things pop out for me. The first one is the \$2 million across departments to fund increased utility costs. Not unrelated, the second one is \$1.2 million for additional funds going towards the territorial power subsidy program.

I think we have big opportunities for energy savings and doing things in a better way that's both cheaper and beneficial to our environment. I, of course,

have been bringing some of those ways forward, and I know the Premier and his cabinet are aware of those. But I think it highlights, as well, some of the infrastructure, like the mini-hydro run-of-the-river projects that are small-scale, appropriate to the small communities and most beneficial to them.

A little bit of upfront pain can give really long-term gain financially as well as in these other areas of social and environmental benefits. So I'm hoping to see those sorts of things in the future. I realize this is just a supplementary budget, but these things do pop up.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the area the Member has identified is of growing concern, I guess, is a fair way to put it. We've had to identify additional costs throughout the year. Some of that is because, as we have told departments, they need to eat some of those costs and encourage energy efficiency. As well, as Members are aware, the fluctuating price of oil across the country and the nation also has a direct impact on ourselves and the departments. So we've had to make these types of adjustments.

The Territorial Power Support Program, as the Member has touched on, is a concern to us as well, as we continue to top up that budget item as we're forced to deal with the increased costs of utilities across the Territory.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of comments. This is a new process for me. This is the first sup appropriation that I have seen, and I want to echo the comments of my colleague Mr. McLeod, in that it seems to me that many of these expenditures in this supplementary appropriation should have been foreseen, particularly the utility costs. I don't think it was a surprise to anybody. A year ago I think we should have been able to know that our utility costs were going to increase, and they should have been budgeted for.

There are a couple of other things in here, as well. From what I see in this appropriation, it's expenses which are necessary, but I again reiterate that they should have been foreseen. I would hope and I'm glad to hear the Premier say that in going forward, our budgets will hopefully be a little more accurate, that we will have fewer supplementary appropriations and that, if I heard him right, they will be for emergent items as opposed to ongoing O&M. I'm glad to hear that.

My belief is that we should budget the way we would in our personal lives for our own household expenses: you set a budget and you spend the money to the budget limit. And when that's gone, you don't spend any more.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, as I'd stated earlier along the lines of this area of the use of supplementary appropriations, it will be something

that, as the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, we will have to work with, to work around reducing the use of these items. It would be, as well, Members who would help in that in the sense of policing the use of that by continuing to send the message back through Ministers and departments about proper planning. The fact is that, in our current fiscal situation we have to come to the realization that there's only so often you can go back to the well before the bucket comes back dry.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We have a lot of new Members here. I'd just like to remind the Members that you do have ten minutes to ask questions and make a general comment, and also within your ten minutes you can ask more than one question. You're not limited to one question. You have ten minutes. I just wanted to throw that out there.

General comments? If there are no more general comments, would the committee like to proceed?

**Some honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We're now on tab 2. I believe we're starting on page 5: Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized: negative \$47,000. Does the committee agree?

Legislative Assembly, Operations Expenditures, Office of the Clerk, negative \$47,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Legislative Assembly, not previously authorized: negative \$47,000. Agreed?

Total Legislative Assembly, negative \$47,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 6, Executive Offices, Executive Operations Expense, not previously authorized: \$981,000. Agreed?

Executive Offices, Executive Operations Expense, \$981,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Executive Offices, not previously authorized: \$981,000. Is the committee agreed?

Total Executive Offices, \$981,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** This binder should be on your desk. We are on tab 2, page 5. We've dealt with Legislative Assembly, Operations Expenditures. We just went through the Executive Operation Expense. We're on page 6. Are you ready to continue on?

We're on page 7. Human Resources, Executive continued, Operations Expense, Directorate, not previously authorized: negative \$185,000. Agreed?



Human Resources, Executive continued, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, negative \$185,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Human Resources Strategy and Policy, not previously authorized: \$187,000. Agreed?

Human Resources Strategy and Policy, \$187,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Employee Services, not previously authorized: \$1,579,000. Are we agreed?

Employee Services, \$1,579,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Human Resources, not previously authorized: \$1,581,000. Are we agreed?

Total Human Resources, \$1,581,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We're now on page 8, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, not previously authorized: negative \$28,000. Agreed?

Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, negative \$28,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, not previously authorized: negative \$28,000. Agreed?

Total Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, negative \$28,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Financial Management Board Secretariat, Directorate, not previously authorized: negative \$119,000. Is the committee agreed?

Financial Management Board Secretariat, Directorate, negative \$119,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Government Accounting, not previously authorized: \$3,962,000. Agreed?

Government Accounting, \$3,962,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized: \$3,843,000. Agreed?

Total Financial Management Board Secretariat, \$3,843,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$6,377,000. Agreed?

Total Department, \$6,377,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 10, Finance, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, not previously authorized: negative \$32,000. Agreed?

Finance, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, negative \$32,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Finance, not previously authorized, negative \$32,000. Agreed?

Total Finance, negative \$32,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 11, Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, not previously authorized: negative \$72,000. Agreed?

Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, negative \$72,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Community Operations, not previously authorized: \$1,441,000. Agreed?

Community Operations, \$1,441,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Lands Administration, not previously authorized: \$30,000. Agreed?

Lands Administration, \$30,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chair, we're on page 11, yes? Thank you. Just to make it firm. I couldn't hear you.

I have a concern to the Premier, or I should say the Finance Minister, on the way we fund projects. In this particular case we have a transfer of infrastructure contribution funding to capital investment expenditures.

What it is, is the money that goes to the Nahanni Butte gym. Before we get too far, I want to firmly state that I'm in support of their project. It's the process that we go about this in transferring O&M to capital dollars and then transferring it over.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Hawkins, I don't believe we've gotten to that item yet. It's under Regional Operations. We're still dealing with Land Administration. It's further down the list, under Regional Operations, if you can hold your question until we get to that line item.

Sports, Recreation and Youth, not previously authorized: \$425,000. Agreed?

Sports, Recreation and Youth, \$425,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Regional Operations, not previously authorized: negative \$575,000. Mr. Hawkins?

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't get fresh time on the clock, it appears.

First, as I said earlier, I just want reaffirm that I'm in support of the project. I'm just not supportive of the process of how we do this.

We're supporting a project by putting money into an O&M fund, and then we're allowing it to be transferred over to capital. And it just sounds like a funky or a wonky way of doing the process. We should be up front.

O&M should not be funding capital projects. The spirit and the intent of this all along is to ensure that the community of Nahanni Butte has a gymnasium. Again, I am in support of the project, but the fact is that I don't like the process.

I'd like the Premier to go on record as to why this is the case. Would he be willing to switch it over to what I would consider to be a normal process, where all capital projects flow through a capital process?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the process that's used has been used for quite a number of years. It is a common process that we use, even when we go into the business planning development stage and to the main estimates that this House would deal with, with projects that fall into the Municipal and Community Affairs area, where the asset that is being constructed becomes property of the community.

This is a result of direction that was given from the Public Sector Accounting Board in 1997 on the way governments deal with their capital assets, and that is when we came into the amortization era of government and how we do business. We've implemented those changes through our accounting structures, and it goes back to the area of who owns the asset when it's completed.

In this case, it only happens with Municipal and Community Affairs because the asset will not be owned by the Government of the Northwest Territories. It will be owned by the community.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, the issue of the community owning the asset is not the issue. It is simply how we define projects through a funding process. Regardless of whether the community of Nahanni Butte gets it through the O&M or just a cheque directly from the Finance Minister, I don't really care, to be honest.

The fact is that we're funding this project up front before we're even given a capital project, and on top of that, we're building a capital project with O&M money. I don't like the principle of the process that we're going through. And I wish to put it on the record that I don't think it's appropriate that we fund projects before we get them in this way where we just give them all the money and say, "go ahead."

This is a project for this community. And it wouldn't change the process if we paid in milestones like we did with any other project. We make the money accessible so it could be drawn down. Again, it wouldn't change the support of the project, in my view, and it would ensure that we deliver the project, in the fact that we get the asset when they get all their money at the same time. Otherwise, it looks like we're paying people up front and saying, "good luck — give us a gym." It makes it difficult for us to bear down pressure if something goes funny.

It's more of a comment as opposed to a question for the Finance minister, but I'm more than willing to hear his response, assuming he wishes to respond. Like I say, it has nothing to do with being critical as to the project, just the process.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, again, the process is one that has been used for a number of budget cycles now. I'll have to correct that: it's not only the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs that has done this. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment also has infrastructure contributions, and that would be, for example, the schools and the education authorities here in the capital.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, the Finance Minister may be technically right, but in no case should we be funding capital projects, in my view, out of O&M money. It just sounds funny. When you go to read it up in the books to find out where the gymnasium is in a potential budget, you're going to go to the capital budget.

The last thing I'll say is that just because we do it this way and we've done it this way for a long time doesn't mean it's right. And just because we do it this way all the time, every time, we're never going to get a different answer or a different process.

I think our process would be better, further enhanced and a little more transparent from the public's point of view and their expectations on how we approve projects if it was done this way. That being said, it's a loan position. That doesn't mean it's not right either.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I guess, for the record, the Member says it is not right. In fact, it is not wrong. This is following the Public Sector Accounting Board and how we deal with our capital and its amortization. This also has changed since we've gone to the New Deal with communities, where the capital program has in fact been transferred.

There are a number of smaller communities that are still in settlements that are an exemption to that, and there are a few projects that didn't get wrapped into the original transfer. We'll see less of these in the future.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Regional Operations, not previously authorized: negative \$575,000. Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, not to be picky, of course, but in Gameti, there's a gymnasium and it's funded through Capital Investment Expenditures, not O&M. Maybe the Finance Minister can explain the difference — why we've now agreed it's not right, it's not wrong through O&M; now, we're funding through capital. Can he explain why it's good for one but not for the other?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this one is the result of being offset by a reduction to the Capital Investment Expenditures. So this is, again, a process of back and forth in how we deal with the construction of that facility.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Again, I wish to reaffirm, not just to the Member who represents the community but anyone else out there who's listening and who cares. The fact is — and it's not a criticism of the project — now we have the example where the other applies.

Again, now I've bought into the Finance Minister's important song and dance and passionate plea that this is the way we do things; this is way we've done things since 1997; and now we do this project through Capital Investments. So just when I get it clear that if we're going to build a gym in Gameti that I suspect belongs to the community, now if we go look at the O&M budget, it's not going to be there.

So I guess I'm searching for some consistent practice — again, transparency on the process — so if anyone wanted to look this up, they would know where to look this up in the budget.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the fact is that the \$250,000 is an addition to the original infrastructure contribution amount, and that is why this one is treated in this manner. It's not that this is the total amount. This is adding to the original cost of that facility, so we have to add it to this piece. Again, it's the back and forth of O&M to capital again and dealing with who would own the asset when the work is done.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, can the Finance Minister clarify for the record who would own this asset, and maybe explain to me how that would be different in the case of Nahanni Butte, where, as I understand it, they would own the infrastructure?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, as I said, this is an additional amount of funding that goes toward the increased costs of this project. So we have to account for it in this manner, as a Vote 1 expenditure, but it's coming out as a Vote 2, being the capital. It's a top-up to the original amount to complete that project. But it will be, in Gameti, an

infrastructure project, with the asset to be owned by the community government of Gameti.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I'm sorry to belabour this point, but if anyone takes a look at this, everything he's said doesn't apply to the example we talked about before. Whether we've topped up the project, it's my point of view, again, that we're not following consistent patterns here.

I'll say it the same way I closed off my last point. It appears to be a lone position, but again, it doesn't necessarily mean my point is incorrect, in that not everyone on this side of the House is screaming, "clarity, consistency."

Anyway, I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chairman. We could be here all day belabouring this. The fact is, I'm just looking for consistency.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the process that I've been discussing is the process that is used. At the end of the day, when the asset is owned by a community.... When we establish the program, for example, under capital, and it's transferred over to communities, we have to transfer it to O&M.

The Gameti school is going to be an asset owned by the Gameti Band Council. The Nahanni Butte community gym is currently identified in the capital until the time the community can legally assume that asset. Then it would have to be transferred over.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Regional Operations, not previously authorized: negative \$575,000. Agreed?

Regional Operations, negative \$575,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Municipal and Community Affairs, not previously authorized: \$1,249,000. Agreed?

Total Municipal and Community Affairs, \$1,249,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 12, Public Works and Services, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, not previously authorized: negative \$429,000. Agreed?

Public Works and Services, Operations Expenditures, Directorate, negative \$429,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Asset Management, not previously authorized: \$465,000. Agreed?

Asset Management, \$465,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$36,000. Agreed?

Total Department, \$36,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Moving on to page 13, Health and Social Services, Operations Expenditures, Program Delivery Support, not previously authorized: negative \$86,000. Agreed?

Health and Social Services, Operations Expenditures, Program Delivery Support, \$86,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Health Services Programs, not previously authorized: \$6,036,000. Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm a little dismayed at the amount of this item: the \$739,000 for the increase in contributions to the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority pension plan. It seems to me, and from what I understand, that this is an extra contribution that's been required in the past several years. I'm wondering whether or not we can soon expect that these employees will become part of the G.N.W.T. public service so we can avoid having this extra expense.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this area is indeed popping up — the existing pension plan — as their plan is different from the G.N.W.T. plan. The employees there are in fact employees of the Hay River health authority.

There have been ongoing discussions over the last number of years of looking to pull that authority into the G.N.W.T. The decision hasn't been made in that area, but work has been looked at. They would have to estimate the full cost of bringing employees into the G.N.W.T. It would have to follow a business planning process.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Just a follow-up comment. I understand it's going to cost us some money to bring these guys into our public service. But I think, in the long run, it is going to save money. I would encourage the Minister of Finance to encourage his colleagues to get this underway and spend the money to save the money.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, as I stated, this action would have to be undertaken through our business planning process. The Minister of Health and Social Services, along with FMBS, would look at the impact of that decision, and it would have to come forward as part of a planning position.

**Mr. Bromley:** Just one more follow-up to that. I understand that this has been looked at somewhat. To the degree that it has been looked at, has the potential for savings been identified? We are obviously looking at reductions coming up. By way of helping to determine how much priority to give to that future action, what have been the findings or the potential identified to date?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, again, the departments would have to justify some practices in the process or actions that would be looked at in trying to achieve bringing that grouping to the public service. Again, the estimates have been looked at in the past. It should fluctuate depending on the criteria that they use, the existing pension plan.

The way we pay employees and contributions would see us with an increase in expenditures beyond this amount and it would then be incorporated into an ongoing amount. One benefit would be that they would all be N.W.T. employees at that point.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Health Services Programs, not previously authorized: \$6,036,000.

Health Services Programs, \$6,036,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Supplementary Health Programs, not previously authorized: \$1,607,000.

Supplementary Health Programs, \$1,607,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Community Health Programs, not previously authorized: \$1,207,000.

Community Health Programs, \$1,207,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$8,764,000. Agreed?

Total Department, \$8,764,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 14, Justice Operations, Services to Government, not previously authorized: \$138,000.

Justice, Operations Expenditures, Services to Government, \$138,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Law Enforcement, not previously authorized: \$280,000.

Law Enforcement, \$280,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Legal Aid Services, not previously authorized: \$403,000. Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, I am looking for some detail on this process where we are adding money. I think, as I understood earlier, it's federal base money, so whether it's catching up to the times and actual costs or not, I just want to make sure this money is going to those who need it the most.

I want to find out what services have been increased. If we're not increasing services, I'd like to know what has been tamed down, if it's paying debt. Anyway, I want to know the details of the \$403,000.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this amount, as the Member has pointed out, is an additional amount from a federal program that is incorporated into this process. I'm informed that the money will be useful in the recruitment and payment of family law lawyers to enable the lawyers to travel into communities prior to court parties arriving. So it gives them some advance opportunities to meet with those that are involved in the court process.

That is one of the areas. As we're informed, it is not new money. The funding was approved for three years and sunsetted by the federal government, and they're recently renewed it.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, changing gears but on the same subject, you said recruitment of family lawyers. Would the Minister be able to provide the details of the staffing levels of those who are were practising family law in the legal aid system. How much would this \$403,000 change or add? Would that give us one lawyer or two lawyers? Would that give us a full complement, et cetera?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, we don't have that level of detail at this time. We could work with the Department of Justice to provide that at a later term.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Legal Aid Services, not previously authorized: \$403,000.

Legal Aid Services, \$403,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Courts, not previously authorized: \$1,729,000. Agreed?

Courts, \$1,729,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Going on to page 15, Justice continued, Operations Expenditures, Community Justice and Corrections. Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Sorry, Mr. Chairman. You flew through page 14 a little too quickly. I had a question on a couple of items on page 14.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Move back to page 14?

**Some honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, I'll start with this one. It looks like we have a \$33,000 increase to fund increases associated with salary and life and disability insurance for our Territorial Court judges. If we ask ourselves aloud: how many judges do we have in the Territorial system? We have four. Over 12 months, that works out to be a lot of money as an increase just for insurance.

I'm just wondering maybe if the Minister can break down the detail. It looks like almost \$600 per judge per month as an increase. That seems like a lot of

money just for an insurance sum. Did something change? Is something different? And how much is this policy costing us?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this is broken down to \$43,000, made up of an increase in the annual salaries of \$14,000 and in life/disability insurance of approximately \$29,000.

One of the things we look at is trying to keep the same rank as a lawyer or judges in other jurisdictions. We also work through the Remuneration Commission that is established, and this is the way we do that. Again, it deals with their court schedule and the amount of travel there would be when they fly into communities. I think that's one of the reasons why the insurance piece is being dealt with.

**Mr. Hawkins:** The Minister is correct in the sense that when you take the \$43,000 and you take out the \$14,000 for salary increases, you're left with the \$29,000. But the \$29,000 divided by four judges and 12 months works out to almost precisely a \$562 increase in insurance fees. I'm just trying to get a sense of.... I don't know anybody's insurance that costs \$562 for life. This is an additional increase. I'm just trying to make sense of this. It's difficult for me to go out there and look people in the eye and say, "Well, we've just bumped up the insurance for judges for another almost \$562."

I want to know what's wrong, what's changed. How much are we normally paying for insurance per judge per month to justify it? That's a huge increase. I couldn't tell you what liability and life insurance costs — I'd be guessing — but I'm sure that's the cost of a whole family's life insurance. It just seems like a lot of money.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the area this deals with is.... From my understanding, there are three existing judges on the circuit, and as well, the life and disability deals with two retired judges. As well, this is all handled through the Territorial Court Act. As the G.N.W.T., we do not set the salaries and the benefits for judges in the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Would the Minister be willing to provide the details of the questions I've asked earlier about the details of what their insurance is, the premiums, things like that — those types of details? I won't repeat every one of those questions, but would he be willing to provide that detail to me?

I'll go on to my next question, which is the \$133,000, after he's done.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** We will work with the Department of Justice to get that information.

**Mr. Hawkins:** With good reason, the judges have an independent commission to review their salaries, and I stress “with good reason.” If I understand it correctly, it goes back to an act in 1998.

As I've explained to the Minister before, it seems as if we've hired the most expensive professionals to review the salaries of the most expensive professionals. Then we have to have someone to sit on both sides — who again is a very expensive consultant — to come up with a simple percentage. I don't belittle the actual salary, but it seems like a very expensive process to come up with a percentage just to say “Increase their salaries.” I heard someone say, “Let's throw away all this gobbledygook and just give them the \$133,000.” Chop it up four ways, and we are probably at their increase anyway.

What's restricting us from finding some way to attach the judges' remuneration to some type of cost-of-living process — independent of the MLAs, independent of the public service — whereby we don't have to renegotiate everything every three years or so? It would probably save a lot of time if we passed legislation that effectively would do what this negotiation process does.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** In this area we must be cautious, as the judiciary is considered a third arm of government. There is the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. The process established, as the Member pointed out, is one that has been in place since 1998. Every four years a commission is established and reviews the compensation for judges. That work is provided to the Minister of Justice for their consideration, to be brought to a business plan process for any adjustments.

This \$133,000 breaks into three categories: commission members for this year, '07-08, \$58,400; commission legal counsel, \$21,150; Territorial judges' legal counsel, \$53,788 — for the total of \$133,000.

**Mr. Hawkins:** My point — which was made at the start of this, which I referenced — stands very clearly. We're spending a lot of money to talk about the most expensive people on our payroll by hiring expensive consultants to challenge and negotiate with more expensive consultants. I wouldn't doubt that these expensive consultants' time is worth the money that they billed for, but it's a process that seems to cost us money.

When we talk about times like these, where we have to find ways to be creative and succinct in how we can find ways to save money, a three-page piece of legislation could clear this up. I doubt that would cost this Assembly \$133,000. If anything, it would provide certainty to the judges and their system, whereby they would get an appropriate

increase that is attached to a normal process, again outside of the areas I talked about.

I reaffirm what the Premier — I should say the FMB Minister at this time; it's the same guy, which is confusing some days — I reaffirm what he said, which is, yes, it is a third arm; it's independent; and it's meant to be independent and not tied to what we do. That being said, we could streamline and simplify the process and give it the respect it's due, rather than sending negotiators off every four years at \$133,000.

Although I don't have the tally from the one they did four years ago, the way prices continue to go, I can guarantee that the one that's due four years from now will be more than \$133,000. And we'll be looking back and saying, “Gee, three or four pieces of paper would have cost us very little, compared to this process.”

I would ask the Minister: would he commit to evaluating this situation to see if they could create some type of discussion paper to review the situation and see if there's a way we could do this in a simpler process? Again, to reaffirm certainly for the justice system that they will be paid appropriately, but we can get it on track where it does it by itself.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this process, as the Members have discussed, we would gladly look at it if the committee were to make recommendations in this area. Then we could put the energy into it. Otherwise this process will continue to be used during the business planning process. There's opportunity for Members to make recommendations and committees to make recommendations in this area when we get into the business planning stage.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Well, I'm going to challenge the FMB Minister at this time by saying: when you're a decision maker — and you are the decision maker, by the way, in this particular case — you don't need the committee to tell you to think about something. I think it's well within your authority to look at and evaluate the process. When we talk about stepping forward in our \$135 million process of reductions and streamlining and course correction, this is a very simple process we could discuss. I guarantee you it wouldn't cost \$133,000.

I would ask the Minister, once again: would he take it back for further consideration and maybe take a chance to review his thoughts before he provides the final answer?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Though, yes, I sit as the Minister Responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, we still do operate in a consensus-style government. I seek the input of Members on a regular basis about how we do business.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Courts, not previously authorized, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** The next subject is the \$493,000 for court travel. Although it may be difficult to phrase a question, there is some concern that the court circuit is done in the most expensive way, a most expensive process. I would like the FMB Minister to ensure that we just don't charter for charter's sake when it comes to planes. Maybe we'd consider things like sched flights.

Again, I don't think there have been any court cases that have been kicked out of the system, that I'm aware of in recent history, because they decided to have a trial on a day the plane actually flew into a community as opposed to waiting for the charter to come in and out because Lady Justice didn't have her chance to do her proper due by the chance of missing one day in the system. I don't think justice is being denied in any process. And I would just like the Minister to put an eye to the costs of travel, especially as I reaffirmed earlier about these very difficult and expensive times we're living in.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** This is, as I'm informed, an increase in the court circuits that are being held throughout the year that were planned for this fiscal year. I believe the Minister of Justice would be able to give more detail to the Members. If we can, Mr. Chairman, give the Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty, an opportunity to provide a little more detail.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** As you know, we are unique in the North compared to other jurisdictions. We are one of the jurisdictions that provide court circuits to the most isolated communities, as opposed to southern jurisdictions. It does cost us money to travel to these communities.

We do work with the judicial system where the court circuit, most of the time, uses scheduled services. As you know, some small, isolated communities do not have scheduled services. At times they have to fly in with chartered planes. The judiciary court schedule is based on the needs of the communities. That's where the cost would come in, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, would the Minister of Justice be willing to provide the details of that charter scheduling stuff he talked about? It doesn't sound like it would be that difficult, seeing how he said they typically take sched flights.

I'd like to know the details on how often they charter, how that works with timing, such as what days they flew in and flew out. I want to see that in comparison to the normal scheduled flights and how many tickets would have been considered at that time.

I will say that yes, probably in some cases, if you're sending a plane full of people in and out, it probably makes sense. If we're sending a full plane in and only fill three seats and make the plane sit there for four or six or eight hours so we can fly them back out as opposed to making people sit there, maybe they could spend a night in the community — a little economic development, such as eating in a restaurant there assuming they have one, or renting from the local bed-and-breakfast. Those are the things to be talking about. That's the detail I want to see. Line the two up against each other.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, we can certainly provide more detailed information on the court circuits in the communities. There are communities that at times the judges would have to spend a night. But most times they don't have accommodation or restaurants, as the Member indicated. We are working to the best of our ability with what we have, chartering to a community or on a regularly scheduled flight. Yes, certainly we can provide that information.

**Mr. Hawkins:** First, I'll say thank you to the Justice Minister who will supply me with that detailed information. May I encourage him not to just stop at the detail I've offered. If he thinks something's relevant to highlight, please do.

The other point I want to make is that if these communities are good enough for MLAs to stay in, I certainly hope that judges are not too good to be there too.

**Mr. Krutko:** I too have questions in regard to the expenditure of \$493,000. I'd like to know the total cost of that transportation of the court circuit in the fiscal year.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, we'll get that information to the Member as well.

**Mr. Krutko:** We do have to realize the importance the courts play in our communities. We also have to ensure that we do control the costs of travelling in the North but also realizing the communities should be able to host a lot of these parties. I know that in the community of Fort McPherson, for instance, we do have a hotel there. I think wherever possible, if they can stay an extra couple of days or a day in a community where there are hotels, meals can be arranged if they make every effort to do so.

Talking to people, especially at the airport, and talking to court workers, they do hold a lot of aircraft, which is very expensive. They fly in, do their court business, fly back to Inuvik, spend a night in Inuvik and fly back to their community the next day. I think that has to stop. If anything, they should make every effort to stay in those communities overnight until they conclude all their business and then move on.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he can get those details of the communities they've stayed in, how long they stayed in those communities, and exactly how many days they've spent overnight in communities in regard to this travel cost.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, in fact, we can provide that number. I can give a quick update here, but we can provide an attachment to give the days spent in communities. The original amount budgeted for the '07-'08 fiscal year was \$1,058,000. The court's scheduled sitting days, as they are defined in 2006-2007, were 273, and in 2007 the sitting days scheduled — you need the total amount here — were 400. I'll give you the actual amount. That was Yellowknife at 273. But the total communities, a grand total: 319 for '06, 469 for '07. And we'll provide the attachment on the actual days that courts regularly sat so far.

**Mr. Krutko:** I'd like to ask the Premier if he can provide the information that he's read out to the committee so we also have a chance to review it. And also in consideration of the budget process we're going through in the next couple of months, we would have the opportunity to read it before that process takes place.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, we'll be able to provide the information on these scheduled sitting days in total for all communities, along with what Minister Lafferty is committed to providing as well.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Justice, Operations Expenditures, Courts, not previously authorized: \$1,729,000.

Justice, Operations Expenditures, Courts, \$1,729,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Justice continued, Operations Expenditures, Community Justice and Corrections, not previously authorized: \$214,000.

**Mr. Krutko:** I'd just like to ask the Minister: are there any other funds, either by way of new funding that will be available to communities for Community Justice Programs, by way of programs established, Justice Strategy funds? We do have Justice committees and other committees, and a lot of them are struggling with the existing funding arrangements we have. I think it would be good if we can see if there are any other federal program dollars available for Justice.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the information that I can provide is the \$145,000 as required for this is coming out of expenditures supported by the federal contribution funding agreement under the Aboriginal Justice Strategy Fund for this fiscal year of '07-08. There are negotiations ongoing in trying to renew that agreement.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** All right, we're on page 15, Justice continued, Operations Expenditures, Community Justice and Corrections, not previously authorized: \$214,000. Agreed?

Justice continued, Operations Expenditures, Community Justice and Corrections, \$214,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$2,764,000.

Total Department, \$2,764,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Okay, we're moving along to page 16, Education, Culture and Employment, Operations Expenditures, Directorate and Administration, not previously authorized: \$677,000.

Education, Culture and Employment, Operations Expenditures, Directorate and Administration, \$677,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Education and Culture, not previously authorized: \$569,000.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I just have a question for the Minister on the insurance for the fire at Chief Albert Wright School. I am curious why insurance costs don't cover this \$451,000 plus the previous \$188,000 for cleanup.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The practice is that as we self-insure, we have deductible limit. We would pay for this work to be done up to the maximum amount, then insurance would kick in. Even if insurance were to kick in, we would have to make the expenditure, and then we would get the return on the insurance file at a later time.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** So this would be one of the expenditures that could be reimbursed?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The total of the amount we had to pay out this fiscal year might be included in our self-financing portion, which would be our deductible. We'd get that information if this would be something we could get reimbursed or if we're still under our own deductible limit where we have to pay our own costs at this stage.

**Mr. Hawkins:** When we're done, I'd like to go back to page 14, but I know we haven't finished the page.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Seeking the committee's approval to move back to page 14. Is there agreement?

**Some honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Okay, we'll move back to page 14. Which line item did you want to talk to, Mr. Hawkins?



**Mr. Hawkins:** Under Courts there is just an observation of \$664,000 that is spent on court-ordered psychiatric assessments. My first question on this is: do we provide psychiatric assessments in the Northwest Territories?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I'd have to go to the Minister of Health and Social Services to look at whether the Department of Health and Social Services provides this service. When cases are going before criminal court, a presiding judge has the authority to go ahead and order an accused to undergo a psychiatric assessment. We would have arrangements with Alberta if we don't have those available in the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Hawkins:** My question, probably misunderstood, had nothing to do with the direction to order court-ordered psychiatric assessments. It had to do more so with whether we provide those services in the Northwest Territories.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I would have to get the details from the Minister on that piece.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I believe this item speaks to the provision of psychiatric treatment for those who are in the criminal or justice system and who are in need of having that treatment or that assessment. The information that the Minister Responsible for the FMB read out states that that is the case.

If the Member wants to know about the health question, we do offer those services. We may not be able to offer all those services in the North, and if that's the case, they will be referred south.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I'm just concerned that, if we're offering these services of psychiatric assessment in the Northwest Territories, as the Minister seems to allude to, why are we not sending these folks through this court-ordered process to the professionals that we have?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, in this area, for example, the Department of Health and Social Services are providing these services to residents of the Northwest Territories and could be to their capacity or, as well, potentially locums filling in, in a number of those cases, as we have in many other cases of specialists.

The court process. There is an arrangement that deals with the Alberta government and the Capital Health Authority, I believe, that provides this service through their court-ordered psychiatric assessments that are conducted, and they have an arrangement through a contract in that area. Thank you.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, everyone is making a big deal out of the fact that, oh goodness, we have to send them there, but I want to first find out how many court-ordered assessments have been

issued, and how much is the typical rate that we would normally pay a local psychiatric person/professional to do this job? Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the Member is asking again for more detail that goes between two departments, so we wouldn't have that available to us here. We do have, for example, the court-ordered psychiatric assessment, the data, and we're projected in 2007-08 to have assessment days of approximately 611, a significant increase from previous years. Thank you.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, if I got that right, we had 607 assessment days in total. Now, was that all court ordered? What is the cost of a psychiatric professional if they were to be staffed at this end? Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Once again, Mr. Chairman, the Member is asking between two departments what the assessment rate or what the rate is that the Department of Health and Social Services provides for this area. I can provide him what the assessment rates are under the existing agreement for court-ordered assessments through the Capital Health Authority. The total amount is highlighted at 611. That's an increase of approximately 450 more assessment days than they had anticipated. What the charges, for example, would add up to — I don't have a daily rate, but we're looking at \$1,300 a day by the 611 days. Thank you.

**Mr. Hawkins:** What does it cost to hire one of these professionals if we were to staff them at Stanton Hospital? Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** We'll have to get that information for the Member.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, I think this is an example of where we're sending people to Edmonton, to the Capital Health Authority, for a service that I think we could provide here at a similar cost. If we're going to pay \$664,000 for this, if you're adding the cost of the assessment, not including the travel and whether it's getting somebody out of a community, which costs even more than it costs to get out of Yellowknife, probably double or triple.... If you have to send somebody with an escort or if it's court-ordered, whether you have to send them with a professional such as somebody from the sheriff's office, all of a sudden hiring one more psychiatric specialist is starting to look pretty cheap. So I would like to make that suggestion.

I would also like that comparison brought forward when they send the rest of the detail to me at that time. Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, I think the comment about looking at, in a sense, bringing the services to the Northwest Territories is a good one.

And we'll get that information, again, put together with the rest of the commitments we've made in this area.

As well, we have to realize that in past practice when we've in a sense repatriated services to the North, it's not always ended up being less expensive than the current way of doing business. But this looks like it could be a good candidate. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** We've concluded page 14 previously, so we'll be returning to page 16.

Education, Culture and Employment, Education and Culture, not previously authorized: \$569,000.

Education, Culture and Employment, Education and Culture, \$569,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Advanced Education and Careers, not previously authorized: \$194,000. Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Chairman, I just had a couple of questions in regard to the increase — and I guess it was a negotiated increase — to the lease for Aurora College in their current location at Northern United Place. It's a substantial increase of close to 30 per cent. That is what I calculated. I'm not sure who we've got doing the negotiating of leases, but I think we didn't negotiate a really good deal if we were paying \$660,000, and now we're paying \$900,000-and-some. It's a substantial increase.

I just wanted to put on the record that I think this deal is for five years. And at the end of this five years or during this next five years, we have got to come up with a plan to build a college, a permanent home for Aurora College here in Yellowknife. There has to be a stand-alone campus here in Yellowknife. We can't continue to be paying \$1 million in rent every year to Northern United Place. We have to get a dedicated facility up and running within the next five years, and we've got five years to do it. Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the previous lease amount was entered into ten years ago. As we realize and are seeing, the occupancy rate here in the capital has changed significantly since ten years ago, hence, the increase of the new negotiated lease amount. The Member is right: it is for a five-year renewal.

Of course, every government would have to look at its options to see what's available. The department can look at that. But again, with our tight fiscal environment, coming up with actual capital dollars to build a facility versus leasing is something that is also going to be part of the equation.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, I was just going to reaffirm that I hope the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is taking this seriously, the increase, and that I too — Mr. Ramsay beat me to the punch — think that this is now a serious demonstration of how we could fix some of our expenditures and our problems associated with that.

On top of that, a lot of people know that this would bring a new and much higher profile to the college, that I think it requires and is also hungry for, because I think this college now wants to continue to grow. As well, it has potential, I think, of migrating towards more of a university format. I have big expectations for this to continue. And I think this is the underpinning point: \$1 million a year for a lease cost is a lot of money. I hope the Education Minister is listening very closely, so we have high expectations that they move very quickly on coming up with a solution.

I'll tell you that five years is going to go by very fast, and someone is going to be sitting there, hopefully not sleeping at the switch, going, "Oh, my goodness, we didn't plan for a university or a college campus," whatever it's going to be at that time. Then we're going to have to renew for another five years. I'll say to the Education Minister: heed our warning at this time. We want to be able to move forward. Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The Member will have plenty of opportunity during the business plan stages of our budget development process to work with the Minister Responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Right now, as identified and as structured in the Northwest Territories, the headquarters of the main Aurora College is situated in Fort Smith with campuses in Inuvik and Yellowknife as main campuses, and then we have smaller facilities in other communities. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Still on page 16, Education, Culture and Employment, Advanced Education and Careers, not previously authorized: \$194,000.

Advanced Education and Careers, \$194,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Income Security, not previously authorized: \$552,000. Agreed?

Income Security, \$552,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** The Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1,992,000.

Total Department, \$1,992,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving along to page 17, Transportation, Corporate Services, not previously authorized: negative \$243,000.

Transportation, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Services, \$243,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Airport, not previously authorized: \$385,000. Agreed?

Airport, \$385,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Highways, not previously authorized: \$1,170,000. Agreed?

Highways, \$1,170,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Ferries, not previously authorized: \$201,000. Agreed?

Ferries, \$210,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Road Licensing and Safety, not previously authorized: \$20,000. Agreed?

Road Licensing and Safety, \$20,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1,533,000. Agreed?

Total Department, \$1,533,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving on to page 18, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: \$158,000.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Management, \$158,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Economic Development, not previously authorized: negative \$1,864,000.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, there is a Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program, I believe, in the range of \$2.5 million. It has been reduced by approximately \$2.1 million. I would just like to find out or have the FMB Minister put on record where that \$2.1 million will show up or who is getting it or where it is going.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, it's being reduced so that the overall expenditure of the Government of the Northwest Territories would be reduced by this amount in accordance. The department has worked in this area and won't be needing this funding for this year but is re-profiling it, and it will come back in through next year's business planning cycle.

**Mr. Hawkins:** When the Minister says that they will be re-profiling it, does that mean it will be voted on as new money, or will it fall out of this system into the lapsed process, back into the Treasury, and be put up the competition like every other program, or will it be re-profiled automatically on the Tourism Product Diversification line item?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, as we know, every budget has to be approved by this Assembly. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has put forward a plan that reinvests the dollars over a number of years to fit this program over a number of years, so that is in the system.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Chairman, I just had a couple of questions following up on Mr. Hawkins' concern. There was a great deal of interest when the program itself was talked about late in the life of the last government. There was also a rush to get a briefing to our committee earlier on this year. I'm just wondering. The rush was because there was a line up of operators and people out there in the Territory that were waiting to get some of this assistance money. So if we are re-profiling it and putting it off, what money is available today for the operators that were waiting to access this funding?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, for this fiscal year, up until we agree on a new budget with new initiatives, \$304,000.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Chairman, I guess that part of the onus on getting the briefing and getting it before committee was because there was a pent-up demand out there amongst operators to access some of these dollars, and if now there is only \$304,000, I believe the Premier had mentioned, then that causes me some concern. I don't understand why we couldn't have more money available for operators wanting to access the Product Diversification Fund.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, there were a lot of packages that have gone out. As well, individuals or companies could have gone to the department's web site to download it off that process. At this stage there have been eight applications received, with the possibility of up to 13 scheduled for the end of January.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I guess the more things change, the more they stay the same, because the last government's Governance and Economic Development Committee found out about the program through a supplementary appropriation. And here we are in this government.... Being the Chair of EDI, this is the first I've heard, through this sup, that the funding is not going to be even what we thought it was going to be in January. So again, it's in a sup where we find out exactly what's happening. Like I said, the more things change, the more they stay the same sometimes. I am a bit concerned about that, Mr. Chairman.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The total budget line stays the same over the same number of years. It is changing, though, from one year to the next. Instead of such a large amount being utilized in 2007-08, as highlighted, the number is now

\$340,000, and the balance is then being redistributed over 2008-09 through to 2011-12.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Not to belabour it much longer, but again, the committee was under the understanding that there is a substantial amount of money there. Again, for the pent-up demand that was out there with tourism operators here in the Northwest Territories.... Obviously, something changed somewhere.

The money is not there, like it was supposed to be there. We're just finding out about it through a supplementary appropriation — that the briefing we had with the Minister six weeks ago wasn't what it seemed. I don't know if.... It wasn't communicated to committee, not to my knowledge; I could be mistaken. But I'm wondering if it was communicated to the tourism industry and the operators that are out there and that are picking up packages that were trying to access some of these dollars.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this is an example of when dollars are approved late in a fiscal year. Getting a program implemented and available sometimes can prove more challenging than initially anticipated. Luckily, today we have the Minister of ITI who can give more details as to what the Member has raised with his concerns.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** I think the pent-up demand is still there. It just became a question of cash-flowing the money. We rolled out the program on January 7, and as the applications have been rolling in, we realized that, as part of the cash-flowing, we weren't going to have enough applications to flow the whole \$2.5 million in this fiscal year. To ensure that all the money goes for tourism operators, we put forward a request to re-profile it. And that's why we're bringing it forward here as part of the supplementary appropriation.

The overall effect is that we're still going to have \$5.6 million over four years available for this tourism diversification program. I think it's just a cash-flowing issue.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Just really quick, Mr. Chairman: \$340,000 — I think that would be taken up quite quickly by applications that were received. Some of the concerns by committee members were that the funding that was available wasn't enough.

I'm having a little bit of trouble understanding why we couldn't flow this money because we didn't have enough applications. I think the applications are out there, and there is a demand out there for the money. I'm having a little bit of trouble understanding that rationale.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Based on the applications that we received and the amounts requested from the different programs that were being accessed, we have calculated how much money would flow out

this fiscal year. We are anticipating that all the \$2.5 million that we had originally budgeted for this fiscal year will be spent, but it's a cash-flow issue.

Of the applications received, we calculate that \$318,000 will be paid out this fiscal year. That's why we're asking to re-profile the remainder, so we can spend it next fiscal year.

**Mr. Ramsay:** The Minister is saying that if they had the \$2.5 million this fiscal year, it wouldn't have been spent. That is prior to the end of June?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** This '07-08 fiscal year still ends at the end of March. Later on in the session, we're going to be dealing with how we get from March to June. This budget, the dollars voted for the 2007-08 fiscal year and the authority to spend those dollars ends March 31, 2008.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Still on page 18, Industry, Tourism and Investment, Economic Development, not previously authorized: negative \$1,864,000.

Industry, Tourism and Investment, Economic Development, \$1,864,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: negative \$1,706,000. Agreed?

Total Department, \$1,706,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving on to page 19, Environment and Natural Resources, Operations Expenditures, Corporate Management, not previously authorized: \$375,000.

Environment and Natural Resources, Corporate Management, \$375,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$375,000.

Total Department, \$375,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving on to page 20, Municipal and Community Affairs, Regional Operations, not previously authorized: \$3,172,000.

**Mr. Krutko:** With regard to the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Agreement, I'd like to ask the Minister exactly what the time limit is on this agreement, what other projects are going to fall within this funding arrangement, and which communities are going to be benefiting from this program.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** This is an agreement that flows over a five-year period. The total amount of that was in the neighbourhood of \$16 million. This flows through to a number of communities. For that information, it was split as well between tax-based and non-tax-based communities: 45 per cent to

tax-based communities and 55 per cent to non-tax-based communities is the way it's worked out.

We don't identify, for example, what tax-based communities spend their money on. They have their plan to work on. As well, we have a new deal process we've worked out with a number of other communities.

The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs may be able to provide a bit more detail there.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** There is a number of projects that we have approved to date. I believe the Member is asking for a listing of those projects. Those are the Behchoko sewer main replacement, the Behchoko water treatment plant, the Behchoko vault replacement, the Behchoko solid waste disposal site, the Inuvik woodbox utilidor replacement, the Norman Wells water storage tank replacement, the Yellowknife corrugated metal pipe replacement, Fort Simpson water and sewer main replacement, the Fort Smith Water Treatment Plant upgrade, the Hay River sewage treatment lagoon upgrade and the Fort Smith intake ground stabilization and geotechnical assessment.

There is still a number of projects we're looking at. Those are the implementation of the water treatment plants, and also the Nahanni Butte gym project, the Fort Smith Water Treatment Plant amendment and the city of Yellowknife wood pellet boiler project.

**Mr. Krutko:** I asked the question of how many years, and the Minister mentioned five years. When does it start and when does it end within that five years?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the program started in January 2005, so this is a continuation. It's been adjusted as of recently. I believe it ends in five years, so it'd be 2010.

**Mr. Krutko:** I know there's talk about another fund in regard to the Canadian building fund. Can these dollars — and also using the Canadian building fund dollars — be used jointly, or is this a separate fund altogether?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, I believe they are separate funds. The Building Canada Fund needs the matching dollars from each jurisdiction to qualify. This one is separate from that.

**Mr. Krutko:** I believe that we do have very major infrastructure problems — our community especially. There's federal legislation that's being developed, or has been developed, looking at the possibility of having to process our grey water. Right now we just pump it out of a house, put it into a vehicle and put it into a sump. I think there's talk about having to process that through a treatment facility.

Again, there's going to be a major cost implication to communities, where you're going to have to start treating your grey water. I'm just making the Premier aware that there are going to be implications, especially for smaller communities, non-tax-based communities, which will not be able to, unless we match some of these funds.

That's why I asked the question of the possibility of matching or, basically, getting some money through the municipal infrastructure fund and maybe through that Building Canada Fund which can assist these small communities where you will have a major capital cost, especially if we have to force all our communities to go into the arrangement of having to treat grey water in all our communities. I think there is that financial implication that is coming, and I think we have to be ready for it.

Also, the problem we see from putting water treatment plants in communities where the costs have skyrocketed and where we're realizing... I believe we have ten communities on a list, and we're only able to do five. Again, with the limited dollars we have, we have to be able to stretch it as far as we can.

I'd like to ask the Premier exactly... I know we're still in negotiations on the Building Canada Fund. Is that something we can bring forward to the federal government to see if we have the flexibility of doing that — being able to move this money around and also joining these two funding sources together for any large capital projects that may come in well over our allowable amounts, because we won't be able to match it, especially if we expect the small communities to match those projects.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** I have to go to the Minister responsible, the Minister of Community Affairs. He can give details on the overlap or how one fund affects another. Potentially, one may roll into the other. The question about the bundled projects or the... Previously the Minister responded about bundled projects. That is one of the activities we're looking at doing: how our infrastructure is not one project by one project. We found they cost substantially higher. But for the actual funding, how it rolls out and the impact on other dollars available, Mr. McLeod can provide that detail.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Chairman, this whole initiative was put in place by the federal government with a budget of \$16 million over five years. It increased by an additional \$3 million over the life of those five years.

Although it doesn't state it, the MRIF program is completed. It's expected that the new Building Canada Fund will replace it in terms of providing funding for infrastructure to the communities. It would be very unlikely that they would accept a project that's been approved through the MRIF

process — that has an oversight committee that we have joint management on with the federal government, that we would be able to use the new money to steer it towards an already approved project. I would say the chances are going to be very slim. We haven't signed the framework agreement yet. Once we do that and we start working on the funding agreement, the detail will become more clear. Thank you.

**Mr. Krutko:** I would like to ask again: would you consider that some communities may not be able to come up with the matching funds? We should have the flexibility or ask for the flexibility with the federal government in those circumstances that we do allow for some leeway. Again, I know people are perceiving a gas tax and whatnot. But again, the smaller your population, the less you get.

I think it's important that we do look at that option and that we don't totally exclude it from our negotiations. I'd like to get some assurance that maybe we'll consider that in our discussions with the federal government.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the Building Canada Fund, again, as the Minister pointed out, is going to continue on where this one changes. As well, there is an allocation identified, and this is the work that's been ongoing in negotiations with the federal government. A portion of that is for municipal infrastructure; a portion of it is for transportation infrastructure. And there are a number of categories that are highlighted within that. Again, the Minister may have further detail on that.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Chairman, the Member's concerns have been raised by the members of LGANT, the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories. They've also been brought forward by the N.W.T. Association of Communities.

One of the things that we're trying to work out as we move forward on the discussions with the Building Canada Fund is how would the communities access the dollars that would be made available — whether it's a formula funding process that we have now with the communities for the capital or would it be an application base so that we can enhance what they're doing already and give them a little bit of breathing room.

We're not quite there yet on how we're going to do that. That's something we'll have to work out because we want to include the communities as we have those discussions.

**Mr. Krutko:** With regard to the way the funds are going to be rolled out, is that going to be base-plus funding in regard to having a base for communities to work off of and then maybe look at population on top of that? I know that process. We have done that

in the past in regard to the last Assembly. And I think that way did work.

I think that having a base to work off makes it more workable for communities to do capital projects in communities. I would just like to know: is that program going to be base-plus funded?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The arrangement between ourselves and the federal government has a base to it. As we proceed from our end to communities looking at project by project, that changes how it flows. But there is potential that it can recognize the difference in community size as well. The Minister, again, can add more detail.

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Chairman, we have confirmation from our government that they will be going into two different areas: transportation and municipal assets. We have a process for the transportation side of it.

The unknown at this point is how the money would flow to the communities. Of course, that's why we can't put together any lists and bring it forward because we need to work out a number of things before we can move forward. And dealing with the communities, providing money to the municipalities for capital is one of the areas that we have to yet negotiate and work out.

**Mr. Krutko:** Final question. How soon do we expect to have an answer or have this negotiation concluded so that we can see where we're going with this program?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, we are hoping to have the framework agreement signed off before the end of this month or very close to the end of this month. The funding arrangement, we've yet to get a timeline on that; it could be another couple of months. Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** We're still on page 20, Municipal and Community Affairs, Regional Operations, not previously authorized: \$3,172,000.

Municipal and Community Affairs, Capital Investment Expenditures, Regional Operations, \$3,172,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$3,172,000.

Total Department, \$3,172,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving along to page 21, Health and Social Services, Health Services Programs, not previously authorized: \$2,729,000. Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Chairman, over the past seven, eight years, the Government of the Northwest Territories has spent millions and millions of dollars in the area of electronic health records.

I just wanted to know — and I'm not sure if the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Health and Social Services has this information — who's in charge of electronic health records and the implementation of all this money that's being spent in this area? Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this project here works through the federal government. They've established the Canada Health Infoway process, which is established as an independent, non-profit organization launched by Health Canada in 2001. They originally started with \$1.2 billion in that area.

The Department of Health and Social Services has been working on our own system but also adapting to what has been brought forward as a national initiative so that we can — as we've had patients going out to other jurisdictions — share information on the same platforms. Thank you.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I'm not a Member of the Social Programs Committee. But I think it would be useful for Members, perhaps through the Social Programs Committee and then other Members could be invited.... I personally would like to see what we've gotten for the \$12 million or \$13 million we've spent in the area of TeleHealth and on electronic health records. I'd like to see how it's working and where we're at because it's a substantial amount of money that we've spent there. I'd like to think that we're making some progress there. And I'd like to see some evidence of that first-hand. Thank you.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, TeleHealth is an initiative that started a number of years ago to work and provide services. For example, X-rays in the smaller communities can be shipped to doctors in our larger centres to help in the diagnosis situation. This piece falls into a different category. The funding started to flow in 2006-2007 and goes through to '09-10. So it is, again, short-term money in the sense that it is capped.

The Minister of Health and Social Services can also provide more detail to this specific request.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Member's request for information. I think it will be a good idea for the department to go the Standing Committee on Social Programs and make presentations on a number of areas having to do with software programs and electronic information programs that the department is delivering. This one item on here is part of the Infoway project, which is a national project, as the Minister mentioned. TeleHealth is a support program. Then we have the electronic medical records system, which is a different program as well.

In the interest of briefing Members, as some of the Members are new, I think that would be a good thing to do. I want to accept that invitation, and I will

work with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs to accommodate that.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Any other questions? Still on page 21, Health and Social Services, Health Services Programs, not previously authorized: \$2,729,000.

Health and Social Services, Capital Investment Expenditures, Health Services Programs, \$2,729,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$2,729,000.

Total Department, \$2,729,000, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving on to page 22, Education, Culture and Employment, Education and Culture, Special Warrants: \$250,000.

Education, Culture and Employment, Capital Investment Expenditures, Education and Culture, Special Warrants, \$250,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, Special Warrant: \$250,000. Agreed?

Total Department, Special Warrant, \$250,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 23, Transportation, Highways, not previously authorized: \$1,500,000.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Just a couple of questions on the cost — the \$1.5 million to provide funding to cover the new permanent structure to replace the failed Caribou Creek drainage structure. I just wanted to ask a couple of questions.

Do we have some type of warranty or insurance to cover what would appear to be the fault of the engineer or whoever's fault it is? Why are we paying \$1.5 million?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** We do have to recognize this culvert was put in place in 1973. The department has been doing its maintenance. It was on an annual basis. Based on my understanding, those large culverts are looked at for their safety. This one is felt to have gone through collapse because of the water flow situation that eroded underneath that specific facility. I would have to look into whether or not our insurance program would cover us off in this area.

**Mr. McLeod:** The \$1.5 million — I'm not going to point fingers. They do have people who are supposed to be going out there inspecting these things. If they pass an inspection and then collapse, there is responsibility there somewhere, as far as I'm concerned.

My question is on \$1.5 million. Is this a true and accurate estimate that it's going to cost to do that? Based on what I've been seeing from the department, I can almost expect to see another sup or another request for more money because the \$1.5 million is just not going to cover it, if that's what they estimated. Then the \$422,000 that we just said yes to a little earlier, I think that was just to do the detour around where it is. And now we have \$1.5 million.

I'm just curious. I would like to know or be reassured that this \$1.5 million is a true estimate and that they're not going to come back after the actual work and request more money. It is getting to be common practice with the department to underestimate and, when the actuals come in, request more money.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** The total of the project on this one is identified by the department at \$1.925 million; \$425,000 will be reallocated from the major culvert replacement capital project. So they are realigning the \$425,000 and asking for the \$1.5 million.

We can have the Minister provide the schedule of events they have identified and the costing with those.

**Mr. McLeod:** So the \$425,000 the Premier made reference to, that's on top of the \$1.5, but that is not including the \$422,000? I am assuming we are expecting work to be started this spring or even this winter because we do have a lot of anticipated traffic up the highway this summer, and we want to make sure that this is a safe place to drive. As it stands right now, I think they've made some signage estimates, which was a good thing. But the way they had it detoured was awfully dangerous. So my question is: the \$1.5 is in addition to the \$425,000 the Premier spoke to, but it doesn't include the \$422,000 that we had already approved a couple of pages before?

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the total amount for this piece of the work is \$1.925 million. That does not include the earlier amount for the work around dealing with the collapse as it occurred.

The department also informs that this work must be done during the winter season, as part of the condition on the water licence application from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as we have to deal with this before spring runoff occurs to protect the fish habitat in that area. This bridge construction has to be done this winter, and the detour has to be removed before spring runoff occurs as well.

**Mr. Krutko:** In regard to this item, I requested the Minister of Transportation to give me a breakdown on the age of the culverts on the Dempster

Highway. The report that got back showed that the majority of culverts on this stretch of highway were installed in 1973. Again, they are 37-year-old culverts, and we are starting to see that corrosion is happening in these culverts. I think this is probably not the first culvert that you are going to see collapsing on this road system. I think that the government has to ensure that we do a literal test of our culverts to make sure that this doesn't happen.

I know for a fact that there was a collapse in the culverts when they were building the Dempster Highway at Rengleng River, where they went to similar culverts as this one that collapsed. Those are similar types of culverts that were put in at the same time, and I think it is important that we take a look at those culverts too. That is a major cost to this government to replace them.

Also, if we have an emergency like we had in this case, to have the road totally shut down because there is no means to put an access route around that major crossing, especially around the Rengleng River, again, this shows that the age of those culverts is a threat to the public. I believe we have to replace them, hopefully sooner than later.

I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation what they are doing to replace the rest of the culverts on this part of the Dempster Highway.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, this deals with the existing situation. The department business plan and their capital acquisition plan would have to identify these areas. They do have a major culvert replacement fund available, and that's where, for example, the \$425,000 would be allocated from this specific area. I am not sure if the Minister of Transportation would have all of that information here this evening on the plan. They are going forward, as well. That plan would have to be voted on by this Assembly as we proceed with our budget processes.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Chairman, the department is going through their inventory. They are looking at the culverts in and around this area, in terms of 1973, and they are looking at all the culverts in the Northwest Territories. They are looking at what it will cost to replace them, and they're updating information and reprioritizing some of the work that they have to do with regard to the culverts. There are another 54 bridged culverts, as noted, needing some form of rehabilitation.

They are looking at their costing, as the Premier alluded to. There is a process we're going to enter into, looking to replace or repair some of these culverts. The department has a discussion program on a yearly cycle, so we do estimate the cost to put in the culverts or to put the bridge in. I think they base the numbers on some of the similar work



that's going to happen and what numbers they get. Certainly, as we delay, the costs are going up every year in terms of the material and that.

There is a process going on within the department, and of course, we'll have to meet with the House and our colleague Members in terms of putting through some of the projects. We want to continue with replacing of culverts that are in dire need.

**Mr. Krutko:** In regard to culverts and also the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, I know they have raised the issue with us in the past in regard to the stress on fish and everything else: the migration of fish and the effects that culverts have, especially in the spring runoff. I think at some point we'll probably have to replace the majority of these larger culverts we have on creek crossings or river crossings in regard to dealing around Fisheries and Oceans.

I'd just like to ask the Premier if he can make it possible for the Department of Finance to give a report to the Economic Development Committee in regard to the problems we're running into with culverts collapsing and whatnot, and other — not threats — liabilities we may have for the unforeseen, but know they're there.

But because of this situation, we're seeing more and more of these things happening. I think this does have something to do with global warming. I think we can't take it lightly that we're seeing more and more washouts; we're seeing higher runoffs and everything else. It is having an effect on our culvert systems, on our road systems. I think the Premier can direct his department to report back to the Economic Development Committee on some way to update us on what the department is doing in this area of culvert replacement.

**Hon. Floyd Roland:** Mr. Chairman, the Department of Finance does have a risk section within it to look at our risks and liabilities. I'll work with the department to see what we can provide.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Returning to page 23, Transportation, Highways, not previously authorized: \$1,500,000.

Transportation, Capital Investment Expenditures, Highways, \$1,500,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Road Licensing and Safety, not previously authorized: \$300,000.

Road Licensing and Safety, \$300,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Department, not previously authorized: \$1,800,000.

Total Department, \$1,800,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Now, Committee, we'll turn to the bill. I would ask you to stand down the clause-by-clause and Preamble, and turn to the Schedule found on page 3, if the committee agrees.

**Some honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** On the Schedule, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Operations Expenditures: \$21,305,000.

Schedule, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Operations Expenditures, \$21,305,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Part 2, Vote 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Capital Investment Expenditures: \$7,951,000.

Schedule, Part 2, Vote 2, Capital Investment Expenditures, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Capital Investment Expenditures, \$7,951,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Total Supplementary Appropriation: \$29,256,000. Agreed?

Total Supplementary Appropriation, \$29,256,000 approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Now, Committee, I ask you to turn to the bill. We will stand down the Preamble and look at clause 1, page 1.

Clauses 1 through 7 inclusive approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 2, the Preamble.

Preamble approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** The bill as a whole.

Bill 2 as a whole approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Does the committee agree that Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, is ready for third reading?

**Some honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008 is approved for third reading.

Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, approved for third reading.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** I'll thank the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Roland, and to your witness as well.

What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** I move that we report progress.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Noting the clock, I will now rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

**Mr. Speaker:** We'll have the report of the Committee of the Whole, Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 2, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008, and would like to report that Bill 2 is ready for third reading.

I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motion carried.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 23, Orders of the Day. Madam Clerk.

### Orders of the Day

**Assistant Clerk (Ms. Bennett):** Mr. Speaker, Orders of the Day for Thursday, February 14, at 1:30 p.m.:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 5) Returns to Oral Questions

- 6) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 7) Acknowledgements
- 8) Oral Questions
- 9) Written Questions
- 10) Returns to Written Questions
- 11) Replies to Opening Address
- 12) Petitions
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents
- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
  - Motion 2-16(2): Highways Maintenance Tender Packages to Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure (R. McLeod)
- 18) First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 1: Interim Appropriation Act, 2008-2009
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - MS 1-16(2): Sessional Statement
  - MS 9-16(2): Public Housing Rental Subsidy Survey Results and Plans for the Future
- 21) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22) Third Reading of Bills
  - Bill 2: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2007-2008
- 23) Orders of the Day

**Mr. Speaker:** Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 14, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.