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**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Hay River North)

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories  
Thursday, May 29, 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. Norman Yakeleya.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

Prayer.

**Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. I'd also like to welcome everyone in the gallery today. We have a group of young folks from Alberta visiting us today. Welcome to the Chamber.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Hon. Michael McLeod.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 39-16(2)  
HIGH PERFORMANCE ATHLETES  
— CONGRATULATIONS

**Hon. Michael McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, it's with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize the significant athletic achievements of a number of young northern athletes. Ms. Sarah Daitch of Fort Smith has been recently named to the Canadian National Cross-Country Ski Team. This is a tremendous achievement by Ms. Daitch and marks the first time an athlete from the Northwest Territories has achieved this standing since the era of Burt Bullock, Roseanne Allen, Ernie Lennie, Sharon and Shirley Firth and others.

Mr. Michael Gilday of Yellowknife recently concluded an outstanding speed skating season that saw him not only set a new world record in the 1,000 metres but also named to the National Short Track Speed Skating Team.

Those accomplishments complement those of Thomsen D'Hont of Yellowknife, who was part of the 2007–2008 national development squad in cross-country skiing, and Mr. Brendan Green of Hay River, who was part of the 2007–2008 senior national training group in biathlon.

Mr. Speaker, these are truly outstanding accomplishments by young Northerners who have demonstrated that dedication, hard work and determination pay off. These individuals also serve

as excellent role models for many other young Northerners who aspire to achieve great things.

As the 2010 Winter Olympics and the Paralympic Games approach, Northerners will be following these and other young Canadians with great pride as Canada hosts the world in Vancouver and Whistler in less than two years' time. The athletes I've mentioned today are among our best and are representative of a growing group of youth who are achieving great results in sports.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is pleased to support these athletes through the NWT High Performance Athlete Grant Program, which provides assistance to offset training and competition expenses.

Of course, these athletes could not succeed without tremendous support from their families, friends and communities, and it's fair to say that almost every athlete who attains this level of success does so because of the significant support they receive from those around them. To those individuals, sponsors and communities, I would like to pass on our sincere thanks for your contribution to the development of these youths and for helping all of us feel proud to be Northerners.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Applause.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Hon. Jackson Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 40-16(2)  
HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVES

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform you about the success of the initial year of the Small Community Homelessness Fund. Homelessness is a pressing and complex issue across the Northwest Territories that requires cross-departmental collaboration to make an impact. As a government, we recognize that we need partnerships with all levels of government and community organizations to address these issues and support individuals and communities.

The Small Community Homelessness Fund is an excellent example of a cross-departmental initiative

that supported local government and agencies to create projects designed and implemented by community members. This application-based fund was launched in May of 2007 to all small communities, excluding Inuvik, Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Hay River, and was intended to respond to local homelessness issues through a committee-initiated, -driven, and -implemented project. The Small Community Homelessness Fund provided funding for emergency shelter projects up to \$40,000 or homelessness support projects for up to \$10,000.

In 2007–2008 the GNWT approved six applications for funding in five communities. Each demonstrated creative use of existing community resources, buildings and skills, and integrated several partnerships to extend the impact and use of the limited funding. A total of \$170,000 was provided to organizations to help take care of the needs of the people who are homeless.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share some of the outcomes of the 2007–2008 projects.

In Wrigley funding went to the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation for two projects. A life-skills workshop was held, and work has begun on creating a shelter.

Funding was provided to two different projects in Fort Providence. One is through the Deh Gah Got'ie council to support renovations of an existing building as an additional emergency housing option. The other project in Fort Providence is through the Zhahti Koe Friendship Centre and is a healthy-meals program.

A similar program was implemented in Aklavik to provide weekly meals to homeless individuals. This project enhanced an existing snack program.

The Acho Dene Koe First Nation in Fort Liard received funds to implement their winter warm-up program, which includes a weekly hot nutritious meal, access to clothing banks and an emergency funding program.

In Hay River we have been working with the Katlodeeche First Nation to help them achieve their goal of renovating a three-bedroom home into two bachelor units that will help provide accommodations for the homeless.

The homeless-support projects have been excellent examples of community volunteerism and local solutions to homelessness support. The uptake of these initiatives exceeded expectations and demonstrated the need and commitment that is present in the communities through lead projects when some support is provided.

I am pleased to announce that the Small Community Homelessness Fund will be available to communities again in 2008–2009. Information

packages will be distributed shortly to community governments, local organizations, housing offices, interagency committees, community support staff, churches and other local organizers to take advantage of this fund. I would encourage all communities to apply.

I look forward to informing you on the continued progress and outcomes from this innovative project that has created new support for the people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNIZING HAY RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, today, during this busy budget session, on a somewhat lighter note I wanted to take time to speak about the presence of two grade 6 classes in the visitors' gallery.

It is becoming a tradition for Hay River students to come to the Assembly. Earlier this week we had the grades 5 and 6 classes from École Boreale. Today we have two grade 6 classes from Princess Alexandra School in Hay River. This annual event requires quite a bit of planning on the part of Speaker Delorey's and my constituency assistants, Mrs. Mageean and Mrs. Morgan. It is also supported by sponsorship from a couple of organizations that I would like to thank.

The students here today arrived in Yellowknife via a bus charter with Frontier Coachlines, driven by the owner of that company, Mr. Joe Gagnier. The cost of the charter was sponsored by the Hay River Elks Club. I know Mr. Gagnier does a little extra to make sure the kids have a good chance to have a look at Yellowknife.

The students are staying at the Yellowknife Ski Club. They've been swimming at the Ruth Inch Memorial Pool, sponsored by Northland Utilities in Hay River, and they have been to the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre. They have been to the Prince of Wales museum, where they were fortunate to hear northern wildlife brought to life by local naturalist Jamie Bastedo. We are very proud of these young people.

Just a little story in keeping with school trips that the Members might find humorous. I grew up in Ontario, where every grade 8 student in our small town made a pilgrimage to the Ontario Legislature in Toronto. I lived only 120 miles from Toronto. I set out on a trip with my classmates, but I only made it to the nearest village of Tavistock, where I

convinced the bus driver to let me off the bus. I called my dad to come and get me. I lived in a little town like Hay River, but I didn't want to go to the big city of Toronto. So I'm very proud of all these students, because at their young age I was too timid and shy to make it all the way on a school trip to Toronto. I may say I've changed.

Laughter.

This is a very educational experience for these students, and I'd like to thank Minister Jackson Lafferty for taking a few minutes to speak with our visiting classes from Hay River today. I hope they will go home well informed about our Legislative Assembly and have a new interest in the role of the government in the North. Also, I'd like to thank the parents and chaperones for taking time out of their schedules to escort our students here.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

**Mr. Bromley:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is the second National Day of Action in Support of First Nations. I would like to acknowledge the Government of Canada for recently forming the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This commission is part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and will allow people who have experienced harm at residential schools to share their stories in a safe and culturally sensitive environment.

This commission will not decide on guilt or innocence but will fill in a sad history to help people to heal and encourage reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people of Canada. With a budget of \$60 million, the commission will start this June 1 — that's in a few days — and will complete its work in five years.

Mr. Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, views the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a turning point in the relationship between aboriginal people in Canada. He said it will set the historical record straight and "give our people an opportunity to speak to Canadians in a way they have never been able to do before. There will be no...secrets."

Commission Chair Mr. Justice Harry LaForme says it will help to discover why the current relationship between aboriginal people and the rest of Canada is as fractured and misunderstood as it is. To quote Justice LaForme, "Once we are able to define this faulty relationship, we may be able to provide a road map for a more healthy relationship into the future."

Two women of aboriginal descent join Justice LaForme on the commission: Jane Brewin Morley, a lawyer, mediator and public policy advisor, and Claudette Dumont-Smith, a registered nurse active in aboriginal health issues.

There will be a special place for elders in the development of their important work. Northerners have been consulted, and the travel schedule for the TRC will be established next month.

I'm sure all Members join me in acknowledging the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its important task to help all Canadians reconcile our past and live together more honourably in the future.

As an addendum, Mr. Speaker, in my own riding of Weledeh there is a shameful display of the lack of understanding among people. The paving of the roads on Latham Island stops dramatically at the entrance to N'dilo. After years of unsuccessful requests for paving to extend into N'dilo, today the Yellowknives First Nation is stopping vehicles, handing out information about their road and requesting donations. I have made a personal donation to this cause.

The paving of the N'dilo road requires....

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Bromley, your time for the Member's statement has expired.

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

Unanimous statement granted.

**Mr. Bromley:** On the issue of paving the N'dilo road, I have made a personal donation to this cause. It is happening as we speak. The paving of the N'dilo road requires all levels of government — federal, municipal, territorial and aboriginal — to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. I call on all parties to get this done. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will be speaking about an all-too-familiar frustration for individuals and businesses in our territory: red tape. Red tape refers to those non-essential procedures — forms, licences and regulations — that add to the cost of dealing with government. To be clear, red tape does not refer to regulations that are effective and necessary for the protection of public health, safety, the environment and consumers. Those types of regulations are important and essential for good government.

The regulations we need to do away with are those that are obsolete, redundant and confusing and those that hurt our economic competitiveness or simply waste taxpayers' time and money.

Several provinces, including British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Quebec, have red tape–reduction initiatives underway. In 2001 the British Columbia government committed to reducing the unnecessary red tape and regulations by one-third within three years. The government Ministers are now required to maintain a zero per cent increase to regulatory requirements from their June 2004 baselines, and they continue to identify further reductions and reform opportunities. In addition to reducing the number of regulations, the British Columbia government has introduced strict criteria to ensure that new and remaining regulations are as efficient and as effective as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's time for the GNWT to look at its own red tape–reduction initiative, perhaps dusting off some of the work started on regulatory reform during the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly. This is a project that would fit well with the mandate of the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative Committee led by Minister Miltenberger, which he spoke about yesterday. I'll be encouraging the committee to consider this type of initiative to make government as effective and efficient as possible.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRIVATIZATION OF SERVICES AT STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak again about Stanton Territorial Hospital. I'm very encouraged and happy to hear the Minister is trying to get some answers to the problems at that hospital.

Today I wanted to focus on a couple of decisions previous governments have made regarding the privatization of services at that hospital. I believe the decisions to privatize the housekeeping, laundry and food services at that hospital were, in fact, bad decisions. Seeing that we are currently looking at human resource, operational and financial issues at that hospital, we would be remiss if we did not look at revisiting these decisions.

Housekeeping, laundry services and food services are all integral components of having a well-run hospital. Staffing in these areas is always a problem, and turnover is sky-high, which means new staff are forever being trained. These staff interact day in and day out with health care professionals and other staff in this facility, and it is adding to the low-morale issue when there appears

to be no continuity or consistency in services in these areas.

I would like to know how much these contracts cost us and whether the Department of Health and Social Services is the least bit interested in re-examining these contracts.

Sodexo is a huge \$7.9 billion corporation headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland. How much money is this big corporation taking with them that should stay here in the Northwest Territories, where the government should repatriate these functions and services to the people? Even if repatriating these functions back to Stanton would cost us a little bit more, the economic impact of actually paying people a decent wage would add greatly to the local economy and to the level of service provided to health care professionals and members of the public who utilize the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, let's put all the evidence and all the contracts on the table and have a discussion about the future of these services. As I mentioned yesterday, Stanton has a number of issues it's dealing with. This is just one issue, and it won't fix everything. But these are functions that cannot be underestimated or overlooked when looking at the overall health and well-being of Stanton Territorial Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

**Mr. Menicoche:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, today the Assembly of First Nations and the Dene Nation are calling on all Canadians to join with them in the National Day of Action. This is the second National Day of Action declared by the Assembly of First Nations. It's an opportunity for all Canadians to stand together and call on the federal government to work with First Nations to ensure they have the same quality of life other Canadians take for granted.

The Assembly of First Nations and First Nations communities have been trying to work with the federal government to address fundamental issues that affect First Nations communities. These issues are well known and well documented. For example, First Nations families are three times more likely to live in poverty compared to other Canadian families. One in four First Nations children live in poverty. First Nations youth graduate from high school at a rate half the national average. Public health issues such as contaminated drinking water and mould-infected housing are becoming the norm



rather than the exception in many First Nations communities. The focus of this year's National Day of Action is about our children, our future and our responsibility to one another as citizens of this nation.

The Assembly of First Nations, Dene Nation and First Nations leaders across the country are calling on the Government of Canada to protect our children by ensuring there is fairness in funding to support quality education and child and family services for First Nations children; invest in our future by supporting First Nations youth to succeed in the workplace and in post-secondary education opportunities; invest in healthy environments for our people by addressing the shameful conditions that exist in too many First Nations communities, like overcrowded housing, dangerous drinking water and crumbling infrastructures; respect our responsibilities to one another by giving First Nations the right and responsibility to make decisions that affect their lives; work with First Nations to bring honour to the communities, to resolve long-standing land claims; and work together to begin to share in the wealth of this land.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Northerners to join the Assembly of First Nations and the Dene Nation today in calling on the Government of Canada to act now and begin working with First Nations people. In doing so, we will build a stronger and better Canada for all Canadians. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Mr. McLeod.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLOSURE OF ARCTIC TERN YOUNG OFFENDER FACILITY

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I rise once again today to speak on the closure of the Arctic Tern young female facility in Inuvik. The Department of Justice has given us many reasons for the closure of Arctic Tern. Frankly, I don't believe any of them. I think the department used the budget reduction as an opportunity and an excuse to get rid of a facility that was always in the crosshairs.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, when the facility was built six years ago at a cost of around \$14 million, the department had to have had some idea that the Youth Criminal Justice Act of Canada was going to change. This, in my opinion, is poor planning and not a good use of government money. They say the facility is underutilized. First of all, that should be a good thing — fewer young girls incarcerated. When you build a school for 500 students and you have 200 to 300 students, is that considered underutilized, and is that an opportunity to close the school?

There are many ways for this government to realize savings and staff reductions. Has anyone asked the employees of Arctic Tern, or the public service for that matter, how best to save the GNWT money? A way you can know how to save money is to ask the public in all 33 communities, and they'll give you fine examples of government money that is poorly spent. I would encourage all residents of the Northwest Territories to e-mail us and give us your views and opinions on how to save money, and we can use that in our deliberations with Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, I am not a critical or a disruptive person by nature. I try to look at everything from a common sense point of view, and common sense in this case tells me that more thought should have been put into this budget, more consultations with the Regular MLAs and, most importantly, consultations with the people around the Northwest Territories who have to live with the reductions without really having any sort of genuine input or opinions into the budget. These people are why we are here, and we should never overlook the importance of their views. I have said it before and I'll say it again: this budget has all the markings of a bureaucratic budget and not a people's budget.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONCERNS IN TU NEDHE COMMUNITIES

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

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the much-needed services in the communities of Tu Nedhe in the area of infrastructure and also programs and services. There are key issues I must work with in the communities. One of the key things that the community looked at in the area of lack of cleanliness and also in the area of health has been dust suppression. Both the communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e have a tremendous amount of dust flying around the community any time there is any sort of vehicle moving at all, including four wheelers and vehicles that are running all over that community. There are absolutely no plans at this time for any sort of dust suppression in those communities.

My main focus, however, for working with these two communities will continue to be the youth focus. Both of the communities lack youth centres. Throughout the process I've been discussing issues with the youth. I had representatives from both of the communities talk to the youth in the communities to ask the youth what their priorities were. Most likely the key priority for Lutselk'e was that there's some sort of a camp set up for the

students and the youth of the community to be able to attend, and so on. Also the youth from both communities were interested in some sort of summertime swimming pool.

One of the key things I found was really lacking as far as the youth go was the fact that there is no money in this budget, or any further money, I should say. There is a small amount of money focused from the youth Minister, something just slightly over \$1 million, to address all of the youth issues and the various youth things that have to be worked on by the government.

At the appropriate time I'll be asking the Minister responsible for youth questions on whether or not there'd be a possibility that something could be done for the youth as far as budgets go.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS  
NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've stated, First Nations people in Canada, which is one of the richest countries in the world, still live in poverty. People have unsafe drinking water in their communities. People have the highest rate of diabetes and TB in Canada. Canada is recognized as one of the G8 countries, which are the eight richest countries in the world, yet we have these statistics in this great country. It makes us wonder why in this day and age Canada still allows these things to happen to its residents, especially to its First Nations people, who were the first people of this country. It's sad to have to have a day of protest to bring attention to an issue we should all be working on to find solutions for.

I've brought up issues in this House for over 12 years in regard to quality water in my communities. I had to pound on this table to get the attention of the government on the other side. Yet we're still having problems where you have to have teams of doctors go into our communities to test every citizen because of contamination of our water system. We have situations where we have 12 people in a home that was designed for four.

Overcrowding, unsafe drinking water and poverty are what hold the aboriginal people back. We have communities with an average income of \$30,000 per year, yet we have large centres, such as Yellowknife, where the average income is \$90,000 per year. That alone should tell us there is injustice in this territory.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I again would like to thank the people who did take part in this march and, more importantly, hope for more people to

speak out on these issues. That's the only way it's going to get the attention it deserves.

I will ask the Deputy Premier some questions on this matter later.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 4, reports of standing and special committees.

**Reports of Standing  
and Special Committees**

COMMITTEE REPORT 7-16(2)  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE  
2008-2009 DRAFT MAIN ESTIMATES

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure is pleased to present its report on its review of the 2008-2009 Draft Main Estimates. The standing committee is responsible for the oversight of the departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations; Municipal and Community Affairs; Environment and Natural Resources; Northwest Territories Housing Corporation; Industry, Tourism and Investment; Transportation; and Public Works and Services.

The committee met to consider the departmental and Draft Main Estimates between April 1 and April 11, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments on our report. Therefore, I would move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that the report on the review of the 2008-2009 Draft Main Estimates of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety.

Motion carried; Committee Report 7-16(2) received and deemed read.

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure is pleased to present its report on its review of the 2008-2009 Draft Main Estimates.

The standing committee is responsible for the oversight of the departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations; Municipal and Community Affairs; Environment and Natural Resources; Northwest Territories Housing Corporation; Industry, Tourism and Investment; Transportation and Public Works and Services. The committee met to consider the departmental Draft Main Estimates between April 1 and 11, 2008.

## General Comments

### Proposed Reductions and Strategic Investments

Committee members recognize that a reduction to expenditures or an increase to revenues is required if we are to live within our means and find the resources to support the goals of the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. However, the committee expressed serious concerns regarding the government decision-making process that led to the proposed reductions and strategic investments within each department.

Committee members were disappointed that there was no real opportunity to discuss the proposed reductions or investments in any detail prior to the review of the Draft Main Estimates. Without detailed business plans, it was often difficult to determine on what basis the decision to cut or invest was made and how those decisions supported the vision, goals and priorities established by the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

The committee does not support any investments related to the Mackenzie Gas Project at this time and recommends they be cancelled altogether. Committee members noted a number of reasons for this. First, members see these investments as inappropriate given the limited legislative and regulatory authority the Government of the Northwest Territories has in oil and gas development. Costs associated with the project are properly the responsibility of Canada, which, under the existing regime, stands to gain almost all revenues from the pipeline. Secondly, delays in the final recommendations from the Joint Review Panel and socioeconomic funding from Canada indicate a level of uncertainty as to whether the pipeline project will proceed in the near future. Finally, any new investments made by this government should support the priorities established by Caucus for the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

Members also find it difficult to support new spending through strategic investments when the reduction exercise is not yet complete and the full costs of those reductions are not totally accounted for. It may be more prudent to reintroduce new strategic investments as part of the business planning process in September.

### Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Main Estimates include only those strategic investments that are essential or support initiative already underway. All other investments could be introduced as part of the business planning process in September 2008.

The committee further recommends the deletion of all strategic investments related to the Mackenzie Gas Project.

## Position Reductions

Members are also very concerned with the proposed reductions to staff positions and noted that a substantial number of reductions were occurring at the regional and community level. They also noted that the majority of new positions being created through either forced growth or strategic investments were identified as headquarter positions.

Committee members caution that they do not support the centralization of government services. Regional staff play an important role in linking government programs, services and policies to NWT residents and provide important regional and community perspectives back to department headquarters that informs policy and program development.

### Recommendation

The committee recommends that every effort should be made to either retain regional positions by identifying other areas for reduction or identify programs and services that could be decentralized to the regions.

## Revenue Generation

Committee members were disappointed by the consistent lack of revenue initiatives brought forwarded by the departments. Given the current financial pressures, the government needs to actively consider ways to generate additional revenues, including new initiatives to take advantage of mineral, oil and gas exploration and development.

## Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations

The committee met with the Minister and his officials on April 3, 2008, to consider the department's Draft Main Estimates.

The department's proposed operating budget for 2008–2009 is \$6.2 million, a reduction of \$1.12 million or 15.12 per cent from the 2007–2008 fiscal year.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates:

### Impact of Reductions

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations is responsible for negotiating and implementing land claims and self-government agreements on behalf of the government and residents of the Northwest Territories. It is also responsible for managing the government's relationship with aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Proposed reductions in staff positions have the potential to seriously erode the department's capacity to effectively meet its mandate. Committee members expressed particular concern about the impact the reductions may have on claims negotiations, the implementation of final agreements and the government's ability to effectively build and maintain relationships with aboriginal governments.

Given the scope of the proposed reductions to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations (DAAIR) and the important role it plays, the committee makes the following recommendation:

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends that DAAIR be rolled back into the Department of the Executive immediately and a review of its mandate and function be undertaken to refocus its efforts on aboriginal government relations.

#### Municipal and Community Affairs

The committee met with the Minister and his officials on April 4, 2008, to consider the department's Draft Main Estimates.

The committee noted that the total operating budget for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) for 2008–2009 is \$114.782 million. The budget also includes \$33.6 million for capital expenditures, of which \$28 million will be provided to community governments to use to support their own infrastructure priorities.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

#### Community Capacity Building

Committee members recognize that MACA's primary mandate is to support community governments in the delivery of essential services to every resident of the NWT. The committee was pleased that the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates did not include any reductions to core community government operations and maintenance funding, water and sewer services funding or capital formula funding.

However, the committee is concerned with the level of reductions to contribution programs that support community development and capacity building, community emergency response and the impact these cuts may have on communities successfully taking on new responsibilities under the New Deal. Proposed reductions in this area are significant and the overall effect is to diminish support to community governments.

#### Sports, Recreation, Youth and Volunteers

The committee was pleased to see that regional recreation coordinator positions will be maintained. Sport and recreation programs provide an effective vehicle through which personal and social development in young people can be positively affected. The regional recreation coordinators are an integral part of how government engages with youth and youth services and this function needs to be supported as part of a broader youth strategy.

Committee members were very disappointed by the lack of support for the voluntary sector. Members noted that as government reduces its spending, particularly in the areas of health, justice, social services, youth services and community development, communities will rely more on volunteer efforts to weather the storm. Unfortunately, they have less capacity than ever to respond to the needs in their communities. There is a very real need for more direct support to the sector. The committee recommends that the department, as part of the business planning process, identify concrete actions, including the necessary investments, to provide meaningful support for the voluntary sector.

#### Environment and Natural Resources

The committee met with the Minister and his staff on April 9, 2008, to consider the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

The committee noted that the total operating budget for 2008–2009 is \$56.942 million.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

#### Reductions to Forest Management

There were significant reductions to the forest management budget. The majority of the reductions were based on a review undertaken by the department that identified a series of measures that could be implemented to reduce expenditures and still provide effective forest management services. These measures included a reduction to the number of pre-suppression contract fire crews from 39 to 29 and a more cost-effective, coordinated approach in the use of rotary wing aircraft.

Committee members acknowledged that there were efficiencies to be gained within this activity. However, members voiced concerns about the impact the reductions to fire crews would have on people who rely on firefighting for seasonal employment. Firefighting represents a significant employment opportunity for many residents, particularly in smaller communities. This reduction potentially leaves those who rely on employment through these contracts with very few options other than income support.

Also of concern to members was the reduction to the FireSmart program, which supports communities to undertake wildfire risk mitigation planning. The reductions will mean less support and resources for communities to undertake this type of planning. Members note that, overall, the reductions to forest management may have left the department and communities somewhat vulnerable if there is a bad fire season.

The forests in the NWT are an important renewable resource that has significant potential to support sustainable, small-scale industries, such as biomass for heat production, timber harvesting and sawmill operations. The committee encourages the department to work with communities to explore these opportunities as a way to support local economies and promote the use of renewable energy.

#### Energy Planning and Climate Change

Committee members were supportive of the government's efforts in moving forward with key renewable energy initiatives such as wind energy and hydroelectric development. These are important initiatives that will support reductions to greenhouse gas emissions over the long term. Committee members want to see these efforts be balanced with more immediate actions to address the mounting challenge of climate change here in the NWT.

Members believe that the government must develop new initiatives that actually gain net reductions to greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT. Members request the government move beyond voluntary efforts and establish standards and enforceable regulations as part of the effort to mitigate climate change impacts.

#### Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

The committee met with the Minister and his staff on April 9, 2008, to consider the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

The committee noted that the total operating budget is \$81.427 million.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

#### Market Housing Initiative

The purpose of the Market Housing Initiative is to attempt to improve the availability of rental accommodation for essential services personnel, such as teachers and nurses who are working in smaller NWT communities. Committee members recognize that the lack of rental accommodation has serious implications for the delivery of essential programs and services. Members support the

Corporation's efforts to address the need for market housing in communities and encourage all parties to work together to achieve positive results.

#### CMHC Funding

Funding through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation to support operating and amortization costs of public housing is declining on a yearly basis and will lapse entirely by 2038. This will result in a total shortfall of O&M funding of over \$340 million dollars. Committee members recognize the critical importance of this funding to maintain social housing. Members support the efforts of the Minister and the government in working with their provincial and territorial counterparts to lobby the federal government to retain this investment in Canada's social housing programs.

#### Affordable Housing Initiative

In 2006 the federal government committed \$50 million to the Northwest Territories through the Northern Housing Trust to be drawn down over three years. This funding was matched by the GNWT. The program is delivered through the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), and commits the government to the construction of as many as 530 housing units within those three years.

The availability of suitable land and the lack of land tenure within communities continue to have significant impacts on the delivery of housing under the AHI. Given these challenges, committee members expressed concern about the Corporation's ability to meet its commitments within the designated timeframe. Members encouraged the Minister and his officials to negotiate an extension of the funding with the federal government.

Committee members also understand that under the Northern Housing Trust agreement, if land issues cannot be resolved in a community, the Corporation has no choice but to move new housing to communities that do have available lots. Members encourage all parties involved in this process to continue to work to resolve these outstanding issues.

#### Internal Audit Function

As part of the reduction exercise, the Housing Corporation is proposing to eliminate the internal audit function. The two audit positions will be re-employed within the NWT Audit Bureau.

Committee members expressed concern with this reduction and noted that one of the key findings from the Auditor General's report was the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation of its operations. Members noted that the loss of this function diminishes the capacity of the Corporation

and the LHOs to carry out these important functions. The Minister and his officials indicated that the reorganization of the Corporation would help to focus the operations on continued improvement through monitoring, reporting and staff training. Committee members are prepared to accept this approach, but expect to see significant results and improvement in the future through regular updates to committee.

#### Reduction to Homeownership Repair Program

Committee members expressed serious concerns with the proposed reduction to the Homeownership Repair program. Members noted that the reduction would impact the number of low- to moderate-income families being able to afford necessary repairs. As community housing stocks increase through programs such as the Affordable Housing Initiative, repair programs are critical to maintaining the value of the housing stock and avoiding larger repair and replacement expenditures in the future. Members recognize that the Corporation is committed to maintaining repair programs for seniors and persons with disabilities and supports their efforts, but recommend the Corporation make the reinstatement of this program a priority.

#### Contract Tendering

Some members raised the issue of the use of bundled contracts by the Housing Corporation. These contracts usually involve the supply, transportation and construction of housing units as part of the bids. Members indicated that this process has the potential to favour larger companies, as smaller contractors do not necessarily have the capacity to meet all of the requirements of the tender. Members suggest that the Corporation consider breaking out the contracts to allow local contractors to bid on a portion of the required work.

#### Supported Lease Program

The Supported Lease program is the transitional step into the Homeownership Program, whereby assistance is provided through a lease on a Housing Corporation home. After completing a successful two-year lease period, the tenant is expected to transition into owning the unit.

Committee members were concerned that if tenants did not want to move into a homeownership position or were unable to take on the responsibility, the units then could become additional public housing units by default. This could then drive up operations and maintenance costs for public housing stock at a time when the resources to support this work are diminishing. Members request regular updates on this program in order to monitor results.

#### Seniors Housing

Seniors living in public housing pay no rent, utilities or maintenance costs, regardless of their income. There are currently 400 units assigned to seniors housing across the NWT. In many cases, seniors living in these units have the financial means to pay either market rent or contribute to the cost of utilities for their units. Members questioned whether it was fair, for a program of last resort like public housing, to have a segment of the population that is not subject to the same means testing as the rest of the program's client base.

Committee members believe there is a need to strike a balance between respecting the contributions made by our elders and the financial constraints facing the social housing system.

#### Housing Programs and Support Services for Seniors

Members also identified the need for a coordinated approach around the delivery of programs that would encourage seniors to stay in their own homes. Committee members suggest that the NWT Housing Corporation, along with Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services, work together to provide a more focused approach to housing supports for seniors.

#### Department of Transportation

The committee met with the Minister and his staff on April 10, 2008, to consider the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

The committee noted that the department is proposing to spend \$95.947 million in operating expenses for the fiscal year 2008–2009. The proposed budget for the department's capital plan is \$56.437 million.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

#### Contracting Out and Own-Force Labour

In an effort to meet its reduction targets, the department is proposing to reduce costs related to highway maintenance, culvert replacement and chipsealing by using its own forces, rather than use contractors, to carry out a portion of the work. At the same time, they are proposing to contract out airport operations and maintenance services in Fort Simpson. Members were not convinced that, in either case, cost savings would be achieved. There are additional costs that were not factored into the proposed reductions, including casual staffing and equipment leasing and severance costs for laid-off employees. There are also no guarantees that the private sector can deliver services on behalf of the government for less.

### Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Committee members were concerned with the lack of initiatives to address climate change issues within the department. Transportation accounts for more than half of the NWT's greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change are already apparent in the degree of damage to NWT roads and runways as a result of melting permafrost. Members understand that research is currently being conducted to study the effects of climate change on NWT transportation infrastructure. The committee looks forward to the results of the research and requests that a detailed action plan be developed to establish transportation options that would reduce the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

### Department of Public Works and Services

The committee met with the Minister and his staff on April 10, 2008, to consider the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

The committee noted that the department is proposing to spend \$57.8 million in operating expenses for the fiscal year 2008–2009. The proposed budget for the department's capital plan is \$12.1 million.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

### Deferred Maintenance Program

The proposed deferred maintenance program builds on the work under taken by the Risk Management and Assessment Program to identify critical maintenance deficiencies with the GNWT's current infrastructure stock. The committee supports this initiative and sees it as an effective approach to managing future maintenance and energy costs and extending the life of these assets.

### Water and Sewer Maintenance Services Contracts

Public Works and Services provide water and sewer maintenance services on a contractual basis to several communities in the NWT who do not have trained personnel to carry out those services. Committee members would like to see these services devolved to the community and appropriate training programs be put in place to support community government staff in assuming those responsibilities. Department officials indicated that they have been working with the School of Community Government to establish a job-shadowing program for hamlet staff.

### Petroleum Products

The Petroleum Products Division (PPD) purchases, transports and stores the annual requirement of petroleum products for NWT communities not

served by the private sector. Through the Petroleum Products Stabilization fund, which is generated through profits from sales to PPD customers, the PPD has been in a position to subsidize the cost of fuel products to non-government customers. While committee members recognize that this subsidy helps to offset the very high cost of fuel in small NWT communities, more needs to be done to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and provide communities with alternative sources of fuel such as biomass.

Members recognize that the shift away from the consumption of fossil fuels is a significant undertaking that will require time and collaboration across government departments and with communities. The committee recommends that the department identify approaches to providing renewable energy sources to communities as part of the Greenhouse Gas Strategy and Energy Plan.

### Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment

The committee met with the Minister and his staff on April 8 and April 11, 2008, to consider the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

The committee noted that the department is proposing to spend \$45,593 million in operating expenses for the fiscal year 2008–2009. The proposed budget for the department's capital plan is \$3.828 million.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates.

### Energy Initiatives

Committee members support the proposed energy initiatives to further develop renewable energy potential in the Northwest Territories. Members noted that the proposed review of electricity rates, regulations and subsidy programs is an important first step in the provision of reliable and affordable energy sources to residents of the NWT. Members look forward to providing additional input into the review as it moves forward.

The committee recognizes the potential for hydro development in the NWT to provide more affordable, efficient and reliable energy sources. Members support the Taltson Hydro Expansion project but stress the need to continue to invest in the development and implementation of mini-hydro projects and other approaches to renewable energy.

### Energy Coordination

Members had a number of comments and questions related to the approach to energy policy and planning within the GNWT. Currently, ITI has the responsibility for overall energy management

and planning within the government. ENR's responsibilities are primarily related to climate change adaptation and mitigation and the development of alternative energy sources. Members questioned why some renewable energy development such as hydro, are the responsibility of ITI, while other approaches, such as wind energy development, fall under ENR.

Members also noted that separating responsibilities for the implementation of the Energy Plan and the Greenhouse Gas Strategy between the two departments might not be an effective approach to achieving the intended outcomes of either strategy. The committee believes it would be useful to review the role of the two departments in the development of renewable energy policy and planning in order to ensure greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

#### Support for the Traditional Economy

The traditional economy — agriculture, fishing, trapping and commercial game harvesting — is an important, but increasingly undervalued sector of the NWT economy. The NWT is rich with an abundance of renewable resources that could be developed into small-scale businesses that can diversify local economies, promote greater self-reliance and preserve traditional land-based activities.

Committee members are very concerned with the lack of support for this important sector. The committee recommends that the department develop a comprehensive framework that identifies strategies to enhance the traditional economy, particularly agriculture, market gardening and other forms of local food production.

#### Reduction to the Commercial Fishery

Committee members were disappointed with the reduction of funding to the commercial fishery. Members recognize that there are serious challenges within the commercial fishing industry. However, a large part of the problem is the low price for fish set by Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. The set price does not keep pace with increased operating costs experienced by NWT fishers.

The proposed cuts further diminish the viability of this industry. Members felt that more could be done to establish and implement a meaningful recovery plan. Such a plan could include assisting NWT fishers to find alternate markets; providing assistance in marketing their product and establishing appropriate manufacturing facilities.

#### Economic Development Initiatives

The committee is generally supportive of departmental efforts in the area of business and economic development. It is particularly pleased

with the Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development (SEED) program and sees it as an important tool for expanding local economies, particularly within the smaller NWT communities.

Committee members raised issues related to the potential overlap in services through the Business Development Investment Corporation, Community Futures and other business development support services. Recommendations have been made in the past for the department to consider establishing a one-window approach for these services at the regional level. The committee encourages the department to consider ways to streamline these services in order to ensure better coordination and avoid duplication.

#### Tourism and Parks

The committee raised concerns about the proposed cultural interpretation at parks program as a new strategic initiative. Under this initiative, the department is proposing to develop cultural programs at a number of territorial parks to increase visitation and improve the overall park experience for tourists. Members support the concept but noted that this could be achieved using existing resources. For example, campground operators or cultural organizations could apply through the Tourism Product Diversification program to deliver a range of cultural programs within the parks. Members recommend that the department pursue other means to support this activity.

The committee also recommends that the Parks Renewal Strategic Infrastructure project be cancelled. Members noted that at a time of fiscal restraint, there are greater priority needs that could be addressed through this level of investment.

Under the Territorial Parks Act, there are regulations that support the creation of wilderness and cultural conservation areas, natural wilderness parks and protected areas. While ITI is responsible for the creation and regulation of territorial parks, ENR has the responsibility for conservation and protected areas. Members discussed the overlap of responsibility between the two departments and recommend that there be a review to determine if conservation goals can be effectively met through ITI.

#### Maximizing Benefits from Resource Extraction

Committee members noted with concern the lack of proposals to increase revenues to the government from non-renewable resource extraction. Members identified a number of potential revenue streams, including owning equity stakes in diamond mines and oil and gas production; implementing a mineral or resource tax and exploring opportunities to expand secondary and tertiary industries related to diamond and oil and gas production.



**Mr. Speaker:** Committee Report 7-16(2) accepted by the Assembly. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Committee Report 7-16(2) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Motion carried; Committee Report 7-16(2) received and referred to Committee of the Whole.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again, colleagues. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) to have Committee Report 7-16(2) moved into Committee of the Whole for today.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have the committee report moved into Committee of the Whole for today.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**Mr. Speaker:** It is my pleasure today to welcome, as well, the grade 6 students from Princess Alexandra School and their teachers and chaperones here to the Legislative Assembly on their yearly trip. It's always nice to have them here. I want to introduce some of them, and then my colleague Jane will introduce the rest of them.

I would like to introduce Shaylynn St. Jean, Brittany Tregidgo, Jasmine Vocat, Jenna Aken, Zackary Bonnetrouge, Scott Burrows, Amy Cayen, Nicholas Cockney, Deena Corrigan, Clell Crook, Emily Fraser, Joely Gauthier, Kimberly-Ann Grandy, Jeffrey Greonheyde, Carter Hill, E.J. Lau-a, Sean Mabbit, Rachel Mack, Zachary Martin, Ashley Rowe, Patrick Smith, Sadie Stark, Bailey Vogt, Shylow Warrington, Lyndon Yee.

I'd also like to recognize a constituent of mine, Joe Gagnier, the driver of the bus that brought the students over here. Also, I'd like to recognize my constituency assistant, Deb Mageean, in the audience.

I'll go to my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen, Hay River South, for recognition of visitors in the gallery.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll read these names quickly. I would like to recognize teachers Jennifer Tweedie and Elliot Johnson; chaperones Deb Monkman, Steve

Anderson, Barb Aiken, Elizabeth Scheper, Robert Fraser, Rodney Burrows, Aaron Martin and Rachel Yee; and students Max Anderson, Abby Annavarapu, Thomas Appaw, Shania Bernarde, Makyla Buckley, Nathaniel Cockney, Cameron Croucher, Jack Jensen, Keenan Lafferty, Carlie Larocque, Kathleen Lundbek, Bryce Maher, Hanna-Jo McBryan, Dane Monkman, Gabriel Pangborn, Herbert Pekok, Chad Plamondon, Drake Roberts, Nathan Scheper and Andre Schmidt. I'd also like to recognize my constituency assistant, Ms. Wendy Morgan.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a constituent of mine who has relocated to Hay River, Shania Benard, from Tulita, visiting her grandmother in Hay River.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also welcome the young group from Alberta and B.C. on the Carlson tour of our Northwest Territories. I understand they spent the night in Hay River and also spent two nights in Yellowknife. They're going to be leaving tomorrow back to their respective communities. Have a safe drive. We certainly appreciate having you visit the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I think I speak for all Members when I say that when doing this job, we need the unconditional support of your family. With that, I'd like to recognize my wife, Judy, who's been my source of support and encouragement for the last 29 years.

**Mr. Speaker:** If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the House. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here.

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 214-16(2) MINISTER'S ADVISORY PANEL ON THE ECONOMY

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow up to Mr. Bromley's questions from yesterday and Mr. McLeod's announcement yesterday that he plans to form a Minister's Advisory Panel on the Economy, I have a few questions about that.

Right now, as everyone knows, we are undertaking some pretty drastic cuts in the GNWT budget, and we are also undertaking a review of all agencies, boards and commissions, with an eye, I suppose, to streamlining and reducing the number of boards and agencies we have.

With that backdrop in mind, I would like to ask Minister Bob McLeod how much this new Minister's Advisory Panel on the Economy is going to cost this government.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister Bob McLeod.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** I expect the cost to be minimal to the government.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** If the advisory panel is going to be representative, it is going to have to comprise people from different regions of the Northwest Territories. I assume, unless we're going to use modern communications technologies, that is going to involve getting those people together on a quarterly or annual basis, and that's going to mean bringing people to a meeting. So I'd like to ask the Minister if any cost analysis or budget was prepared for this panel.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** We would work out the budgets with the panel. The expectation is that we would use the modern technology that's available so we could have long-distance meetings. The expectation is that most of the representatives would pay their own way.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Yesterday when the Minister was questioned about why this was the first time Regular Members had heard of this new advisory panel, the Minister responded that he was advising us right here in this House. That's where we heard it. You heard it here first. We never heard of it before.

I'd like to ask the Minister how long this plan has been in the works and if he doesn't believe it would've been appropriate to bring this to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, since it is a panel — a Ministers' panel — on the economy.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** This isn't something that's new. I think the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly and I believe the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly had advisory panels. It is a panel to advise the committee, and I'm quite prepared to discuss it with the standing committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mrs Groenewegen.

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** Mr. Speaker, there have been advisory panels on the economy in the past. As long as they've been around while I've been a Member of the Assembly, I've always thought it a little odd.... Not that we shouldn't talk or dialogue with people outside this Assembly, but might I suggest there's a good advisory panel on all manner of things sitting right over here on this side of the House? I would appreciate Ministers taking that into account more often.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to coming back with a budget and letting us know how much and how we're going to pay for this new Minister's Advisory Panel on the Economy?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, we're quite prepared to do that. Also, to clarify the Member's expectations that we would consult only with the honourable Members.... We're quite prepared to do that, and we want to do that, but I think we also need to consult with other stakeholders in the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister McLeod. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 215-16(2)  
ROAD PAVING IN THE  
COMMUNITY OF N'DILO

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. I mentioned today the shameful situation of the pavement stopping at the entrance to N'dilo. I'm not sure exactly; it seems to be an overlap in responsibilities and so on. I think what's needed is possibly a lead in getting this issue resolved. I'm wondering if the Minister of Transportation sees a role he could play to help this issue get resolved.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, the Member raises the question about the previous government having done some work on the N'dilo road there. As the Minister, I would be happy to sit down with the Member and possibly some of the leadership of N'dilo in terms of looking at this issue within the municipal boundaries. I need to sit down with the Member and see where he sees his part in terms of assisting with this issue, probably with the city. So I'd like to have this discussion further with the Member once we can arrange some time to sit down together.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister for those comments. He's quite correct; I believe it was Mr. Ballantyne in the past who actually arranged for a small, central strip of pavement to be laid down on this road. It's long gone now, of course. But it does show there is some feeling of responsibility and a role for the territorial government. I appreciate the Minister's comments. Would he be willing to contact the members of the Yellowknife Dene First Nation, say within the week, during their protest here and let them know he is interested and supportive and will be seeking ways to help out with this?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to call the leadership. Also, I would have to speak very clearly on that in terms of the

department facilitating, possibly, some meetings between the proper authorities in terms of this responsibility. I'll look into it more and work with the Member in terms of how we facilitate something the Member is raising today.

**Mr. Bromley:** We have a record number of years, now, of government saying they're not sure where the responsibilities lie, and so on. So obviously, we're looking for resolution. The Minister has made that commitment. Does the Minister have some source of funds that could at least help to get this program started and off the ground — the chipseal program, et cetera?

**Hon. Norman Yakeleya:** Mr. Speaker, I can discuss this with my officials and would certainly keep Mr. Bromley in the loop in terms of our responsibility — where it starts and where it stops in terms of dealing with the municipalities. We certainly want to facilitate this discussion with him. As Mr. Bromley knows, this could also be requested from other communities in other regions, so I want to be very careful in terms of our investment, in terms of where we are. But I will be there to sit down with the leadership, Mr. Bromley, and have that discussion with the appropriate authorities.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 216-16(2)  
POVERTY ISSUES AFFECTING  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, in light of my statement, and also with the National Day of Action in regard to the First Nations to court and the situation we find with our First Nations people, I don't think the Northwest Territories is any different from any jurisdiction in Canada.

I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier: exactly what is this government doing to deal with the poverty that First Nations children and families find themselves in, in the Northwest Territories? More importantly, what are we doing to stimulate those community economies so these people can get out of poverty?

**Mr. Speaker:** Deputy Premier, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** First, I'd just like to note that Premier Roland is out meeting with the other First Ministers at the annual Western Premiers Conference in Prince Albert. They took time to recognize this important day and encourage everybody to take part and look to how we can do things better.

In regard to the question from the Member, clearly the budget that's before this House is replete with areas where there's money for communities. We have a unique circumstance: there are only two

jurisdictions in Canada that have consensus government. They have a 50 per cent aboriginal population. We have a public government that administers programs on behalf of all Northerners. We have a health system, education system, tourism, economic development, transportation; every program we deliver is there for all Northerners. We try to pay attention to small communities as well. We have many other initiatives as we struggle to deal with the cost of living and some of the social indicators. Clearly, everything we do is geared toward having the best possible life for all Northerners, including aboriginal people.

**Mr. Krutko:** As I stated in my statement, just by assessing the incomes of people who live in small aboriginal communities in relation to larger centres, where the average income in the small community is \$30,000 and in the larger centres it's \$90,000.... That alone tells you the economy in those communities is not there. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what is this government doing to stimulate the economies of those communities and not simply put the people on income support or welfare?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** First, let me state that a good education is the best investment we can make for any Northerner or any Canadian. The statistics show very clearly that the better educated you are, the better your job opportunities. The employment rate among those with college degrees and diplomas and university degrees is very, very high. It is in the 90 per cent range, I believe. In the small communities we recognize there are limited opportunities. With those that are close to a major resource development, there's been impact benefit agreements. We have extensive support for adult upgrading education. We have funding through the BDIC to work with local small business initiatives. We have ITI. We want to work with the aboriginal governments as well as look at pooling our money. There are a host of ways we're trying to work to improve the quality of life for all those in all communities.

**Mr. Krutko:** I know I've heard this issue around the table a couple times here today: dust control, pavement in communities. That's a quality-of-life issue. I think that by hearing it here today.... It was raised in the protest I was at today; that item was heard loud and clear down Franklin Avenue. As a government, a good example is the quality of life in communities. The day of dust and dust and more dust is gone. I think this government has to have a better program in place to improve the quality of life in communities. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what are we doing to really improve the quality of life for people in our 28 communities in the Northwest Territories?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We're going into a bit of a different line of questioning here, but I'll allow the Minister to answer. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the good things about having the march down Franklin Avenue, of course, is that it's fully paved with curbs and gutters. Although it's not an issue here in Yellowknife, I appreciate the concern of the Member.

I want to point out that the Government of the Northwest Territories through MACA has significantly increased funding to communities with the gas tax money, the infrastructure money that has been flowed to the governments. I believe there's another \$25 million in the budget as well, this time, to further supplement the funding to communities. We're working very hard through the New Deal to make sure communities have the tools and ability to be able to deal with issues in the communities such as dust control.

**Mr. Krutko:** Again, I'd like to ask the Minister: do they have a plan to deal with poverty in the Northwest Territories and compare it to the national statistics out there? Living in the Northwest Territories it's pretty obvious we have homeless people, who we see here in the streets in Yellowknife. We see the drug abuse that's going on. It is affecting all communities in the Northwest Territories. Again, that's another sign of poverty.

I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier: is this government going to develop any statistics by way of the request that was made to deal with the poverty of children in the Northwest Territories and also with investment in those communities? I'd like to ask the Deputy Premier: is that something this government is developing as part of your strategic initiative to ensure we have a document that can...?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I'll let the Minister answer.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Clearly the initiatives that we're working on, including the cost of living, maximizing benefits for Northerners, improving services to communities, are all geared to that end. Clearly, as it was pointed by the Member for Tu Nedhe, while we have one of the hottest economies in the country and our unemployment rate is overall very low, not all communities have shared the benefits of that rapid expansion and hot economy. What we have to do is be able to create a rising tide that raises all the boats of all communities, not just a select few. That is a challenge before us, and it's one we're committed to working on.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 217-16(2)  
ELIMINATING GOVERNMENT RED TAPE  
(HAWKINS)

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, in today's Member's statement I talked about the need to help eliminate red tape. I highlighted that the lead Minister, Minister Miltenberger, will be leading a committee called Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative Committee. He talked about a lot of actions, but there's a special area he quotes where he talks about efficient and effect government.

I'd suggested a red tape initiative, and I'd like to hear if our lead Minister on this file, Minister Miltenberger, would take on this task and add this to the mandate of this Refocusing Government Committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** That function is implicit in the work we do. I acknowledge the Member's point. If it needs to be more explicit, then we will make it so. I do want to point out that some of the things we're doing, like boards and agencies, for example, are by definition going to be exercises in efficiency. We're going to look at rationalizing policies, legislation, bringing together financial systems to get away from duplication of services so that any funds freed up can be put into program delivery. Those are all going to be ways that will address the issue the Member has raised.

**Mr. Hawkins:** We have policies that are in writing that we have a hard enough time getting fulfilled and followed. Consensus is implicit, as we all know, but at times it isn't done that simply. If Minister Miltenberger is saying he would be willing to put it into writing clearly that elimination of red tape will be an initiative they'll take on, I would prefer he do that. Would he do that?

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** As we work with the federal government and Mr. McCraig to sort our regulatory reform and streamlining of processes, so too are we doing that through our internal processes. While we may not use the term "red tape," I will commit to the Member that we will look at recognizing and realizing the same such efficiencies through processes, clear policies — maybe fewer policies, better-coordinated policies — and better and more coordinated interaction between the different arms of government.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Nothing would be more clear than if we added an item number 6 under his actions that said, Work to eliminate red tape at every possibility.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** I'd be happy to take that clear suggestion and exact wording to the refocusing committee. I'm the chair, but there are other Ministers on the committee, so I will commit to

take that to committee. I will let the Member know the outcome of that. The point is a good one, and it's not to be denied.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I'll take the Minister on that commitment. Could the Minister further commit to having that done within the next few weeks? It's only a simple line.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** I'll commit to having it done before the end of session.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 218-16(2)  
PRIVATIZATION OF SERVICES AT  
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee. I wanted to get back to Stanton Territorial Hospital. In my Member's statement I identified some previous decisions governments have made that, in my mind, have led to some substantial low morale and inadequate operational capacity at that hospital. Like I said in my statement, this is just one area.

I'd like to ask the Minister some questions in regard to the privatization of services at Stanton; I'm talking about housekeeping, laundry and food services. I'm wondering if the Minister knows how much those contracts cost and whether or not the department has done an analysis on the cost-benefit to having those contracts in place.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Health, Ms. Lee.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current contract the authority has with Sodexo is a five-year contract for dietary, housekeeping and laundry services. The total cost of the contract is \$2.3 million. Our studies indicate that by doing it in-house we're looking at probably about \$700,000 more than we are spending on the contract.

**Mr. Ramsay:** I think these are some of the issues that need to be fleshed out. They need to be discussed, whether it's in a public forum or back and forth between the Minister and me — or maybe the Social Programs Committee should get involved in this. But, Mr. Speaker, of that \$2.3 million a year, I think a good portion probably heads straight south. Like I said, Sodexo's a multinational corporation, and they must take a good percentage of that \$2.3 million per year with them.

I'd like to ask the Minister: the public administrator who has been brought in to look at the operational

management areas at Stanton — is this going to be an area they will concern themselves with?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** I have to state that while the latest topics of discussion are with respect to the deficit situation, I think it's more correct to say we are looking at all aspects of the operation. We are looking at transformational changes needed, not only to deal with the deficit situation. It is an organization under stress, and I think we need to look at all the programs — they do run 53 programs. We need to look at them all and see how they're doing, if we can do better, what things need to be changed.

I want to advise the Member and the public out there that whatever we do will be a completely public process. I think it's an important institution and a hospital for all of the territory, and we should all be a part of moving forward on what changes are to take place.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Speaker, I didn't really hear the Minister say whether or not the public administrator would be looking at this. I believe not, but I'd like to ask the Minister if she would entertain having a full cost-benefit analysis done on those functions at Stanton Territorial Hospital — I'm talking laundry, housekeeping and food services — so we can find out if, indeed, we can spend that money more wisely. And if it is a little bit more money and it's going to go into our local economy, that's something we need to have that discussion, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit to doing something like that?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the public administrator is engaged in the review of all 53 programs. That includes a cost-benefit analysis, but also the mandate given to the 53 programs: whether the Stanton Hospital, as it is, should be delivering all the programs it is; whether some of them could be moved elsewhere; whether some of the privatization should be moved in or out. I think those are all broad questions we need to look at, and we are looking at. The public administrator certainly has the mandate to look at all that. It will be something I will work on with the Members on the other side as well.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To my knowledge, there is no requirement by Sodexo to hire northern people for these positions. I'd like to ask the Minister if she knows how much of that \$2.3 million per year on those contracts actually stays in the North.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I don't have that information on hand. It is a private contractor. I will be happy to enquire as to whether we could get

information on how many employees they have, where they live, and such.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 219-16(2)  
DEFICIT AT BEAUFORT-DELTA  
HEALTH BOARD

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in regard to the quality of health care services being provided out of the Inuvik Hospital, and the deficit situation they find themselves in.

Speaking as the Member for Mackenzie Delta, each community has a lot of money designated for community expenses for health and social services, yet services continue to be taken away from communities, moved to Inuvik and then, basically, administered out of Inuvik. They fly people into the community, put them up in a hotel for a week and then fly them back.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik health board has a major deficit year after year after year, and yet nothing seems to be done about it. With regard to Stanton Hospital, you basically have a caretaker administrator put in place; they go in there and they basically micro-manage the thing to death. I'd like to know why you aren't doing that in the case of the Inuvik Hospital.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Health, Ms. Lee.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we do have a governing body, a governing board, in the Beaufort-Delta Regional Health Authority. We do have a deficit situation there, but it is not as severe as Stanton, obviously.

I would like to advise the Member that the deficit-recovery plan for Stanton will be in a package that speaks to all authorities, Mr. Speaker, when it comes forward in this House.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, I have to disagree with the Minister on that one. When basic programs and services aren't being delivered in communities — such as the mental health, the alcohol and drug, and nurses — or even the doctor's visit or dental care, for that matter, is now not being offered like it should be, I think we have a problem.

I would like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it that we are having such a major problem delivering basic services in communities, but it doesn't seem to be a problem in the larger centres where a lot of these decisions are being made? I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what is your department doing to ensure that basic programs and services are being

delivered in communities that are recognized under the Canada Health Act?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to advise the Member that I, as the Minister, am completely committed to working really hard to maximize the opportunities for services to be rendered in the communities.

As much as possible, we would like our community people to have the jobs that are available and to take on the health and social services activity. As we know, that is not always possible, and we have been challenged in recruiting and retaining physicians and some of our other health and social services workers. We will continue to work on that.

I am looking at different models, and I am hoping that, for the next business plan process, I will have some concrete options for the Members to consider in that regard.

**Mr. Krutko:** I believe the big problem you have in Inuvik office is with management. You have people in place who don't have a management background to manage a hospital. You've got people there with, basically, backgrounds in social services who are running a hospital. If you want to be realistic here, that is the problem.

So I'd like to ask the Minister: why are you not taking action, with the depths of the situation in Inuvik Hospital affecting the health and well-being of people in small communities?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister, I have visited Inuvik region more than any other similar region. I think we should be very proud of some of the management we have in Inuvik.

I know we have had a challenge in Fort McPherson, where the community mental health worker's position is, at the moment, suspended. We are looking for a local person. We are looking for a project idea from TI'oondih Healing Society.

I, as the Minister, would like to make a commitment to the Member that I'm totally prepared to work with the Member to work toward having somebody locally to take on that task. I think this is something we need to continue to work on.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the problem is not within the community. The problem is at the Inuvik Hospital in regard to running deficits year after year after year. This government is allowing them to get away with it and not doing anything about it. In regard to Stanton hospital, it seems like every time they have a deficit situation, this government moves in with its army, takes over the hospital, and then basically manages it to a

point where they control everything, right from salaries to benefits.

I would like to ask the Minister: why have you allowed this to go on to a state of affairs, in regard to Inuvik region, where it is having an effect on the morality of the employees and on the delivery of community services by the nurses and caregivers in our communities, which is affecting our employees. I would like to ask the Minister: exactly why is it that you are not doing anything, and when will you do something on this matter?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the Member is well aware, as are other Members, that I work daily, on a case-by-case basis, on any issues that arise on a constituency issue, employee issue or program issue.

I think it is important to note that we do not want to see what is happening at Stanton on a regular basis. It is an authority without a board, and the law requires we have a public administrator. I want to say to the Member that anything we are doing at Stanton, we will.... Those have to be applied. For example, we are working on balanced-budget initiatives. We are looking at what is causing the deficit system-wide. Any changes we make at Stanton have to be applied elsewhere, where appropriate, and in consideration of the NWT health care system as a whole. I think a lot of the issues Stanton is having to deal with apply to other areas as well.

I want the Member to know I am paying equal attention to the deficit situation at Beaufort-Delta, and that Members will all be provided with information and an opportunity to discuss it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

QUESTION 220-16(2)  
CRITERIA GOVERNING THE  
CLOSURE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister of Justice, the Hon. Jackson Lafferty. I'd like to ask the Minister: when a school has a capacity of 500 students and you've got 255 enrolled, is that facility considered underutilized and subject to closure?

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question on the education part, on the schools — that particular issue is all under Education. The funding we provide to the board is based on the actual number of enrolments in the fall, so it is based on the number of students in schools. Mahsi.

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister misunderstood my question. It was on the facility itself. A facility of 500 with an enrolment of 255: is that facility considered underutilized and subject to closure?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, in those types of situations, we work with the boards, the local DEAs and also the regional boards on finding solutions to increase the student enrolment. Also, we look at other options within the school: how it could be utilized within the educational system. That's one area we've highlighted in the past, and we continue to do so within the educational system. Mahsi.

**Mr. McLeod:** A facility is underutilized by a wide margin. Is that justification for closing that facility?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** We're talking about generic school operations. We do have schools in all 33 communities. If the enrolment is down, like I said, we continue to work with the community and stress to them that enrolment is going down; we work with the parents, the school boards and the community. Usually they come back and give us options of how we can work within our means, within our system.

The Member is asking if we close down facilities if the enrolment is low. Mr. Speaker, we're in an education factor where we have all of these students we must support to have further education. The well-being of those students, and to get them educated — that's one of the priorities of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got to hand it to the Minister: he sized that thing where I want it to go. I thought that was pretty crafty of you, and I give you good marks for that. I think he knows where I was leading: I was leading to comparing it to the Arctic Tern facility. So bravo!

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't lead into my next question, so I'm going to ask the Minister my last question. We still have some time here, so I have time to try and craft up some more, to see if I can get him to not sidestep my question. I'm coming to the question.

I'd like to ask the Minister if these budget reductions are being implemented without this particular budget receiving third reading yet.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we will get into further deliberations this evening. We can certainly highlight what we're going to propose to the Regular Members, and then we will decide on that from there, as Legislative Assembly Members. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 221-16(2)  
COST-OF-LIVING ISSUES IN  
NUNAKPUT COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just as a follow-up to Mr. Krutko's comments on poverty, I'd like to question the Minister of ECE on the CPI, for community increase. The food costs are so high in the community the people cannot afford it. Would the Minister of ECE consider redoing the Income Support payments using actual community costs?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, Education, Culture and Employment has recognized the high cost of living in the communities, especially those communities without road access, and especially with respect to the Member's riding. We have identified that.

Due to that fact, Mr. Speaker, we have made some changes within our Income Support program. We did increase, based on the communities' needs. We have initiated that. We've made that initiative. Mahsi.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Can the Minister ensure an increased role of the department staff to ensure career development counselling is provided to my communities to increase employability?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we do have career development officers in the communities and also in the regions. We will continue to work with those small communities that may not have them. They may have half-time positions along with an income security officer. So we'll continue to provide those services and programs at the community level, and we will continue to enhance those programs.

With respect to the positions, we'll certainly work towards that area too. Mahsi.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Can the Minister commit to working with other Ministers to ensure that the people who otherwise would remain on income support be given the tools to access renewable resources?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, nowadays we heavily depend on partnerships with the communities. Also, we as the Cabinet and as Ministers work closely together. Certainly, I'll continue to do that along with the Members. I'd like to continue working with them to see how we can improve in areas of programming services into communities. Certainly. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister commit to travelling to Nunakput to see these issues first-hand with me? An open invitation to you.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, certainly, I'll accept that invitation to visit the Nunakput area along with the other communities I've committed to visit — all 33 communities. That's one of our goals as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Justice as well. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 222-16(2)  
DECLINING GRADUATION RATES IN  
AURORA COLLEGE NURSING PROGRAM

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Speaker, maximizing northern employment is obviously an important aspect of this government. We want to train Northerners for northern jobs.

I understand, based on conversations with some of my constituents and others, that enrolment levels at Aurora College for the nursing program are dropping to the point where, next year, we're only predicting seven nurse graduates.

Given that the health system relies on these northern nurse graduates to fill positions both in Stanton and other communities throughout the Northwest Territories, what is being done by Aurora College — my question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment — to increase enrolment in the nursing program, to ensure we have an adequate supply of nurses coming out of that program for northern work? Northern jobs — Northerners doing northern work.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we do have a unique program here in the North, through Aurora College. We do offer various training programs, diploma programs and degree programs. One of them will be the nursing program. We're very proud of that program. We have graduated as well; as to the placements, we've been working with Health and Social Services in that area.

We have been continuously improving that area with Aurora College and with our Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We will continue to do so to improve.... There needs to be improvement in certain programs. I'd like to hear from the Members how we can improve in certain



areas. That's why we're here: we want to improve in those areas. Mahsi.

**Mr. Abernethy:** I didn't quite hear an answer to the question. I agree the program is a very good program. The nursing program has graduated a large number of Northerners into nursing positions throughout the Northwest Territories, and most of them have been placed in government jobs.

That doesn't address the fact that although it's a good program, enrolment seems to be dropping and graduations seem to be dropping even further. Next year they're predicting seven graduates out of a starting class of 30.

I guess my question, once again to you, the Minister, is: what is Aurora College going to do, possibly in partnership with Health and Social Services, to encourage Northerners — young Northerners — to apply for the nursing program, and what are we going to do for our students once they're in there to help them succeed? We need these Northerners. We need these nurses. What can be done to increase enrolment and ensure the graduating class stays large?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, there are college programs. Certainly the Department of Education, Culture and Employment continues to work with them on the promotional item. Our staff have been working closely with the community members, the leaders, on how we can attract students to these programs. We do have various students in post-secondary in all fields.

I don't have the numbers with me on the breakdown. If the enrolment is going down — and I can certainly share with Members that information — I'll have my department look into that.

Aurora College is an institution we work with as the Department of Culture and Employment. We will continue to promote that program into the communities, into the schools. We have been doing that for a number of years, and we'll continue to do so. Areas of improvement we'll certainly highlight as well. Mahsi.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Speaker, it's not simply enrolment that's the problem. A large number of people do enrol in the program, but many aren't completing. It's not that they're failing out; it's that they're not completing. And our graduation rate, as I've indicated, is dropping. Next year they're predicting seven graduates from their starting class. So obviously, something's going on that's making it less appealing for the students to complete, or something along those lines.

In addition to promoting, I also think it would be important to dig into the program to find out what is the barrier to completion. Is it money? Is it daycare? What is it that's causing these individuals to

withdraw from the program prior to completion? Again, once you've started it — you've invested that time, and you've begun your education — it's very unfortunate to leave early and not finish.

On top of that, we as Northerners need these individuals to succeed, and we need to offer them meaningful employment in the health care system.

So in addition to promoting, what else are you going to do to find some of the solutions to keep these people in school?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we do have other organizations we also work with — the nursing associations and Aurora College. There are other programs that some of the students.... The graduation may be dropping.

We are reviewing those areas. If the nursing program is facing some challenges, then certainly our department needs to look at that, how we can improve in that area.

The Member has raised an issue on the graduation rate dropping and also the students not staying in school. Certainly that would be a concern if that's the case. But our department needs to do a thorough investigation if that's a fact. If it is, then my department will follow through with that and see what kinds of options to work with. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 223-16(2)  
STATUS OF STANTON  
TERRITORIAL HEALTH BOARD

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health and Social Services was answering questions about the Stanton board, and of course, it dovetailed with the problems in Inuvik.

One of the things other Members, such as Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Krutko, have highlighted is deficit and whatnot. The Minister pointed out that the Stanton Territorial Health Authority has been operating without a board. I think, in her words, she says the authority's been without a board.

I've noted that some of the deficit seems to almost go back to the period when the board has no longer been working there. The fact is that there has been no board. So the issue really now comes down to: what is the Minister of Health and Social Services going to do to re-establish that territorial board that once existed at Stanton?

**Mr. Speaker:** The Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** That very question is within the purview of the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative Committee chaired by Minister Miltenberger. Until then, I don't believe there is a plan to reinstate the Stanton Territorial Health Board.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I notice that this so-called deficit situation that's been going on for years, again, dovetails the similar period for which they've been without a board. Does this not seem interesting, and what is the Minister doing to take a look at the serious... If it seems to be running without a board, maybe that's the problem?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** The last time the Stanton Territorial Health Authority had a board was in 2003, and there have been four public administrators. The accumulated deficit at Stanton has not really been the way it is until about three years ago. In fact, about three to four years after 2003, when the board was dissolved, there were actually surpluses at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

**Mr. Hawkins:** I don't follow the math the Minister is doing. Is the board an effective component of running the hospital — yes or no — and if it is, when is this Minister going to act to re-establish the board without someone else telling her to do this?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, the Member didn't ask me whether having a board is an effective way of managing. That was not the question. He was suggesting that not having the board is causing the deficit, and I am simply giving the Member the information that, in fact, this is not true. The authority between the years of 1999–2000 to 2004–2005.... They were in an accumulated surplus situation and then running a very tiny deficit.

Obviously, the future of the health board question is very much the work of the Refocusing Government Committee, because we have two health boards right now without a board. It's an opportunity for everyone to have a say in the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative Committee work.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Maybe I've gotten it all wrong then. I see how it really actually lays out. It seems quite clear that shortly after the board left is exactly when the surpluses ended. I think I've got it really clear now. It seems that once ministerial control got in the way by running a de facto dictatorship over the hospital, that's when these things started happening; no one's at the helm running this organization.

I think if we line these things up.... They may not be up and down perfectly clear, but I think, as we can see, the bigger picture is laid out clearly. The fact is that the problem is relevant and very simple. Will the Minister show some initiative and leadership on this problem and solve this problem by establishing a new territorial board?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I have to say I can't agree with the Member's premise. I think the Member should be aware that the health-governing legislation — and I could provide him with a copy of that — does state that either a health authority has to have a board.... If there is not a board, then a public administrator is appointed, which is the responsibility of the Minister. The public administrator is like the board. That's what we have in the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority as well as at the Stanton Territorial Health and Social Services Authority.

I know the Member would like to see things in a very clear way, but I don't think he has the evidence to suggest the accumulated deficit at Stanton is a result of not having a board. That is way too simple a way of looking at a very complex problem.

QUESTION 224-16(2)  
YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT (RULED OUT  
OF ORDER)

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, I'll direct my questions again to the Minister of Justice: what is the department's plan in case the Youth Criminal Justice Act of Canada changes?

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. That's maybe a hypothetical question. I think I'm going to rule that a hypothetical question. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 225-16(2)  
DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH  
PROGRAMS IN BEAUFORT-DELTA

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to programs and services in my riding, especially a mental health position in Fort McPherson. That program has been delivered in that community since 1991. Everything seemed to be going okay until we got a hiccup in the road. I'd like to ask the Minister why it is that the programs are now having to be delivered out of the Inuvik office and what the cost of that is going to be to this government.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, that program in Fort McPherson is a service being delivered by Tl'oondih Healing Society. There's money allocated for that with the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority. That money is there, and we want to continue providing the community with that service. Right now we don't have anybody who can do that. The authority is working with Tl'oondih Health Society and the leadership of Fort McPherson to come up with a plan. In the meantime, the authority will provide the services

from Inuvik, but that is on a temporary basis until we have a permanent plan in place in Fort McPherson.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, as we all know, these temporary solutions end up being permanent solutions, where we don't have any programs and services. The government is going to fly an individual to Fort McPherson, put them up in a hotel for a week, fly them back to Inuvik every other week for the next number of months. That cost, again, is going to be a burden on this government. I'd like to ask the Minister if they have figured out the cost of doing that versus having a permanent position filled in Fort McPherson.

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, that option is temporary, and it is an option that is not just expensive but inconvenient. It's not desirable. It's not something I like to see done, and it's not something the authority wants. I know, having visited Fort McPherson and having sat and talked to the members of the healing society and having worked with the Member for many years, that this is a program near and dear to the community. The community has fought really hard to keep that within the society, and I am totally willing and able and prepared to work with the Member to come up with a community plan. Whatever we are doing to provide services from Inuvik, where a community wellness worker or mental health addictions worker has to travel to McPherson, is a completely temporary arrangement. It's something we want to not be doing on a permanent basis if at all possible.

**Mr. Krutko:** Mr. Speaker, this is a program that's been there for over 20 years, yet this government seems to have the notion it knows best and the communities don't. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what are we doing to empower communities to change the legislation to allow for alcohol and drug and mental health workers, to make it more flexible for communities? It doesn't seem to be working, yet the control is still being held at the Inuvik hospital. I'd like to ask: when is this department going to give up its reign to give the communities the empowerment they need to provide programs and services such as mental health and alcohol and drug?

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** In answering Mr. Beaulieu's question earlier this week, I did state that I will be coming forward in the next business plan — which is coming up pretty quickly here, as soon as we get out of the budget session — a plan that will relook at re-profiling mental health and addictions workers as well as community wellness workers in the entire plan we have. Right now we're spending \$7 million for about 70 positions to deliver this program. As I've seen, in a community like Fort McPherson I think we could do a better job of making these positions not so stovepiped, where everyone has their job descriptions and sometimes are not really

able to help people in need with addictions services or counselling in a very holistic and more of a multi-dimensional way. So I am revising that, and I hope to bring forward a new proposal for the Members of Social Programs to look at and the Assembly as a whole.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

QUESTION 226-16(2)  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE  
YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you. I will try once again, Mr. Speaker. The Youth Criminal Justice Act of Canada will change, and that's being looked at right now. What is the department doing in planning for these changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, our department is waiting for those changes to come into effect. Just recently the federal government did ask for input from the Northwest Territories on the detention of these individuals. It is in the process. We're not sure exactly when that will be concluded. They're talking about either later fall or early next year, so we're not too sure as to when it will be completed. At the same time, our department is prepared if there are changes coming. We are preparing for that. Mahsi.

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Speaker, where will these youths be detained?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we do have a young offenders' facility here in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

**Mr. McLeod:** Is that young offenders' facility here in Yellowknife?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, we do have that facility here in Yellowknife. Mahsi.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Time for question period has expired. However, we will allow the Member one supplementary question.

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will that young offenders' facility be used to house the offenders who are currently housed in the Arctic Tern facility in Inuvik?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Speaker, those young offenders at Arctic Tern — I believe there are up to four — will be housed at the North Slave Young Offenders. On average, there have been around four inmates at Corrections, so certainly they will be looked after. Mahsi.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 6 on the Orders of the Day.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Unanimous consent granted.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize, visiting us today from Tuktoyaktuk, Mr. Ernest Pokiak in the gallery. Welcome.

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. I'd also like to draw Members' attention to the presence of the Chief Electoral Officer, Saundra Arberry, who is in the gallery today. I will be tabling her report later on.

Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, replies to Budget Address. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

### Replies to Budget Address

#### REPLY 1-16(2)

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, we have a budget before us. We have, basically, a document that was produced and developed by this government and put out for public viewing. But again, we as Members on this side of the House have had very little — for a lot of these initiatives — by way of our priorities for the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. How do we illustrate and interpret our views when we basically established these priorities?

Going through the budget, it's clear that this interpretation is clouded by Members on the other side of the House compared to Members on this side of the House when it comes to exactly how you interpret how to improve the quality of life and services for people in our communities — more importantly, reducing costs of living, managing our land and other elements that are in this budget.

We all have to face the reality that we have some major crises out there — that, realistically, issues are in communities. The struggles people are facing and the challenges Northerners are coping with day in and day out, for most of them, are basically dealing with the struggle of paying their bills, heating their homes and trying to raise their children to have a good future.

With regard to this budget, a lot of the focus seems to be on government bureaucracy taking control over what it thinks it should do versus what it really has to do to improve the quality of life for people in the Northwest Territories, developing bureaucracy to a point where, basically, we need more people. We need more people to tell us how to manage our land versus asking the people who already use the land, own the land and already have systems in place on management of those lands.

For someone who has been involved in land-claim settlements, negotiations of lands the First Nations people own outright... People have control over those lands through their land-administration bodies, which are basically land-management regimes, through land-use planning, land and water boards, environmental review boards and also even inside with regard to the regulatory boards out there. We are implementing services to try to find a way to develop the bureaucracy to manage something that, I feel, is the federal government's responsibility. Until we devolve that authority to this government, what are we doing trying to build up the bureaucracy? We're cutting jobs and people's livelihoods in the meantime, yet we're trying to argue for government to get more jobs in these areas. I think that is totally opposite from this exercise of reducing our budget.

There have been several attempts made to find ways of reducing the cost of living. The most essential aspect of reducing the cost of living in communities is dealing with the high cost of energy: the fuel costs to heat your homes, the fuel costs to generate your power, the cost in regard to mobility by way of road, air and river. Those things don't seem to be even included in this budget process. If anything, we're talking about chipsealing highways and being able to look at ways of developing hydro strategies for big industry, at a tune of \$385 million by way of the Taltson expansion.

I, for one, feel we have to do a better job of helping not only big business but the residents of the Northwest Territories to deal with the rates we pay — the high energy costs. I think we have to realize we have an unfair regulatory power program in the Northwest Territories.

I believe that also includes the way communities are treated when it comes to housing, by way of programs and services, and how they determine rents in communities, power rates in communities and, more importantly, the cost of living in communities. I think it's important that we, as government, find ways to reduce those costs but also look at alternative energy means in communities. We have the basic infrastructure, we have the resources, yet we continue to focus on big business. We're not really doing anything to improve the lives of people in communities.

In regard to a particular item I've raised in this House time and time again.... I passed a motion. I know I made an issue of it a couple of weeks ago. Again, it's accessing gravel sources around communities. Gravel is an essential element for any building block of a community. You need gravel to build your roads. You need gravel to build the paths to walk on. You need gravel to basically deal with the shoreline erosion, floods and other issues that are in front of us.

But I notice in this budget that the community of Aklavik has been left out of this endeavour. This government is not listening to Members on this side of the House when motions are passed unanimously in this House giving them direction on where they should go, what they should look at and, more importantly, being able to make a difference to this government. I do take issue with the way capital is being put on a list and sent to Ottawa. It's like watching people sitting around a room, making the decision of what they think should be on the list but not asking us as Members on this side of the House if we have any ideas of what should be on that list and what should be sent to Ottawa. I've been hearing about it after the fact.

I believe that we, as Members of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, have to do a better job to improve that relationship between ourselves as Regular Members and Members on the Cabinet side of the House, and also ensure that whatever we do is fair and equitable. I feel we should have a program in place that's fair to all 32 communities by way of a system that would allow communities to say what they want. It would also give them the resources to take on programs and services and build capital infrastructure — such as we did with the Building Canada Fund by way of allowing communities to pick, among themselves, what projects they want — and give them the resources to work with by way of base-plus funding. This was done last year and the year before. I believe that was a program that has seen a lot of success in all our communities throughout the Northwest Territories.

The other issue in regard to refocusing government: I believe we do have to restructure and refocus government and improve regional programs by way of government services being delivered at the regional level — not all at headquarters. We've seen it happening in Nunavut; we've seen it happen in other places in Canada. In most of our regions the government is the biggest employer in a lot of these regional centres. The same thing applies to our communities. It's just as important that we, as government, take a step back and ask ourselves, Should we be spending \$487 million in salaries and benefits and the costs associated with the employment of people in this government? How can we better extend those dollars to the programs and services we do have and re-evaluate those programs and services to see where they're going?

In regards to mental health and alcohol and drug programs, we heard the Minister of Health and Social Services state earlier that they're going to reassess alcohol and drug programs in communities. I think maybe she should also reassess the alcohol and drug specialists at the regional level and at headquarters. These were never part of the original plan to begin with, yet they've all grown legs. They're all part of the bigger picture of expending public funds on people who sit in the regional offices. It ain't doing anything for people in communities by way of programs and services.

If the Minister is going to do anything by way of assessing community programs, maybe she should start at headquarters and the regional level to see exactly what these people are doing if there are no programs and services in communities.

Mr. Speaker, there's also an item in regard to capital infrastructure in this government. Yes, we have to look at the major infrastructure challenges we face by bringing down the cost of living, such as large-scale hydro development — as I mentioned, the Taltson project.

If we're going to do it to benefit industry, industry should pay. I know I've raised it several times in this House. It was raised in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly when we had the same financial problem: coming forward with a resource tax and taxing resources that are leaving the Northwest Territories. We will not see royalties or revenue sharing by the federal government in the lifetime of this Legislature, yet we continue to let the diamond industry and the oil and gas industry basically rape and pillage our land, take all of our resources out of the Northwest Territories and make billions of dollars in the meantime. We're struggling to develop basic programs and services for people in the Northwest Territories.

I think it's about time this government dusted off the legislation, brought it forward to this House, had a debate in this House, had a debate with Northerners, people in the Northwest Territories. Let us say exactly what we think we should be doing and quit being dictated by the big industry and the mining sector.

We do have a threat. I think everybody is thinking, Oh, well, it's not really here. It is here. We have a threat from the environmental challenges we face in the Northwest Territories — with global warming, with major developments that are basically pouring toxins into our water system, with the Mackenzie River watershed. We've got industries that are basically sitting in these watersheds and looking at developing uranium. We are not hearing a peep from this government in regard to how it affects, or the toll it's going to have on, our people in the future. I believe those effects are already apparent

from what we see happening in Fort Chipewyan and also in what we see happening with our animals, fish and migratory birds in the Northwest Territories. We sit here and don't even say a peep in regard to what is happening.

There was a major oil spill in Norman Wells. We never heard a statement from the Minister of Environment or any Minister in regard to the impact on the residents upstream from Norman Wells, by way of the Mackenzie Delta, and the communities along the Mackenzie. We sit here and talk about devolving power to ourselves from Ottawa, but we're stooges of the Ottawa government when it comes to doing anything that really will benefit the people of the Northwest Territories and mean not being dictated by the federal government.

I, for one, Mr. Speaker, feel that land claims are important documents. If anything, they supersede the legislation in this House. Yet when it comes to land claims and living up to those obligations this government signed on to, it seems we just ignore the land claims once they're negotiated and sort of forget about them. We're off trying to save.... We're going to manage the land. We're going to basically set up squatter's policies and dictate how those lands could be controlled. But the First Nations groups of those areas haven't even settled their land claims, and this government is going forward with squatter's legislation in an area that the claim hasn't been settled in.

These people have rights — their treaty rights and also the modern treaties by way of land claims and land and management rights that basically supersede that. We are involved in a regulatory review process with the federal government. The federal government is undermining those obligations under the land-claim agreements. The regulatory systems we have in the Northwest Territories are those established under Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act and were established through land-claim settlements. Those settlements are constitutionally protected under section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, yet we find ourselves in the quandary of having someone from Ottawa or the federal government dictating to the Northwest Territories — the First Nations groups that have land claims — how they're going to automatically change the system without consulting the people who, in the first place, basically put them there.

It's critical that we, as government, do everything we can to deal with the issue I touched on earlier in regard to poverty. It's sad to say we have homeless people in communities. It's sad to say we have drug abuse problems in communities. There's crack cocaine; there's crystal meth. Every type of drug is now appearing in our communities. It's affecting our young people. It's affecting the population of our younger generations. The major population in the

aboriginal community.... Fifty per cent of our population is under the age of 25. Those people are the ones we are looking at to be our future leaders — the individuals who are hoping to take advantage of the economic well-being of the Northwest Territories. If we don't take hold of this problem, the costs associated with that will cost the government by way of medical services and mental health services, and jail and justice costs will increase drastically.

Mr. Speaker, the budget talked about the Mackenzie Highway Project in regard to looking at how we can develop that. We have to take on the challenge of building a major piece of infrastructure. We're looking at a \$1.8 billion project that is probably the biggest project in the Northwest Territories next to the pipeline. Yet we have to do it in a way that, at the end of it all, we as residents do not have to pay for the major costs associated with that project.

I know there were a lot of discussions around the area in regard to the Deh Cho Bridge. I think it's important to realize we have to wake up to the reality of how you generate revenues to build major infrastructures. We do have to look at P3s. We have to look at partnerships. We have to take a look at the costs associated with operating, maintaining and leasing pieces of infrastructure — regardless of whether it is a ferry, a road or a public piece of infrastructure — and find new ways of financing it.

Mr. Speaker, again, I think it's essential that we, as government, and we, as Members of this 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly.... If you really want to make a difference, we have to do things differently. I've been here since the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and we went through a process back then. Like I stated earlier in the week, in some cases nothing's changed. Basically, because of those decisions, we are still living with the consequences of selling off public housing in communities. We are living with the problems in relation to capacity in government to deliver programs and services. Yet we continue to do the same things over and over and over, not realizing we are continuing to spin our wheels, with no real goals or objectives and achievements — in light of things we have done wrong — and, more importantly, improved programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, I think we do have to work together as Members of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. We do have a budget in front of us. As Members on this side of the House, a large majority of Members on this side do not agree with this budget. I, for one, do not support this budget the way it is laid out. But, again, realizing that we have four years in front of us, we hope we can really work together to make a difference for the benefit of people in the Northwest Territories and not continue to play the game of them and us. You guys are over there; we're over

here. You guys have the hammer and we have the peanuts. All you have to do is hit the peanuts with the hammer and you think you can get away with it. I'm telling you right now: you ain't gonna get away with it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 13, petitions. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents.

### Tabling of Documents

**Mr. Speaker:** Pursuant to section 266(2) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act I wish to table the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 General Election of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Document 58-16(2), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2007 General Election, tabled.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 10 AN ACT TO AMEND THE PHARMACY ACT

**Hon. Sandy Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 1, 2008, I'll move that Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act, be read for the first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Bill 8, tabled document 37-16(2), Committee Reports 5-16(2) and 6-16(2), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

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

We are in Committee of the Whole considering bills and other matters. Under consideration: Bill 8, Committee Report 2-16(2), Committee Report 3-16(2), Committee Report 4-16(2), Committee Report 5-16(2), Committee Report 6-16(2), Tabled Document 37-16(2). What's the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen?

**Mrs. Groenewegen:** The wish of the committee today is to continue with Human Resources and

then move on to the Department of Justice for consideration of the Main Estimates for '08-09.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Is the committee agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Okay. With that, we'll take a short break.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

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

#### MAIN ESTIMATES 2008-2009 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Before we begin, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Human Resources if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Yes, I will, Mr. Chair.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in.

For the record, Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left I have Sharilyn Alexander, acting deputy minister of Human Resources, and on my right I have Shaleen Woodward, director of Human Resource strategy and policy.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. When we left off we were on page 2-79, Employee Relations, Operations Expenditure Summary, information item. Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, indeed; when we broke we had been talking about grievances, I believe. The Minister had mentioned there were 242 grievances cases pending. I'm aware that's being worked on; there's some progress being made. The union has set aside, apparently, a week per month until 2009.

Obviously this sort of thing is horribly expensive and undoubtedly very hard on people, and I'm wondering what the Minister is doing to really nip this in the bud. This seems like a terrible backlog and not the sort of way we want to do business, and it's probably quite expensive. It would be best to resolve a lot of those things before it got to that stage. Can the Minister tell us what's happening to

prevent that situation from being exacerbated in the future?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings with the union, we were also having monthly caseload meetings so we could review the outstanding caseload with a view to resolving as many as we could without having to go through the complete arbitration route.

**Mr. Bromley:** That's good news, and it seems like a good, practical approach. Even better, of course, would be to avoid this situation in the first place. That's probably somewhat of a policy decision. Again, highlighting the costs that undoubtedly are associated with grievances, both in dollar and people terms, what sort of policies is this department contemplating to avoid the development of ongoing situations like this?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** I guess we're doing a couple of things. I should point out that the right to grievances and arbitration is something that's embedded in the collective agreement. The current collective agreement ends the end of March 2009, and certainly I guess that would give us an opportunity to discuss it with the union membership or leadership.

In addition, as part of our ongoing human resource planning and strategy, we will be working with departmental managers and facilitating training with regard to human resource management and how to deal with these kinds of situations so we can begin to try to reduce the number of grievances and arbitrations.

**Mr. Bromley:** I appreciate those remarks. In my short career here I've encountered quite a few cases like this, and it has struck me that there is room in the policy area to deal with some of these cases in perhaps a more progressive way and avoid grievances and the cost of grievances. But I'll just leave it at that.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** We see this as an area that, with better planning, coordination and working with the departmental managers, we can certainly improve on.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just for the Members' information, there was information requested that's been handed out. For the record, we have received that information. We are on page 2-79, Employee Relations, Operations Expenditure Summary. Does the committee agree?

Department of Human Resources, Employee Relations, Operations Expenditure Summary, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Pages 2-80 and 2-81, Employee Relations, Active Positions.

Department of Human Resources, Activity Summary, Employee Relations, Active Positions, information item, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 2-82, Employee Services, Operations Expenditure Summary, active summary: \$7.663 million. Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering.... I see a drop in corporate or administration costs as detailed in 2-84; same dollar figures being considered of about \$900,000. Sorry, an increase. I'm wondering what that increase is about: that's almost \$1 million there, almost 25 per cent.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Human Resources, Mr. McLeod.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The increase is mainly due to the rising cost of the Medical Travel Assistance Program and also some adjustments to the budget for compensation and benefits based on expenditures in the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

**Mr. Bromley:** I see that, in fact, medical transportation has actually dropped a little bit there rather than risen. So perhaps it's just the compensation and benefits, but when I look at that on page 2-83, I see there's less than \$100,000 in costs as opposed to almost \$1 million in costs here.

One reason I raise this is I haven't seen any backup on this one. So I am interested in what's behind that \$900,000.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** There's an increased cost to the employee benefit, and there's an increase of \$120,000 for overtime throughout the division. There's also \$120,000 for interim funding.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Chair, if I could just maybe ask him for that information in written form, that would be great.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** We can provide that information to the Member.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Employee Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$11.663 million. Mr. Menicoche.



COMMITTEE MOTION 9-16(2)  
TO EXAMINE ALTERNATIVE AND  
COST-EFFECTIVE MEANS TO PROVIDE  
MEDICAL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE AND  
A DENTAL PROGRAM AS A BENEFIT TO  
GNWT EMPLOYEES  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mr. Menicoche:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just with respect to this page and this line item, I'd like to move a motion.

I move that this committee recommend that the government look at alternative and more cost-efficient means to provide medical travel assistance and a dental program as a benefit to GNWT employees.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. The motion is being circulated. To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Just for the public record, we don't allow abstentions in the vote in Committee of the Whole unless it's a recorded vote. Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that we're talking about medical travel, I do have a question. I understand when it comes to medical travel the GNWT basically covers the majority of the cost for approved staff. When it comes to medevac I understand that Green Shield will reimburse a percentage of those costs. But the problem is, because the GNWT pays for the costs up front because they're far too high for the staff to pay, we tend to actually recoup some of those dollars back from Green Shield because Green Shield will only reimburse employees. This means there's potentially a large amount of money we're paying out per medevac, which theoretically we should be able to get back from Green Shield, but we can't.

Is the department doing anything to find a way to collect these dollars back from Green Shield or to change our process so we don't spend out these huge amounts of money and not get them back?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Human Resources, Minister McLeod.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to have the acting deputy minister respond to this question.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Alexander.

**Ms. Alexander:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. How it works is employees who choose to participate in the Public Service Health Care Plan do have extended health benefits as well as a medical travel benefit. It's referred to in the plan as air ambulance.

Employees who are covered can get back the cost of air ambulance if they incur it.

We did run into a problem recently where the Public Service Health Care Plan changed their rules so that, rather than allowing us to be in a situation where we could have employees assign the benefit directly back to us, we were in a situation where employees would have to incur their medevac costs initially up front and then have to claim back.

We had fairly extensive discussions with Sun Life of Canada. We reached an agreement in January so in situations where employees who are covered and are medevaced can assign that benefit directly to the Department of Human Resources. So we are recouping those costs now. They've agreed as well for the last year that anywhere we have the employees sign off the assignment of benefits, we can recoup those ones as well. So going forward, as long as the employees are covered, we can get that back.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's really good news. I'm glad to hear that that's happened.

At the same time, we also see the budget for medical travel going up. With these changes, did they offer us an opportunity to save some money on our medical travel? And as a result, do we need to go with an increase in medical travel as high as we have?

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** We don't think it afforded us any opportunities to save money. I think the changes in costs were probably minimal.

We have been doing some work as a department to try to find ways to reduce our medical travel costs. One of the ways we been able to do that is by contracting with a specific airline and also getting a Stanton medical doctor to review claims or referrals for medical travel.

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 10-16(2) (RULED OUT OF ORDER)

**Mr. Abernethy:** I have no more questions on that. But I have a motion.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Go ahead.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the program summary for the Department of Human Resources at this time.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is not in order. At this time I have to rule the motion out of order.

We are on under Employee Services, Active Summary. The motion talks about program

summary, which is basically an item we haven't got to yet. So when we get there, you can.

So again, Employee Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$11.663 million. Agreed?

Department of Human Resources, Activity Summary, Employee Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$11.663 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, Employee Services, Program Delivery. Agreed?

Department of Human Resources, Activity Summary, Employee Services, Program Delivery, information item, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Employee Services, Acquisition, information item. Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm curious. On the listing of positions for Employee Services, it lists employees in Yellowknife headquarters and in Fort Smith. I've wondered why there are no employee services provided in the other regional centres.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Human Resources, Mr. McLeod.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of the employee services are in Yellowknife. Unfortunately, the ones in Yellowknife are dealing with payroll and with the increases to the help desk. I'd like to ask Ms. Alexander to expound further on the question.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Alexander.

**Ms. Alexander:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In Fort Smith we have two of our help desk positions that are part of the Employee Services division. As well, we have one benefits leave administrator position. That position could actually be located in any of our service centres. When we went out to competition recently on it, the successful candidate was located in Fort Smith, and therefore we moved the position to Fort Smith. If the successful candidate had been located in one of our other service centre areas, we would have moved the position to another regional service centre.

**Ms. Bisaro:** I guess I'd just like to clarify then. In the answer, I heard that benefits leave administration is only done by one person, I think. So that's why we have people in Fort Smith. If I could get that confirmed, or if benefits leave administration is available at all regional centres.

**Hon. Bob McLeod:** There is benefits leave administration done in all regional centres, although payroll is predominantly centralized and done out of Yellowknife.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Okay, we're on page 2-86, Employee Services, Active Positions, information item.

Department of Human Resources, Activity Summary, Employee Services, Active Positions, information item, (page 2-86) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 2-87, Employee Services, Active Positions, information item.

Department of Human Resources, Activity Summary, Employee Services, Active Positions, information item, (page 2-87) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Everybody turn to page 2-51, Human Resources, Program Summary, Operation Expenditures Summary. Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 11-16(2)  
TO DEFER FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF  
PROGRAM SUMMARY FOR DEPARTMENT  
OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the program summary for the Department of Human Resources at this time.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Motion is being distributed. Motion is in order. To the motion.

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Question is being called.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** With that, we will be deferring the Department of Human Resources. I'd like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** It was agreed earlier that we are going to move on to the Department of Justice. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Justice if he has any opening comments in regard to departmental estimates. Mr. Jackson Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to present a Department of Justice Main Estimates for fiscal year 2008–2009. The Main Estimates propose a departmental Operation and Maintenance budget of \$91.976 million and capital funding of \$1.69 million. The Operation and Maintenance budget is an increase of 4 per cent over last year's Main Estimates. This consists primarily of forced growth costs for courts, policing in communities and a collective agreement. This

also takes into account reduction and strategic investment in the department's operations.

The government is moving to realign spending growth with revenue growth in order to stabilize our fiscal future and reinvest in the priorities of this Assembly. Many Justice areas have very little flexibility for change. Services must be provided under statute or are essential to the delivery of core programs. Our approach in preparing for this proposed budget was to find efficiencies where possible.

Two-thirds of our budget is spent on salaries for staff. As a result, the proposed reduction will result in some job losses. Clearly, when we are talking about our workforce, there are no easy choices to make. The proposed changes respond to the need to live within our means while maintaining the programs and services expected by our clients and the public.

I'd like to briefly outline the work of this department. There are six main key areas of activity.

- 1) Services to the government. The department provides a range of legal services to the government. This work is almost always done in-house at a significantly lower cost than contracting private lawyers. Our staff lawyers provide legal advice to all ministers, departments and many public agencies. Legal translators prepare the French version of bills and regulations, as well as public materials for legal consideration. The \$8.8 million budget for services to government also includes work such as financial services, improving supports to families in conflict and the policy research required to develop new legislation or improve programs and services.
- 2) Law enforcement. Just over \$29 million has been budgeted for law enforcement activities contracted to the RCMP. This Assembly has indicated that policing is a priority, especially policing of smaller communities. During the life of this Assembly, new detachments will be opened in three communities. I am proud to announce that the new detachment at Sachs Harbour became operational last week, and we will be providing services to residents who have not had a full-time police presence in 15 years.

Applause.

As a strategic initiative, the Main Estimates include \$1 million in additional funding to the RCMP to help cover the cost of new mandatory back-up policy.

- 3) Legal aid services. The Legal Aid services board budget is approximately \$5 million. That covers NWT's share of the cost of operating

three legal aid clinics in Yellowknife and Inuvik that provide legal services to NWT residents who cannot afford a lawyer. The board also provides court worker and public legal education programs. The Main Estimates include a reduction in funding for the Court Worker Program. The workload for all regions was assessed; we believe it can be handled more efficiently by moving to the same regional model that has been working well in the Sahtu, the Deh Cho, the Beaufort-Delta, the Gwich'in, and the South Slave regions. Four of the ten positions will be eliminated. The other six core workers will carry an equal workload while serving all NWT communities.

- 4) Courts. The department provides funding and administrative support to the NWT courts. The total budget of \$1.9 million covers the Justices of the Peace court program, the Territorial Court, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, Court Library and reporters and the Treaty Court Registry. There has been significant forced growth in this area to cover the need for additional court staff in Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik, along with an increase in circuit travel to hold court in the communities. As you know, this tradition has been in place since Justice Assistance came into the North, and it's not common in other parts of Canada.
- 5) Community Justice and Corrections. The proposed Main Estimates include reductions in this area. It is one of the few areas of the Justice budget with flexibility.

This government is required to provide adult and young offender facilities for territorial offenders. However, the way we provide them is discretionary. We will continue to provide a full range of programming with greater efficiency by consolidating management in young offender programs. The government is proposing to close the Arctic Tern Young Offender Facility, restructure management in Yellowknife and Fort Smith, eliminate two program delivery officer positions at the North Slave Correctional Centre and eliminate the Community Justice special project fund.

There are no planned reductions to programming offered to offenders. We are committed to providing a wide range of programs that support rehabilitation. We will provide programs and services in the most cost-effective and appropriate way by using our existing staff more effectively. That includes activities like sex offender treatment and addiction programming and a wilderness camp. In total, \$33.8 million has been budgeted for adult and young offender facilities, probation, wilderness camps and costs of programs to support rehabilitation of offenders. This money

also funds victim services, crime prevention and diversion programs in communities.

- 6) Services to the public. The \$3.9 million budget for services to the public includes funding for the Coroner's Office, the Public Trustee, the Rental Office, Legal Registries, and the Maintenance Enforcement and family violence program.

In addition to these six activity areas, our Infrastructure Acquisition Plan includes \$1.69 million in capital costs related to IT projects and minor renovations to facilities. This year the department is projecting an increase of revenue of \$1.793 million. This is partly related to the federal Access to Justice Agreement for legal aid, but the majority of it is from renegotiated agreements to house federal offenders in our corrections centres.

Mahsi for the opportunity to provide an overview of the department's 2008–2009 Main Estimates. I look forward to answering questions the members may have. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Jackson Lafferty. At this time I'd like to ask the Chair of the committee responsible for overseeing this department if they have any opening comments in regard to the committee's review of this department.

**Mr. McLeod:** Members considered the Draft Main Estimates for the Department of Justice on April 10, 2008. Committee would like to thank the Minister and his officials for appearing before the committee.

The committee noted expenditures of \$91.976 million for operations expense and \$1.69 million to be spent in capital projects for the fiscal year 2008–2009. Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Main Estimates.

#### Proposed Correctional Facilities and Renovations

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs could not reconcile closing the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik, a facility that only opened in 2002, while constructing a new territorial women's correctional facility in Fort Smith. The committee does not dispute that the current Territorial Women's Correctional Centre in Fort Smith is not suitable; it's past its useful service life and needs to be replaced.

The committee also does not dispute that the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility has structural issues related to its foundation that may prove to be insurmountable and render the facility unsuitable for continued use as a correctional facility. It is also recognized that the facility has been severely underutilized since it opened because of changes in

the way youth are sentenced. However, in the absence of an engineer's report that clearly outlines costs, options and potential remediation solutions for the foundation issues, it would be irresponsible for the committee to endorse a plan that essentially writes off a purpose-built government asset like the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility. The Minister has informed committee that such an engineering report will be completed sometime this summer. Should that report bear out the department's assertion that it may be uneconomical or unsafe for the Arctic Tern facility to continue as a correctional facility, the committee is prepared to support a supplementary appropriation for planning the replacement of the territorial women's correctional facility.

This was not the reasoning behind the recommendation made by the committee to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board to eliminate the \$300,000 in the infrastructure plans for the planning and replacement of the women's correctional centre. The recommendation to delete was rejected by the FMB on the advice of the Department of Justice. If it is economically feasible and safe to continue using the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility as a correctional facility, committee believes the department will have to rationalize the construction of a new correctional facility. Options like renovating the River Ridge facility or Arctic Tern facility for use as a women's correctional centre, or maybe just renovating the River Ridge facility for use as a women's correctional centre and moving the current River Ridge cognitive program to Inuvik, or a combination of using Arctic Tern as a women's facility and building a smaller facility in Fort Smith to address capacity issues, needs to be examined.

In the minds of committee members it is apparent that the department is committed to the closure of the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility as the easiest way to meet a significant portion of its contribution to the reduction exercise. Whatever happens, there are still going to be ongoing operations and maintenance costs and, in the worst case scenario, demolition costs for the Government of the NWT. The cost may not be borne by the Department of Justice, but it still would be a cost to the government.

Unlike the Department of Justice, the Standing Committee on Social Programs is not prepared to write off a \$16 million purpose-built facility until it is patently clear that this is our only option. Nor are we prepared to support the construction of a similarly priced facility until this determination has to be made.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends that \$320,000 for the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre be deleted

from the Infrastructure Acquisition plans for the Department of Justice.

#### Recommendation

The standing committee recommends that \$613,000 be added to the operations budget for Corrections and Community Justice to continue operation of the Arctic Tern Young Offenders Facility.

#### Recommendation

The standing committee recommends that the Department of Justice undertake a facility review that will outline the present condition of existing correctional facilities and of the future space requirement for the correctional system.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, I would like to hand it over to my colleague Mr. Abernethy to continue.

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

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

#### Court Workers

The department is proposing to delete four court workers in order to realize savings of \$365,000 over two years. Statistics provided by the department seem to indicate that the caseload some of these court workers have is too low to justify their positions. Committee members note that the two positions are in smaller communities: one position in Fort Smith and one position in Yellowknife. It is obvious to committee members that if there has been an increase in the number of cases going to court there should have been a corresponding increase in the number of applications processed by the court workers. The statistics presented by the department seem to indicate the Court Worker Program model was flawed from its very beginning.

It was also noted that the budget also asks for ten positions in court services and one additional Territorial Court judge, for a total cost of \$1.25 million under forced growth.

While the department managed to make a compelling case for the need for these two positions, the same cannot be said for the rationalization used to justify the reduction of services at the community level. Committee recommended that the department reconsider these reductions and look for other opportunities to utilize these court workers in the communities doing other things, such as supporting the activities of Community Justice committees. In rejecting this recommendation, the department indicates the intransigence of embracing approaches that may be outside the current practices of the department. The response is that because the court workers help the accused in accessing legal aid, there would be a conflict of interest if they were to be

involved in delivering victim services programs or assisting Community Justice committees.

It should be pointed out that any restorative justice program has two components to deal with, in that there is a victim and a perpetrator. It was obvious to the committee members that the department is not willing to look at other opportunities to utilize these positions at the community level. Members of the committee believe that core workers are the community's vital link to the criminal justice system. When a court circuit comes to town, they are essentially strangers, and the court workers assist in ensuring that the accused show up so that the court time is not wasted. So on one hand the committee is being asked to support enhancing the ability of courts to deliver justice through hiring ten new positions and another Territorial Court judge, and on the other we are being asked to support the reduction of justice services at the community level.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends that \$91,000 be added to the operations expense for Corrections and Community Justice so that four court workers will continue employment and the department will have further opportunity to expand court workers' duties and role in the communities.

I will ask my colleague Mr. Beaulieu to continue.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Thank you.

#### Community Justice Programming.

The department is proposing to reduce available funding for Community Justice activities by \$350,000 and not staff a position that was supposed to support these Community Justice committees, for an additional saving of \$83,000.

Again, the committee was disappointed that the department seems to be concentrating its effort and apparent spending patterns on supporting the criminal justice system in those communities with stand-alone court facilities, to the detriment of our smaller communities. One of the stated goals of the department is to increase the capacity and role of communities to address justice issues. Cutting available resources and support services to the Community Justice activity runs counter to such a goal.

The department points out that a portion of this reduction is because historically all of the allocation has not been spent. The committee would point out that this could mean communities need more support from the department in developing programming and effective Community Justice committees. A committee recommendation to reinstate this funding was rejected by the department. The Standing Committee on Social Programs cannot support the erosion of programs

at the community level and the loss of opportunity for these communities to access funding to grow Community Justice programs and activities, and the roles for local Community Justice committees.

#### Recommendations

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that \$433,000 be added to the operations budget for Corrections and Community Justice so that funding for special projects, Community Justice committee funding and support positions can be returned to last year's level.

#### Recommendations

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that if the department is unwilling to continue funding Community Justice activities at the 2007–2008 levels, the \$942,000 of forced growth under court services to hire ten additional court officers be reduced by \$433,000 in order to fund Community Justice activities.

At this time I'd like to turn it over to my colleague MLA Bisaro.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you.

Programming Staff at North Slave Correctional Centre.

Members of the committee were concerned to hear that the department was proposing to reduce programming staff at the North Slave Correctional Centre. The committee's major concerns with this proposed reduction centred on inmate wellness and the ability of the remaining programming to meet the requirements of the federal Corrections Service. The department's response indicates there will be no reduction in the types of programs offered or in the frequency of offering to inmates, and that existing staff will assume other duties. Committee members have difficulties in accepting the department's assurances, as Members are always concerned when dedicated program delivery staff is eliminated and prevention programs are affected by budget considerations. It is with some reservation that the committee is prepared to accept the layoff of program delivery staff for offender programs.

#### Law Bursary Program

The department is proposing to eliminate the law bursary program over the next two years. This program gave some support to students while they attended school and provided some opportunities for articling and summer employment. While it is sad to see the program end, the reality is that there has been no real net benefit to the NWT or the Government of the NWT, as the majority of recipients have not returned to the North to practise law.

The Student Financial Assistance program remains one of the most generous in Canada and is more than adequate in meeting the financial needs of students wishing to pursue the study of law. Mr. Chair, I would ask my colleague Mr. McLeod to continue.

**Chair (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Robert McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Paradoxes of Budget-Cutting Exercises for the Department of Justice

In the 2005–2006 Main Estimates, the Department of Justice proposed the elimination of court registries in Hay River and Inuvik. At the time, the department argued that the volume of work did not justify the positions or costs to keep the court registries facilities open in these two communities. The previous Standing Committee on Social Programs, in conjunction with the other Regular Members of the Assembly, successfully argued that there was a cost to making sure that justice was available and geographically accessible to all residents of the NWT, and the elimination of the court registries in Hay River and Inuvik was staved off.

Three fiscal years later the volume of work is such that the Department of Justice has asked for ten new positions in court services, of which the communities of Hay River and Inuvik will be getting two court officers each. Judging from the budget-cutting proposals put forward by the Department of Justice in this Main Estimate, it is obvious to Members that there is a trend in the department to put forward simple solutions involving the closure of facilities or the elimination of services to achieve the bulk of required cost savings rather than having to examine overall program-delivery efficiencies.

While this may make it easy to achieve the cost-cutting targets, it is obvious that without any long-term systematic approach to budget reduction exercises, any cost savings that are realized may result in increased costs to the department in future years. The Standing Committee on Social Programs will be looking for evidence of such an approach when we review the 2009–2012 business plans in September.

#### The South Slave Drug Interdiction Task Force

Communities south of Great Slave Lake have proposed the formation of a task force to interdict drugs that are brought into the Northwest Territories on our highway system. As this is the primary method of transportation for drug dealers and is an opportunity to curtail the availability of drugs in communities that are farther north, the Standing Committee on Social Programs will be willing to support such an approach. We look forward to

discussing this with the Minister during the review the 2009–2012 business plan.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** At this time I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Yes, I will, Mr. Chair.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in, please.

For the record, Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witnesses, please?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi. Mr. Chair, with me, to my immediate right, Mr. Donald Cooper, Deputy Minister of Justice. Also, to my left is Kim Schofield, Director of Finance. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments in regard to the Department of Justice. Committee agreed? Detail?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** If I can get you to turn to page 7-7, Department Summary. We'll be deferring that until after we have a summary of consideration of the rest of the bill.

Department of Justice, Active Positions — By Region, information item.

Department of Justice, Department Summary, Active Positions — By Region, information item, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 7-9. Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Chair, just looking at this, I can't help but observe there's quite an amazing loss to our smaller communities, which disproportionately focuses people in headquarters in terms of the reductions. I'm just wondering if there was sensitivity to that issue when the department was putting these cuts together.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Certainly this was one of the areas that were a difficult decision within our Justice Department. As you know, within Justice there's not much flexibility when it comes to the funding allocation. Certainly of those that are potentially impacted, we do recognize the sensitivity.

But the majority of the positions that have been highlighted... It's in our regions because the majority of our funding also covers the staffing in those regions. I believe it's around 80 per cent in

our regions. That's why there's a big impact into the regions. Mahsi.

**Mr. Bromley:** I think our goals and priorities stress part of the need to make sure our economic benefits and so on are across regions. But I'd like to leave it for now, and I may bring it up later on here.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Active Positions — Community Allocations, page 7-9, information item.

Department of Justice, Department Summary, Active Positions — Community Allocation, information item, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Revenue Summary, information item, page 7-10.

Department of Justice, Department Summary, Revenue Summary, information item, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We're on page 7-12, Services to Government, Active Summary. Mr. Ramsay.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if I can get an explanation under Details of Other Expenses, in the category Other, for \$1.566 million. Does the Minister have that available?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** The \$1.566 million that's been highlighted reflects the systems chargeback — the TSC chargeback — and supplementary reserve allocation. Mahsi.

**Mr. Ramsay:** Mr. Chairman, I know the TSC chargebacks. What amount would that be and what amount would the other...? What makes up the \$1.566 million, is what I'm asking. I don't know if it's all TSC chargebacks or what. Is there a breakdown of those costs associated with that \$1.566 million?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Schofield.

**Ms. Schofield:** Mr. Chair, the systems chargeback amounts to \$580,000, and the TSC chargeback is \$886,000. There is a \$100,000 portion for the allocation of the supplementary reserve.

**Mr. Ramsay:** That's good, thank you.

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

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I have a motion on this page.

COMMITTEE MOTION 12-16(2)  
TO DELETE \$161,000 FROM DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE, SERVICES TO GOVERNMENT,  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF DEVOLUTION  
DISCUSSIONS  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mr. Beaulieu:** Mr. Chair, I move that the 2008–2009 Main Estimates be amended by deleting \$161,000 from the Activity Summary, Services to

Government under the Department of Justice, Operations Expenditure Summary, on page 7-13 for the advancement of devolution discussions.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. The motion is being circulated. To the motion, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Hon. Michael Miltenberger:** Mr. Chairman, I would request, if it's possible in Committee of the Whole, to have a recorded vote.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The Member's asking to record the vote. We do have recorded votes in Committee of the Whole, so with that, to the motion.

Interjections.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** A recorded vote is allowed in Committee of the Whole, so we will be asking for a recorded vote. To the motion, Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask the Minister to provide....

**A Voice:** You can't ask questions.

**Mr. Bromley:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion.

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Robert McLeod, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** All those against the motion, please rise.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Michael McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Are there any abstentions for the motion? Please rise. Those in favour of the motion, ten. Those against, six. Abstentions, zero.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We're on page 7-13. Activity Summary, Services to Government, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$8.66 million, as amended.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$8.66 million, as amended, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Program Delivery Details, page 7-14?

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Program Delivery Details, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$64,000.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$64,000, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 7-16. Information item. Services to Government, Active Positions.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Active Positions, information item, (page 7-16) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 7-17. Information item. Services to Government, Active Positions.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Services to Government, Active Positions, information item, (page 7-17) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 7-18. Activity Summary, Law Enforcement; page 7-19, Activity Summary, Law Enforcement, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$29.444 million.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Law Enforcement, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$29.444 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Information item, page 7-20, Law Enforcement, Program Delivery Details. Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to get some details under the First Nations policing. It's a line item for \$424,000. I just want to see where it's reflected from a day-to-day point of view.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, just on the subject line, there are four policing members, I believe, under RCMP Division.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Would that be a contribution directly related to the special constable?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, these are the full-fledged RCMP members. Mahsi.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chair, is there a reason we break it out like that: as First Nations policing money as opposed to overall policing services money? I'm just trying to understand why it's broken out separately. Is it to ensure we have more



locally represented police? If that's the case, could you make that clear — why it's broken out?

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Deputy Minister Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some years ago, what was then the Solicitor General's Department started an aboriginal First Nations policing program, which was to encourage aboriginal members to go into the RCMP, and offered a 52-48 financial split with governments and territories. We only managed to get four of the First Nations policing officers funded at that level, and that hasn't changed, although we've been going for many years. That's why it's broken out differently: the other program is 70-30 per cent and this is 52-48.

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

**Mr. Hawkins:** That's satisfactory. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Page 7-20. Law Enforcement, information item. Agreed?

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Law Enforcement, Program Delivery Details, information item, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Under Justice, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, page 7-22. Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just quickly here: how many legal aid lawyers do we have on staff right now? As I understand it, we have multiple clinics, and if they could give it to me by clinic.... I'm not sure if we still represent a clinic in Inuvik, but if we do, could I have that? Could I have the breakdown of how many legal aid lawyers we have in Yellowknife in the two clinics? And of course, if we have any additional clinics, if I could have the breakdown of the staffing in those, specific to lawyers that provide legal aid services. I'm not looking for the administration or those types of details — just lawyers who provide legal aid.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, with respect to the lawyers, the family clinic has three, and at the legal aid clinic we do have six positions. Mahsi.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Are they all in Yellowknife?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, no. There are also two in Inuvik. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a question with regard to the amount for travel under Details of Other Expenses on page 7-23.

We were given to understand that most departments are....

**An Honourable Member:** We're not on....

**Ms. Bisaro:** Sorry. We're on 22? Apologies.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree we're moving on to page 7-23?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Justice, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$5.02 million. Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you again, Mr. Chair. The question is in regard to the travel amount under Details of Other Expenses on this page.

We were given to understand that most departments are representing a 5 or a 10 per cent reduction in travel and supplies. This travel budget has gone from \$279,000 last year and is an increase of \$11,000 for the 2008–2009 budget. I wonder if I could have an explanation, please.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, we do recognize that there were proposed cuts in this area. The number you see before you is due to the fact our legal aid lawyers are on the community circuits. It does cost money to do circuits to the communities. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Fine. Thank you.

COMMITTEE MOTION 13-16(2)  
TO REINSTATE \$91,000 FOR FOUR COURT  
WORKER POSITIONS IN DEPARTMENT  
OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AID  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Chair, I move that the committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding for the amount of \$91,000 for the proposed elimination of the four court worker positions under the Department of Justice, under the Legal Aid Services Activity.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Motion is in order. Motion is being circulated. Motion is being distributed. To the motion. Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Mr. Chair, I'd like a recorded vote.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** The Member is requesting a recorded vote. We will have a recorded vote. To the motion.

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Question is being called. All those in favour, please rise.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Robert McLeod, Mr. Hawkins.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** All those against the motion, please rise. All those abstaining from the motion, please rise.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Michael McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Those in favour of the motion, ten; those against the motion, zero; abstentions, six. Motion is carried.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** We are on page 7-23. Justice. Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$5.02 million. Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just looking at the detail lines, and under Travel I see the budget in this area has gone up from \$279,000 to \$287,000.

I was under the understanding that the government was going to be working toward the reduction of travel expenses, and I'm curious as to why, in this section, the travel budget has gone up as opposed to down.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, with this area we had to realign our budget due to the fact of the high cost of travelling to our communities, with fuel prices going up. It does cost substantially more to travel to the communities on the court circuits for legal aid lawyers. Mahsi.

**Mr. Abernethy:** There has been a lot of discussion about travel and the fact that there are opportunities to get cheaper rates by buying in bulk. Did the department explore alternate methods of purchasing cheaper airfare, therefore reducing their budget in this area?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, my understanding is that it is all done by court circuits,

either by whatever is on the schedule or by charter to the communities.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Mr. Chair, that's not really an answer. Did you explore any opportunities through bulk tickets to find cheaper ways to buy airfare, therefore reducing the cost of travel within your department?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, at this time we haven't done the bulk order of the tickets to the communities. At the same time, we are at the exploration stage. That's something we have been instructed to do by the government, as part of the reduction in travel. Our department will certainly look into that as well. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Next on the list I have Mr. Jacobson.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Today I am here in strong support of the court worker positions in the communities. I believe these positions are an asset to the community and to the people they serve. It's a vital link between the court parties coming into the communities and the people of the communities they are working in.

I got a letter from the Sevoliq Justice Committee in my community of Tuk that strongly recommends we keep these positions.

The bottom line: for the \$91,000, this government... For the cost of that, it's unacceptable. They say these ladies are underutilized. I don't think so. You have the court worker in my home community. She flies all over Beaufort-Delta assisting in court parties when people are on holidays and stuff. She does a really good job, and she's good at what she does.

For the court party arriving into the community, the court staff say the court party will assist the locals, but there's no trust there. We say we want to help our people. We're not helping them. We're going to be filling up the corrections facility here so fast, without these positions.

I really feel this should be re-looked at. The positions should be kept. Like I said, it's like a make-work project. These positions — it's easy to say we'll cut them, but the bottom line is we're going to be filling up the jail, the corrections facility here, so fast. Then we're going to want to hire these positions back, probably next year.

We're here to serve our people, even though we.... Democracy shouldn't be calling the shots in regard to these positions. These positions in the Beaufort-Delta, Yellowknife — there are two in Yellowknife and two in the Beaufort-Delta — are needed.

I really believe I'm here to make a difference, just like their positions in the communities: they're there

to help the people. There's no trust link between the court parties and the local people.

I strongly recommend that we keep these positions and, Mr. Lafferty, that we can't fail our people. I just want to say that.

**Chairman (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, when our department was going through the proposed reduction, we identified how this government needs to be — as has been said over and over — effective and efficient government; and how our programs are delivered effectively and efficiently in the communities.

With the proposed reduction in the Member's riding, as he indicated.... We looked at the overall court load in, let's say, Tuktoyaktuk for example, which serves a community: 54 applications per year and eight days in court.

At the same time, another area, Fort McPherson, is serving two communities: 60 applications and eight courts a year.

Compare that, Mr. Chair, to Fort Simpson, serving six communities, with 150 applications per year.

So these three communities with two positions that have approximately 114 applications, versus 150 for one position.... That's one area we looked at where.... This is the area we've highlighted.

We need to tighten our belt, I guess you can say, within our Justice Department to say: Where can we improve our program? Where can we have an efficient and effective staffing in our region, in the communities? You know, we talked about potential reducing of positions or eliminating positions with dates on that, the number of applications that come in.

Based on that, compared with other regions.... Even the Sahtu region is serving five communities. They have over 120 applications per year. Five communities versus three communities. So there's the reason behind trying to cut down on the cost factor.

We want to be an efficient and effective government, as the Premier alluded to earlier at the beginning of the session. It was part of our mandate as a department to look into our department, in the regions, in Yellowknife, in headquarters, re-looking at the whole, overall structure. That's part of the reason we came down to reducing or eliminating the proposed positions. Mahsi.

**Mr. Jacobson:** It's pretty easy to say in regard to.... They cut that position. I know your stats say they're pretty low. But I know that the court worker there attends court, assists all elders when needed

in regard to any kind of legal paper or legal documentation; they do get help to fill out papers, I think, in all the duty travels she does do in the Beaufort-Delta.

I'd like to see if he could get that information, as well — all the duty travel she's doing — and also re-profile that position to give her more work to do, I guess, to make that position more viable for this government. I really think this should be relooked at.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, we can certainly bring forward some of the information on those stats, what we have within our Justice Department.

I guess what we're proposing is to serve these communities out of Inuvik. I think it will be more cost-effective having a position out of Inuvik to serve Tuktoyaktuk. That's what we're discussing here today.

I think the public needs to be aware that the applications are coming in. They're quite low. Half the time we get calls coming in and asking, What are these individuals doing half of their time? Part of the reason, I guess, we came down to these positions was just to reduce the cost of operating in that area. So servicing out of Inuvik will make viable sense. Mahsi.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess, for me, I'm pretty happy. That's a good thing. My community of Tuk is not so busy in regard to the court docket. The biggest thing again.... Here we go, the small communities being picked on while the more regional centres are being accommodated.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, it's not a matter of regional versus small community. We, as a government, are accountable to the general public. This is public money. You need to be aware that we are cutting costs in certain areas to meet our efficient and effective government 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly mandate. Mahsi.

**Mr. Jacobson:** Well, why would we be hiring ten extra staff in regard to having our new court party per se and not keep these four positions for \$91,000 when you're ready to spend \$1.25 million?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, we can certainly elaborate on that one and get through that page. With this proposed reduction in this area, again, it is part of the government's mandate to be an effective and efficient government in the regions and also in the communities.

**Mr. Jacobson:** For myself, I think if we let these four positions go for a measly \$91,000, we're failing our people, we're failing the system and we're failing the justice system. I really think these should

be reconsidered. Remember, Mr. Minister, you're the man. You could call the shots. You could make this happen. Let's get it done.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** I am the man. I want to make some positive changes in the communities. I think I am on the right path. We are going to be saving \$355,000 over a two-year period if we move on this new initiative.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. First question: in Legal Aid the lawyers that were mentioned — I believe it was six in Yellowknife and two in Inuvik.... Are there additional contract lawyers as well? Are they used in both areas?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could get Ms. Schofield to elaborate on that, please.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Schofield.

**Ms. Schofield:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are three legal aid lawyers at the Family Law Clinic, and there are four criminal lawyers and two lawyers in Inuvik. There's also what we call a legal aid panel, which is private sector lawyers who also complement the staff lawyers in providing legal aid services to the residents of the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you for that information.

On another subject here, I want to make the observation that, as a new MLA, this is one area, one activity of government, where I've had to spend a lot of time with constituency issues. It's had specifically to do with, I would say, discontent in the workplace and the amazing amount of similarity and issues raised by people in this activity area that I've been dealing with. I'm just looking for some assurance from the Minister that.... There's been consistent concerns that, in this process of reduction and layoffs, we're sort of targeting people who may be considered by some to be problem employees. Of course, that's quite a matter of perspective.

Can the Minister assure me that the letting go of court workers and others in this department is not targeted at those individuals, or positions that have individuals, considered to be problematic employees?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Certainly, that is not the case. When we go through a proposed reduction, we look at all avenues, the pros and cons. We do seek out the management and staff to seek their input. We exhaust all avenues before we pursue it.

**Mr. Bromley:** Would it be fair to assume that these positions are not currently under any grievances or anything like that?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't recall if there's a grievance in relation to a position occupied by one potentially affected employee. There is one potentially affected employee who is on extended sick leave, and the medical information is that employee is not able to return to work at this time. I don't believe there are any grievances.

**Mr. Bromley:** Thank you.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Ms. Bisaro.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to speak a bit to the issue of reducing the court workers in the four communities. The Minister stated that he's trying to cut costs, and I'm all for cutting costs, but I think there's a couple of things that haven't been considered in light of this particular reduction.

It's been mentioned by the Member for Nunakput that the court worker in his community — and I suspect it happens in other communities as well — does a great deal more than just take legal aid applications. I think there was a recommendation from the Social Programs Committee that Justice consider looking at these particular jobs, the legal aid or the court worker jobs, and re-profiling them, expanding the duties of the court worker job to include other things, such as working for the Community Justice committee. There's any number of items within a community that the court worker could assist with. It has also been mentioned by the Member for Nunakput that there's an amount of travel involved and various other and sundry tasks they do.

I'd like to ask the Minister if there was any analysis done prior to the decision to cut these four court worker positions, other than analyzing the number of legal aid applications they take in a year and the number of courts they attend in a year. Was there an analysis of any other work that these particular workers do, such as travel and assisting clients to court, et cetera?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Minister.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Currently, the Tuk position we're referring to does not do much travelling, except for today because of the Inuvik person being on leave at this point. But that's the case right now, that they are alternating that position. That's why you see them travelling to the communities currently. Usually they're within their own community. That's where it's at.

**Ms. Bisaro:** Thank you for that information. I would like to know whether or not the department did an analysis of the work that court workers do in the communities that have been affected: Yellowknife, South Slave and Beau-Del — if there was an analysis of the work these particular individuals do prior to the decision to cut them.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Ms. Schofield.

**Ms. Schofield:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was an analysis done on the workload, as we have provided to the standing committee in our response. The majority of the work they do is in filling out legal aid applications, as well as attending court. If there are functions they are providing in the community, such as assisting elders on filling out forms or that, it is possibly in excess of what the Department of Justice would require as a duty for legal aid services. As well, there was work done in determining whether these functions could provide other duties within the justice system, such as Community Justice services. It's seen as a conflict between our Crown prosecutors, and often the judiciary, when court workers provide a dual service of dealing with the accused as well as dealing with the victim side of the restorative justice program.

**Ms. Bisaro:** I guess we'll have to agree to disagree, because I think there's an opportunity to provide a service to smaller communities by expanding the duties these particular people can do. I think I have to point out, again, as was pointed out in the report from the standing committee, that Community Justice has two sides: there's a victim and there's also the perpetrator. The court worker can work with one side and, to my mind, avoid that conflict.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Cooper:** In the course of taking applications for legal aid, the court worker often gets facts and has discussions with the accused, and is seen as.... In some cases, they receive confidential information, and they are viewed — in this adversarial system we have — as being on the side of the accused.

The justice committees are neither on the side of an offender nor a victim but there to reconcile the interests of the community as a whole. The Crown Attorney's office, some years ago, refused to divert offenders in one community until the court worker, who was heavily involved in the justice committee, resigned from that function. So although we would like to expand the duties of the court workers, as was pointed out the judges and the Crown attorneys who allow for the diversions will not agree to that.

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

**Mr. Krutko:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, along with Mr. Jacobson, represent the two communities in the Beaufort-Delta that have had legal aid workers put on notice that their jobs are at risk. Yet for a saving of \$90,000 for four positions, which adds up to less than \$25,000 per person, I can't see the justification why these are particular areas of concern.

Just lately, in regard to supplementary appropriation items that came before us in the last day of this House, there were major capital expenditure cost overruns in travel in the Department of Justice for charters in and out of airports. Charters go into communities, and they sit at the airport until a court party decides it's time to go. There's a major cost savings there if you simply stop using that practice and allow those charters to be used only when they need to go into a community and when they need to come out, and not hold the aircraft at that airport. You could have saved this \$90,000 on probably one court tour of the Beaufort region.

I can't see how you can justify taking four people's livelihoods out of our communities. These people have been trained for that particular job. These people service other communities in the regions; they go up to Tuk; they go to Fort Good Hope; they go to other communities outside of Fort McPherson and Tuk. Yet nowhere in your report did you make mention of that but to say, Well, there are 60 cases at McPherson and eight court parties. A large number of clients I know up in Fort McPherson drive to Inuvik to go to court because they're told the court party will not be in the community for a while, and that's in order....

The bottom line of justice is the right to have justice that's fair to one and fair to all. More importantly, you're innocent until proven guilty and have the ability to, basically, see a lawyer. In most cases in a community, the court party pops into town, the person's on a list of people who are going to get called, and you get 20 minutes with a lawyer before you go into that courtroom. Is that justice? I don't think so. Yet these individuals, in order to acquire a lawyer.... You need to be able to get some fees to pay for a lawyer to begin with and be able to have access to a lawyer in those communities. Somebody mentioned there are two lawyers in Inuvik.

In order for our communities to get to a lawyer, they either have to call Yellowknife, go to Yellowknife, talk to a lawyer at a.... Yet the whole idea of justice in the Northwest Territories is the whole concept of being fair, that you're innocent until proven guilty and you have your day in court. The system that's there to save \$90,000 I think is totally pathetic.

Again, I'd like to ask the Minister: have you looked at other areas for savings before you made the decision to save \$90,000 for four people's jobs, by

looking at the cost of forced growth items in the Department of Justice, such as charters?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, this is an area we seriously looked at before the proposed reductions. If it's going to save us money over time, along with other reduced or eliminated areas.... This area is not just \$91,000; it's \$365,000 that we'll save over a two-year period.

The Member stated that the charter going to a community is costing us a substantial amount of money. It would cost an even more substantial amount of money if we contracted services. We do what we can for justice — to have the judges, the lawyers and also the court workers going to the community to attend. Where there are no sched services, the plane would have to wait on them. Wherever possible, the department tries to use the sched services. At times the judges do request charter services to the communities. That's what we're faced with today. Certainly, that area has been addressed with our department already. Mahsi.

**Mr. Krutko:** I have spoken to court parties at the airport in Inuvik waiting for planes to leave, and the people working in the Department of Justice say that even they are wondering why it is that they're flown into communities and they can't book themselves in to a hotel. They know they're going to be there for a couple of days because of the number of people on the docket. Why do you have to hold charters to fly back to Inuvik and stay in a hotel in Inuvik when there's a hotel in that community?

I think there's got to be better planning by the Department of Justice when it comes down to reductions and retention. You should be able to find those savings in O&M in regard to the operational cost of justice. So again, I would like to ask the Minister if he would seriously consider re-profiling these positions, put them back and look at other areas for reductions.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Certainly that's one area we can probably consider as part of the recommendations being made.

**Mr. Krutko:** I'd like to thank the Minister for saying yes to that.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, what I'm saying is that we're going to look at it. We're going to consider it. I'm not saying yes at this point, but we're going to certainly consider it. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We're on Justice, Activity

Summary, Legal Aid Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$5.02 million.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$5.02 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Moving on to page 7-24, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Program Delivery Details: \$5.02 million.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Program Delivery Details: \$5.02 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-26, information item, Legal Aid Services, Active Positions.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Active Positions, information item, (page 7-26) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-27, information item, Legal Aid Services, Active Positions.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Legal Aid Services, Active Positions, information item, (page 2-27) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-29, Justice, Activity Summary, Courts, Operations Expenditures Summary: \$10.945 million.

COMMITTEE MOTION 14-16(2)  
TO DELETE \$942,000 FROM THE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE COURTS  
FOR TEN ADDITIONAL  
COURT SERVICES POSITIONS  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mr. McLeod:** I have a motion. I move that 2008–2009 Main Estimates be amended by deleting \$942,000 from the activity Courts under the Department of Justice — Operations Expenditures on page 7-29 for the proposed ten additional court services positions.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Chair, I am glad to move this motion. I see — and I think it was mentioned in our committee report — that three years ago when I first got into this, one of the first things I had to do was go through a budget exercise. The court registries in Hay River and in Inuvik were proposed to be closed. They tried to justify closing it then. We managed, with the support of all the Regular Members, to keep those places going. Now, two or three years later, we're saying we need ten additional positions under courts.

This is another example of positions being taken from the small communities like Fort McPherson and Tuktoyaktuk. We're saying there's no need for those positions now. It's \$91,000 — peanuts. And we're proposing to spend \$942,000 to add ten new positions in Fort Smith because — why? — the court dockets are overflowing. If that's the case, then our correctional facilities should be overflowing along with them. I don't see that.

It's hard for us from the communities to go back and try to justify saying we need more court positions. It was hard for us to go home and try to justify a \$50 million to \$60 million dollar courthouse. This is another example of taking from the outside and sucking it all into the capital. I have great concern with that.

The Minister said before that we'll elaborate further on these positions once we get to it. I think we're elaborating a little further right now. Talk about the applications that need to be filled out from the court workers. Now we need ten new court positions. Obviously, there are going to be more applications to be filled out.

The two just don't weigh out, and it's hard for me to sit here and approve ten new positions. I know one or two of them are supposedly going to Inuvik. That still causes me a lot of concern, especially when we're proposing to eliminate four court workers and then we're adding ten new court positions. I think it's a bad use of government funds at a time when we're trying to preach restraint. "We should practice what we preach" is a good motto to go by.

We're sending a mixed message out there. We're telling people, "Oh, yeah, we're reducing; we're reducing. We're just reducing you." But the biggest centres we're increasing. That's the message people are getting in the communities. I'm not sure what the pay is for the two court workers. I'm assuming — well, \$91,000 on here for four. So I'm assuming it's really not a huge number. We're proposing to put \$942,000 for ten positions. I am no mathematician, but that works out to \$94,200 per person per position.

Mr. Chair, it's just another example of taking from the people and giving to the bureaucrats, and it's another example of the department being so far out of touch with the front line that they're willing to centralize everything. A good example was the court registries. "Close those down. Centralize those." This is just another example of a department that, in my opinion, is so far out of touch with people. As Mr. Krutko said before, I think a good example of that would be holding the charter down at the community while they do the court docket, get on the charter and go back to the bigger centre. Now, that's way out there. That is just not being in touch with the community. This is a prime example of that.

As a government and as Cabinet who know the needs and wants of the people in small communities — a few of you represent some small communities — you should realize that and should not allow this to happen. If it is left to the Regular Members to have to do something about it, then we have no problem with that. To me, this is the Department of Justice, but this is an injustice to some of the smaller communities to constantly see everything going into the bigger centre. That's why I have no problem moving this motion, and I am going to be asking for a recorded vote.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion.

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Question is being called. All those in favour?

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Robert McLeod, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** All those opposed?

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Michael McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** All those abstaining? All right; the results of the recorded vote: ten in favour, six opposed, no abstentions. The motion is carried.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** We are still on page 7-29. The amended total under Courts, Operations Expenditure Summary is \$10.003 million.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Courts, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$10.003 million, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-30, Activity Summary, Courts, Program Delivery Details.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Courts, Program Delivery Details, approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-32, information item, Courts, Active Positions. Mr. Beaulieu.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I just had a question on the reporting of positions, in the previous section as well. I'm just looking for clarification on the positions in North Slave. I'm assuming those are regional positions. I just want to ask the Minister: which communities does the North Slave regional office cover for courts?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mr. Chair, the North Slave region would consist of Yellowknife.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** I'm wondering if the function of this regional office is similar to the functions of the other regional offices and not one of a headquarter function.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Chair, the functions are similar. Those positions are essentially court clerks, sheriffs and court reporters. The positions are the same except that the two satellite court registries don't have clerks who service the Supreme Court, which is Territorial Court and JP Court. Otherwise, the positions are the same.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** So there is no headquarter functions with the positions that are reported in the region here? I'm asking because earlier on, when we questioned the distribution of positions, the Minister advised us that 80 per cent of the positions were in the region. I'm just ensuring that these are regional positions. Is this North Slave region located in Yellowknife? That's clear to me. I'm wondering if they have a territorial function, a headquarter function at all. Are there any of these positions that should be located in headquarters or reported in the North Slave region? So my question is: do these positions have headquarter functions?

**Mr. Cooper:** All of these positions are what we call dotted-line positions. They report to the judges for certain things — certainly when they're inside the four walls of the courtroom. But the executive functions for running the courts consist of two individuals: a director and one assistant. Those are reflected under Yellowknife headquarters. Unless and until the courts move to a different place, we'll remain in the same building — unless there is some confusion there. We only have two executive positions in courts outside of the actual courts themselves.

**Mr. Beaulieu:** This is my final question on this. If the North Slave regional office was located outside of Yellowknife, all 34 positions that are currently in place would be moving with the regional office function if, say, the regional office was located in Behchoko or something. Is that correct?

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** That's correct, except for the judges and their support staff.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Any other questions? We're on page 7-32, information item, Courts, Active Positions.

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Courts, Active Positions, information item, (page 7-32) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-33, Justice, information item, Courts, Active Positions. Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chair, my apologies. I did have a question on 7-28. I was wondering if I could go back to 7-28 and just ask my quick question.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to page 7-28. Are there any nays?

**An Honourable Member:** Nay.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** There is a nay, so we will continue on with page 7-33, Justice, information item, Courts, Active Positions

Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Courts, Active Positions, information item, (page 7-33) approved.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Page 7-35, Justice, Activity Summary, Community Justice and Corrections, Operations Expenditures Summary: \$33.826 million. Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a motion, one I'm happy to put forward.

COMMITTEE MOTION 15-16(2)  
TO REINSTATE FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT  
OF \$613,000 FOR THE ARCTIC TERN  
YOUNG OFFENDERS FACILITY  
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

**Mr. McLeod:** I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding in the amount of \$613,000 for the proposed closure of the Arctic Tern Female Young Offenders Facility, under the Department of Justice under the Community Justice and Corrections activity.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion, Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** Very quickly, Mr. Chair. Thank you. I think I've made my position, obviously, quite clear in the past five days. I think this is an excuse to close another facility out in the community and bring things into the central area, and I have a concern with that.

We built this facility a few years ago at a huge cost, and now we're saying we have no use for this facility. This facility provides good services not only to the clients who are in there but also to the community.



Again, I say at this time of restraint, when we're talking reductions, we need to have a close look and utilize the facilities we have and not be looking at building brand-new facilities. That's the reason I will continue to speak to the closure of Arctic Tern. It's more than just a facility. A facility is just a building, but there's a lot more to this facility than that. I'm afraid they'll take the clients out of there and move them to the capital again. Then the act changes, and we're going to have a need for a new facility. So where's it going to go? In the meantime, they may have demolished Arctic Tern or whatever they want to do with it.

The reason I have an issue with this, Mr. Chair, is just that they use this as an opportunity to close the facility down, regardless of whether it disrupts any lives in there or not.

That's why I'm more than happy to move this motion. It's a recommendation to Cabinet and the department. I hope they'll look at it very seriously, because we are quite serious about this motion.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod.

**Mr. McLeod:** Mr. Chair, I would like to ask for a recorded vote again.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion.

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Question has been called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Robert McLeod, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** All those opposed? All those abstaining?

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Michael McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bob McLeod.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** With respect to the vote, we have ten in favour, zero opposed and six abstentions. The motion is carried.

Motion carried.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** We're still on page 7-35, Department of Justice, Activity Summary, Community Justice and Corrections, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$33.826 million. Are there any questions? Mr. Hawkins.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Mr. Chairman, I once again seek unanimous consent to return to page 7-28.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** We have a Member seeking unanimous consent.

Unanimous consent granted.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just quickly — I won't use up a lot of time on this — considerable concern has come up about the Court Library. That's access for people from the general public and, potentially, lawyers. I know there's an electronic version out there that's generally only really accessible by those in the practice of law. As I understand it, there may be potential restricted hours or changing of the hours, and at one time there may have been a suggestion of even changing the location of the Court Library. Can I just get an update as to that?

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We did, as a department, plot out options on the Court Library itself. We've been in touch with this Assembly as well to see if we can share the library with our Court Library. Unfortunately, it didn't work out. At the same time, we have explored other options, and if I can have Mr. Donald Cooper just elaborate more on the detail of those options that have been presented. Mahsi.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Cooper.

**Mr. Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In a nutshell, the current plan is that the library will remain where it is, although much reduced in size, in recognition of the fact that the utilization of it is primarily by lawyers and probably all but one or two or three in this jurisdiction do their legal research on-line. The utilization is very low right now, but it will be remaining where it is. We've advised the Law Society of this, and they seem to be reasonably happy with that.

**Mr. Hawkins:** Just one last item, Mr. Chairman. I would like to be assured that they seek the formal deletion from the Law Society just to make sure they're fully up to speed and their membership is satisfied with that.

The last point I just want to make on this area is that I've been informed that there's potentially up to a 30 per cent usage by the general public that wouldn't be perceived as use by a lawyer or by someone having any legal training. That was why I was highlighting that there's a group out there that wouldn't have access to the electronic version.

My comment on this — and I'll leave it as my final comment — is the fact that if the Department of Justice is considering adjusting or tweaking or changing or whatever you want to call it, be it the hours or formal location, I would suggest that they

place some notice out there to encourage some kind of feedback from the general public that doesn't operate through the Law Society or a formal organization. Therefore, if they need general public feedback, they at least have the opportunity to accept it.

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty:** We'll certainly take that into consideration.

**Chairman (Mr. Abernethy):** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Are there any further questions on page 7-28? If there are no further questions, we'll be returning to page 7-35, Justice, Activity Summary, Community Justice and Corrections, Operations Expenditure.

In recognition of the clock and that it now states 6 p.m., I will rise to report progress. Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Thank you, witnesses.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Can I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Abernethy.

**Mr. Abernethy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 37-16(2), Main Estimates 2008-2009, Volumes 1 and 2, and Committee Reports 5-16(2) and 6-16(2), and would like to report progress with six motions being adopted.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Do I have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motion carried.

**Mr. Speaker:** Item 23, third reading of bills. Item 24, Orders of the Day, Mr. Clerk.

**Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the Day for Friday, May 30, 2008, 10 a.m.

### Orders of the Day

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Ministers' Statements
- 3) Members' Statements
- 4) Returns to Oral Questions
- 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
- 6) Acknowledgements
- 7) Oral Questions

- 8) Written Questions
- 9) Returns to Written Questions
- 10) Replies to Opening Address
- 11) Replies to Budget Address
- 12) Petitions
- 13) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 14) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 15) Tabling of Documents
- 16) Notices of Motion
- 17) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 18) Motions
- 19) First Reading of Bills

Bill 9: Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 4, 2007-2008

- 20) Second Reading of Bills
- 21) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters.

Bill 8: Appropriation Act, 2008-2009

Committee Report 2-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations, Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Public Housing and Homeownership Programs

Committee Report 3-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations, Report on the Review of the 2006-2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner

Committee Report 4-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations, Report on the Review of the 2008-09 Draft Main Estimates

Committee Report 5-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations, Report on the Review of the 2008-09 Draft Main Estimates

Committee Report 6-16(2): Standing Committee on Social Programs, Report on the Review of the 2008-09 Draft Main Estimates

Committee Report 7-16(2): Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, Report on the Review of the 2008-09 Draft Main Estimates

Tabled Document 37-16(2)

- 22) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 23) Third Reading of Bills
- 24) Orders of the Day

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, May 30 at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.