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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Friday, June 6, 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, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Hon. Norman Yakeleya.

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 55-16(2)
TRADITIONAL LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, over 100 students from Kalemi Dene School in N'dilo and Kaw Tay Whee School in Dettah have been taking part this week in a traditional life skills program at the Yellowknife River.

Under the instruction and guidance of our Dene elders these young people are learning and applying traditional and cultural practices for tanning moosehides, preparing traditional foods, creating tools and playing Dene games. The students are also getting the opportunity to take part in the traditional construction of a birchbark canoe.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, together with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, are providing the financial and in-kind resources to support this extremely worthwhile project.

It is just one of many traditional life skills projects provided annually for school-aged youth by Industry, Tourism and Investment under the Take a Kid Trapping Program. We are fortunate that this particular project happens to be taking place while we are sitting here in Yellowknife, and I would like to extend an invitation to all Members of this Assembly to participate in a feast being held as part of this program. The feast will take place this afternoon from 4 to 6 at the Yellowknife River, known to the Yellowknife Dene as Weledeh.

Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal people of our territory have a long, proud history of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The transfer of traditional life skills ensures that these values are sustained and that important social and cultural links are maintained to the land and its resources. Since 2002 over 4,000 youth have participated in different components of the department's Take a Kid Trapping Program. The program's success is due in large part to the strong partnership that exists between the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment; Municipal and Community Affairs; Environment and Natural Resources; Education, Culture and Employment; and the talents and skills of the many local residents and elders who support the program in various communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Michael McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 56-16(2)
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW DEAL
FOR NWT COMMUNITY GOVERNMENTS

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to share with colleagues some of the positive results that have been realized to date in the first year after the formal implementation of the New Deal for NWT Community Governments.

Implemented April 1, 2007, the New Deal is designed to provide communities with increased authority in decision making on capital projects. Designed in partnership between the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and community governments, the initiative reflects a huge shift in our government's approach to planning, designing and implementing community public infrastructure, in response to a long-standing desire of many of our communities. With increased authority comes increased responsibility, and everyone involved recognizes that community governments must be supported if they are to be able to successfully manage these new responsibilities.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has worked to provide a range of supports for community governments. Numerous community,

regional and territorial workshops have been held to support the development of a five-year capital investment plan. Training has been provided in capital-planning methods and best practices. The School of Community Government has developed courses in asset management, infrastructure financing and other related issues.

In addition, through ongoing partnerships with the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT, MACA is supporting opportunities to share templates and best practices amongst communities so that learning from each other's experience can be maximized. Pilot projects have demonstrated that communities have the skills and abilities to successfully take on new responsibilities, and I would like to highlight a few examples.

The Hamlet of Fort Liard completed their long-awaited maintenance garage as well as office and fire hall upgrades in one construction season, on time and on budget, by bundling the projects.

The Hamlet of Fort McPherson is planning the grand opening of their new community complex this spring. The building will include the hamlet offices, a youth centre, an elders centre and a community radio station. By leveraging funds from other sources, the community has acquired a multi-purpose building that will serve a range of needs.

The K'asho Got'ine council in Fort Good Hope will be starting construction on their new community office complex this summer and, through this process, have developed local capacity in project design and management.

The Yellowknives Dene First Nation are proceeding with a new community complex in Dettah and, in the process, are working in partnership with MACA to find a way for all designated authority band governments to deal with restrictions in the Indian Act.

In all cases communities have taken MACA funding and enhanced local projects by accessing other funding sources.

The New Deal is a new way of doing business, one which reflects a more balanced and respectful partnership between the Government of the Northwest Territories and community governments. In a time of strained resources I'm pleased to note that there has been a significant increase in the amount of funding available to the community governments to implement community public infrastructure.

The Government of the Northwest Territories capital formula funding, along with an increase in federal infrastructure funding, will result in an increase of over 250 per cent in funding for community public infrastructure, from an average of \$17 million per year in 2004–2005 to \$49.5 million

per year in 2009–2010. While this increase does not address the infrastructure deficit that our communities face as a result of the impacts of deferred maintenance on the lifespan of existing infrastructure, it allows them to make great strides in addressing that issue.

Experience over the past year has demonstrated that communities are competent and capable of managing complex infrastructure projects. With ongoing support, advice and mentorship from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, we will continue to see the development and growth in community capacity and achievement.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT-WIDE REDUCTION OF PAPER DOCUMENTS

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this is Environment Week, I thought I would comment on an affront to Mother Nature, our environment and our pocketbooks perpetrated by our government every day. I had a perfect example of this yesterday. In my mailbox appeared a lovely 16-page, full-colour, glossy report. The accompanying three-line letter told me the report was attached and that it was available on-line and provided the Internet URL.

The letter was a waste of paper, except that I will reuse the back side. The info in the letter could have been sent in an e-mail. The report was lovely to look at but won't be used. I will read it, maybe file it, quite likely recycle it. I can get the same info, also in colour, by reading the report on-line.

What was the cost to print this document? How many trees did we kill to make it and the letterhead page for how many hundreds of people, and how many of these reports do you think will still be around next week?

All Members recently received an e-mail from a Yellowknife resident with a novel cost-saving suggestion. He said, and I quote from the e-mail:

"...the GNWT give serious consideration to changing the format for annual reports from hard copy to a disk. If the reports were prepared and submitted on a disk and distributed as such, the savings to the government and agencies would be substantial. The time spent by employees who are tasked to complete the reports would be reduced significantly, thereby saving time and money for the government. Following tabling in

the Legislative Assembly, the reports could be uploaded to the department's web page or to a central web page containing all the GNWT and agencies' reports.

"On another note, this would greatly reduce waste (all the reports that eventually end up at the dump) to our landfills and cut greenhouse gases during the production stage."

It's small changes like this one that will help our environment. It is small changes like this one that will save us money and force us to think outside the box. I don't know what policies the government might have in regard to the publication of reports — why, what, when, how — but I suggest that we need to change them and change them now.

To the government, save our trees and send notification of new reports and copies of the document by e-mail; save our expenses and print it to disk or post on-line. To quote again from the e-mail, "It would be a win-win situation for everyone." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the next few weeks across the Northwest Territories young people are getting ready to celebrate the completion of school by having their grade 12 graduation ceremonies. This is the time for them to acknowledge the achievements that they've made. I'm especially honoured to be invited to the Inuvik Samuel Hearne high school grade 12 graduation ceremony tomorrow, and I'm looking forward to that.

I'd like to send a message out there to young people. This is a time to celebrate your achievements. Part of the celebration, I know, for a lot of them is going out and having graduation parties. Although I would discourage it, I know it's going to happen, so I'm asking all of you out there just to be very careful while you're out. Especially use this time to reflect on and celebrate your achievements, and thank the people who guided you through those years that you went to school — your parents, your teachers, some of your peers.

There's a bright future ahead for a lot of kids finishing school. Our post-secondary funding is second to none in the country, and I would encourage you to take advantage of it. You've got a whole future out there. Some of you may even end up in this Assembly, and if you do, I'm going to teach you how to say yes once in a while. It's a new chapter in the lives of the young people out there. Use it for a time of celebration, reflect on everything

that you've done and just be very careful, again, while you're out there.

As an Assembly we salute your achievements, and we just want all the grads across the Northwest Territories to know that we are very especially proud of them, and we look forward to the contribution that I think they're going to make to the Northwest Territories in the future. I think we have a bright future; I think we have a bright group of kids coming up. We acknowledge that and try to promote it with the education system we have here. People do have issues with the quality of the education, but I think we have a post-secondary education that gives a lot of kids up here an opportunity they wouldn't normally get, and I would encourage them to go grab a hold of that opportunity, because it's there. Best of luck to all the grads and whatever you decide to do in your future.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a special day for the residents of Fort McPherson and Chief Julius School. Today some 15 graduates will be graduating from Chief Julius School. Of the 15 graduates there are five sets of brothers — Alyn Charlie, Aryn Charlie; Grant Snowshoe, Waylon Snowshoe; Robert Koe, Desmond Koe; Corey Alexie, Glenn Alexie; Jeffrey Robert, Perry Robert — along with Steven Kimiksana, Jennifer Greenland, Megan McCormick, Bobbie Rose Koe, and Ashlynn Allen.

I'd like to take this time to congratulate each and every one of the graduates and, more importantly, their families and their teachers and the staff of Chief Julius School for everything they have done to make sure that these children were able to graduate.

Mr. Speaker, it's an important time for our communities when we see some 15 graduates graduate from our high schools in our small communities. They are our future; they are the ones that will make the difference to the benefit of all the communities. I encourage the students to continue on with their educational endeavours and to continue on to better themselves and take advantage of those opportunities in the future.

I would also like to recognize three graduates from Tsiigehtchic who will be graduating in Inuvik tomorrow: Darby Blake, Maranda Blake and Shelly Andre. I would like to also recognize my niece

Ashlyn Krutko, who will also be graduating in Inuvik tomorrow.

In closing, I would like to congratulate each and every one of them and, more importantly, their families. Again, it's our communities that win when we see our students graduating.

With that, all the best, good luck and continue on with your educational endeavours. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COST-OF-LIVING CONCERNS IN COMMUNITIES

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. All week I have been highlighting the differences between small communities like Lutsel'k'e and Fort Resolution and life in the larger centres. I have talked about the limited resources to medical services, professional counselling, and education and training options, which people in Yellowknife and the towns take for granted. I have talked about the higher rates of suicide and youth crime; the limited resources available to our schools and RCMP detachments; the lack of municipal infrastructure like paved roads and sidewalks, recreation facilities, piped water and sewer services; and the high costs of travel, food and other essentials. It's a long list, with which small community residents are all too familiar.

I have questioned the Minister of MACA, the Minister of Health and the Premier on what the government is doing to ensure that policies, procedures and funding formulas are small-community friendly. Mr. Speaker, I have asked what the government is doing to address the high cost of living in communities that people cannot afford to live in, that cannot provide programs and services to their residents; and the lack of infrastructure.

Our territory is vast, with 33 unique communities, some in settlement claim areas, some still under negotiation. We have to realize that a cookie-cutter approach made in Yellowknife cannot fit everyone. We are aware that residents, no matter in which community they live, expect quality programs, services and infrastructure, and hope for more from life than just barely making ends meet.

I was pleased to hear yesterday that the Premier is receptive to the idea of a joint committee that will focus on small-community concerns. I look forward to working with my colleagues in this House on this very important initiative.

The cost-of-living issues have been raised time and time again by my constituents. This is a concern for every resident in our smaller communities. Residents are getting frustrated but participate in

comprehensive consultation processes, where they unanimously voice their concerns and collectively identify the cost of living as a main concern, yet here we are again, talking about the need to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, an immediate needs assessment and an effective strategy should be developed and delivered for a real long-term sustainable solution. Later I'll have questions for the Premier.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT MARKET DISRUPTION POLICY

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about how the market disruption policy is interpreted in the business development funding guidelines. Under the current policy, market disruption is said to occur when an investment by the government in a community impacts an existing business. Exceptions to this policy will only be considered if it can be demonstrated that a substantial portion of the market cannot be served by existing businesses, and that those existing businesses will not be seriously impacted by the proposed projects.

Recently a constituent who operates a small business informed me that a business located in another South Slave community received a business development contribution. The business that received the funding, however, has a Hay River business licence, and operates each year on a seasonal basis in Hay River and is in direct competition with my constituent. When my constituent raised his concerns with ITI officials and the Minister, he was told that the policy was followed, because the applicant's — in this case — primary place of business was in another community.

Clearly, this constitutes market disruption, and the government, by approving the contribution, is in violation of its own policies. This response also illustrates that the market disruption policy is narrowly interpreted, and does not take into consideration situations where market disruption occurs in other NWT communities other than the applicant's community.

This is not an issue about competition. Businesses — small businesses, all kinds of businesses — expect and deal with competition. This is about the need to have a fair and equitable funding process for businesses that are operating in the same region.

I ask that the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment investigate this issue and take appropriate action to address this gap in policy.

I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELIMINATING PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, as I always like to begin each Friday, I would like to make special mention that it's Red Friday and I support my troops.

Today I want to talk about the need for public support in discussion and education in an effort to gradually eliminate the use of plastic bags. Plastic bags are everywhere. For almost every purchase we make, we get a plastic bag. Here in the NWT that adds up to almost 40 tonnes of plastic bag waste each year.

The use of plastic bags has serious impacts on the environment. While some are recycled, most plastic bags go to the garbage and end up in our landfills. It is estimated that plastic bags take up to 1,000 years for them to break down. Plastic bags are also a major part of our litter problem. They clutter our streets, stick to our trees and certainly pollute our waters.

Another reason to consider eliminating plastic bags is that they are made from petroleum products, a major contributor to greenhouse gases. Some people like to say it's Environment Day or Environment Week, but as I see it, to some degree, it's Environment Day every day.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has identified plastic bags as something we should consider recycling. I believe we should take it a step further and consult with the residents and businesses on ways to eliminate the use of plastic bags in the NWT.

If I highlight Halifax, for instance, some stores don't even sell plastic bags anymore. They don't allow them. They sell only cloth bags. So if you show up there, you're out of luck if you forgot your bags. You have to buy new ones.

There's a growing international movement to ban or discourage the use of these manufactured plastic bags. Countries like Ireland, Australia, South Africa, Bangladesh, and even China have either banned these bags or implemented taxes or fees to put pressure on consumers. These taxes and fees have resulted in a significant drop in the use of

plastic bags and have provided millions of dollars to governments to support recycling programs.

Many Northerners recognize the problems associated with plastic bags, and they are saying no to plastic bags by using cloth bags.

I believe that we need to move on this movement and ideals that are best for our environment. I would encourage the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources to make sure he gets out there and engages Northerners, to make sure we take significant steps to reduce and move forward on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CLOSURE OF VOLUNTEER NWT

Mr. Abernethy: Today is a sad day for the voluntary sector and non-governmental organizations in the Northwest Territories. As of yesterday, due to lack of GNWT funding and support, Volunteer NWT had to close their doors.

Volunteer NWT has been a champion for the voluntary sector, which includes volunteer organizations as well as NGOs, by promoting and supporting this sector. They have worked towards increasing the number of Northerners helping out, providing communities and organizations with the tools to increase volunteerism, and setting up a formal network to support the long-term goals and work of volunteers and voluntary groups.

This Assembly's strategic plan indicates the desire to support the voluntary sector, yet when the rubber hits the road, it is clear that Cabinet does not actually support this sector. As such, Volunteer NWT is dead.

Volunteer NWT was able to find \$79,800 in project funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation to assist with further work on financing relationship issues between the GNWT and the sector. Unfortunately, the funding does not include Volunteer NWT operating funds. Volunteer NWT does not believe there are reasonable expectations for success with such a project at this time in the absence of GNWT support.

There is still a need for the services that Volunteer NWT has provided. Their united voice has a place. Their dedication to act as a point of contact between the sector and the GNWT will be missed. There is much left to be done on the part of the GNWT to engage this sector.

The GNWT must develop a dialogue and work with this sector. This sector plays an important role in creating healthy communities. The GNWT's unwillingness to support and work with the volunteer sector and Volunteer NWT is the North's loss. I encourage this government to reconsider their decision to not support Volunteer NWT.

At the appropriate time I'll be asking the Minister responsible for MACA questions on this issue. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REHABILITATION PROGRAMMING
AT NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr. Ramsay: I want to speak again today about sex offender and family violence programming at North Slave Correctional Centre.

I've been greatly concerned over the Minister's comments to me, in previous rounds of questioning, that the two program delivery officers are going to be reassigned to caseworkers, and that other staff at the facility are going to be trained to deliver the programming. This is completely absurd. Does the Minister really and actually believe that other staff could attend a week or ten-day training course and just simply step into delivering a group therapy sex offender or family violence program? If this is the case, what does this say about our commitment as a government to keep our families and communities safe?

We have an obligation to our residents to rehabilitate offenders before we send them back into our communities. Sex offender programming is very specialized training, and it takes years of training, clinic practice and dedicated professionals to effectively deliver the programming. You can't just simply open a manual and teach lessons. It is actual group therapy, and I would really like to know who is going to train these new people.

The existing delivery officers trained for over two years with a psychologist who put the program together. I don't understand how individuals who are caseworkers, who deal with inmates and issues day in and day out, are going to have the non-judgmental attitude the trainers will need. The two positions should not be melded together.

I've had the occasion to speak with some officials from Correctional Service of Canada who have some very deep concerns over our Department of Justice's now nonchalant approach to programming. They tell me that in the federal system all programming must be delivered by qualified staff — the delivery of sex offender and

family violence programs with individuals that must have at least a master's degree. How can we get away with proposing a week or ten days' worth of training to individuals with no clinical, university, or academic training?

Perhaps the Minister should look at Corrections Canada, at its guidelines for the provision of programming. He might be surprised by what he finds, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TAILINGS SPILL AT EKATI DIAMOND MINE

Mr. Bromley: As my colleague Mr. Hawkins has said, every day is Environment Day, and today is the last day of the recognized week called Environment Week.

I'd like to mention the tailings spill at Ekati Mine. Apparently, a large overflow of a contaminant wall — about 4.7 million litres of contaminants — spilled onto the tundra and the lakes where, of course, we have lake trout, grayling, whitefish, and so on, and the whole ecosystem, right from the invertebrates up to the migratory birds, and eventually to where we consume and where we get our energy from for our bodies.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the cause. It's still unknown, apparently. People are also looking at the effectiveness of the monitoring programs, which have come into question. There's a possibility that the spill may actually have been spotted, incidentally, by an employee flying into the mine. So I hope there are going to be some tune-ups there.

Cleanup is apparently happening and is being pursued very aggressively and appropriately. But this whole thing brings into question the design of these development projects. Of course, during environmental reviews we're always assured that everything is well in hand and so on, but these things are based on so-called normals. They are based on the patterns of climate and so on. From having participated, I know that the tailings dams, which have ice cores, are designed for a certain amount of warming, and warming, of course, is much greater than predicted only ten or so years ago. There really are no normals anymore. We hear a lot about tailings, but not about the greenhouse gas emissions causing the climate change — one of the biggest issues we have today. Greenhouse gas emissions have doubled, largely because of the diamond mine development projects. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we still have no requirement for even 1 per cent renewable energy in any of our development projects. This, to me, is atrocious. We

still need major tune-ups there. Even the youngest child on the street today will be able to tell you that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL
NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May and June mark a special time in the North, a sure sign of change. The land returns with its colours, and the sounds of the wildlife once again come alive.

Mr. Speaker, another sign of change is also recognized in our schools. Graduations mark that change in many lives of our students and families. The graduates look forward to what the next stage of life may bring — continuing education, jobs, travel, families. As parents we still see our young son or daughter taking their first steps, riding their bike for the first time — I hope my son Justin is watching — running across a field with a Batman cape flapping in the wind.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the students across the country and the Northwest Territories, and especially the students of Samuel Hearne Secondary School. I am sorry I could not make their graduation ceremonies this weekend as we are busy here in session. As well, I will be watching my son take the walk — I think I said I wouldn't do this anymore, didn't I? — take the next step in his life as growing up into a man.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Recognition of
Visitors in the Gallery**

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While they are not strictly and literally in the gallery, I'd just like to recognize two of the pages, Danielle Soucy and Nicole Labine. I thank them for their services.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I recognize the two pages from the Sahtu, Miss Emily Collier and Mr. Luc Erb from Norman Wells.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Speaker, I can't see whether or not my constituent is still there, but Barb Wyness, a representative with UNW and a constituent of Frame Lake, is in the gallery, I believe. I, too, would like to recognize one of the pages. Harper Sateana-

Barr is working with us this week and doing a fine job.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to represent all of the members of the UNW.

Interjection.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I don't represent them all, but I've certainly seen them around a lot lately, and I want to thank them for the fine job they are doing, representing their constituents. Thank you.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Gayla Wick, a UNW representative and a constituent from Yellowknife South. Also, Mr. Steve Bedingfield, a long-time colleague on the NEBS board.

Mr. Speaker: I'd also like to recognize a constituent of mine, Roy Courtoreille, in the gallery. He's the regional vice-president for UNW. If we missed anyone else in the gallery, welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 276-16(2)
INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE
COMPARISON BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, all week I drew comparisons between smaller communities and the larger centres. I understand the smaller communities cannot have high schools with full curriculum like the larger centres, arenas and even indoor swimming pools. However, I'd like to ask the Premier if he has had any Cabinet discussions on closing the gap between larger centres and the smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, we have, when we talked about the services, the vision and goals of the 16th Legislative Assembly. One of the areas we look at is strategic action supporting small and sustainable remote communities. We've had a number of discussions flowing throughout a number of initiatives that we've highlighted, whether it's Reducing the Cost of Living, Building Our Future, Refocusing Government. There are a number of factors in each area that we want to put some energy into and focus on through the life of this Assembly to reduce those gaps the Member has highlighted.

Mr. Beaulieu: I'd like to ask the Premier: has the Premier initiated any discussions in his Cabinet on the requirement to have a needs assessment to determine the current gap in determining where the small communities are and where they should be?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as we begin the work of the 16th Legislative Assembly to get through this budget cycle, we're prepared to move into these areas and look at that work. There has been much work done; for example, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, when it comes to their funding formulas; Education, Culture and Employment; Health and Social Services. There are different frameworks out there when it comes to the level of service in communities. We want to bring those to the table, as we'd had the questions in the House by the Member regarding a role with the committees and Members of this Assembly. I think that's the area we can get into. A number of these approaches we can take through that joint committee.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, in addition to setting up a joint committee to address these issues, would the Premier put this project or this initiative on the Cabinet agenda so that this does not lose its focus during this Assembly?

Hon. Floyd Roland: In fact, this morning we were talking in Cabinet about pulling together the information that we can sit down with Members on and come up with a joint process of dealing with these issues. So yes, it will remain on our roles and strategic actions as we work through this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to seek the Premier's opinion. I'd like to ask the Premier if he agrees that the level of service to our citizens is not balanced between small communities and larger centres. Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: I think it would be fairly straightforward for us, as Members, whether we're representing small communities or larger centres. When we travel throughout the North, we can clearly see there are differences in our larger centres that have a healthy economic sector versus the small community that could be traditionally based.

There are large gaps; we recognize that. That's why part of our strategic action is supporting sustainable communities. That is looking at the level of service we provide and the delivery methods. We can also bring to the table the fact that as a government we've recognized these when it comes to trying to put more resources into those communities.

Unfortunately, the smaller we go, the harder it is to come up with the right balance when you talk about investment in our communities and the cost per capita. We recognize that, and we'd like to sit down with Members and bring all of the information to the table.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 277-16(2)
GNWT MARKET DISRUPTION POLICY

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I talked about the way in which the market disruption policy was interpreted when approving applications for business development funding. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment what process his department uses to assess the potential for market disruptions when they're receiving and reviewing funding applications.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: With regard to the business programs we deliver, market disruption is one of the principles that is at the foundation of all of our programs. So for any applications we receive, we ensure that we do due diligence to ensure there's no possibility of market disruption.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I think the Minister is aware of the situation I brought to his attention, where one business is producing something in a community and getting business development funds to bring that product into Hay River to compete directly and head-on with existing businesses in Hay River. Now, this may be a bit of an anomaly, but it has happened. What could the Minister tell me to assure me that that type of thing would not be accepted — that it would be part of the application for the applicant to tell where they're planning to market their product?

Hon. Bob McLeod: As we develop programs — and programs have been in place for some time — we evolve with regard to our policies.

Under the current policy the example the Member outlined is perfectly within our policy, whereby there's no market disruption because it's limited to the community where the assistance has been requested and provided. I'd like to advise the Member that we are changing our policies. We are introducing our new SEED program — Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development — which will be rolling out sometime this month.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, since we're on the verge of a new SEED fund and setting up

policies to go with that, would the Minister commit to undertake to ensure that if someone is applying for that funding to operate a business, which they then plan to operate on a regional basis, you would ensure that regional activity would not be impacting on existing businesses competing with them, causing market disruption?

Hon. Bob McLeod: I guess we don't want to be presumptuous; we want to make sure we follow all of our consultation requirements and provide early notification and so on. I think that probably within a month or so our new program will be out, which much more clearly identifies and defines market disruption to address exactly the situation the Member raised.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'll be happy to inform my constituents that they may be able to have some input into that consultation that will set those policies in place.

Mr. Speaker, under the current Business Development Fund process and in the upcoming SEED program, will it be possible for businesses to apply on a consecutive-years basis for those business development funds? Would it be possible for a business, for example, to apply every year and get those funds, or will there be something in the policy that will preclude that from happening?

Hon. Bob McLeod: This is an area we've been trying to address for some time. We haven't been able to work it out, principally because for contribution funding, we have to come to the Legislative Assembly every year for our budgets to be approved. I guess until such time as we find a way to deal with that, only at that time will we be able to address the Member's question. It's certainly an area we would want to try to achieve.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 278-16(2)
ACCESS ROAD CONNECTING AKLAVIK
TO THE DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier, and it comes down to a question of fairness. Over the years, as long as I've been here and as long as the Premier's been here, I've been asking questions about developing road connections from Aklavik to the Dempster Highway, and also trying to find ways we can do that. I was always told that the only way you'd be able to do that is to be part of the Highway Strategy in the Northwest Territories. In order to make that grid, you have to be part of the strategy.

Yet I seem to see a lot of initiatives that aren't even in the strategy, and also new initiatives that are coming this way. I find there are projects in place where communities have roads being built into their communities — communities which are not part of the NWT Highway Strategy.

I'd like to ask the Minister if this government is being fair when projects that are not part of the NWT strategy are being put into place without developing around the strategy this government has in place and which is fair to everyone.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: As the Member has highlighted, the fact is that we do work around our Capital Acquisition Plan, the strategies that are in place. There have been quite a number of them laid out. From time to time we do update them, or the focus becomes around communities instead of territory-wide initiatives.

We will work with communities as we have in the past. Some communities, for example, have gone out and done their own studies or cost-benefit analyses and even some design work, and then we sit down and have those sorts of discussions.

We're prepared to sit down with communities and do some work together, whether it's cost sharing or looking at some of these new initiatives that may come forward, and at that point — once we have that type of information — look at how we can put it into our Capital Acquisition Plan.

Mr. Krutko: The point I'm trying to make is that we have all these different programs. In the case of my community I was told the only program out there is the community access road project, which is about \$50,000 a year and capped at \$450,000. You can't really do much with that, yet you see communities where you're building roads in excess of \$4 million or \$5 million that are basically being paid by this government. I'm being told that in order to get your project, you have to come up with half the money.

I'm just wondering where the consistency in this government is with regard to fairness for communities. You have roads being built into communities at no cost to the communities but are being told that if you want the road, you have to come up with half. Where's the fairness in that?

Hon. Floyd Roland: There are a number of different initiatives, whether within our own government or agreements we end up signing or that flow through with the federal government. For example, the Building Canada Fund has a cost-sharing process that we have to match, or the project has to match, going forward.

We have some initiatives within our own policies of cost-sharing arrangements with communities. It

depends on which project it actually aligns with — whether it's the Building Canada Fund or our own Capital Acquisition Plan. There is no hard and fast line, for example, to say every project has to have a 50/50 share. I've spoken with the Minister of Transportation to come up with a cost-sharing arrangement with, for example, the community of Aklavik on a study they can do to come up with the actual financial analysis that's needed to move this to the next stage.

Mr. Krutko: Again, the point I'm trying to make is that there are projects in place right now in the capital budget where they're going into communities. You're building roads into communities, and basically, the government is paying 100 per cent of the cost. I'd just like to know exactly why it is that communities are being treated differently where now, in order to get a road built, you have to come up with half the funds, but in the capital budget right now before this House we are paying to build roads into communities.

Hon. Floyd Roland: In the tight financial frame we're in, one of the processes that allows us to move projects ahead would be if there's a cost-sharing arrangement. The only project where we talk about a 50/50 arrangement is, in fact, one that was discussed in this House, which is the Yellowknife bypass road. We're looking for cost-sharing arrangements, and in fact, there's been that discussion with the gravel-source 177 discussions with the community of Tuktoyaktuk. This one here, as the Member has highlighted a number of times, has been raised politically a number of times, but there hasn't been that cost-benefit process. We're prepared to sit down and share with the community on putting that one in place so we can move it to the next stage so then it can come into the plan.

We also have to recognize that the Building Canada Fund, for example, that's triggered a number of these projects.... We're waiting for the final agreement to be signed with the federal government. They're having a say as to what actually goes or doesn't go as part of that package.

It is a seven-year process. We'll have an opportunity to continue to work with that process as we proceed.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The road from Aklavik to the Dempster Highway.... There's a motion passed by the Beaufort-Delta leaders going back to 1991. I believe I've moved motions in this House and have supported motions on the floor in regard to this. This item has been on the radar for quite a few years, yet I don't know if we'll ever see the light of day under the process we're using where the rules change every time you try to do

something. One group gets it free and the other group has rules attached to getting something.

I'd just like to ask the Premier exactly what we are doing to connect communities, which is a priority of this 16th Assembly, to improve access to our communities.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Again, for clarity, the fact is that some of these communities that have pursued initiatives have spent their own money on coming up with their plans and cost-benefit analyses and so on. We realize that in other communities, they don't have that flexibility, so we're ready through the Department of Transportation to look at an arrangement where we can help get to the next stage.

The fact is that when we talk about connecting to our actual highway system from communities, we know from our estimates, and we've been using these for quite some time.... It's an estimate that at least starts the basis of our discussions — for example, on the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We're looking at a highway-level road at about \$1 million per kilometre. That has a huge impact as to what we can actually proceed with. But we're prepared to work with communities and some arrangement.... We're cost sharing on some of the initial studies so we can advance to the next level. We're prepared to do that with the community of Aklavik as well.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 279-16(2)

ELIMINATION OF PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe in practical approaches to everyday problems. I believe we have a solution before us about this plastic bag problem, which is to use cloth bags or recyclable bags. In my household I try to lead by example. I have a six-year-old who often reminds me about stuff like that, because it's the young kids who know all about this problem. They seem to be teaching us older folks.

We need some leadership from the Department of ENR on this issue. I'd certainly like to know and get some details as to where this government is on working toward eliminating, in a gradual sense, the use of plastic bags.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to point out that I think ENR has provided fairly significant leadership. If you think back a couple of years, when we first rolled out the recycling program, it was with

considerable consternation, because the plan wasn't complete enough. We forged ahead anyway, and now we have a very successful program. We continue to work on that program. We've been doing consultations, and we plan to come forward here in the next number of weeks with a plan that will look at some fairly significant improvements to the waste reduction and recycling program. On our list are going to be things like plastic bags.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister taking the time out of the day to give himself a pat on the back. I mean, my issue really is what are we doing with plastic bags — not to make the Minister feel better about himself.

Mr. Speaker, what support programs are we going to provide for our citizens and our businesses to make this happen? You can hardly go to a store without them having a special little rack of recyclable bags. So what support programs and ideas is the Minister bringing forward to this problem?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I was just trying to acknowledge and point out the fact that in reality, ENR has been fairly progressive in terms of how we move on this type of issue, and we're going to continue to be.

We're going to come forward with a plan in the next number of weeks. We're going to work with the committee. We're going to lay out a fairly, I believe, ambitious plan that's going to allow us to address things like plastic bags and expand on beverage containers. We're going to look at cardboard. We want to look at electronic waste. We have the unresolved issue of tires.

I agree with the Member. I've been across every community in the Northwest Territories, and plastic bags are a blight on the landscape, literally. There's no place that you walk in or around communities, from the 60th parallel, where I live in Fort Smith, or Ulukhaktok and any place in between.... If you look at the dumps, in the bush — no matter where you go — there are plastic bags. I agree that they're a blight on the landscape. It's time for us to take action on that.

Mr. Hawkins: Well, you know, it's funny. When the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or government as a whole, says, "We'll take action," it could mean years. But when citizens like my constituents Adrian Bell or Paul Falvo, or I should mention Diavik, which will be now known as Rio Tinto.... I mean, when they decided to help clean up the streets, they could make a decision in that day and then run out there and start cleaning up the streets on these types of problems.

Mr. Speaker, what's taking this problem so long? When can we see some real action on this?

Because it's not a difficult problem, to move forward on this initiative.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, we have about 1,200 days left, so we're not talking years here. We're going to be moving fairly quickly. When we do, I look forward to the Member's support to push this forward and help us deal with all the potential obstacles.

While the Member may think it's relatively simple, it does take time. If we stood up today and said we're going to get rid of plastic bags, we have to plan how you're going to do that, how much lead time, and make sure you have it laid out very clearly. You want to make sure we consult with committee and do this right. We want to do this so that it will succeed, not just give a knee-jerk response and a poor plan.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: As the Minister says, when government moves.... Well, I'd better make sure I don't miss it, because I'll tell you, it takes a long time waiting for it.

Mr. Speaker, when can we expect this initiative? The Minister says, "Well, we have 1,200 days, yada yada yada." This is a simple process. We could move on this initiative sooner than later. You know, the people expect some type of leadership. All I'm hearing is, "Let's find ways to talk longer; let's find ways to plan longer." The problem is out there. The solution is out there. If the Minister wanted to do something, he could.

Mr. Speaker, in short, can the Minister guarantee that we're going to move on this initiative in some direction, in some step, before Christmas this year?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, now, for the third time in this set of questions, I will say that in the coming weeks we are coming forward with a plan that will lay out how we intend to move on this particular issue.

If I stood up and just unilaterally and arbitrarily announced we were going to do certain things, the first question I would be asked is, "Why didn't you consult us? And why did we have to stand up...? Why are we hearing about this in this Legislature and not through the committee process?"

I am very respectful — we are very respectful — of that process. We want to continue to be. We will be coming to committee. It is going to be an ambitious plan. It's going to address the issues this Member raises, and not just the little narrow issue of plastic bags but the broader scope. I hope that the Member will in fact think outside the box and work with us to make this a reality.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 280-16(2)
GOVERNMENT-WIDE REDUCTION OF
PAPER DOCUMENTS

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask some questions to the Minister of Finance in reference to my Member's statement.

He should have received the e-mail that I referenced in my statement. I'd like to thank the sender of the e-mail for taking the time and the initiative to act and to forward a suggestion to us. I hope that the Minister has read the e-mail. I'd like to ask whether or not he agrees with the sentiments expressed in that e-mail — that we are wasting money, that this is a cost-saving opportunity, and if he is intending to act on this particular suggestion.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did receive the e-mail. We've had a look at it. In fact, I do believe it is something that we have to put some attention to as we go forward — whether it's limited copies where we go, or if it is just sending out the disk, as we see that become more and more used. Wherever we attend, there always seems to be a backup along with the document. Maybe we can get to that point where we just do a summary and then have the full package on a disk. So that is something that... We will go down that path and start to make it happen as the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Ms. Bisaro: I appreciate the Minister's answer. I would hope we could get to a point where we're not using paper at all. I don't see any need for it. Maybe a few copies, as the Minister said, but I think we need to totally limit what we're putting out there.

I'd like to know from the Minister when we might expect to see some sort of plan, suggestions or ideas that might be coming forward in relation to this problem.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the process we've been involved with takes a lot of time with departments, Cabinet and Members. Once we're through this budget process, we'll be sitting down and putting energy to a lot of the initiatives we've talked about. This area will be one of those. In fact, I think we can send out a directive. The staff are getting and listening to this message that, as we prepare for the next level of reports, we have to see how we can barrel back some of those initiatives. We also have to recognize that not all communities are fully up to speed with the e-mail system and the technology, so we've got to work on improving that

piece as well. But where it fits, we will be going down that path.

Ms. Bisaro: I'd like to tell the Minister that I certainly understand that not all of our communities have the opportunities and access to technology that some of the larger centres do, but I feel very strongly that we have the technology and we should be using it. I'm glad that the Minister suggests that staff can act on their own by hearing this particular discussion.

This isn't a question. Well, maybe it is a question. I'd like to ask the Minister how, for the second day in a row, a Cabinet Minister was able to anticipate my next question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that we have been sensitized by working with committee members and trying to do the best job we can. Hopefully, we can continue down that path and be as prepared as we are and responsive. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 281-16(2)
COMPULSORY REQUIREMENTS TO REDUCE
GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request a response to my question from the Minister, who must know what I'm going to ask. Thank you very much.

Laughter.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I don't actually know whether this is the Minister of ENR or ITI, but as I mentioned during my statement, there is zero requirement for development projects, large industry, to provide even 1 per cent of their energy requirements from renewable energy or to offset, and no compulsory requirement to gradually wrap that up to increasing amounts to address the climate change issue. Is the appropriate Minister working on getting that legislation in place?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'll put the question to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is one of the issues on the list that we have to come to grips with. The federal government has come out with their own suggested plan. Now they're indicating they're prepared to look at alternative suggestions. It's a discussion, as a government, that we have to have. Some of our existing policies, like the Greenhouse Gas Strategy, are mainly focused on how government does business, how we're going to control our own

emissions. But as we look at development, existing and to come, it is an issue that we're going to, as a government, have to put our minds around in a policy sense.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you to the Minister for that response. Our people are demanding that this government respond to the situation and not slough this off to the federal government. We're also not talking policy; we're talking about compulsory measures, which requires legislation. The MGP will triple our emissions. The diamond mines almost doubled them. How is the Minister planning to mitigate these impacts, which are on the backs of our people, as they walk away with their large profits?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that we are moving to occupy a field where some would question the issue of jurisdiction. I'm speaking specifically about the area of water. We're moving forward — in a very proactive way, I think. We have a framework that we're going to be taking to committee here. The Premier's mentioned that. We have a broad land-use framework that we're working on, and we intend to work with committee. We have a joint climate change committee that's going to give us advice on how to move forward on this.

This is an issue that has work required to be done. We don't have clear answers, but clearly, we recognize that there is an increase. There's the JRP report that we're waiting to come out with, in terms of the Mackenzie gas pipeline, and as we move forward with further developments, this issue is going to be becoming clearer and clearer. We have to sort out, as a government and as a Legislature, what's the most appropriate step. I know the Member has very clear ideas. As the Member would respect and acknowledge, there is a wide range of opinions as well. We have to try to bring those together into one solid policy.

Mr. Bromley: The residents and communities are actually doing quite a bit on this sort of thing, but we're looking for some response to industry. The non-government organizations have shouldered the costs in the joint review process of the Mackenzie Gas Project. They are the ones who hired the economists to look at what the carbon-neutral approach would cost. And it's quite modest, in the order of less than a 10 per cent increase in costs — 5 to 7 per cent. When is this government going to start playing that role and, instead of being open for business and subsidizing this industry, get some answers on what it would cost to make it responsible for development that benefits the local people?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, even Imperial Oil, from what I've been reading, is getting

enormous pressure from its major shareholders to be more environmentally responsible. We recognize and we have to make sure that business does not get by on the backs of Northerners, that they acknowledge the impact of what they're doing in terms of development. While it may not be a perfect system, we are moving more and more down that path to not only a recognition, but as I indicated to the Member, we're going to be developing the policies with the help and guidance of the MLAs and the climate change committee, for example, of how best to do this.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister acknowledged Imperial, which, of course, is part of the largest profit-making machine in the world. Northerners are paying the cost once again. Our foundations are disintegrating. We're losing our species. The polar bears are having problems in some areas, and there are much more dire predictions and so on. Will this Minister commit to looking at and aggressively pursuing some compulsory requirements for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by large industry?

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: I would be happy to commit to the Member that I will come forward, along with our Cabinet colleagues, with a paper that outlines those policy implications and the jurisdictional issues and lays out the landscape as we plan to move forward collectively here at the Legislature, and how can we best do that to address the issue that Mr. Bromley has raised.

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

QUESTION 282-16(2)
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER NWT

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are in follow-up to my Member's statement on the end of operations of Volunteer NWT.

Given that the voluntary sector is a key player in helping us develop and maintain healthy communities, I was sad to hear that Volunteer NWT, which is a champion for the sector, is shutting down operations due to limited and/or no funding from the GNWT. In the past the GNWT has supported them and has provided some funding. Now it appears that they've cut them completely off.

My question is to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. I'm curious, specifically, given the strategic plan of this Legislative Assembly, how is it that MACA has decided that the sector no longer warrants some financial support, given that they are our partners in

helping us develop some financing framework in the sector?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, first of all, we should be clear on who has cut funding to Volunteer NWT. We never did provide any core funding to Volunteer NWT. We had an arrangement with the federal government and Volunteer NWT to be partners on a number of initiatives. The core funding came through the federal government's funding sources. A couple of years ago that funding lapsed and was not going to be renewed. Our investment in Volunteer NWT was on specific small initiatives.

Mr. Abernethy: Where that is actually true, in the past, is the feds had provided money. The feds, in their wisdom, had actually cut the money last year, and the GNWT stood up and helped support the voluntary sector through the Volunteer NWT. Regardless of whether the feds are doing it or not, they play an incredibly important role in the Northwest Territories, which has clearly been acknowledged through our strategic plan.

I'd like to ask the Minister to commit to meeting with Volunteer NWT and working out some form of financial arrangement that will help them sustain their existence and continue to do the good work that they do on behalf of the people in the Northwest Territories.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We have been meeting with Volunteer NWT as recently as last week, or several weeks ago at least. The dollars that were provided to Volunteer NWT was \$50,000. That money was to be used to explore new and other sources of revenue for that organization, as we indicated to them that we were not in a position to core fund them or pick up where the federal government cut the funding. So those dollars were provided to them. I don't believe we have seen a report of what they have found. Our information tells us that Volunteer has decided to wind up their organization as they haven't been able to identify any new sources.

From the government's standpoint we still think that there is a lot of merit in having an organization or a good support system in place, and we want to continue moving towards that. The Premier has mentioned that there should be a review or more investment or discussion in this area. We'd like to do that. First of all, we have to get our house in order. We are also expecting to have further discussions with the Building Our Future Committee to see where we can play a role in supporting Volunteer NWT and the volunteer sector.

However, having said that, we still have our own initiatives that we'll continue to fund. We have dollars in our budget, providing it gets approved, to do our own initiatives that support volunteers.

Mr. Abernethy: I'm quite happy to hear that the department is willing to work with the sector. I think that's great. It's great that they understand the value and hope to work with, but on the other side, they turn around and say, "But we're not giving you any money."

The sector actually has gone out and has found some money. I indicated it in my Member's statement. They also have a great relationship with Sport North, which helps them with some infrastructure and whatnot. So they still do require some operating funds from time to time. As an example, the board consists of members from all over the Northwest Territories who are coming together to put together a common message and a common theme on the voluntary sector, which includes those pure-volunteer organizations as well as NGOs, and trying to work with the government to find a solid finance framework that will ensure health of the sector as a whole. So as champions, they are incredibly important, and I think we're missing the point.

I would once again like to encourage the Minister to dig in and to see if there's any opportunity to find some additional funds. They're not asking for a lot of money at this point in time but some money to help with their basic operation.

Hon. Michael McLeod: As indicated, we still have a considerable amount of time to deal with a number of issues that are not, maybe, at the top of our list, as some Members would like to see.

The volunteer sector and Volunteer NWT, I think, are two separate issues at this point. We are still investing in the volunteer sector. We don't have any money to provide core funding to Volunteer NWT. We would like to take a step back and start looking at this issue and look at all the issues of interest to the volunteer sector and make sure that each department across the government is involved and that we provide appropriate leadership. We would like to be able to work with the Building Our Future Committee and look at ways we can identify resources and start funding some of these priorities in the volunteer area.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again that all sounds great. Unfortunately, it also sounds like you're going to be doing to the voluntary sector what you're occasionally doing to us, which is telling them what you're going to do, rather than working with them.

Volunteer NWT is a central organization, a champion for all these groups, and would be a great group to engage and involve in conversation to help set a direction that's going to be acceptable to all the groups that are out there.

If you're not going to give them money, will you at least meet with Volunteer NWT and find some way to engage the actual individuals who are the champions for the sector as a whole? I think it's not the right answer, but at least we could find some way to engage them. If there's no money, we have no choice, but will you engage the individuals involved?

Hon. Michael McLeod: That's something that we have been doing on a fairly regular basis in the last while, trying to find ways to support Volunteer NWT. We have been meeting with their executive.

Our information is that they have since dissolved their organization. To bring in the board and representatives from across the Northwest Territories is going to be a very extensive undertaking. At this point we don't have the resources to do that. We'd like to bring people from across the North to talk about volunteerism and to see how we can improve our system and support. However, until we identify the resources and come up with a plan, we are not going to be able to do that.

We will commit to seeing if there's any desire from.... I'm not sure there's an organization to meet with anymore, but we can commit to contacting at least the former members.

Mr. Speaker, we did not kill the organization. We never had any support dollars for core funding. That was the responsibility of the federal government.

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

QUESTION 283-16(2)
REHABILITATION PROGRAMMING AT
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on my Member's statement. Again, I want to question the Minister of Justice today, in this House, regarding the delivery and provision of sex offender programming and family violence programming at North Slave Correctional Centre.

The more I think about this and the more digging around that I'm able to do, it raises a number of concerns for me. I've asked the Minister this question before, about how the qualifications and the delivery of programming at North Slave Correctional Centre could potentially impact the federal inmates that are housed at that centre. Now, the answer I got back from the Minister was

that it wouldn't impact it. But that's not what I'm hearing today, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the Minister of Justice: will the change in personnel and the changes that he's looking at implementing there impact our ability to house federal inmates at North Slave Correctional Facility?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The North Slave Correctional Facility offers, through Corrections Canada services, an ex-offender relapse program, a family violence program, the national substance abuse program and also the anger emotion program, which the program delivery officers provided for a number of years. We certainly will continue with the program. There's no such impact to the program itself. We will continue to deliver a program, so there is no impact. Mahsi.

Mr. Ramsay: But again, I am having trouble understanding the rationale the Minister uses. I want to ask him: what standards and policies does Corrections in the Department of Justice have when it comes to programming? Do those policies and standards mirror the federal government's Correctional Service of Canada?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we do follow the Corrections Canada services guidelines and criteria when it comes to program delivery. The three individuals we are talking about — the program delivery officer and two case managers and also the psychologists that deliver this program — were mentored and trained to deliver the offender program and accredited by the Correctional Service of Canada. So it is certified through the Correctional Service of Canada to deliver the program. It is a highly recognized program and a highly recognized accreditation that these individuals receive. Mahsi.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, I am having trouble understanding how.... I don't see anywhere in what I've read — the information that I've read from the Correctional Service of Canada — where they say it's okay to train somebody for a week or ten days and send them into a classroom in group therapy so they can train or program sex offenders so they can be rehabilitated and go back into the community. I am not sure where it says that anywhere.

I want to ask the Minister: does he understand that having a "train the trainer" that he talked about the other day and backfilling positions...? We are talking about rehabilitating sex offenders. I am not sure how the Minister can say that it is okay to train

somebody for a week or ten days and send inmates back into our communities. It doesn't make any sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we recognize the program delivery criteria. It came down from the federal government, federal Corrections. What more can we offer? It is accredited for these individuals to deliver a program — the four key areas for rehabilitation — into the community. So we have trained these individuals for, as the Member states, a couple of weeks, a few weeks. We train these individuals, and they are trained. They are certified by the Correctional Service of Canada because it is their program, as well, so we are meeting the standards of their criteria at North Slave Correctional Facility. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I am going to be interested in seeing what happens here and how long the program at North Slave Correctional Facility continues to be, as the Minister said, certified by the federal government. I think that's going to change with some of the job cuts out there and the re-profiling of positions. I think that's going to change.

I want to ask the Minister: can he tell us today what qualifications program-delivery officers or whoever is going to be conducting the programming...? What qualifications do they have — clinical, academic and professional expertise — to deliver those programs, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I can't speak specifically to the position. It is a confidential matter. If we do highlight their credentials and qualifications, we are specifically targeting those individuals, and I certainly cannot speak to that. But I can speak to the criteria that we follow: again, it's the Correctional Service of Canada. My staff will be meeting with Corrections next week.

Just to move forward on this, we want to train more individuals at Corrections as well. We want the program to be successful. It has been very successful to date. We want to continue the progress. So we are moving in the right direction. We do have trained people, certified and accredited by the Correctional Service of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 284-16(2)
SUMMER MANDATORY LEAVE
FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, my questions are for either the Premier or the Minister of Human

Resources. We as a government, as everybody knows, have been looking at ways to save money. The Regular Members got together and came up with a list of potential reductions. We submitted that to Cabinet. As yet, we have not had a formal response back to that, because we were told that those would require some analysis.

I would like to know what kind of flexibility we have. Everybody knows that during the 13th Assembly we came up with something called Donny Days, where non-essential service providers were given the days off between Christmas and New Year's. Is there any potential for that type of thing again, perhaps between National Aboriginal Day and July 1? That seems to be a bit of a week there when a lot of people are... Well, there are two stat holidays very close together. Has any consideration been given to that?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Flexibility is something we definitely need to look at in this area. For the record, though, we did respond to the committee on the specific changes we made within the budget documents before this Assembly, based on some of the recommendations the Members made. A number of the recommendations require that they go into the Refocusing Government initiative. So as we get through this phase, we'll be putting the energy in, working with Members to see how we can implement those in the next budget cycle, as we're starting to enter that process as well.

The area the Member has raised, the Donny Days scenario — in fact, in one of my meetings with the UNW president, I suggested that...what can we look at in the future? Because we obviously haven't met our targets to date. We need to still look at how we use the money wisely in the North. Is there an appetite for looking at something of that nature coming down? He said that though the union is always opposed to looking at reductions to hours for staffing, in principle that's something that could be looked at. So I think it's an avenue that we should approach.

I recall the days of discussion on Donny Days. Some of the staff within the communities that I represent — and the correspondence I received — said they'd be happy to take a Friday afternoon off the odd time. So though we haven't entered those discussions, we need to have those as part of the mix as we go forward.

Mrs. Groenewegen: When I look at private sector employers and even the federal government, they have a lot of opportunities for their employees to partake in different things, like transitional retirement, where instead of going from working five days a week to full retirement, they look at reducing

their work week to four days a week and then down to three days a week and then they're off on their retirement. There is an opportunity for people to work six-hour days instead of eight-hour days. There are all kinds of different opportunities available to people who have different lifestyles or different times of their life where they may need the extra time or they may like to work less. People are concerned about quality of life. We as a government have an opportunity, I believe, to offer people workplace flexibility that would save us money and make them happier. I want to know what work is underway to consider those options.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I should say for the record that "mandatory days off" are in fact the official words that we use in our policy, going forward. The issue of what other areas we're looking at — we do have to work with the unions that operate in the Northwest Territories, because the working conditions, the hours set, also work directly with those negotiations. So we'd be prepared to engage in a level of discussion to see if there are avenues of flexibility within that working arrangement. Once we get to the next stage and begin the next process of business planning for the remainder of the life of this government, we're going to have to look at a number of options and see if they would be effective solutions for us.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I'm not hearing that we actually do have a lot of flexibility to do some of those things, so that is a discussion I would like this government to embark on with the union. I really do believe there could be cost savings, and it could be a win-win situation for everyone.

I have a situation in my constituency, for example, where a person wants to retire, but they want to know that they can come back as a casual. Why can't that kind of thing be facilitated?

Hon. Floyd Roland: I'd have to get some clarity from the Minister of Human Resources, but my understanding of the process is that we're looking at retirement. If individuals have set their dates, we have to work with, for example, Superannuation, because there are set dates when individuals can qualify. Working with them on potential earlier retirement for individuals that may be affected.... Once people are retired, I don't see where we have any problems. Again, I'd have to defer to the Minister of Human Resources and get more detail on that. But for retirement and coming back as a casual, people call their regional offices or offices in communities and put their name on the list. I'll have to see if there's any problem around that, going forward. I'll get that information to the Member.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I look forward to hearing what the Premier finds out about that. It's not just that

they.... They have everything in place to retire: the pension, everything, all the numbers; they've reached the goals. But before they do that, they would like to know for sure that they could come back as a casual, because it's important to their decision whether they retire or not. If that kind of thing could be accommodated, I think it could be a win-win for everyone.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, whether we are affected with our work environment, with our unions or, in this case of retirement, working with Superannuation.... If they have policies in place that could affect some of those areas, we'll get some detail on that. One of the factors that could affect that, for example, is how high a level they are within the public service. That also has an effect on that avenue. Again, that is more a reflection of our relationship with Superannuation.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 285-16(2)
PRIVATE SECTOR INCENTIVES TO
HIRE SUMMER STUDENTS

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I spoke yesterday in question period and asked the Minister of Human Resources about what they're doing for summer students. We talked about summer students that potentially could be hired by the GNWT, and that process. The Minister alluded to a potential answer to my questions about the private sector. In the past there has been an incentive program out there for the private sector. I think the Minister said there was around a \$5,000 potential out there. What is the Minister doing to ensure that the private sector knows this is available, and to make sure that they can obtain access to this program?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a number of programs to entice summer students to return to the Northwest Territories. It comes in two forms: the northern Summer Student Employment Program and the Northern Graduate Employment Program. The programs that the Member is referring to.... Under the Northern Graduate Employment Program, we have a Graduate Transition Program, and that program is being reduced. It was a program to place returning students with the private sector as interns, and the government subsidized interns up to \$25,000. Unfortunately, that program is being phased out, and we're providing for the remaining students that are in the program.

We also have the Progressive Experience Program, which provides up to \$5,000 to place students with different agencies. Although primarily used during the summer, funding can also be accessed throughout the year for northern post-secondary students doing co-op or practicum placements with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, we heard a couple of programs, and they're certainly good. But the private sector is telling me that they need more support, because there's certainly enough work in their businesses and in the private industries to take on more summer students, as well as other types of programs. The principle, really, on this issue is: is the government making money available so the private sector can help supplement those summer student wages and maybe take on more summer students?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, the only program we have right now is the Progressive Experience Program, but we'd be prepared to look at something for the next business-planning cycle. Certainly, if we can reduce the costs to the government by having the private sector hire more summer students, I think that would be something we could work towards.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time for question period has expired; however, I will allow the Member a short supplementary. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, a private sector person called me yesterday, as I've said, and they want access to any opportunities they can to help leverage their money to hire students, because they've got a lot of work in their shop. This is one of a number of examples out there. Mr. Speaker, if there is a pot out there through the Progressive Experience Program, how much money is available, and how would they obtain access to this potential program to make sure they put these students to work?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Currently we have 75 progressive experience positions that are available. Most of them have been taken up for this year.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, if I said today — simply just today — how much money is there in any incentive program for any employer to come in and tap into, so they could use that to leverage their own money in order to hire summer students...? Because, I think, as highlighted by the Minister and me yesterday, the territorial government can't employ all the students; it certainly isn't reasonable. We've only been able to employ approximately 60 per cent of what we had last year. The private sector wants to take it up. So what programs exist

today that they could call to tap into to hire these extra students?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I should point out that there are a number of funding agencies that provide for summer student employment, including the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories. I'll be pleased to make a list of those programs available to the Member.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Written Questions

QUESTION 18-16(2) CAPITAL PROJECTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, capital projects within the Department of Transportation.

- 1) Of the projects identified for funding under the proposed Building Canada Fund, how many were brought forward from the NWT Highways Strategy or from the department's Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, and how many are new initiatives?
- 2) What level of consultation was undertaken with community and aboriginal governments on the infrastructure projects identified for funding?
- 3) Can the Minister provide to me copies of any agreements or motions from community or aboriginal governments in support of the infrastructure projects that are identified for funding?
- 4) What class of cost estimates is each of the proposed Building Canada Fund projects presently at?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Tabling of Documents

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled Communities and Diamonds — 2007 Annual Report of the Government of the Northwest Territories under the BHP Billiton, Diavik and De Beers Socio-Economic Agreements.

Document 59-16(2), Communities and Diamonds — 2007 Annual Report of the Government of the Northwest Territories under the BHP Billiton, Diavik and De Beers Socio-Economic Agreements, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod.

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Bill 8, Tabled Document 37-16(2), Committee Report 7-16(2), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

By the authority given me as Speaker by Motion 10-16(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the hour of daily adjournment to consider business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I call the Committee of the Whole to order. In consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: 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), Committee Report 7-16(2), Tabled Document 37-16(2). What is the wish of the committee, Mrs. Groenewegen?

Mrs. Groenewegen: The Committee wishes to proceed with the Main Estimates for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations and, depending on how that goes time-wise, proceed to the Department of Public Works and Services.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, we'll take a short break and continue with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

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

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009 DEPARTMENT OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Before we took a break, we decided that we'd begin with the Department of

Aboriginal Affairs and then, following that, Public Works and Services. So at this time I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs if he has any comments. Premier Roland?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to present the 2008–2009 Main Estimates for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, incorporating feedback provided by standing committees.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations carries an important responsibility on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is responsible for negotiating, implementing and monitoring land, resources and self-government agreements, including treaty land entitlements. It manages the GNWT's relationship with the federal government and with provincial, territorial and aboriginal governments and circumpolar countries in all matters of intergovernmental significance, and it provides strategic advice on matters pertaining to federal-, provincial-, territorial-aboriginal relations.

By virtue of its mandate DAAIR leads or is directly involved in many of the strategic activities supporting the GNWT's Managing This Land initiative. As Premier and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, I carry the responsibility to represent and promote the interests of all NWT residents at aboriginal rights tables and through our intergovernmental relations with aboriginal, provincial, federal and territorial governments. This important task directly supports the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

In the future the department anticipates new negotiating tables for the Acho Dene Koe First Nation, supporting land resources and self-government negotiations, Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation transboundary negotiations, K'atloodeeche First Nation, Hay River Reserve treaty land entitlement negotiations, Fort Good Hope self-government negotiations and Dine Tha' transboundary negotiations.

The GNWT, as a responsible and legitimate government, takes its responsibility to shape the governance system and the land and resource management regimes in the NWT very seriously. We talk of making decisions about the North in the North. So we will eventually need to be a party to these negotiations, instead of letting the federal government represent our interests in aboriginal rights negotiations.

The department is requesting \$6.5 million in operating expenses for the 2008–2009 fiscal year. This represents a decrease of 13 per cent, or \$950,000, from the 2007–2008 Main Estimates. The proposal includes expenditure reductions in the amount of \$605,000, comprised of \$330,000 in

savings from the elimination of position vacancies, \$95,000 from reduced travel and contracted services across the department; and \$180,000 reduction in contribution funding currently available to aboriginal governments.

As recommended by the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, an increase to the grants and contributions funding to aboriginal governments and organizations has been made. The now \$350,000 fund will assist each regional aboriginal government with the cost of engaging in four multilateral meetings per year and one bilateral meeting per year with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The sunset of the intergovernmental forum resources is in the amount of \$500,000. This funding had been utilized to fund aboriginal government participation in intergovernmental initiatives and supplement the level of funding available to aboriginal governments and organizations for special events.

Transfers to other departments in the amount of \$29,000 for adjustments to TSC chargebacks and mailroom salary costs. Forced-growth funding in the amount of \$130,000 in support of collective bargaining increases and digital communications network upgrades. A one-time allocation of \$54,000 from the supplementary reserve.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I'm prepared to answer questions committee members may have. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to ask the committee responsible for overseeing the department's estimates if they have any comments. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. 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.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations is responsible for negotiating and implementing land claims in 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 and 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, and the important role it plays, the committee makes the following recommendation. The committee recommends that DAAIR be rolled back into the Department of Executive immediately, and a review of its mandate and function be undertaken to refocus its efforts on aboriginal government relations.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the committee's comments on DAAIR. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs if he'll be bringing any witnesses.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

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

Mr. Roland, can you introduce your witnesses, please?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Joining me at the table here to my left is Ms. Gabriela Sparling, deputy minister of Aboriginal and Intergovernmental Affairs. To my right is Mr. Richard Robertson, chief financial adviser within the Department of DAAIR.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments, Aboriginal Affairs. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: I'm good.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): General comments, Aboriginal Affairs. General comments? What is the wish of the committee? Detail. Can we turn to page 2-93? Program Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: that is going to be deferred. We'll move to the next page. Active Positions — By Regions, information item, page 2-94. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In looking at the active position numbers, I see that the department is going down by 11 positions. After

hearing the Minister's comments, I see that there is going to be a whole lot of new negotiating going on in the future. I understand that a number of these positions that are being eliminated are negotiator or negotiator-related type positions. I'm wondering if I can get the Minister to explain to me what processes you used in order to determine which positions to eliminate. Were any of them vacant? Which ones were filled? And, given these new tables that have been coming around, will you have enough negotiators left over to actually do your part of the negotiation as required?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the process of looking at the reduction target that we had to work with within the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, we don't have much flexibility. There are no program dollars available.

The department is about people and taking part at these tables. What we had to look at was ensuring that we were able to meet our obligations under a number of categories. Those are, for example, negotiations and pieces that we're involved with today, to have representation there to ensure that we meet our obligation under the implementation agreements that we're involved with between the parties. As well, we have to look at what operations we can take part in, going forward.

There were a number of vacancies that were in the area. In fact, six of the 11 positions are vacant. We've had to look at ways that we could re-profile some of the responsibilities to the remaining staff. For example, at the negotiation tables we will have key staff there, a negotiator and one other part of the team. There have been a number of different tables where we've had three people at the table, so we're down to two. At a number of the tables these negotiators will and are already serving more than one table.

In the areas I discussed earlier in the opening comments about taking part in the new tables that are coming about, we are going to have to put a forced-growth submission in for the next budget year if the tables in a number of cases...especially in the case of the Fort Liard table, which seems to be moving along rather quickly. We've been observers at this point, but to take part, we're going to have to come forward to the Assembly for increased revenue on that section. But we're looking at how we do business, and revising it to a certain degree. We would be coming forward in '09-10 through one of our strategic initiatives, the Managing This Land initiative, for changing our process and requiring more revenues to adapt.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you for that information, Mr. Minister. I'm curious, given that.... I may have misunderstood, so just bear with me. With these additional tables, if you're going to be going for a forced growth in '09-10, and we're already.... April, May, June — three months into this fiscal year, and by the time we give the employees their notice, we'll be halfway through the fiscal year. So they'll be gone after halfway through the fiscal year is up, and then we'll be looking at bringing back people to do similar jobs at the beginning of '09-10. Does laying off the individuals now make much sense if we know that we're going to have to re-create them in six months? I don't understand the value in six months' worth of savings.

Hon. Floyd Roland: The process wouldn't quite match up that way. Yes, the timing and so on looks like it would, but the positions that are actually targeted for reductions aren't the chief negotiator positions. So we would end up having to deal with that outside this process anyway.

For example, we're looking at a policy position, a communications position, an administrative position, financial planning, budget analyst position, communications again, an intergovernmental relations analyst, and two assistant lands negotiators are being targeted as well. So it's not the chief negotiator piece we've organized so that we can represent every table that we are directly involved with. For any new additional tables we've had to inform Cabinet as we proceed, and inform Members. We would have to adapt, going forward, and recognize.... The one I just mentioned earlier seems to be moving along quicker than we'd anticipated, and we're going to have to come forward and make a request to help us participate at that table. Going forward, though, there is a plan for the reorganization of the department, in formalizing our role with the aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories. As we get into some of the detail, I'd be prepared to go into a little more of the detail of how we're planning to do things differently as we go forward.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you for clarifying that for me. When is the reorganization and the restructuring of the department going to occur?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the first impact is dealing with this budget and its impact. As we go forward in the '09-10 business plan, what we're planning is a four-year cycle for this government, but the remainder of our three years, it would come forward. We would begin addressing it in '09-10, so members will start seeing our plans for what we're hoping to try to do before the fall time.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 2-94. Active Positions. information item.

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Program Summary, Active Positions — By Region, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Active Positions — Community Allocation, page 2-95.

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Program Summary, Active Positions — Community Allocation, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$6.5 million. Agreed?

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$6.5 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 2-97. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 32-16(2)
TO RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT
OF ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS INCREASE
ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT ACROSS
THE DEPARTMENT TO A MINIMUM
OF REPRESENTATIVE LEVELS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee strongly recommends that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations take immediate action to develop a strategy to increase aboriginal employment in management positions, and across the department, too, at minimum representative levels and, further, that the department include the strategy within its departmental business plan to be considered in the fall of 2008.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. The motion is being circulated. On the motion, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Aboriginal employment for all employees is low. It's 31 per cent across the Territory. I think our objective is to try to achieve 51 per cent, according to the Affirmative Action Policy. For all employees, this department has an affirmative action number of 27 per cent.

The aboriginal percentage of employees in management is 17 per cent, or one position of the six senior management positions. The committee felt that it was vitally important in this department that we have some aboriginal management, and more aboriginal employees, as we're engaging in our share of the negotiations across the Territories with the various aboriginal governments, various land claims, and governance negotiations that go

on with the various aboriginal groups in the various regions. That's it.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): General comments. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'll be supporting this motion on a couple of principles. We often talk about sort of raising women in the context of senior management and making sure that they're profiled appropriately and given fair opportunities.

This actually happens to be one of those departments where we have a deputy minister who is a female. It also falls down, though, in other areas, where it's less admirable. It doesn't reflect our general population and the distribution of representation.

So that was the principle of why I am supporting this motion. You would think, if anything, that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs would have more First Nations people in it, and it doesn't. I would think that with the connection and interest in this issue, there must be a number of candidates out there that would be striving to be part of something that is bigger on the principles of why it exists.

Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't want anyone to assume in any manner that I think we should fire people just to replace people. But I certainly think, in my view — and I am supporting this motion — that a strategy to highlight what I'm trying to say needs to be in place.

Again, it's more of a representative view and an interest view. If I were to put my two cents in, I think what's critical here, for me, is to see a plan to address this and to start making some tracks on this issue, because it just doesn't reflect what I would think it should.

I'm going to leave it at that. So it at least gets on the record once, I'd like to ask for a recorded vote on this matter.

Sorry, one more thing: I think we can do better, and I know we can do better. I certainly know, in my experience, there are a lot of smart, educated, very leadership-style aboriginal people out there that would be willing to take on this opportunity to get into this role. I think they have every right, and we have every right to help promote that opportunity.

So, Mr. Chairman, with that, again, I'll be supporting the motion, and I thank the committee.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will also be supporting this motion.

We have a chance to review departments on an annual basis, and it became abundantly clear that

the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations does not put much emphasis or priority on having key players in the department who are aboriginal.

As a government we absolutely chastise the federal government all the time when they appoint people to various positions that have to do with the management of our lands and resources. We constantly say that we have good and qualified candidates who are Northerners, who are indigenous, who are aboriginal Northerners, to manage these things, chair these kinds of things. Yet we as a government, in our own Department of Aboriginal Affairs, very obviously do not have aboriginal First Nations people in those positions of leadership in a department like this.

I have a problem with that. Also, I think it's just sending the wrong message. It's a contradiction, a glaring contradiction, of just about everything else that we say and stand for in this government, in terms of having our public service reflective of the territory itself. And certainly, it's even more obvious in a department that's called the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

So I will be supporting the motion. I'll speak to something else on another page, but I'll be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to speak in favour of the motion as well.

I'm not sure if it goes far enough. To be fair to Aboriginal Affairs, they're not alone. I think the government, in its entirety, should be somewhat ashamed of itself for having.... And not just this government; previous governments too — let's be fair. We've had an Affirmative Action Policy in place for a number of years, and if you look at senior management, aboriginal people in senior management positions in this government is 15 per cent. DAAIR's not alone. It's a problem that runs throughout the government.

Just to pick another department: ITI has 21 senior managers. Twenty-one senior managers at ITI, and one of them is aboriginal. So DAAIR is not alone. We're moving this motion today to raise the issue.

And it isn't just in management at Aboriginal Affairs; it's also in Intergovernmental Relations. I don't believe there's.... There might be one aboriginal person in that whole section, and to me, it runs contrary to, I think, what we're trying to do and what we're trying to work with.

We're trying to work with aboriginal governments. We should have aboriginal people in some of those

positions. I know there are aboriginal employees in some of the negotiating areas in the department, but we can just do better, and I think that's the message that we need to send out.

I know the other Ministers are listening to this too. We need to do better than 15 per cent in senior management in terms of aboriginal people. That's not a very good statistic and not one to be proud of. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Minister Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think this motion does at least.... I would have to agree somewhat with the Member for...

Some Honourable Members: Kam Lake.

Hon. Floyd Roland: ...Kam Lake, yes...

Laughter.

Hon. Floyd Roland: ...on the fact that as the Government of the Northwest Territories, when you look at our stats, at the community and regional levels, we have good numbers. Headquarters itself has suffered, for a number of reasons, and it's been through many of levels of government, or years of different governments, as the Member pointed out.

In fact, we recognize that the Affirmative Action Policy itself, government-wide, needs to be addressed. It's been in place for many years, and we need to get to the next level.

I understand that the Minister responsible for Human Resources will be — if he has not already — starting to have some dialogue about the next level of what we can do to improve where we're going.

Specifically for this department, as it's represented and as the motion is about, we have to talk about Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. It's a combination of responsibilities we serve. In fact, when we put this package together, two of our employees were out on education leave and are now back and in the department. So these numbers are off slightly, and we would adjust, of course. We're seeing how that continues to work. So we've got a couple more employees who are back from education leave, which shows our commitment in having them further advance their careers and potentially move up the ladder as well. So we've got that in place.

I'm all for having aboriginal people in place to do the job. We have to ensure that they have the appropriate level of education and training, because as an aboriginal person, I'm not in favour of putting

people in place who are going to fail. I would say that we've got to improve in that area. I think, in this case, we've got a couple of employees who have returned from education leave who will support us, the way we go forward and the work we do.

As well, even in the negotiation pieces, one thing we find in this department — because, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we're not seen as the employer of choice in a number of areas — is that as people move up the system in our negotiation process in other areas, they receive other, more lucrative offers, whether it be from the federal government or their own aboriginal organizations. So we have to compete with that as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. There has been a request for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

Principal Clerk of Operations (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson.

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

Principal Clerk of Operations (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Roland, Mr. Michael McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Results of the motion are eight in favour of the motion, none against, seven abstentions. The motion is carried.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 2-97, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$6.5 million. Agreed?

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$6.5 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 2-99, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$650,000. Agreed?

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary,

Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$650,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, Active Positions, page 2-100. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see that there's a reduction of 11 positions. I just wondered if the Premier — or I should say, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in this particular case, but obviously one and the same — had any comment as to the strategy to review this reduction, and if he had any comment on the work that was done to ensure that either these positions weren't necessary or, furthermore, that this work could be picked up by other staff.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm going to have to repeat what Minister Lee said yesterday. It's not a matter that our positions are not needed and required in what we do but of making decisions of best serving the tables we're at and the mandate we have.

We've come up with a balance where we're at every table that is established, and we are meeting our mandate when it comes to, for example, implementation, because that's a part of the funding through the federal government that we have to meet. We have been meeting those obligations.

Six of the 11 positions are vacant. I gave a list earlier on the number of positions that were actually targeted for reduction through this exercise.

We are coming forward with a revised plan and process of how we work with First Nations and aboriginal governments and organizations in the Northwest Territories. For example, on the contribution funding piece, as Members had made a recommendation that we increase that portion, we did. But we're looking to formalize our relationship with aboriginal governments and organizations. I say "formalize" because in the past we have had political accords to establish relationships.

What we're doing now is going to the four meetings per year, meeting with regional leaders and the Premier — myself — and we would bring the resources to the table on specific initiatives. It would be a time that now all parties can put agenda items together, similar to the process we use right now on the intergovernmental forums, when it's provincial or federal, and with the territorial government. So we're adopting that and moving it forward and formalizing our relationship.

As well, we'll have one meeting with each aboriginal government and organization and their

elected leaders once a year. So we'll have bilaterals once a year, and four meetings per year with regional leadership on initiatives that we feel we can move forward on as the people of the Northwest Territories. That's the core of where we're going with some of the change.

As I stated earlier, in the 2009–2010 business plan process, we're bringing back to the table a number of initiatives to increase the role that we have, changing somewhat from what we used to be and how we funded things in the past. So we are coming forward in the fall business plan cycle with a change in the plan, and also, it would require more resources.

Mr. Hawkins: I thank the Premier for that answer. Before I get specifically to the impacted and whatnot, the Premier did make a statement regarding meeting their mandate. I just want to be clear: he's saying that with a reduction of staff, they'll still be able to meet their mandate. Could he explain what the case was before? If there's been a reduction of — can I say? — approximately 20 to 25 per cent of staff, that's a huge reduction. From a layperson's point of view, you're saying you can delete 25 per cent of people working on a particular file, or maybe in an area, and still meet that mandate, so either you were doing mandate-plus or the mandate's been trimmed down. I just want that assurance. Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, it isn't easy to make changes to our planning, but one of the things we had to do was ensure we met our mandate at the negotiation tables and implementation tables. So we've ensured that with the changes we've had in place, at those tables we still have representation. We've gone, in a number of cases, from three down to two, but we have our chief negotiator and one other at the table.

As I went through before, the majority of the positions identified, six of them, are vacant, so we've had to take positions from a number of areas that go on. We've had to look at administrative positions, communications, policy advisor, budget analyst, and senior communications as well. Those are the areas we've highlighted for impact and reduction.

The tables: we've kept our complement of two people at each table. As I stated earlier, as the new tables are established, we're going to have to come back to this Assembly for more resources.

We intend, as I said earlier, in the 2009–2010 business-planning process, to come forward through the Managing This Land initiative, because we talked about land and governance coming with initiatives of some restructuring and a new way of doing business with our aboriginal partners.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister provide some information as to how those five positions ended up, or where they ended up? Were they transferred? If the positions were reduced, what happened to the employees in those particular cases? Were they transferred to empty positions, vacant positions, or are they still in stasis at this moment, waiting for the completion of the budget? Thank you.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, before I hand this off to the deputy minister, the fact is, as we go through the cycle, we're working through HR with affected employees for the potential finding of other positions. Each department, in some cases, is working with individuals; with others, we're waiting for this final process to be done before shifting of positions can happen.

But specifically within Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, I'll have Ms. Sparling give some detail.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd just like to take the time to recognize a few people in the visitors' gallery. The mayor from Paulatuk, Ray Ruben, and his wife, Bella; and Ernest Betsina from Yellowknife. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Hawkins. Oh, sorry. Ms. Sparling.

Ms. Sparling: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the five positions was an administrative assistant who has since found indeterminate employment in another department. Another position, a communications advisor, was also successful in getting an indeterminate position in another department. One policy person has chosen to go back to school and has resigned from the GNWT. There were two people affected who are on transfer assignment. Our understanding is that at least one of them will have a position back at their home department, and the other one may not.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you for that detail. Actually, that was very helpful. Out of the remaining, or what would be described as the remaining 32 positions, how many will be left vacant? My question would be: do you have any unfunded positions that go over and above that latest number?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the rest of the positions have been filled. We have one vacant position that's there, and we're using those funds to hire a contract negotiator on a number of our files.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 2-100, with regard to Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: I think that has satisfied my concerns at this time. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, Active Positions, page 2-101. Agreed?

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary, Active Positions, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hawkins?

Mr. Hawkins: Just putting my hand up because we're turning the page.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we're on 2-102, Lease Commitments — Infrastructure. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Can I get some further details on this as to exactly what this lease commitment is and how it provides value to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and of course to the Government of the Northwest Territories?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Member is referring to the lease commitment on page 2-103. That area is one where we pay the lease of the government office that is in Ottawa. It has been established there for a number of years. This is one of the areas where we are doing work within the Executive and DAAIR to see if we can change the way we do business in Ottawa and the need for that office. We're looking at our options in that category. So it's still there for now. This is our piece of it, of the actual lease of the space itself.

Mr. Hawkins: Is this office staffed, and by how many people, if it is?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, there are, right now at the office in Ottawa, two staff. One is an office manager and the other, one of the individuals who is on transfer assignment, is also there. We know the transfer assignment is changing, so we will have one office manager in the office itself. Again, that office is open for all departments to use when they travel into the capital, Ottawa, as well as for other organizations and aboriginal governments for their use when they travel down there.

Mr. Hawkins: The Minister wasn't 100 per cent clear on the transfer assignment positions. Is that one that is affected and will be reduced, and will that mean there will be one person in the office after a certain period of time?

Hon. Floyd Roland: The transfer assignment position.... The home department is actually FMBS, and that is an affected position, so that person is working with their home department.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, my question then would be: is this position being refilled after that transfer assignment finishes? And furthermore, if

we leave a manager there, my question really would be: what would the manager be managing if they were left by themselves?

Hon. Floyd Roland: The position would not be filled. The one the Member is speaking of is within this department down in Ottawa. The office manager wasn't the manager of that position. The office manager ran the office and kept it open and ready for use by individuals in governments and departments who travelled down to Ottawa. As I stated earlier, we are revising, looking at how we operate in that area, and how we operate as a government for when we travel down to Ottawa. That will come forward as part of our '09-10 business plan process. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: Just one more question in this area. Well, I certainly hope only one more question. Is that because...? We were talking about space and whatnot, when the Premier talked about revision coming in '09-10, so I won't press that too far. But I just want to get clarity, and hopefully, it's the last time: is this manager position a permanent position that is staffed at this office, or are they a contract or some type of special hire — hired in a special way outside of the normal process?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, that position is filled through our normal hiring practices governing the Northwest Territories. It's not a contract position, so that position followed the same process of competition.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Information item, Lease Commitments — Infrastructure. Agreed?

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary, Lease Commitments — Infrastructure, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 2-103, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item: \$499,000.

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Activity Summary, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item: \$499,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Turn back to page 2-93, Operations Expenditure Summary, Program Summary: \$6.5 million. Agreed?

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Program Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$6.5 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs estimates is concluded?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Then I'd like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out.

The next department that we agreed to deal with today is the Department of Public Works and Services.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services if he has any opening comments on this department. Mr. McLeod, Michael.

Hon. Michael McLeod: I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2008–2009. The Main Estimates propose the department operations and maintenance budget for 2008–2009 of \$57.8 million, which represents an 11.6 per cent increase in O&M funding over 2007–2008. In addition, the department has an infrastructure investment plan of \$12.1 million for 2008–2009.

Position changes for Public Works and Services include the hiring of eight new apprentices in Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Inuvik and Norman Wells in designated trade occupations. An energy management specialist position was established in headquarters as part of the GNWT Energy Plan and Greenhouse Strategy, while a project officer is required to support the increased workload from the wood pile and facilities risk management program.

As part of the target reductions exercise, Public Works has identified five positions for elimination. Three of these five positions are currently vacant. The reduction will have no impact on existing employees. These three positions are located in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik. The two remaining positions were responsible for maintaining the water and sewer system in Behchoko. Those positions were transferred to the community government effective April 1, 2008, to coincide with the community assuming responsibility for the system.

Public Works and Services is an essential partner in the achievement of government-wide goals, and the department continually strives to deliver high-quality services to its clients while achieving the best value for government, communities, businesses and residents. The department achieves this through support and leadership in the areas of active management, information and communication technology, procurement, records management, community fuel provision, telecommunications regulation, and electrical and mechanical safety.

The department also manages an additional \$135 million for projects and services on behalf of clients through a revolving fund, chargebacks and capital transfers. These funds are used to provide computer and data communications for government offices; fuel services for residents, businesses and power corporations in 22 communities; and delivery of capital infrastructure for our clients.

One of the key initiatives for 2008–2009 is the Deferred Maintenance Program. Safe, reliable infrastructure is essential for the delivery of GNWT programs and services. The department maintains 60 significant buildings with an age of over 30 years. To date, assessments have identified over \$150 million in deferred maintenance in 39 of these buildings. There are still a number of facilities that have yet to be assessed, and it is expected that costs will continue to increase as Public Works carries out assessments on these remaining buildings. The risks associated with this aging infrastructure will begin to be addressed in 2008–2009 through the implementation of the Deferred Maintenance Program. This program will have many benefits, including safer buildings, the reduction in the number of unplanned closures, a reduction in the use of substandard facilities, improved energy efficiency in many of the older facilities, and a reduction in unplanned expenditures.

In addition to the facilities owned and maintained by the GNWT, Public Works currently manages a lease portfolio valued at \$17.5 million, with 57 leases across the Territories. Public Works reviews this portfolio regularly to ensure that occupied space meets the program needs of our clients. The GNWT is facing a difficult challenge in providing the programs and services residents require, given the fiscal resources available. Delivering and maintaining infrastructure required to deliver these programs and services has also proven challenging.

In response, Public Works and Services is leading a change in the way the GNWT approaches infrastructure. In consultation with the departments, Public Works will develop standardized designs for similar buildings such as schools, health centres and parks infrastructure. These standardized designs, once developed, will be used for all future infrastructure projects and should result in cost savings for the design and construction phases of these projects.

In the last fiscal year the department undertook several energy efficiency activities in the areas of planning, designing, building, maintaining and operating government-funded buildings and facilities. These initiatives were in support of the GNWT Conservation Action Plan, and they included thermal scanning of GNWT and community buildings, inspection of buildings' mechanical and

electrical systems, converting GNWT buildings in Fort Smith to electrical heat, using energy efficiency guidelines in the design of GNWT buildings, installing a biomass heating system in the North Slave Correctional Facility, and initiating a geothermal heating system in Aurora College, Thebacha Campus, in Fort Smith.

In 2008–2009, \$970,000 in funding will be available through the federal ecoTrust and will be used to support projects that will further reduce GNWT energy use and achieve reductions in air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions for facilities across the North. These projects include conversion of a maintenance garage in Fort Smith to electrical heat, installation of a wood pellet boiler in Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko, a geothermal ground source heat pump project at Aurora College campus in Fort Smith, and a capital assets retrofit fund to conduct detailed energy audits on selected buildings across the territory.

With the Technology Service Centre, the department provides information, technology support and services to meet the business objectives of the GNWT. More and more, the ability of the government to provide services to northern residents is dependent on the availability of secure and reliable information and communications systems.

Finally, I would like to mention the provision of the central fuel services. Through the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, Public Works and Services funds the provision of heating fuel and gasoline in communities where commercial operations do not exist. Through the Fuel Management Services Agreement, the Petroleum Products Division provides the Northwest Territories Power Corporation with all its requirements, and manages and operates a tank farm at 20 communities across the Northwest Territories. Under this agreement, PPD maintains three tank farms in very remote locations, as well contracting with and training local fuel delivery agents to provide necessary services. These agents have an important function in our communities, and Public Works and Services works with them to carry out this important service. In partnership with our supplier, PPD is exploring new re-supply routes, including bulk marine tankers via the Alaska Over the Top route to reduce shipping costs and gain access to larger, more competitive markets for fuel supply. We believe that this position will have a beneficial effect on the cost of fuel in communities served by PPD.

Public Works and Services continues to be responsive to its many clients and strives to provide high-quality services to departments and people of the Northwest Territories. The budget we are reviewing today will contribute to achieving this objective.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions the Members may have. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister.

At this time I'd like to call on the Chair who is responsible for the committee's consideration of their budget. With that, I'd like to ask Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. 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.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mrs. Groenewegen to provide committee's comments on issues arising out of their review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates. Mahsi.

Mrs. Groenewegen: The proposed Deferred Maintenance Program is billed under the work undertaken 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.

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

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 fuels, 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 a process to providing renewable energy sources to communities as part of the Greenhouse Gas Strategy and Energy Plan.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing in any witnesses.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

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

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, Mr. Chairman. With me today to present the Public Works and Services Main Estimates is Mike Aumond, the deputy minister, on my right; and on my left is John Gabel, director of the Technology Service Centre.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments in regard to the department's Main Estimates. General comments? Detail? Committee agree with the detail?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): General comments, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciated the Minister's opening comments here. I agree that Public Works and Services is a very essential partner in the achievement of government-wide goals, as he stated. A big one I've been emphasizing — and I know many people in this department have shown some interest in it — is dealing with our energy crunch and our environmental issues associated with greenhouse gas emissions. There's sort of a happy overlap of a couple of problems that can be addressed with the same solutions.

I see one of the things mentioned is fuel services for residents, businesses and the NWT Power Corporation, provided in 22 communities. It's very easy just to get in the habit of doing the same old thing and having the same old approach, but I think we're trying to emphasize new ways of doing things, new approaches that actually address some of our problems. I know there are opportunities in this area to find new fuels that are better for the environment and, hopefully, ultimately cheaper — certainly, in full-cost accounting they will be beneficial to our local economies and so on.

I'm hoping the Minister will be exploring that and that it will show up in their work — if not in what's remaining of this year, then strongly in the rest of the life of the Assembly.

I note \$150 million in deferred maintenance — 39 buildings. I'm wondering what proportion of that is now going to be handled through the New Deal funds by communities if those buildings are now part of a community's responsibilities. If that's not appropriate, I'd like to know that. The other thing is, how much of that is being addressed in this budget, so I can sort of gauge the length of time it will take to address this deficit in building maintenance and so on?

The Minister mentioned cost savings for the design and construction phases of the infrastructure projects, and that's huge. But of course, even more expensive is the operation of those buildings throughout the rest of their lives. I know this is not new information, but I'm just trying to emphasize that whenever we talk about this, we need to be talking about that third and most costly phase and — more and more, as we get with the times, thinking about demolition and so on, bringing those things into the equation — the cost of reuse and recycling and so on.

I appreciated the projects that are listed in terms of energy efficiency and energy conservation. I think there are some good ideas with the way the federal ecoTrust dollars are being spent. I've also appreciated the progressive approach of hiring an energy specialist. I'm really encouraging that to happen in other departments. I'm hoping this department can share the benefits of that experience, certainly, if it shows us savings are possible.

Mr. Chairman, on the last part again, I'd like to just mention the Petroleum Products Division. I think it was mentioned in the comments from the Economic Development and Infrastructure Standing Committee. Again, we're committing here.... PPD, Petroleum Products Division, is exploring new resupply routes, including bulk marine tankers via Alaska Over the Top and reduced shipping costs and so on. But these are perverse investments that show an ongoing commitment to fossil fuels when we have pretty strong evidence of what's happening to the costs and what's going to happen to the supply. It's not something I enjoy saying, and I'm certainly cheering with everybody else with the few dollars' drop in the barrel of oil, here, but somehow I can't give that much weight.

So I'm hoping that much more effort goes into displacing our use of fossil fuels with other opportunities and with more efficiency and so on. The maintenance of bulk storage facilities: we spend millions and millions of dollars on this. It would be much nicer if we could find a way — granted the challenges involved — of finding

cleaner fuels that don't require that sort of infrastructure and cost.

I just wanted to mention those things. I'm sure other things will come out in the detail.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Public Works, Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A number of issues have been raised there. First of all, I recognize the Member's concerns regarding the issue of the environment and the use of fossil fuels. We as a government have committed to looking at all the avenues to see how we can reduce our dependency on those fuels and introduce new sources of energy.

Of course, the supply of the product at this point is starting to become a concern. I think everybody would agree that the cost is becoming a real factor, and it's going to force us to really become a lot more efficient and use a lot more alternative sources of energy. The PPD is a program set up to assist communities that don't have any access to a private source of fuel. The program is designed so that it is full-cost recovery; it allows us to recover our expenditures in that area.

We are trying to do a number of things to do our business a lot better in terms of energy use. We have quite a few buildings in our government inventory. I think our numbers are around 350 buildings. We started, a couple of years ago, to do thermal scans, and we plan to do all of them. We've done, so far, 180 buildings. We've already recognized that there is a high percentage of them that need to be upgraded to be a lot more energy-efficient.

In terms of the question for funds that are being utilized from the New Deal to upgrade these buildings, the answer is that we're not using any of the New Deal funds. These are buildings that belong to the Government of the Northwest Territories. However, we are doing thermal scans on buildings that the community would like us to include as part of this assessment.

We certainly will encourage, if any of the buildings were to be demolished or replaced, that we look at some type of recycling or look at the ability to reuse. We still are fairly new in this area and are therefore required to bring somebody on stream who can bring us the expertise required. That has resulted, in this budget, in including an energy specialist who would advise our government and all the different departments. We also hope they could help us when we deal with some of the communities as they move forward in their requirement to put together energy plans as part of their sustainable community long-term plans.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The wish of committee.... Sorry. General comments. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a lot of general comments, but what I'd like to do is maybe search out a little more information. Some of the general comments speak to an approach as opposed to specific line items. On one of the pages here — page 3 of the Minister's opening comments — we talk about \$150 million in deferred maintenance. I'm just wondering if they've developed a strategy that will help carry out some of that, or what's the approach on how not only they've identified it, I guess — like I said, a strategy. How are they dealing with it?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We haven't come to the detail yet, but I understand your questions are on the opening comments. Mr. McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have a total of roughly \$7.5 million in our budget to start working on the deferred maintenance issues. We plan to have that as an ongoing program. This amount would give us the ability to deal with around ten buildings per year.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate, on page 4.... This is an item I've highlighted a few times in the past in the 15th Assembly — the standardized design for buildings. I'm quite pleased to see it's written into the Minister's comments.

The issue I have here is that quite often some of these buildings, although they are important infrastructure.... What happens is the infrastructure then turns from needs to wants, and then from wants to artistic design, and then from artistic design to turning it into an award the whole world gets to see. You go from standardized windows of being normal rectangles to really interesting polygons in some community that you could never maintain if somebody puts a rock through those windows. So I'm pleased to see that some initiative is being taken in this regard.

What I am curious about, specifically, with this is: will a policy be developed and come forward soon? And when can Members expect to see some type of policy that will reflect this mantra cited on page 4 regarding standardized design?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll turn to the Minister, but I think we'd agreed we were going to try to give our full general comments and let the Minister respond. So after this — is everybody agreed with that still?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): So perhaps after this response you could lay out your general comments.

We'll get other general comments and have the Minister respond. Minister McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of deferred maintenance has become very serious in the last while. This is one of the first years we've had a budget line to address any of the issues. The number of buildings that need attention is growing.

As an attempt to try to deal with the many issues that are challenging our capital process and capital investment, we are convinced that having at least the schematics and a design that's fairly standard available for the communities and for most of our infrastructure.... We're finding that, for example, we have water plants across the Northwest Territories — every community has one — and not very many of them are the same. Getting parts, finding people with the expertise on the different types of plants is becoming a very big challenge. We'd like to standardize that.

We'd like to have communities of basically the same size be able to see what they can get, and avoid going to the communities with a blank page and saying, "Tell us what you want." That usually leads into a very long, drawn-out process that becomes very expensive. This way, we would have facilities that we would have predesigned. Communities could take a look at them and have some say, but not completely design it from scratch. I think that would save us a lot of time. It would reduce our carryovers, and it would probably go a long way in reducing our costs.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, before I go into continuing my general comments, I would disagree with shutting a Member down. I feel that my privilege as a Member has been taken away and my rights are being stepped on. I would caution the Chair in that regard. Whatever advice is given to shut down a Member's privilege of debate.... This would be an unusual exercise of that privilege, because I have not given it up. I am prepared to accept the position of the Chair, but I wish to highlight that before I continue.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll take that into consideration. If you'll just now deliver your general comments. I believe this has been discussed in committee. You probably missed that session, but I will take that into consideration and ask you to continue with your comments.

Mr. Hawkins: Well, I still have a couple of small questions. I feel that they're appropriate, and I'll continue with them in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, we have the infrared thermal scanning continuing on page 4, and it talks about community buildings. Although I support the GNWT scanning its buildings — and again, there's no

specific line item that points to this, so that's why it is appropriate in opening comments — I'm curious as to whether the department actually charges back for this in any way. Is this something we do as a favour while we're in the community? My thought is it would probably incur either overtime or extra work on behalf of the staff who would be in that designated area. That's my question, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the intent of providing the service to the community would be.... If, while we're in the community and doing our own facilities and buildings, the community was interested in us doing the scan on any of their buildings, we would provide that at no cost. Should a request come in for us to specifically come in to do scans on any building that's owned by a community, we would expect them to pay for our travel costs but not the actual scanning.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last comment for opening remarks is I want to make note that it's good to see some ecoTrust money going to some good projects. I'd enjoy the fact that Public Works is working very hard to develop options like heat pumps and selling more wood boilers. It may not be the only solution to our energy crisis and the way it is, but the territorial government, as we all know, pays a fair amount in oil costs and to operate buildings. If we can find a cheaper solution, that certainly is a payback — within a reasonable amount of time, that is — I certainly support. That's highlighted on page 5, where Public Works has leveraged some of the ecoTrust funds from taking money and making it into real projects to deliver real results.

I believe that concludes my opening comments.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we all know, for this department and also all government departments, we have some major challenges in front of us. For ourselves, especially in the northern region of the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea area, where there are very identifiable problems we're running into — from permafrost shifting, to buildings shifting and rotting pilings — I think we're starting to realize that the infrastructure challenges we face in the North are becoming more and more apparent. It's becoming more and more expensive to deal with those issues.

The same thing applies in regard to petroleum products. We realize there are some real logistical challenges we face in the North, just trying to get access to fuel. We had fuel shortages last winter in Inuvik. Fort McPherson was out of fuel, and Inuvik. The costs became so unbearable because of fuel supply, and not the dependable fuel supply that we're used to, because something happened in an

Alberta refinery, where it shut down, that affects the North, especially the northern communities.

It's also important to train people to take over capacity issues. You talked about operators in regard to supply services and water treatment plants and whatnot. I'm glad to see that you've moved in the area of Behchoko. But also, you do have similar arrangements in the communities I represent — Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson — which are the only three communities left where POL provides that service to the local municipal authority.

Again, there are people who are being trained. They were down here last week getting more training. I'd like to also see something similar to what was done in Behchoko by way of transferring either the people who are there to the local community authority, or get the people who are trained up and running in the plants.

The other big challenge that we face.... I know we talk about finding unique ways of reducing the costs of fossil fuels, but people don't realize the cost of the alternatives that are going to have to be there to basically convert those communities. Sure, it would be great if we have projects in communities, where you have a small mini-hydro project. But again, those are all very cost-intensive. You're talking tens of millions of dollars to make these conversions and switch over to another system.

At the end of the day, we have to assess, analyze, exactly what the cost of that decision is going to be, weighing the costs of getting off of fossil fuels in these diesel communities. Whatever we do, it has to be universal. It has to be right across the Territories. Everybody in the Northwest Territories depends on diesel fuel to heat their homes, and in most cases, to run their power and also to run their vehicles. I think it's something we have to work on, but again, it's going to be a very costly endeavour.

In regard to the Petroleum Products Division, it does provide the costs to communities. The insanity of how fuel gets to the Northwest Territories is that most of the fuel going to Alberta from Norman Wells goes through a pipeline. It goes south and then goes to a refinery in Alberta. Then we purchase our fuel in regard to the Syncrude plant outside of Edmonton, put it on a rail system, send it to Hay River, put it on a barge, take the barge, go up the river, take the fuel off the barge, put it into tanks, take it off the tanks, and put it in a home or into the power plant. That fuel is moved about ten times before it's finally being used for its end purpose.

We have to find a way to deal with the logistical costs of moving fuel in the Northwest Territories. Buy bulk purchase, by way of putting it in a tank, or buy it from Valdez or wherever we can get the cheapest price, bring it over the top, store that

barge or whatnot in the Beaufort, and distribute to the Beaufort-Delta communities so they don't have to handle this fuel ten times over.

The bottom line for communities is that we have to have sustainable communities. The biggest cost to sustainable communities is energy: the cost of heating our public infrastructure, the cost of deliver fuel services by way of schools, health care centres and whatever. We have to realize that unless there's an alternative that's going to happen overnight and you hit a switch and it will happen.... Again, it's not realistic. So we have to do more planning in that area.

I would just like to state that for the Department of Public Works there are alternatives. We are looking at residual heat systems in the communities. I know, in the community I represent — Fort McPherson — there have been capital investments, put in place by the Gwich'in Development Corporation and the Power Corp, tied into different public buildings and whatnot. But again, it's trying to educate the municipalities, the Department of Public Works and Services and people on the ground that they have to be able to realize that in the long term there will be savings, but you have to be able to review that system and not be opposed to these types of capital investments in those communities.

With that, Mr. Chair, those are some of my general comments. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I'll turn now to Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just in regard to the petroleum products, it's good to hear that they're looking at the Over the Top route, which is a cheaper way of getting fossil fuels into our communities, such as diesel, which is really needed in the communities I represent in Nunakput. The cost of one community's private sector.... Three really rely on the PPD, the Petroleum Products Division, of the government.

I really worry for this winter in regard to the high cost of fuel in my communities. We don't have any alternative sources like we do here in the capital and in the southern parts of the territory. We rely on the petroleum products in the smaller communities. With the high cost of fuel, that's the big thing that I'm worrying about this year. If we could get it cheaper by the Over the Top route, it's a good thing. It's a lot less strain on the community governments, the hamlets and your housing authority.

From what I see here with the Minister and his staff, it's good to see the progress they're working on. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Any more general comments? Moving on to the response from the Minister. Minister McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly agree with the comments that were made by the Members.

The issue of pilings has been something that has proven to be very expensive in the last while, as we've experienced change in our climate. We're starting to see a lot of our buildings in the northern end of our territory having problems with pilings. It has forced us to do a lot of work to rectify the situation and look at different ways to try to avoid using the wood pilings that have been causing us problems.

The comments about fuel being expensive, and concern about the supply this winter is certainly a real one. I'm happy to say, though, through our PPD we were able to have all the fuel delivered to our communities through one form or another. Unfortunately for the community of Good Hope, we had to bring the fuel in by air, because our supplier was not able to have it delivered there. Nonetheless, there was a contract put in place, and they honoured it.

We have really been trying hard to move away from providing all the operation of water plants over the last several years. We have, for the most part, been fairly successful. I think there are only about three or four communities now that require our assistance to operate the plants, and more so just to provide some of the maintenance and provide the support.

We continue to look at putting out a system that would have water plants fairly consistent in terms of them being designed and built the same, so that we can have people in the communities that can go from one community to another should there be a shortfall in staff.

I also, of course, have to agree with the Member for Mackenzie Delta that we have to explore other avenues for alternative energy, as the communities are very challenged at this point to deal with the high cost of living, and that includes power and heating fuel. The Over the Top route has allowed us to find a cheaper supply. It is less handling, as the Member indicated. Through the Alberta system there is a lot of shifting and moving of the product. Over the Top would require us to bring in a tanker — I think this year it's coming from California. We'll have it brought into the Mackenzie Delta. It'll service the communities right up to Norman Wells if there is a desire for them to do that.

We have a committee that is looking at options of how we can deal with some of the energy challenges we have in our system and in our

communities. We have provided suggestions to them to investigate regarding energy and energy management to our communities and in our facilities. Those things, hopefully, will prove to be successful at finding some sort of alternate energy systems.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to provide a few comments on Public Works and Services. I know the reduction exercise was there and the department was challenged, but they've done a good job in coming up with the reductions that were asked. They're up a little bit, but I think it's all very defensible.

I wanted to mention that it's a department where there are a lot of challenges, and the Minister and the management inside that department are managing the issues there quite well. I didn't have any real concerns with what's happening there, aside from the fact that we have to be very cognizant of the increases in energy costs. Mr. Bromley spoke earlier of what those are, so we've got to keep our eyes squarely on that.

We've also got some issues with aging infrastructure that we need to take care of, and asset management — having people in communities that can look after what we have there on the ground. Things are looking relatively good here in Public Works and Services.

The one comment I did have would have to do with the TSC. Again, it's a valuable service that the TSC provides the government with. But from a budgeting perspective, I'm wondering if any thought's been given to perhaps having the TSC establish its own budget instead of charging back various departments for utilization of their services. To me, that would be more of a straightforward approach and easier for the public and for Members of this House to comprehend if we had a system like that, where the TSC would have to state their budget on an annual basis. That's something that as we go forward, we can work through the business plans next year or come up with a different model, because it is a little bit confusing following all the chargebacks to the TSC.

Those are just some comments, Mr. Chairman. Again, I wanted to thank the Minister and his staff. I think things here, for the most part....

One other thing I did want to mention: I was very impressed with the Minister and the department for coming up with the briefing on the capital-planning process and some big issues there that we're trying to tackle as a government, and I think they've done a tremendous job in that area too. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's always good to hear kind remarks about some of the work we've been taking on.

There are a number of things that we've focused on this time around as we brought our budget forward. We've really tried to focus our reductions on areas that we felt would avoid cutbacks to programs or program areas — some of the statutory requirements and programs that are scheduled to sunset or had significant concerns from the Members of this House. It's also allowed us, in our new initiatives, to bring some investment to an area of real concern, and that is deferred maintenance. We've also been able to hire a number of apprentices, so we're quite happy with that, that these things are in our budget.

The issue about the TSC having their own budget is something, up to this point, our staff has had general discussion on. We've really not pursued this as a desired way to do this, because right now, through a chargeback system, the growth is really paid for by the departments, and the onus is on the departments to control the growth. Going to another system, where we would put it in our budget, we may lose some of that. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Detail.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we'll move to Department Summary, page 5-7, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$57.8 million. Again, we'll defer that Department Summary and return to that at the end.

We're on page 5-8, Active Positions — By Region, information item. Agreed?

Department of Public Works and Services, Department Summary, Active Positions — By Region, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Another information item, Active Positions, Community Allocations, 5-9.

Department of Public Works and Services, Department Summary, Active Positions — Community Allocations, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Revenue Summary, information item, page 5-10.

Department of Public Works and Services, Department Summary, Revenue Summary, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're now under Directorate. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Apologies here. I have a question on 5-10.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Do we have agreement to go back to 5-10?

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a quick one. I'm wondering what the grant-in-kind was that apparently was stopped last year, that didn't continue this year. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Public Works, Mr. Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the grant-in-kind is the contribution, or the recognition of the contribution, made for Rockhill Apartments, which has now been transferred over to the Department of Health.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: That's fine, thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, going to 5-13, Directorate, Operations Expenditure Summary, Activity Summary: \$6.589 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Directorate, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$6.589 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): 5-14, Active Positions, Directorate, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Directorate, Active Positions, information item (page 5-14), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): 5-15, Active Positions, Directorate.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Directorate, Active Positions, information item (page 5-15), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Asset Management, page 5-17, Operations Expenditure Summary, Activity Summary: \$49.229 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Asset Management, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$49.229 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-18, Grants and Contributions, Asset Management, Activity Summary, Grants.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Chair, I'm now slightly confused. I thought the revenue summary, the

grant-in-kind mentioned on page 5-10.... I thought the Minister said that that was the Rockhill grant, whereas on 5-18, the \$260,000 is the Rockhill grant. So I'm just a little confused. The number you mentioned before — that \$510,000 that disappeared — doesn't seem consistent with this \$260,000. So if you can help me understand that, that'd be great.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we'll have Michael Aumond, the deputy minister, explain the discrepancy here.

Mr. Aumond: Mr. Chair, if I could just bring the Member back to 5-10, the grant-in-kind that was \$533,000. The revenue summary in '07-08 now showing as zero in '08-09 is just a decrease due to the decision made by government accounting to forgo revenue that should be recorded — the amount owing to the department should we have leased out that apartment building. That's on the revenue side. And in 5-18, it's just the value of the grant-in-kind associated with that rental revenue.

Mr. Abernethy: Can I have that in English, please?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Aumond, do you have a translator?

Mr. Aumond: Mr. Chairman, in October there was a decision made to transfer the Rockhill Apartments, which was leased by the YWCA from Public Works to Health, which is the program sponsor. So we renewed that lease. And in '08-09 there was ongoing negative operation expenditure target adjustment, with the revenue for \$260,000, which we record as a grant-in-kind. It serves as sort of a subsidized lease over and above the \$533,000 — the difference between that and what we could have got on the market should we have rented it. So it's just an accounting to show what we could have got had we rented it out versus subsidizing the lease to the YWCA.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 5-18, Grants and Contributions, Asset Management, Activity Summary, Grants. Agreed?

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Asset Management, Grants and Contributions, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 5-20, Asset Management, Active Positions, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Asset Management, Active Positions, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-21, Asset Management, Active Positions, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Asset Management, Active Positions, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Now moving on to 5-23, Technology Service Centre, Operations Expenditure Summary, Activity Summary, \$953,000.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Technology Service Centre, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$953,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Petroleum Products, Operations Expenditure Summary, Activity Summary, \$1.029 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Activity Summary, Petroleum Products, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.029 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Lease Commitments — Infrastructure, information item. Agreed?

Department of Public Works and Services, Lease Commitments — Infrastructure, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Technology Service Centre (Chargeback), information item, 5-27.

Department of Public Works and Services, Technology Service Centre (Chargeback), information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 5-28, Technology Service Centre, Active Positions — By Region. Agreed?

Department of Public Works and Services, Technical Service Centre (Chargeback), Active Positions — By Region, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-29, Technology Service Centre, Active Positions — Community Allocations.

Department of Public Works and Services, Technology Service Centre (Chargeback), Active Positions — Community Allocation, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-30, Public Stores Revolving Fund, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Public Stores Revolving Fund, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-31, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, information item. Mr. Bromley.

COMMITTEE MOTION 33-16(2)
TO RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES BRING
FORWARD A PROPOSAL TO ALLOCATE A
PORTION OF PROFITS FROM THE SALE OF
PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO INITIATIVES
TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee strongly recommends that the Department of Public Works and Services bring forward a proposal to allocate a portion of profits from sales of petroleum products to initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the benefit of those communities where the revenue is generated.

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

Mr. Bromley: This was reflected in our committee report, and it's been discussed a number of times. I think the department has shown interest in this sort of thing already. It's a recognition that we need to change our approach, change our way of thinking. I think the responsibility of this government is to.... If we're going provide subsidies, let's not subsidize things that we know are hard on people and are destroying our future. Let's take those subsidies and put them into things that benefit everybody and actually work towards achieving our goals rather than competing with or opposing our goals.

This is a small action, in a way, but it would show that we have a new way of thinking. It would demonstrate to the public that we're aware of the need to back off subsidies for fossil fuels and emitting greenhouse gas emissions and put them into alternatives which are more labour-intensive, are beneficial for the local economy and slowly bump up the skills and the local businesses in our communities that actually support the goals and the priorities of this Assembly. I just wanted to put this forward. Again, it would show a progressive and new approach, new recognition of the signals that we're getting in the world, and our willingness to participate.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 5-31, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-32, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, Active Positions — By Region.

Department of Public Works and Services, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, Active Positions — By Region, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-33, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, Active Positions — Community Allocation.

Department of Public Works and Services, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, Active Positions — Community Allocation, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-34, Public Works and Services, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 5-35, Public Works and Services, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item.

Department of Public Works and Services, Work Performed on Behalf of Others — Continued, information item (page 5-35), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Public Works and Services, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item, page 5-36.

Department of Public Works and Services, Work Performed on Behalf of Others — Continued, information item (page 5-36), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We'll move back to page 5-7, Public Works and Services, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary, \$57.8 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$57.8 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 4-6 of Volume 2, Public Works And Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Asset Management, Total Tangible Capital Assets, \$5.468 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Asset Management, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$5.468 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Activity, \$5.468 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Asset Management, Total Activity: \$5.468 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 4-8, Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Technology Service Centre, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$1.650 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Technology Service Centre, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$1.65 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Activity: \$1.65 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Technology Service Centre, Total Activity: \$1.65 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 4-10, Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Petroleum Products Division, Total Tangible Capital Assets, \$5.041 million. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to highlight again some of these costs. These are often considered hidden costs and not brought into full-cost accounting processes. This sort of thing is probably the tip of the iceberg when we're dealing with a fuel that is also toxic and harmful in other ways to the environment. It takes extra care and responsibility, but it certainly takes a lot of dollars and takes dollars away from other things that we could be doing that would actually be beneficial to achieving our goals. That's all I wanted, was a brief comment to highlight the millions of dollars we're spending on these.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 4-10, Petroleum Products Division, Total Activity, \$5.041 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Petroleum Products Division, Total Activity: \$5.041 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department: \$12.159 million.

Department of Public Works and Services, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Petroleum Products Division, Total Department: \$12.159 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of Public Works and Services estimates is concluded?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress for today.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): A motion is on the floor. The motion is not debatable.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'll rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko?

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 7-16(2), the Economic Development and Infrastructure Report on the Main Estimates 2008-2009; Tabled Document 37-16(2), Main Estimates 2008-2009, Volumes 1 and 2; and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted.

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

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Madam Clerk, Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Principal Clerk, Operations (Ms. Bennett): Orders of the Day for Monday, June 9, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.:

- 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) Petitions
- 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
- 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
- 14) Tabling of Documents

- 15) Notices of Motion
- 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
- 17) Motions
- 18) First Reading of Bills
- Bill 9: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008
- Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- Bill 8: Appropriation Act, 2008–2009
- CR 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
- CR 3-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner
- CR 4-16(2): Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning Report on the Review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates
- CR 5-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates
- CR 6-16(2): Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates
- CR 7-16(2): Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure Report on the Review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates
- TD 37-16(2): Main Estimates 2008–2009, Volumes 1 and 2
- 21) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22) Third Reading of Bills
- 23) Orders of the Day
- Mr. Speaker:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 9, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.
- The House adjourned at 2:17 p.m.