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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Monday, June 9, 2008**

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The lead Minister on Maximizing Opportunities Strategic Initiative Committee, the Hon. Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 57-16(20)
MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity today, as the lead minister, to provide an update on the activities that are being undertaken and planned under the Maximizing Opportunities Strategic Initiative.

Maximizing Opportunities is one of the five initiatives that form the backbone of our government's strategic approach and which are the basis of the investments announced in the recent budget. These five strategic initiatives have their foundation in the vision, goals and priorities developed by all Members.

The actions associated with Maximizing Opportunities advance the goal of a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices and supports other goals of the Assembly.

The NWT is rich in both resources and economic opportunities. The activities under this initiative are all aimed at positioning NWT residents to take advantage of these opportunities. Four broad actions are planned under Maximizing Opportunities:

- Improving Skills for Living and Working
- Maximizing Benefits from Resource Development
- Supporting Diversification

- Promoting the NWT as a Place to Visit and Live

First, many NWT residents are not achieving the skills they need to enter and advance in the labour market or take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities. To address this fact, Improving Skills for Living and Working aims to build the skills we need in the Northwest Territories, especially trades and entrepreneurial skills.

We have proposed over \$4.4 million in investments starting in 2008–2009, including funding and supports for trades in high schools; additional support for trades and apprentices through marketing and promotion of trades, including efforts targeted at women and aboriginal people, as well as ongoing support throughout apprenticeship and occupational certification programs; and enhanced mobile trades training that will expand trades training to include Aurora Campus in Inuvik and outlying communities.

Second, Maximizing Benefits from Resource Development will include facilitating the GNWT's participation in preparing for the construction of the Mackenzie Gas Project. Specifically, the GNWT will make the necessary investments to complete our participation in the National Energy Board review, to begin implementation of our arrangements with the project proponents and fulfill our responsibilities in the regulatory phase of the project.

The Mackenzie Gas Project represents an important opportunity for our territory to advance towards the vision of a balanced, diversified and sustainable economy. The project holds the promise of significant ongoing investments in the oil and gas sector and substantial business employment opportunities providing both direct and indirect support to the sector.

Investment has also been planned to take the Taltson Hydro Expansion Project through the environmental assessment process and complete a project development agreement. This project has significant economic impacts and could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the diamond sector.

Third, resource development is spurring the NWT's economy, but it alone cannot provide a sustainable, balanced and diversified economy. We are proposing investments of \$3.1 million for Supporting Diversification in 2008–2009 that focuses on efforts to support small business development and tourism in the Northwest Territories. Activities include a new Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development, or SEED, policy and funding for refurbishment and expansion of the territorial parks system and for cultural interpretations at parks in all five regions.

Fourth, the NWT is rich in culture as well as natural resources and has enormous future potential. Promoting the NWT as a Place to Visit and Live is aimed at marketing and promoting the NWT and supporting its arts and crafts.

A critical element of this action is our increased support for the arts. This vital sector makes important economic contributions, and this support will allow us to implement aspects of the Arts Strategy.

The activities aimed at promoting the NWT at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver starting in 2008–2009 are to plan our involvement at the Olympics. These games are being dubbed Canada's Games, and as we plan our involvement, we need to consider our priorities of economic diversification and youth. We want to use this opportunity to promote our territory and to showcase our northern artists, performers and culture. The Olympics may also provide an opportunity for youth to take part as ambassadors to our territory and get a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

These four actions all contribute to achieving a balanced, diversified and sustainable economy. They will promote development that reduces regional and community disparities, will help identify new economic opportunities, will support the development of sustainable local economies through small businesses and community-based sectors, and will help build community human resource capacity with an emphasis on trades and entrepreneurial skills.

The recently adopted GNWT Macroeconomic Policy Framework guides the GNWT's investment in the NWT economy. The Maximizing Opportunities Committee will be overseeing the next step in setting out the GNWT's economic road map — the development of a long-range economic investment plan that uses the criteria set out in the framework to evaluate the potential impacts of investments in the various sectors of our economy. This work will also guide investment decisions regarding the \$4.2 million in the Community Development Trust funding received from Canada earlier this year.

The planned actions as part of the Maximizing Opportunities initiative will help us achieve our goals and vision of a strong, sustainable and prosperous NWT.

Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 58-16(2) MINING WEEK

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, today is the beginning of Mining Week, an opportunity to highlight the significance of this sector to our economy and our future.

From our humble beginnings driven by the rush for gold to our prominent status as the world's third largest producer of diamonds, mining in the Northwest Territories has been the mainstay of our resource economy. Since 1991 investment in mineral production, specifically diamond mining and exploration, has been the driving force behind a decade of record-setting economic statistics for the Northwest Territories.

In this time the growth of mining has done much more than just stimulating the NWT economy. It has changed the way we do business. Our residents, businesses and corporations now take a direct role in our region's economic growth as business owners, operators and investors.

Beneficiaries of our mining sector include aboriginally and regionally owned airlines, hotels, restaurants, construction firms and telecommunications and logistics companies, as well as service and supply industries. These northern investors and entrepreneurs have succeeded by meeting the needs of our rapidly expanding mining sector. Their success, in turn, is presenting us with an unprecedented opportunity to build a future. This is the true value of mining in our territory.

The mining sector has and can continue to offer tremendous opportunities for NWT residents under the right conditions. It is critical that we strike the right balance between our support of this sector and its impact on our residents, our communities and our environment.

As a government we have supported environmentally responsible and sustainable mining developments on the condition that the benefits of these operations can be maximized for NWT residents, businesses and communities. This can be seen in our growing secondary diamond industry. We have been very careful to follow up

and confirm the commitments made by our major mining companies in our socioeconomic agreements. Mining has been the impetus and test case for this made-in-the-NWT approach to resource development, and thanks to the commitment of the industry itself, these agreements are bearing positive results.

Since the establishment of our first socioeconomic agreement with BHP in 1996, the combined operations of Ekati, Diavik, and Snap Lake have spent over \$5 billion with northern and aboriginal businesses. In that same time these three mines have provided in excess of 10,000 person-years of employment to Northerners. This includes over 5,000 person-years of employment for aboriginal people of the NWT.

The mining industry in the NWT continues to show great promise. Exploration and mining are not without challenges, but this sector, driven by the demand for our abundant resources, will continue to be the economic cornerstone of our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN GNWT SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to discuss affirmative action and the involvement of aboriginal persons in senior management. The Affirmative Action Policy has been around for nearly 20 years, since 1989, and it has certainly had an impact on the GNWT's hiring decisions over that period of time.

What I want to point out today is that even though the policy has been with us for nearly 20 years, we're still failing as a government to have a workforce representative of the population. The percentage of aboriginal employees has been hovering in and around the 30 per cent mark over the past dozen years. There does not seem to be a concerted effort on behalf of government to improve on the statistics.

Even more troubling, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that even though the policy itself has been with us for almost 20 years, we have not been successful at succession planning for aboriginal employees. Currently we have just 15 per cent of the GNWT's senior management listed as aboriginal. Even after having affirmative action for 20 years, we are not doing well in this area.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations has only one employee that is aboriginal in senior management. ITI, arguably the most top-heavy department in government today, has 21 senior management positions of which only one is staffed by an aboriginal person. Some of the other areas of our operations also need to do a better job acquiring aboriginal senior managers. These include Justice, Aurora College, Finance and the Department of Executive. I also point out that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has the best percentage government-wide with six out of 15 senior managers being aboriginal for a percentage of 40 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, what the GNWT needs to do is have a plan, and it needs to be able to identify aboriginal employees for mentoring and succession planning. What is happening is that aboriginal employees are getting frustrated and taking their skills with them outside the Northwest Territories, and this is a shame. We need to keep our people and their skills here in the NWT. We need to find out why there is always a huge discrepancy between the percentage of aboriginal employees in government and those in management.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Human Resources at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROPOSED WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IN FORT SMITH

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about the proposed women's correctional facility in Fort Smith.

I don't know how many more mistakes we're going to make in terms of Justice and infrastructure related to Justice than we already have. I remember when we went through the battle in this House over the closure of the Dene K'onia Young Offender Facility in Hay River, which just had to move to Yellowknife and be added on to the new North Slave Correctional Centre. I was here when we talked about the millions and millions of dollars of cost overruns on the North Slave Correctional Centre, which I'm sure came in at around \$50 million. We've been through a debate on the establishment and construction of a new court facility here in Yellowknife, which is probably another \$50 or \$60 million. We keep making mistake after mistake with respect to corrections facilities, and I think that we had better take a very serious long look before we invest any more millions of dollars in capital infrastructure for corrections facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what's wrong with the facility that's existing in Fort Smith. I hear it's old. I say: "So what? If it works, who cares if it's old?" Why would we need a \$6 million facility for a minimum security facility in the Northwest Territories? I don't know how many women are incarcerated in the Northwest Territories, but I would suggest that it's not very many.

We need to get our priorities straight as a government. We need more money. At a time when we're in a reduction mode and trying to find \$135 million in reductions over the next two years, we need to look at priorities like front-line resources for children with special needs in our classrooms, treatment for young people who are suffering with addictions, daycare facilities, youth centres and programs for our young people. We need to get our priorities straight as a government, and I would suggest that spending \$6 million on a corrections facility should not be a priority spending item for this government.

Mr. Speaker, I could swear, after we had this debate in the House about voting that planning money down for that facility, that I heard the Minister of Justice on the radio saying that they were going to find the planning money from someplace else. Later today I'll have questions for the Minister of Justice whether or not, in fact, he did make that statement, and if he did, then we'll have to ask ourselves what is the purpose of what we've been doing here for the last several weeks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GRAVEL SOURCE FOR TROUT LAKE

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided.]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like ever since I was first elected to this Assembly in 2003, I have been hearing about the infamous gravel-source 177 outside of Tuktoyaktuk. Now it seems the government has found a way to move this important project.

In my riding the community of Trout Lake has source 15, which they need access to. Source 15 is located approximately 20 kilometres from Trout Lake and supplies the gravel for that community. Up until two years ago it was more efficient to haul gravel across the lake during the winter, so the lack of an all-weather access road did not present a problem. However, for the last two winters the lake ice has not been thick enough to allow for the gravel haul, and the situation is becoming critical. The time has come when we need to build an

access road, and this needs to happen soon. With climate change we clearly can no longer count on having enough ice to use the lake for the winter haul.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the government will see fit to make the access road to source 15 a priority. Small communities like Trout Lake have to live without many of the services and infrastructure that those in larger centres take for granted, but gravel is very basic for our small communities. I think that this government does need to ensure that that need is met.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEMPSTER HIGHWAY ROAD CONDITIONS

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to know: what do the people of Mackenzie Delta have to do to bring attention to the road conditions of the Dempster Highway and the condition of roads in our communities — set up roadblocks and ask the travelling public to pay for these repairs? The road conditions of the Dempster Highway have to be pretty bad for someone from the Inuvik region to complain that the road is bad.

Again, I'm standing up in this House talking about the condition of the Dempster Highway. We hear complaints in regard to Highway No. 7, closure of that highway, complaints in regard to Highway No. 6... And yet again, another gravel highway is being brought to the situation of being a public debate issue in this House. Yet we have other highways where we're basically talking about chipseal, from Highway No. 3 to Highway No. 4 and now Highway No. 5.

We have to realize that the travelling public has to be our first priority, and the public safety, as the Minister states, is his number one priority. Yet people have died on our highways because of road conditions. We have to do everything we can to improve our highway systems.

In light of this being the 50th anniversary for Inuvik, the Dempster Highway is an important link for those people travelling our road systems, and I think it's important that we do everything we can. The Inuvik celebrations are just a couple of weeks down the road, and I think we have to do everything we can to get that road in place.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the last time a Minister drove on that highway we spotted five graders on the road system between Inuvik and the border. I'm wondering if that's what it takes for this government to act: to have a Minister drive the highway, and then you see some action.

I'd like to ask the Minister at the appropriate time: exactly what does it take to maintain the Dempster Highway?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COUNSELLING SERVICES IN LUTSELK'E

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Previously I talked about counselling services in Lutselk'e. Unfortunately, the services currently being offered to the residents of Lutselk'e are not meeting the needs of the people.

With the recent suicides that the community has had to deal with, the department needs to conduct an immediate review of these services. I understand the department is in the process of reviewing the entire Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, and that's good to hear. But I need to know, in addition to this review, what action is being taken specifically to address the situation in Lutselk'e.

Lutselk'e is a small, isolated community with a population of 400. Of that 400, 96 per cent is aboriginal. Also, of that 400, almost half of the population is 25 years or younger.

Lutselk'e is a traditional community, with many residents still hunting, trapping and fishing. Over 80 per cent of the community still speaks the traditional language of Chipewyan.

With Lutselk'e being an aboriginal community, it is critical that the government's programs and services properly recognize and effectively incorporate cultural sensitivity into the design, and more importantly, the delivery of programs and services. This includes actively engaging the community. This is not happening in Lutselk'e, and it is a significant factor in why the mental health and addictions counselling service is not meeting the needs of its residents.

Mr. Speaker, I understand this is a very complex issue, and many factors are to be taken into consideration when designing programs and the delivery mechanisms. But one of these factors that has to be included is the full, unconditional participation of the community; in this case, the Lutselk'e Dene Band. The community has been requesting this for some time now.

I view the situation in Lutselk'e as critical, and I feel that we have to do all we can to provide the necessary support, including incorporating the unique cultural perspectives of the aboriginal people.

The reality is Lutselk'e is an isolated, traditional aboriginal community, and the mental health and

addictions programs and services currently delivered are not meeting the needs of the people.

Today I will have questions for the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MINING WEEK 2008

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. June 9 to 14 is Mining Week, a promotional event sponsored by the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines. It's an opportunity for the Chamber to show the public what miners do and how the mining industry benefits Northerners and Canadians in general.

The North has a long history of mining as a driver of our economy. Yellowknife in particular has been and still is dependent on mining. Since 1937, when the first gold mining camp was established here, the mining industry has been the foundation of Yellowknife's economy.

Some of the gold mines established over the years were Burwash Mine, Con Mine, Negus Mine, Giant Mine, Ptarmigan Mine and Colomac Mine. All are now closed, with the two biggest mines — Con and Giant — shut down in 2003 and 2005, respectively.

A community's character is often set by its history. For Yellowknife, the influence the gold mines have had on this city will likely never be forgotten. Since the closure of the two major gold mines, Yellowknife has managed to maintain its vibrant economy due to the opening of three diamond mines north of here. The economy is now closely linked to diamond mining instead of gold mining, and Yellowknife's trademark is now Diamond Capital of North America.

Mining Week celebrates our mining heritage, our mining industry, both past and present, and mine rescue competitions, hotly contested by teams from our northern mines. The activities get underway today. Residents can check out the new diamond displays at the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre. Today through Thursday they can tour mine training simulators at Aurora College, and learn how to operate a loader, a haul truck, or a tunnel bolter. Wednesday they can take in the NWT Mining Heritage Society annual general meeting. It's a barbecue, picnic and tours of Giant Mine. Friday and Saturday they can observe the annual Mine Rescue Competition. And last but not least, they can attend the Miner's Picnic on Saturday. Yellowknife Community Arena will be the place to be on June 14.

I urge Members and Yellowknife residents to take advantage of these Mining Week festivities. Northern mining brought us to where we are today and will take us forward as the NWT moves into the

future. Your attendance at events will show miners that you respect their contributions to our society, both past and present.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG NORTHERNERS

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend, on Saturday, I had the privilege of attending and speaking at the grad ceremonies held in Inuvik for the Samuel Hearne graduates. We had 40 grads this year, and it was the 40th year of Samuel Hearne Secondary School.

The valedictorian who spoke to the students made a couple of comments that caused me to think about and appreciate the system that we have up here. The first comment he made, he was talking about doing his grade 11 in Ottawa just last year, and he kind of disputed the fact that everybody says the quality of education is better down south, and I thought that was a very good remark. This was coming from a young man who had done all his schooling in the North, through our educational system, from kindergarten. The second remark that he made, he encouraged his fellow grads to take advantage of the best post-secondary support system in the country. I thought these were very wise words coming from such a young man.

And that's where I'd like to go today, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak on the training opportunities for youth. Not all of our students are going to go on to university or college. There are a lot of them that are going to go into the trades, and that's something we have to promote, and promote vigorously, starting in Inuvik, with the trades trailers that they have there. A couple of my colleagues and I had an opportunity to tour the facility, and it's something that's going to have a lot of positive influence, I think, in the coming years.

This government, in my opinion, has to be proactive. They have to be leading the way, leading the push for training Northerners, and not following. Some of the aboriginal governments — in particular, the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in — are doing what they can to try to set themselves and the young people up to take advantage of the training opportunities. The recent announcement — I think, this past weekend — of \$1.2 billion in exploration rights for the Beaufort-Delta really points to the need that we have to get our young people out there. We have to get them trained. We have to accelerate the training, because development will come and go, and if we're not proactive in this, then we're going to miss the boat on this one. It's something that we should be setting up for right

now. This government has to take the leading role in this.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. I was saying that this government has to be in the forefront on this one. We have to let industry know that our young people need to be trained, and work with the aboriginal governments. But it has to be a cooperative, collaborative effort. It's very important. I don't want to see this territory ten years from now with all the work come and gone, and our people still not trained. It's not acceptable, and I think we have to see what we can do about it. Young people are the future of the Northwest Territories, and we have to make sure they're the ones that are the major beneficiaries of all the work that's going to be going on.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I'd like today to urge this government to hire more people who are persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities have priority status under our Affirmative Action Program and Policy. With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I'd like some explanations for the low numbers for persons with disabilities in our public service. It's hard to believe that of the 4,725 employees within the GNWT we only have 19 people, or 0.4 per cent, who are persons with disabilities.

For me, this raises two issues. For one, the Affirmative Action Policy does not work; and secondly, this government is not committed to integrating this group into our workforce.

The GNWT needs to start hiring more persons with disabilities. They need to make true accommodations to integrate them into our casual pool. It is time for this government to realize that fostering diversity is a strength in our organization, not a weakness. To help this disadvantaged group get a little help and get forward in this life, we have community-based organizations like the EmployABILITY program of the Yellowknife Association for Community Living that has the expertise in this field. I'm sure they'd be more than happy to get out there and work with the Department of Human Resources to make sure some initiatives get off the ground.

Supporting persons with disabilities as they work towards achieving their skills, development and employment goals must become a priority of this government. Priorities also mean strategic investment, Mr. Speaker. This government needs to set up a pool of money and set aside something in the range of \$50,000 that could achieve these goals. That's not asking for an incredible sum; it's something that could go a long way. This government needs to recognize that individuals such as I've talked about can make valuable contributions in our public service.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to say that whenever someone's hired, you see that they bring a new hope and a new light to their life — you can see the excitement in their eyes — and the chance of moving forward with some dreams. Let's make sure that we bring some dreams and hope back to this group. Let's hope that we bring some quality of life back to this group, such as persons with disabilities. I think we could go a long way by recognizing the opportunities, not the walls.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to recognize Stephen Dunbar, a graduate student of Carleton University. He's doing his thesis on consensus government. Most of you will recognize him from a while back. Welcome, Steven.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 286-16(2) GRAVEL SOURCE FOR TROUT LAKE

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just following up on my Member's statement with regard to access to gravel sources in the communities, I know that in the last Assembly we had done some work on the gravel strategy for our communities. I'd just like to know the current position of the Minister of Transportation with regard to the gravel strategy that we produced last term. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the Member, in terms

of the source 15 — what we're going to be calling it — into Trout Lake.

Certainly, the gravel issue down the Mackenzie Valley to all the communities has become an item for Transportation, and we're working with other departments in terms of dealing with certain issues of gravel into the communities.

Mr. Menicoche: I believe we should do it numerically. Source 15 is way before 177.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, part of the strategy includes, I believe — maybe the Minister can correct me — doing class D estimates on how much the roads are going to cost. Has there been any work done in Nahendeh riding, and most particularly in Trout Lake?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member. If we were to do it numerically, we would have 14 other sources before Trout.

I appreciate the question from the Member. The report in terms of the gravel sources: we're certainly working closely with our colleague here from Public Works, in terms of working with the community and Public Works, in terms of the gravel sources for each community.

As Mr. Menicoche noted, last week in the House Mr. Krutko asked a question on the Aklavik gravel source and working with the department in terms of how we deal with this issue. It's a government-wide issue, because this issue will become very important in the coming years, in terms of developing and investing in our communities and in our transportation system.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm raising it in the Assembly today is that it has been a couple of years since Trout Lake was able to access gravel. In fact, they had it hauled — I think it was from 60 kilometres away — this winter just to meet that urgent need.

Part of the strategy was to get readily accessible gravel to the communities. I'd just like to ask once again: how much work was done towards the Trout Lake gravel access?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to sit with the Member sometime today or tomorrow and go through the details in terms of the amount of work, but I don't have it available right in front of me to answer some of the specifics, in terms of the work. We had done work on the gravel sources down in the Mackenzie Valley communities. I'll be happy to sit with the Member in terms of going through the details with him.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've made reference to the gravel strategy from the 15th Assembly. Is that document public, and can I see a copy of it once again? Mahsi.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Yes, it's public, and certainly I will make sure that he gets a copy.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 287-16(2)
COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR LUTSELK'E

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I talked about the importance of involving community First Nations groups in the design and delivery of mental health and addictions programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister: in light of what has happened in the last couple of years in Lutselk'e, what is the Department of Social Services doing to specifically respond to the suicides?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member stated in his Member's statement, I and the department are in the process of reviewing our mental health and addictions strategy, and I will make sure that we put focus on consulting with the communities and putting in culturally appropriate programming.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, our front-line staff are trained, in working with the communities, to be aware of and prepared to deal with suicide potential. Specifically to what the Member is speaking to, which are the three suicides that happened in the community, I have asked the deputy minister to send a team of specialists there to address that situation in the short term.

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, I understand there is an MOU between the community and the department. Can the Minister tell me what the MOU entails?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware that there was an MOU, and I'm not aware of the details, but I'm happy to look into that and have further discussions with the Member.

Mr. Beaulieu: I am told there is an MOU between the department and the Lutselk'e Dene Band. If the Minister finds the MOU, would the Minister agree to complete an immediate review of the MOU with the Lutselk'e Dene Band?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I am aware that the department, through Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, is much in touch with some of the challenges and needs of the community, so I'm happy to make the commitment to undertake that and see what we can do to work on this.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that it's difficult for us until we're meeting with YK Health and Social Services to bring anything here on the floor that it has to do with. My question to the Minister: is there any local person, a local Health and Social Services person that speaks the language that has the potential to be working for Health and Social Services at Lutselk'e?

Hon. Sandy Lee: I don't have that detailed information. We have a lot of people working in the Health and Social Services system who are from the North, who are from the community, but I don't have that information for Lutselk'e. I do make the commitment to the Member that I will undertake to look at that MOU, which I understand speaks to the working relationship between the department and the community of Lutselk'e and then to build on that to strengthen the programs available and active for the community of Lutselk'e. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 288-16(2)
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY ROAD CONDITIONS

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Transportation in regard to my Member's statement on the condition of the Dempster Highway. I'd just like to ask the Minister exactly what it is going to take, from this government and from the Minister's department, to realize the condition of the Dempster Highway. Is there a process in place to ensure that the public's safety is paramount in regard to anything that happens to avoid accidents and death on that highway?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to state to the Member that I certainly agree with that. It's this government's first priority, in terms of the safety of the roads for the travelling public, and this department has, significantly over a number of years, invested heavily in terms of the maintenance and the reconstruction of the Dempster Highway. We continue to do that in terms of providing a safe road for the travelling public, helping the area of the Member's riding.

Mr. Krutko: As I mentioned also, Inuvik is celebrating their 50th anniversary in the next couple of weeks. It's going to be very crucial that the travelling public is able to travel safely to Inuvik for that 50th anniversary. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what is your department doing to ensure that the public safety is paramount and that we do what we have to, to upgrade and maintain that road so that the travelling public feels safe and secure on that highway system?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The Member is correct. We're well aware of the 50th anniversary that the good town of Inuvik is going to celebrate. The department and I have been working on the safety mechanisms on the Dempster Highway in terms of the dust control, in terms of the extra work that needs to happen. I'm looking forward to sitting down with the department some time in a short while in terms of getting an update as to what recommendations are going to be in place in the future to ensure the travelling public does experience a safe drive on our roads in terms of them coming from all places, and especially driving on the Dempster to Inuvik.

Mr. Krutko: As I mentioned in my statement, I think the last time the Minister was up there, we spotted five graders on the road. It's possible that if the Minister or the superintendent of highways would drive that highway, maybe we'll see some attention by way of seeing graders on the road. Would the Minister commit himself or his superintendent to actually physically drive that highway to see for yourself exactly the condition of that road, and maybe we'll see something get done to it.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I certainly look forward to driving the Dempster Highway sometime this year. I want to reassure the Member that over the years of the Dempster Highway we have spent a great number of dollars in terms of investing, in terms of reconstructing, upgrading the road. We have done a lot of work, and we'll continue to do work in the future. I will assure the Member that the staff at the regional office takes extra precaution and care in terms of ensuring that the public do experience safe driving on the Dempster Highway.

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to ask the Minister if they have statistics in regard to the number of accidents and deaths that have occurred on our gravel highways. I mentioned Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 8 and also Highway No. 6. I'd like to ask the Minister: have you done a comparison of gravel highways and highways that have hardtop by way of calcium? I'd like to ask the Minister if he has that detail, and if not, can he get it to me.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: We keep that every year. I will be glad to share the information with the Member. I don't have the detail in front of me. What

I know from the information I have read on the Dempster Highway is that we have actually lowered the accident rates on that road since we started the reconstruction from the Yukon border to the town of Inuvik.

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

QUESTION 289-16(2)
PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT OF
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today during my Member's statement I talked about bringing hope and inspiration back to a disadvantaged group. That group I was talking about is the Council of Persons with Disabilities. To be absolutely clear, not every person with a disability requires extra help. They are able to get out there and get gainful employment, actually, through the regular process. There are programs out there, as I talked about the EmployABILITY for persons with disabilities, that help people with disabilities to get jobs.

My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources. My issue really comes down to this: would the Minister be willing to look at setting up a small fund that departments can draw upon to make sure they can get out to hire people with disabilities, to make sure they get gainful employment and help bring back some of that quality of life?

Mr. Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: The hiring of people with disabilities is a priority for this government, and certainly we will be prepared to look at all avenues where we can increase their representation.

Mr. Hawkins: That was an excellent answer. I would hope that his next answer will include "yes" and will look at the \$50,000 suggested by the Member. My question to the Minister is: would he look at potentially setting up a pool of money, such as maybe \$50,000, to get something started as a potential pool that departments can draw from to use to fund people in this category?

Hon. Bob McLeod: As the hiring of people with disabilities is a priority for this government, this is certainly an area that we will put additional resources to. I don't know if we would want to limit ourselves to \$50,000. As a department we have identified a lead person to deal with the hiring of people with disabilities, and I will be meeting with the president of the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities later this week.

Mr. Hawkins: May I be the last person to put a limit on that pool of funds for this Minister, but I was only trying to talk about seed money. If this Minister of Human Resources wants to put in more money, he's certainly welcome to it. My question is: was that a commitment to making sure that this would happen, and can we expect something in the near future?

Hon. Bob McLeod: As the Member knows, the delegated responsibility for staffing rests with the deputy ministers and their departments. Certainly I'll be working with all departments to ensure that we continue to improve our performance in the hiring of disabled people within the public service.

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

Mr. Hawkins: We seem to get these great answers, and I want to thank the Minister for these great answers, but we just seem to be really short of that commitment and excitement.

Would the Minister be willing to step up the pressure on all departments to make sure that they increase their percentage of people within their department who they hire who have disabilities? Will he take that commitment a little further and work a little harder with it?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Yes, we are committed to achieving that. We will be starting that with a meeting with the president of the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities.

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

QUESTION 290-16(2)
PROPOSED WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL
CENTRE IN FORT SMITH

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As in my Member's statement today, I have questions about the proposed women's correctional facility for Fort Smith. So far all that's been identified in the budget was money for planning. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Justice what is wrong with the facility that we have now, how many women does it accommodate, and what kind of occupancy has been historic over the last few years?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Three questions there. Minister, you can answer one or all three, if you would like. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly this facility that we're referring to was before Committee of the Whole, this facility in Fort Smith. The building itself is from the 1950s and holds minimal security. Those inmates with high

risk are usually sent to RCMP cells, or most of them are sent south. We certainly want to keep them in the North. That was part of the plan. The capacity of that facility is 18 inmates. I don't have the to-date record, but from April we had 12 inmates in there and some are still down south. If we bring those inmates from down south that will certainly fill up the capacity. There again we don't have the security. That's maximum security at the corrections.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'd like to ask the Minister: how many inmates would the new facility propose to hold and at what price?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Part of the plan that was brought forward was to have a newer facility that would have the maximum security to allow those inmates that are down south as we currently speak. Part of the proposal is to have those inmates.... With the numbers of inmates that we have down south, if we bring them back, we'll be at full capacity. Right now we're talking about 18 inmates in that facility.

Mrs. Groenewegen: So if I understand correctly, the current facility will hold 18 inmates and the proposed new facility would hold 18 inmates but have a greater security capacity. At what projected cost and what classification of estimates would the new facility be projected at?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: We were proposing \$320,000 for the planning stages, but that's been part of the deletion. At the same time, there were different phases, phase 1 and phase 2. I don't have the actual number with me right now, but I can certainly provide what was budgeted for the new facility. Now we have to look at options, because the number for planning has been taken out. If we need to find some internally, it might be difficult at this time within the Justice department. Those are options that we need to look at, where we go from here. Certainly I can share that information with the Member.

Mrs. Groenewegen: The Minister has provided me with a perfect segue to my last question. That is, if the planning money has been voted out by a motion of this Assembly, out of the budget, are the comments that we heard of in the media correct then that, in fact, the planning money may be sought and found within the Department of Justice budget right now, so as to proceed regardless of the motion of this House?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Those are ongoing discussions that we're having within our department — if the money is taken out, then what options do we have? Certainly, with the Justice department alone, that's a substantial amount of money. If we need to find it within, it's going to be a bit difficult. We're looking at options to move forward. If we're

going to proceed with the facility in Smith, then we need to have more discussion on that. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 291-16(2)
EKATI DIAMOND MINE TAILINGS SPILL

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my statement on Friday about BHP Billiton's Ekati Diamond Mine tailings spill. In particular, I understand that there was a three-day delay, we now know, between the occurrence of the spill and its detection. So to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources: is there an attempt to get to the bottom of that and tune up the detection abilities or to work with the inspectors that are responsible for that? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first priority was to make sure that the spill was dealt with properly. Very clearly, as that issue is dealt with, there's going to be a review, a debriefing and a post-mortem on what happened, what were the timelines and where improvements are needed.

Mr. Bromley: I certainly don't disagree with the priority there. I understand that cleanup is going well.

I also understand it was a malfunction of a spigot that caused the spill. Apparently it was some ice and whatnot clogging it. I suspect it's partly because of changing conditions. We're finding our springs are a lot different than they used to be and so on.

I'm wondering if the Minister has considered having a fairly broad review of the protocols that developments such as this are following in regard to the new information we have on climate change and the source of extreme variations we can expect from now on.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: The Member has identified an issue that is going to bear some scrutiny. There have been a number of spills and situations that have happened resulting with leaks of fuel and tailings ponds attributed to ground shifting, things freezing. There seem to be some things — while I'm not in a position to say emphatically or unequivocally — that are related to the issues the Member has indicated. Clearly, one of the issues that has been attributed to those causations has been the changing climate. So the Member raises a point that is going to bear scrutiny.

Mr. Bromley: One last question: will the review include the tailings dams that have ice cores in them? I understand they were designed for a warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, and we know now that that's quite insufficient.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: All those technical criteria will be part of what is going to be reviewed to make sure that we can try to hopefully anticipate some things and not wait until there's actually a failure. All those factors will be considered.

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

QUESTION 292-16(2)
ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN GNWT
SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources. It gets back to my Member's statement where I was speaking of aboriginal persons in senior management positions with the GNWT, the Affirmative Action Policy being in place since 1989. The number of aboriginal employees in the GNWT workforce has been hovering around 30 per cent — that's government-wide — but in senior management it's at 15 per cent. This policy has been around for 20 years, so I'm wondering what plans the government, this current government, has to address the low numbers of aboriginal people in senior management positions with this government.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct in pointing out the low levels of aboriginals in senior management. This is a problem that has been around for a long time. The Government of the Northwest Territories' aboriginal representation in the public sector has been flatlined at 31 per cent for at least eight or nine years. We've proposed to the previous government and will be coming forward to propose once again that we look at making changes and moving towards an employment equity program.

Mr. Ramsay: There are a lot of reasons why I'm bringing this issue up today. I hear about aboriginal constituents who work for the GNWT who are consistently passed over for promotion when it comes time to look at advancing in the department. It's not just one department — Transportation, Justice — it happens all the time.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources.... It sounds like they're coming forward with the employment equity program, but what are we doing today to address these low numbers?

Hon. Bob McLeod: Presently the Affirmative Action Program gives priority to qualified aboriginal employees. So they apply for a job, and they get priority if they meet the requirements of the position. I think it's also important to point out that when the Affirmative Action Policy was first introduced, it was accompanied by training money under the Public Service Career Training Program, which allowed the government to train aboriginal people and others to aspire to positions. That program disappeared. In order to improve the performance of the Affirmative Action Policy, we have to find a way to provide additional training to accompany it.

Mr. Ramsay: In addition to aboriginal people being passed over for promotions, I also think and have heard from folks who get educated and get trained, and then when it comes time to apply for positions with the GNWT, they get the back turned on them. These are home-grown aboriginal employees or potential employees.

I'd like to ask the Minister: it doesn't sound like we're doing anything today, but are we not doing some succession planning when it comes to our aboriginal employees in this government? Is there any that's underway today?

Hon. Bob McLeod: This is certainly an issue for our government. All of the senior managers, as a criterion in assessing their performance, are directed to work in helping develop aboriginal people towards achieving senior management positions within the government. I think our problem is our pool of people. Not everybody wants to work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. There are a lot of options for aboriginal people who have the qualifications. Those are the issues that we have to deal with.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that. It seems to me that we used to do a fair bit of management training opportunities and mentoring aboriginal employees so that they could make that transition from a rank-and-file employee into senior management. What's happened to the management training opportunities that were out there? I just don't see them anymore.

Hon. Bob McLeod: We still have those programs. Some of them have been reduced, but we still have the management employment program, where we bring 15 to 20 people into the pool and work very closely with those people so that they can aspire to higher positions within the government. That program is still in existence.

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

QUESTION 293-16(2)
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR YOUNG NORTHERNERS

Mr. McLeod: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about training opportunities for youth. In the Minister's statement today he talked about the same issue. So I'm glad to see we're both on the same page on this.

I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister of ECE. I'd like to ask the Minister if the department works with the aboriginal governments and industry in identifying potential training opportunities for youth across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we are working with the communities, aboriginal organizations and aboriginal governments. Our departments are also working in the regions. They do offer a wide variety of programs at the community level, at the regional level and also at the headquarter level. They provide services that relate to career development, apprenticeship, employment preparation and training, which the Member has alluded to. At the same time, we have worked with industries in the past, because we're very interested in apprenticeship training.

Certainly those areas have always been a key interest of the Northwest Territories, because we do lack tradespeople in the North. We also encourage and work with students to access SFA, the Student Financial Assistance Program, so they can pursue higher education as well.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, in speaking to some of the aboriginal governments, there seem to be training opportunities offered, and then the government seems to have some training opportunities, but I think what's missing here is a coordinated effort to make sure all the groups are on the same page so we're not having duplication going on where it's costing the government extra money.

I'd like to ask the Minister if industry is required to let the government know what they've got coming in the way of training opportunities and potential training opportunities and identifying potential employees?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, we do have people in trades that do monitor and also work with industry if there are employment opportunities. Certainly we need to be a partner in that, whether it be the trades or on-the-job training or even community-based training. We do have Trades on

Wheels now in Inuvik, and they'll certainly be fully utilized.

Also, not only do we as the GNWT and the community level help, but also the federal government does offer assistance through the HRDA program, and with that, there are various career-focused skills links, summer work experience and youth awareness.

So we do work with the federal government closely, the communities, the regions and also the First Nations government at the community level. We do what we can as the GNWT to work with them and the same with the industries as well.

Mr. McLeod: I thank the Minister for that. The Trades on Wheels I think is going to have some positive impact, but I think the point here is we have to insist to industry that we want these people trained, not just say we're going to do it and then we'll leave it up to you.

I'd like to ask the Minister if industry has ever offered money to ECE to run training programs through Aurora College.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, there has been some interest and also some true partnership funding through industry. Most of it was training in the community, in the region. Some industries were getting ready for their operations during the construction phase. They wanted to have qualified, trained people. So we have partnered in that area, and whether it be the oil and gas sector or the new mines that may be coming up, I'm sure they'll probably go through the same process.

As the GNWT, we'll be very interested in that area, where there is involvement of individuals from the community. That's one of our goals. Certainly we need to highlight that to industries that are exploring or even during the construction phases in our backyard per se. So we'll monitor those areas.

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

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked that because I know for a fact that there was some money offered for training though one of the exploration companies up in Beaufort-Delta. My understanding is it wasn't taken advantage of.

I'd like to ask the Minister if Aurora College has the capacity to offer courses that are more likely going to be funded by industry. They just need someone to administer and deliver the course. Do they have the capacity to do that?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I do believe that we do have the capacity. If we don't, we certainly are always looking for partnerships — partnerships with the U of A or Calgary-based and so forth — with Saskatchewan. The prime example

would be the teacher degree program, and also the nursing degree program.

So we are open to any opportunities that come to our doorstep. We, as the department, would like to jump on that. Even better, if they provide funding through the delivery of a training program, then by all means, we are open for that. If Aurora College doesn't have the capacity, then I'm sure they will jump on the opportunity to build the capacity. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 294-16(2)
PROPOSED WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL
CENTRE IN FORT SMITH

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on the questions posed by my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen in regard to the Territorial Women's Correctional Centre.

I believe we heard the Minister state that there are 12 inmates in Fort Smith, but I wonder if the Minister could confirm that that's correct and advise how many women inmates we are responsible for in total within the Territories and in southern placements.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When I gave the number 12, that was from April 2008. We are in June now, so I'm sure the number has changed.

I don't have the number with me right now, but I can provide that number to the Member, and also detailed information on the southern placements: how many exactly we have in the south. I can certainly provide that information as well.

Ms. Bisaro: I appreciate the answer from the Minister, and I would be happy to receive that information as soon as possible.

I'll ask the question anyway. I'm going to have to assume that he wouldn't have that detail here, as well, but can he advise the cost that we incur on an annual basis to house inmates in the south?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: There again I can provide more detailed information, but I can use North Slave Correctional as an example, since I do have the previous numbers on that. It is based on the housing of inmates. I believe it was \$186 a day, based on the inmates at the corrections centre.

It could be different in this area, but I can certainly provide more detailed information to the Member on that.

Ms. Bisaro: I would appreciate receiving that information.

In regard to the need for a new facility — assuming that we will have a new facility with a capacity for 18 and assuming that that's what's required and again looking at the amount of money that it costs us to house people in the south and the amount of money that it's going to cost us for a new facility — I'd like to know from the Minister why there seems to be such resistance on the part of the Minister and the department to delay the project for one year.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, that was one of the proposals that we brought forward. There again, it's a 1960 building. I think what it comes down to is the minimal security that we have. We want to bring back those inmates from the south. I think that if we can house them in Fort Smith in the Women's Correctional Centre, that's part of the reason why we propose this new facility.

The facility is based on \$320,000 for planning and another \$6 million for the particular building. So that was part of the proposal: trying to invite those inmates back from the south, to be back home.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't differ; I don't disagree with the Minister that we want to bring our inmates back to the North and house them in the North, but given that there's been a deletion to the budget of this amount of money and that \$186 a day is a lot of money — but still it's not \$6 million — I have difficulty in understanding why the Minister still seems to feel that this project should go ahead at this time. If he could give me that explanation.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons, again, is that we have these inmates in RCMP cells as opposed to in a facility that we should have. At the same time, we send these inmates down south as opposed to having them in the North. That's part of the reason why we propose to have a facility in Fort Smith for women's correction. So instead of sending the inmates down south, we want to have them here in the North.

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

QUESTION 295-16(2)
ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN GNWT
SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on questions that my colleague from Kam Lake was asking the Minister of Human Resources on affirmative action.

In the Minister's response he indicated that the Public Service Career Training Program had disappeared. It was a program that was being utilized to help aboriginal people with technical skills but who lacked education transition into employment at officer- and management-level jobs. The program, the PSCTP, had an 84 per cent success rate and was graduating 30-plus aboriginal people a year into meaningful jobs in the public service. It's gone, because in 1996 the budget cuts resulted in the elimination of the program. So we took a program that worked and eliminated it, and now we've been stagnant at 31 per cent.

Given that the program is successful, I'd like the Minister responsible for Human Resources to commit to conducting a review of the program that did exist and possibly re-implementing it in order to ensure that we have a tool that is there and available for aboriginal people in the North who have technical skills but lack education to transition into officer-level and management-level jobs in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

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

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly we'd be very interested in getting the details of that program again, especially since it was a very successful program.

I think the government moved to training more people directly through Aurora College and so on, whereby people went into post-secondary education and were able to go into jobs directly with the Government of the Northwest Territories. I think it would be timely to look at the Public Service Career Training Program again.

Also, some other federal programs that were there have disappeared, as well, like the Northern Careers Program that was there. It's no longer around, but certainly I'd be prepared to look at that Public Service Career Training Program.

Mr. Abernethy: That's good to hear. I think the program is a very good program, and it was very successful in its day. Given that you've committed to looking at it, I was wondering if I could get a further commitment to get a timeline from you as to when you might be able to conduct a review of the Public Service Career Training Program, with recommendations to possibly re-implement it.

Mr. McLeod: Our first step is to go back and find a copy of that program and find out what aspects of it worked. Then we would have to review it in line with the way we're organized as a government with regard to human resources and with how we would work with the departments in view of the fact that delegated authority for staffing is really the

departments'. I would expect it would take at least four to five months to get to that point.

Mr. Abernethy: In another part of the Minister's response to the Member for Kam Lake the Minister talked about the Management Assignment Program. I was under the impression that the Management Assignment Program had actually stalled and that there hadn't been an intake for at least a year or two. Can you just give me a quick update on the Management Assignment Program? Is it still up and running, or has it stalled out and died as well?

Hon. Bob McLeod: As far as I know, there had been three intakes into the Management Assignment Program. I'll have to check and see whether we've gone out for another round of intakes this year. There were some issues with the Management Assignment Program in the fact that there were some questions. There was a feeling that it should be more regionally balanced, that there should be also more proportional representation with aboriginal people. Those are some of the issues. I know that the program money is still there. There was some reduction to the program money, but as far as I know, the program is still in existence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for that. I'm wondering if I can get the Minister to commit to providing the Members on this side of the House a summary and detailed breakdown of the Management Assignment Program: how many people are in it, by year; when the last intake was; and the budget that is allocated toward that program.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to do that.

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

QUESTION 296-16(2) RCMP PUBLIC COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Justice. It has to do with a bylaw officer and the RCMP and pepper spray and a graduating class in Fort McPherson.

Mr. Speaker, I received several phone calls this weekend in regard to an incident that occurred in Fort McPherson. The constituents were concerned in regard to the complaint process. Where do they go with their complaints in regard to filing complaints but, more importantly, investigating these types of incidents? Is there an open,

transparent process where the public, through an RCMP complaints commission, are looking at a review through the justice system? I did have an opportunity to meet with the Minister this morning on this matter. I'd like to ask if the Minister had an opportunity to look into exactly what processes are available to residents of Fort McPherson so that they can take a closer look at this situation, so it doesn't happen again.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member approaching me early, early this morning about this particular incident. From what he shared with me, it was an unfortunate incident that did occur. I did pass that on to my department, the Justice department. As you know, we have to work with the RCMP, G Division, that is responsible for the RCMP officers. On our part the Justice department is asking all kinds of questions through the RCMP, G Division, on what happened, what actually occurred. From what the Member has shared with me, if it's matching the RCMP report when it comes in, I can certainly share with the Member at that time. I don't have that detailed information as of yet, but it is forthcoming. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: I'd also like to ask the Minister if he can keep the other community leaders involved by way of the mayor and the chief. Apparently, they are also involved in this process. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can also include them in regard to whatever his findings are and to keep the community informed on whatever comes out of this.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to have an open communication dialogue with my department and the community and the leadership at the community level. Certainly, I'll commit to that. I'll share what I can share from the department once I get fully briefed on this particular incident.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, as a Member who gets these types of phone calls, sometimes you wonder what avenues you have. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly what do people do when they find themselves in a situation where they feel that their Charter rights have been violated, that they've been jailed without cause, and also that excessive force has been used? What's the process that individuals have to be able to file a complaint? Basically, do they have a system or place they phone to talk to someone when these incidents come about?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: We do have a process within our department and also within G Division of the RCMP. If there's a complaint, there is a complaints commissioner, as the Member alluded to earlier, and also the Human Rights Commission.

It does deal with human rights as well. Those areas and also the contact numbers.... I can certainly provide that information to the Member and to the community that has gone through this process. I think it's important to have those contact numbers available to all communities, as a matter of fact.

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

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I'd like to thank the Minister for his answer because I think it's important that we do have some sort of a public process, that it's out there, that people are aware of it. I'd like to ask the Minister: is there is a process where you can actually call for a public review — I don't want to say inquiry — an open, transparent, public process where, basically, witnesses can be called, where statements can be taken? I think there are a lot of people who want to give statements on this matter, but there's no process for that. I'd just like to know: is there such a process that people can go through?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I'll certainly find out from my department, working with the G Division. I believe there was an incident in a community, in McPherson, and also there have been some witnesses. I'll certainly find out from my department what kind of process we have in place to report these incidents and for, as the Member alluded to, the witnesses that want to come forward. I'm not too familiar with the detailed operations because G Division is arm's length from us, the Department of Justice. I'll commit today that I'll bring that information forward once I get my hands on it.

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

QUESTION 297-16(2)
PROPOSED WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL
CENTRE IN FORT SMITH

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't entirely satisfied with the answers I got from the Minister of Justice with respect to the women's correctional facility in Fort Smith, and that would be putting it politely.

We passed a motion in this House to remove from the budget money for the planning for this facility. To me that should register on the other side of the House as: "Wait. There was debate." The idea with waiting was to maybe assess these structural issues with Arctic Tern and look at the possibility of re-profiling that facility. For me to hear the Minister of Justice say that they could potentially look within the Department of Justice for \$320,000 for planning money is a little frightening. First of all, (a) they didn't get the message, and (b) that means that they've got \$320,000 worth of discretionary funding

somewhere within the Department of Justice at a time when we're trying to cut \$135 million from the budget.

I'd like to ask the Minister: did you understand the motion to say that we did not want to proceed with any further work on this facility this year?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the motion was brought forward to this House, and it was passed by this House, but with the circumstances that we're faced with at Arctic Tern, we need to relook at the whole correction facility. We have Arctic Tern. We have women's corrections, North Slave corrections, South Slave corrections, and River Ridge corrections. We need to relook at the whole picture. We have to deliver the most effective and efficient operation of correction services in the Northwest Territories.

Mrs. Groenewegen: We clearly deleted the planning money for the Territorial Women's Correctional Facility out of the budget. Now, before this government decides to spend any money planning for that facility, will the Minister undertake in the House today.... Will he commit to us that no planning will take place until this review of available facilities and options is fully examined?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Those are areas we need to look at, as I stated earlier. Also, whatever we do, we'll certainly go back to the committee if there are any changes. What we've gone through, the practice here.... There have been some recommendations to delete and also recommendations to add on. We need to consider those additions that were brought forward by the committee. There are changes, and we'll certainly go back to the committee on that particular item.

Mrs. Groenewegen: So then, just to summarize and make sure we understand, no planning work.... No dollars will be expended toward the planning of a new territorial women's correctional facility in Fort Smith until this work is done and the Standing Committee on Social Programs has been fully consulted.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The \$320,000 planning stage has been taken out, so we're kind of at a standstill right now, but if there are any changes, we will go back to the committee. I think it's important to have the dialogue. If we're going to have some changes, we need to notify the committee members.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also ask the Minister if he would have his department do a very serious analysis, as well, as to whether or not it is cost-effective to repatriate more high-security inmates from southern Canada. At the rate that we are paying for these inmates to be placed in southern Canada, would he make sure that there is a cost benefit to repatriating them in terms of the capital money we would have to expend for a higher security facility?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: We talked about the repatriation of the centre and also getting the information from the south. Certainly, we'll look at that. That type of information we do have within our department. We'll certainly get more information for the Member and the committee as well. There again, we'll be meeting with the committee if there are any changes in that area.

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

QUESTION 298-16(2)
ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT IN GNWT
SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on the question by my colleague Mr. Ramsay from the Affirmative Action Policy pertaining to aboriginal employees. Would the Minister agree to evaluate all aboriginal employees in the plan to move more aboriginal employees into management?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand the question, it is: would we undertake to evaluate all aboriginal people that are working for the government with a view to promoting them to senior management? I think we do that on an annual basis.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for question period has expired. However, I will allow the Member a supplementary question.

Mr. Beaulieu: Can the Minister have each of the departments, since they're responsible for human resource hiring, complete a career plan for all its aboriginal employees?

Hon. Bob McLeod: In the performance evaluation process we do exactly that with every employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We encourage management to do annual performance appraisals with their employees.

Mr. Beaulieu: I'd like to ask if for a promotion into management they would look at the set of qualifications to ensure that jobs that can be done

by aboriginal employees are given to aboriginal employees.

Hon. Bob McLeod: The Government of the Northwest Territories operates under the merit principle. With the Affirmative Action Policy an aboriginal employee who applies for a job or for a senior management job or a middle management job, if they meet the qualifications and if there is only one aboriginal applicant, would have the highest priority. They would be interviewed first, and if they met the minimum qualifications or requirements of the job, they would receive the job. I guess the other process that could be followed would be a direct employment process. Generally, in all cases the first priority is given to aboriginal people.

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

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the department or the Minister ensure that the department puts a priority on increasing aboriginal employees in management and keep it on the agenda and report the results back to the House within a period of time, maybe at the next sitting or the time after that?

Hon. Bob McLeod: I would be pleased to commit to that, but I think it's important to realize that without additional tools to work with to try to address this problem, even if I put in one year or two years, I would come back in that period with the same results. I guess what I'm saying is that I need additional tools to be able to work with. In the past, movement toward an employment equity process was put forward. Certainly, I would like to try that approach once again. I committed to looking at the Public Service Career Training Program that was in place ten years ago or so. I think I would need additional tools in order to improve on the numbers.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Written Questions

QUESTION 19-16(2)
SUMMER STUDENTS HIRING PROCESS

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Human Resources. The question is as follows.

- 1) Can the Minister provide the details of how the Affirmative Action Policy is applied to the hiring of summer students?
- 2) On what date was each summer student hired for the 2008 summer season?

- 3) For each student hired, how many are returning summer students, and how many times have the returning students previously been hired as summer students?
- 4) How many students will be going to post-secondary institutes for the first time this fall?
- 5) And finally, how many summer students are finished post-secondary schooling and will not be returning in the fall?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

QUESTION 20-16(2) WAGE SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment:

- 1) What is the number of employers across the NWT accessing money from the Wage Subsidy Program?
- 2) What is the number and location of apprentices?
- 3) What is the amount of money accessed through the Wage Subsidy Program?

Mr. Speaker: 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 Agriculture Products Marketing Council 2007–2008 Annual Report.

Document 60-16(2), Agriculture Products Marketing Council 2007–2008 Annual Report, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 11 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 11 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 8, Committee Reports, Tabled Document 37-16(2), Committee Report 6-16(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 daily hour of 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. We have several items to deal with as the Committee of the Whole: 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). Mrs. Groenewegen, what is the wish of the committee?

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, the wish of the committee today is to proceed with the consideration of the Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and, pending the conclusion of that department, move on to Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, we'll take a short break and begin with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole back to order. When we broke, we agreed to continue on with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment if he has any general comments in regard to the business plans. Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to present the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2008–2009.

This department invests in and provides for the development of the people of the Northwest Territories. Departmental activities flow from goals and objectives outlined in Building on our Success, the department's strategic plan. These include the preservation and knowledge of our heritage, support and promotion of our official languages, students in our schools achieving their potential, an integrated adult learning network, a skilled workforce and a comprehensive system of financial supports within a responsive income security system.

Mr. Chair, the department is proposing to invest close to \$294 million in 2008–2009, which represents an increase of 3 per cent from the 2007–2008 Main Estimates. This spending is in line with the priorities of the caucus of the 16th Legislative Assembly and the strategic direction set by Cabinet.

I would like to highlight some of the key initiatives and activities of the department and describe how these will contribute to our vision for northern people.

We will focus on building on our future through early childhood development investments, trades and technical opportunities in schools and expansion of the Teacher Education Program. We will make improvements to aboriginal and French language services and libraries. We will increase funding to culture and heritage, including new investments in arts. We will maximize opportunities for Northerners through initiatives in literacy and trades. We will also continue to improve supports in communities through the establishment of one-stop income security community service centres and capital investments in educational facilities.

To align our spending on these key initiatives and activities with available resources, the department will make reductions to Aurora College's base funding, will end the oil and gas contribution program and reduce wage subsidy programs.

Education and Culture

First, within the education and culture activity for 2008–2009, we propose to spend \$173 million for early childhood development, K-to-12 education, official languages and culture and heritage programs.

Early Childhood Development

We plan to spend \$6.2 million on early childhood development activities. These activities will add to the early learning provided to children at home and help provide children with a good start in life by giving them the learning tools they need to succeed in school and beyond.

In recent years, the department has supported the establishment of 20 Language Nest programs across the Northwest Territories. In 2008–2009 and ongoing we will continue with these investments.

As part of the department's strategic initiatives 2.5 positions will be added to the current staff complement of 4.5 to ensure that community-level early childhood programs comply with the new operational standards and have access to the technical support they need.

School System

For 2008–2009 the department is budgeting approximately \$155 million to support education for children and youth through contributions and other supports to education authorities.

During the current school year we decreased the pupil-teacher ratio from 16 to 15 students for every teacher and increased funding for inclusive schooling from 17 to 19 per cent of school contributions. In 2008–2009 we plan to further reduce the PTR by 0.5 as part of the ongoing commitment to provide students with trades and technical opportunities.

The Aboriginal Languages and Culture-based Education Directive was established in 2003 to promote the integration of language and culture in our schools. In 2008–2009 we will contribute \$120,000 to Aurora College to deliver the Aboriginal Language and Culture Instructor Program on a full-time basis so that schools are able to access more qualified staff to implement the directive.

To ensure we have enough teaching staff today and well into the future, the department will provide \$300,000 to Aurora College in 2008–2009 to

expand access to the Teacher Education Program in all regions. This initiative will help ensure a qualified teaching workforce that represents the students it serves.

Official Languages

The \$5.8 million allocation for official language activities in 2008 and 2009 includes the \$3.8 million in federal funding from the recently renewed Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and aboriginal languages. A large portion of these monies will support activities of the official language communities. In 2008–2009 an implementation plan for delivery of French language services and for aboriginal language services will be developed. We will also pilot a single-window service centre for French and explore ways that we can use this approach for aboriginal languages.

Library Services

The department proposes to spend \$1.1 million for the Northwest Territories Public Library System. The allocation will support the basic operations of community libraries and virtual libraries. In addition, \$100,000 will be directed towards library capital improvements.

Culture and Heritage

In 2008–2009 we plan to spend \$4.1 million on culture and heritage programs at both the territorial and community levels to further build a number of initiatives underway.

Recently the Arts Strategy Action Plan II was released jointly with Industry, Tourism and Investment after consultation with artists and cultural organizations across the Northwest Territories. In 2008–2009 a new investment of \$500,000 will enhance support for arts and culture activities at the community level and contribute to pride in culture, community cohesion and our growing cultural economy.

Advanced Education and Careers

Within Advanced Education and Careers the department proposes to spend nearly \$43 million. Programs and services in this area provide Northerners with access to career counselling, employment development and post-secondary education needed to successfully participate in our expanding economy.

College Programs

The department plans to spend \$34.7 million to provide a number of certificate, diploma, degree and trade programs relevant to the NWT labour market. The \$30.4 million contribution budgeted for

the operations of Aurora College includes \$620,000 for the college program initiatives mentioned in my opening remarks. This contribution also reflects a \$470,000 reduction to the college's base funding. The college is currently finalizing its 2008–2009 plan to incorporate these planned changes.

Adult Literacy and Basic Education

Low literacy is a significant barrier to postsecondary education and employment development. In 2008–2009 the department will continue to invest \$1.9 million for literacy initiatives. This investment includes support to the Aurora College Adult Literacy and Basic Education Program, the NWT Literacy Council and other community literacy partners.

Career and Employment Development

The department plans to spend nearly \$9 million for apprenticeship, trades and occupations, and career and employment development programs. This amount includes \$4.8 million in federal funding through the Canada-NWT Labour Market Development Agreement to provide employment development for individuals who are eligible for employment insurance.

The decision to end the oil and gas contribution program corresponds with the final year of the aboriginal futures partnership agreement that ended on March 31, 2008. Given our strong economy, approximately \$1.3 million for wage subsidies is being taken out of the budget for 2008–2009. The Apprenticeship Training on the Job Program for small businesses will continue, however, to help train up to 200 apprentices every year.

The savings from program reductions will allow funding to be redirected to a number of higher priority trades-related enhancements. Through an annual investment of \$200,000 towards the operation of the Aurora College Mobile Trades Training Unit, access to trades will be provided in the Beaufort-Delta region. We will also invest \$100,000 in 2008–2009 to enhance supports for women and aboriginal apprentices. Together with the school trades initiative mentioned earlier in my remarks, these investments will help ensure increased enrolment and improved completion rates.

Employment Standards

This government recognizes the importance of establishing and ensuring compliance with employment standards as a means to ensuring a productive work environment. We propose to spend \$720,000 on this function. Recently the Labour Standards Act was revised and replaced by the

Employment Standards Act, which came into force on April 1, 2008. In 2008–2009 the department will develop a plan to make employers and employees aware of the new requirements.

Along with these investments we will continue working with other governments and industry to ensure greater access by Northerners to training and employment opportunities.

Income Security

Within the income security activity the department has budgeted nearly \$70 million during 2008–2009 for a range of benefit programs, including student financial assistance, income assistance and public housing rental subsidies.

The department recently integrated income security programs under a common policy framework and model. The new model describes a system of supports that will enable income assistance recipients to achieve greater self-reliance. This budget includes an additional \$5.9 million to better meet the needs of our clients under this model.

The department is also moving toward the establishment of one-stop community service centres to deliver the range of income security programs.

Infrastructure

The departmental Main Estimates are supported with a request for continued investment in suitable education facilities over the planning period. With more than 65 educational facilities across the NWT, a number of which are nearing the end of their operational life, there is a need for continued investments in educational facilities. The high estimates for capital projects reflect the rising cost of capital construction.

Concluding Comments

The 2008–2009 Main Estimates are presented in the context of limited fiscal resources available to invest in new programs and services. As with other departments, it has been necessary to make difficult decisions. My ministerial colleagues and I have made decisions using the priorities of the 16th Assembly as a guide. We want to ensure that monies are spent to help build a better future for Northerners and maximize opportunities for individuals, families and communities. The departmental budget has been developed to further both the GNWT strategic direction and the department's strategic plan.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee members may have. Mahsi, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time I'd like to ask the committee responsible for overseeing the department's estimates if they have any opening comments. Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The committee met with the Minister and his officials on Monday, April 7, 2008, to review the Draft Main Estimates of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Committee members made note that departments were proposing to spend \$293.914 million in operations expense and \$24.408 million on capital projects in the fiscal year 2008–2009.

We would like to thank the Minister and his officials for appearing before committee. Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 budget planning cycle.

Wage Subsidy Program — Apprentices

The department proposed during the Main Estimates review to eliminate all wage subsidy programs. Members of the committee were very concerned that funding to subsidize apprentice wages was included in this proposed reduction. While the elimination of Training on the Job and the Youth Employment Program subsidies is regrettable, it is clear to committee members that the same economic conditions that led the department to implement these programs no longer exist. The NWT economy is booming, and more and more students are graduating from high school and taking advantage of post-secondary educational opportunities. In addition, many of the large employers in the non-renewable resource sector are being good corporate citizens and are investing in education and training for their employees. All of these factors have lessened the need for the GNWT to offer wage subsidy programs as a way of fostering economic growth.

However, committee members believe that companies that hire apprentices still need to be subsidized to encourage them to continue to hire and train apprentices. Of particular concern to Members are the small business operators, the local housing authority, the municipalities that hire apprentices, which in recent years have lost many of their qualified tradespeople to the opportunities and higher wages offered by larger, multinational non-renewable resource companies operating in the Northwest Territories.

Apprentices and the time spent by journeypersons in instructing them and supervising on-the-job activities do not contribute to the bottom line of companies. It was generally acknowledged that apprentices do not start to contribute to the bottom line of a company until they are in their third year.

This is why the subsidy program does not subsidize fourth-year apprentices.

There is a shortage of qualified tradespeople in the North, and it is contributing to the higher costs that governments and residents are forced to pay in constructing or renovating infrastructure, homes and businesses. Members note that the department is planning to invest in improving opportunities for students in high school to be exposed to the trades and ensuring that the trades programs are delivered through Aurora College, using up-to-date equipment and technology.

In addition, Members had the opportunity to see mobile trades training in action on a recent trip to Inuvik and were impressed with the opportunities this type of innovative approach will offer adult learners and students in a secondary school. The committee supports the department's plan to invest a further \$200,000 per year in delivering this program.

The committee could not reconcile these increased investments that will encourage students to pursue trades training with reducing the potential number of available apprentice positions. The committee recommended that the department reinstate the apprentice wage subsidy for companies and organizations in the NWT that employ fewer than 100 people. The members were pleased that the department agreed with this recommendation and reinstated \$100 million to the budget to subsidize businesses for the hiring of apprentices.

Mr. Chair, at this time I'd like to turn it over to my colleague Mr. Beaulieu. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Beaulieu.

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

Responsibility for Public Housing

Members of the committee are still hearing from constituents that the transfer of responsibility for social housing from the NWT Housing Corporation to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is not working and is causing hardship for many families. It is acknowledged that any time there is a major shift in how government delivers a program, there are bound to be program delivery issues. The department has recognized that there are problems and has told the committee that they are working towards implementing solutions and improving communications with stakeholders. While this effort is appreciated, it has to be made clear to the department and the government that the members of the standing committee will need to see tangible proof of the improvement in program delivery before the review of the business plans in

September 2008 in order for there to be continued support for this program transfer. If improvement is not readily apparent, the committee may consider recommending, with renewed vigour, that the responsibility for all aspects of social housing be returned to the NWT Housing Corporation and its local housing authorities, who have proven they can deliver the program and have the confidence of the community residents.

Child Care User Subsidy for Students

Members of the committee were very concerned to hear the department was eliminating the Student Child Care User Subsidy program that provides subsidy to students while they attend post-secondary institutions in the NWT to care for their children while they're attending school.

In discussions with the Minister and his officials it became apparent that this program was undersubscribed and the regular Childcare Subsidy Program would also be applicable to students with children attending post-secondary institutions in the NWT. Members also confirmed that money received for Student Financial Assistance would not be used in determining program eligibility under the regular child care user subsidy program. With this understanding, the committee is prepared to accept this reduction, and there should be no adverse effect on students with children pursuing post-secondary opportunities.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague Mr. Bromley.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In reviewing the presentation and discussion with the Minister on the proposed Main Estimates and the potential new departmental initiatives, it became apparent to members of the committee that the issue of literacy and ecology was not addressed. To become ecologically literate is to understand the principles of organization that ecosystems have developed to sustain the web of life.

In this century ecological literacy will be a critical skill for politicians, business leaders and professionals in all spheres. It will be one of the most important components of education at all levels, from schools to colleges and universities, for the continuing education and training of professionals.

Members are aware that many teachers are incorporating ecoliteracy into their lesson plans, but are of the impression that this is done on their own initiative and not as a required part of the curriculum.

The intent behind developing such a curriculum is to foster the experience and understanding of nature. Being ecologically literate, or ecoliterate, is to understand the basic principles of ecology and to be able to embody them in daily life and the lives of human communities.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to see the principle of ecoliteracy incorporated into the curriculum for all school-age children and strongly encourages the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to begin the planning process for inclusion in the 2009–2012 business plans.

The availability of suitable facilities in many of the smaller communities in the Northwest Territories, such as child care facilities, has hampered the abilities of these communities to create new daycare spaces so that all residents can participate in the wage economy or further their education. The Children First Society in Inuvik and the various non-profit organizations running daycares in Yellowknife and other NWT communities are hard pressed to come up with economical solutions to their space requirements because of the aforementioned lack of infrastructure and the effects of inflation and a strong economy on rental rates in the private rental markets. It is clear to committee members that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has to take a larger role in helping daycare operators meet their space requirements.

Innovative solutions involving industry, aboriginal governments and development corporations, local governments and other GNWT departments and corporations need to be researched. All spare infrastructure that exists at the various levels of government needs to have its suitability for use as a daycare facility determined. Partnerships between the NWT Housing Corporation and aboriginal development corporations to allow for the inclusion of daycare facilities in infrastructure that may be built using loan guarantees is one example of a potential approach that may provide benefits to all parties involved.

Central governments traditionally step in when the private sector or junior levels of government cannot respond to the needs of the population. The committee would suggest that this is the case with ensuring that NWT parents have reasonable access to quality, affordable daycare in their home communities.

The North's robust economy is providing many opportunities for residents of the NWT. It is a shame that primary caregivers with children under the age of 12 are denied the opportunity to participate in learning and economic opportunities because of a lack of daycare opportunities. We should be concentrating efforts in making sure that

all persons who live in the Northwest Territories are employed. Increased availability of quality daycare programs would help. The committee is hopeful that the department will consider a renewed effort in developing quality daycare spaces as part of the 2009–2012 business planning process.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to now turn it over to my colleague Mr. Abernethy.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Childcare Subsidy Program

Committee members support the Childcare Subsidy Program, which allows low-income earners who are parents to participate in the wage economy or pursue post-secondary studies. There is still concern on how the policy to not provide the subsidy to daycare operators when the child is absent because of sickness or family emergencies is negatively impacting daycare operators. It is noted that if a child is sick, they are not allowed or supposed to attend daycare and that the daycare operating costs remain the same regardless of whether a particular child attends or not. Members believe that stable funding equals a stable daycare operation and that this regressive, punitive policy should be rescinded. We look forward to further discussions on resolving this issue during the review of the 2009–2012 business plans in September 2008.

Income Security Program Reform

During discussions on respite care programs delivered by Health and Social Services authorities it became apparent to members that there was a disconnect between the services offered by the Department of Health and Social Services designed to keep people living in their own homes for as long as possible and the policies that guide the delivery of income security programs. For example, it is possible for a family to hire someone to live with their grandmother to assist in meeting her day-to-day needs without impacting the public housing rental rate she is charged. However, using the example of a granddaughter employed at the Northern Store moving in to assist, Granny's rental rate would go up dependent on how much the granddaughter made. It seems ludicrous to the committee members that a stranger can move in without penalty, yet a family member is denied the ability to help a loved one without having the family incur extra costs for rent.

There are considerably more costs involved to move someone into a long-term care setting than could be gained through increasing social housing rents in situations like these. The committee is not

advocating a free-for-all approach and believes there is a role for a medical professional to play in determining eligibility and need for home care, to provide ongoing monitoring, and to ensure that such an arrangement is working out.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment modify their income security programs to allow employed family members to stay in a family member's social housing unit without incurring rent increases where such an arrangement would improve quality of life and allow for continued independent living.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to pass the reading of the document to Ms. Wendy Bisaro.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Utility Costs at Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre

It was noted by the committee that the department expects to save \$14,000 in utility costs in 2008–2009 because of renovations and upgrades to the technical and lighting systems at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. The department is to be commended for this. This is an example of how the retrofit or replacement of existing infrastructure using available energy-saving technology can result in savings for the GNWT.

If we were to extrapolate this type of savings to all of the major infrastructure projects for similar-sized buildings, like schools and hospitals, the amount could be quite significant. It is important that all capital projects consider energy saving and sustainability as guiding principles in their design and construction.

Student Financial Assistance Program Reductions

The department will be reducing the Student Financial Assistance loan allowance by \$1.5 million. Members were concerned that this would have a negative impact on the amount of funding that students could access. In discussions with the Minister and his officials it became apparent that this was related to uptake and that the department has sufficient funding to meet the requirements of students in 2008–2009 and for the foreseeable future. With the understanding that no students will be adversely affected by this proposed reduction, the committee is prepared to support the department.

Renewable Energy Technician Program

With accelerating impacts of climate change and fossil fuel costs, this government has recognized the need to increase our use of renewable energy such as solar, biomass, wind and hydro. This need is emphasized in our Energy Plan and Greenhouse Gas Strategy. There are increasing opportunities for community applications as off-the-shelf technology becomes available, yet the technical expertise is missing. This gap needs to be addressed. Doing so will contribute to achieving this government's education goals, its economic goals through the development of local economy and economic diversification, and finally, in achieving its environmental goals through greenhouse gas reduction.

Adaptation to Climate Change and Community Self-sufficiency

There are a few such programs available nationally that could be drawn upon or even partnered with in the initial stages. Youth today are interested in this area of expertise but frustrated with the lack of practical programming available. In addition, existing trades programs, like the building maintainer, electrician, plumber and gasfitting courses that are offered through Aurora College, need to incorporate this new energy-saving technology into their curriculum. The committee looks forward to discussing and incorporating renewable energy technology programming into the 2009–2012 business planning process.

Mr. Chairman, at this time I would like to return the reading of the document to Mr. McLeod.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sustainable Communities Program

The visions and goals of this Assembly revolve around healthy and environmentally sustainable communities. Communities that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable do not just happen. They require comprehensive planning and skilled attention in many areas, from full-cost accounting to building community spirit, developing self-sufficiency in leadership, and the encouragement of a strong local economy that meets its basic needs utilizing largely local resources.

The sustainable communities program at Aurora College could draw upon several of its existing courses, perhaps slightly modified, as well as others added to round out the need for a comprehensive curriculum. Graduates would add considerably to the community capacity and would

be inspired to return to their communities to practise their skills and inspire others. The committee looks forward to discussing and incorporating such a program into the 2009–2012 business planning process.

Mr. Chair, that concludes the committee's report. We'd like to thank our committee staff, Mr. Collinson and Ms. Bennett, for all their hard work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. With that, I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Lafferty?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Is the committee agreed for the Minister to bring his witnesses?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

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

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I have to my left Mr. Dan Daniels, deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and also Mr. Paul Devitt, director of Strategic Business Services, Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

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

Before we begin, I'd like to ask the Members about a question of process. As we agreed earlier today, we'll allow for general comments from all Members and then allow the Minister to respond after all Members have made their general comments. Is that agreeable to the House?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, general comments. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank the Minister for his detailed opening remarks.

In looking at the budget, I am happy to see a number of things in there. I am happy to see the increase in support for the arts, lots of information on early childhood development schools, official languages. Overall, I am quite pleased with what I see, but there are still some areas of concern.

One of the areas of concern that I have is that in looking at the document, it appears that the number of staff within the department itself is going up by

seven positions, yet I am of the understanding that at least five people in the department have been notified that their jobs are affected and that they potentially are going to be laid off. So when it comes question period, I am going to be trying to seek some clarification and some better understanding of that.

The other area, the area that I have the most concern about, is similar to an area of concern that I had when it came to the Department of Health and Social Services. It is around the fact that the department provides the authorities with a whole lot of money. I haven't heard the same types of statements such as "live within your means" within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, but we have been hearing rumours and information out of the authorities, not necessarily from the authorities themselves but certainly employees and whatnot, that there are cuts and major changes to programs which may affect staff. I will be trying to get some clarity around that, finding out what kind of impacts the budget being provided to the authorities is actually going to have.

I also notice that it looks like there are a large number of teaching positions in the authorities disappearing, and I am going to be seeking some clarification and some understanding around that. I was under the impression that we weren't actually doing too much in the way of reductions in the boards themselves. So similar to Health, I am going to have some questions around what's going on in the boards and how this budget and these reductions are going to impact on the authority level.

Otherwise, I am quite happy with what I see. I do have some questions about positions. I am really happy to see some increased investment in the arts. We will have some questions on the Childcare Subsidy stuff as well as on the daycare stuff, but otherwise it seems good, and I'm mostly happy with what I see. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, am happy to see some of the emphasis being placed on similar areas.

I want to start with early childhood development and child care. I'll be looking for some of the following points. We need to support the training of early childhood education workers. To be able to do that, we need to pay replacements while that training happens and organize accessible community-based training as well. We need to support a territorial early childhood education association so that the GNWT has someone to communicate with on policy issues like this and that

will help alleviate the shortage of affordable quality child care and ECE opportunities.

We need to review criteria and the process for child care subsidies so that more people can take advantage of this. I know there are cases where we have two-income families who are really working poor and still can't access these subsidies. We need to ensure that child care centres are also not penalized by late payment of subsidies. This has been a perennial problem. I'm hoping the department has addressed that.

Finally we need to review operational funding so that centres are not penalized when children are sick or otherwise absent, and I'll be mentioning that again later.

I was particularly pleased to see the increase in support to the arts and cultural programs. Again, just some of the things I'll be looking for and perspectives that I have on this that I'm hoping are reflected in the allocation of this additional funding and possible future funding. I think culture and the arts are really an economic engine and a real source for economic diversity, one of our goals. Municipalities that adopt culture as an industry have gained positive economic benefits for their communities. Cultural industries create job growth, turn ordinary cities or communities into destination cities, create interconnections between arts and business, revitalize urban centres, attract skilled workers and create spin-off businesses. These are proven relationships.

The arts have been instrumental in facilitating social cohesion, bringing tourism to unlikely places, fostering a sense of belonging and preserving collective memory, basically building community. Arts and culture are powerful tools with which to engage communities in various levels of change. They are a means to public dialogue, they contribute to the development of communities' creative learning, they create healthy communities capable of action, and they provide a powerful tool for community mobilization and activism that help build community capacity and leadership.

They're a factor in quality of life and quality of place, and these are priorities that I see are at least as important as economic development. Culture, long overlooked as a tool for garnering quality of life, is now being recognized as the means to community building, encouraging outdoor activity and healthy lifestyles, lifelong learning, increasing accessibility to programs for all levels of society and celebrating diversity and cultural differences. Finally, the ability to engage and motivate children and youth from all socio-economic levels in education and community is a respected strength of arts and culture and particularly relevant to our communities.

On the introductory remarks under Advanced Education and Careers, College Programs, the Minister noted that tens of millions of dollars are being provided towards certificates, diplomas, degrees and trade programs relevant to the NWT labour market. That's not something I disagree with, but I would say that we don't want to be just reactive here. It would be nice to be proactive and see not just where the economy is demanding right now but what direction the economy and society are moving in and where the jobs are likely to be given the issues that we're dealing with today and in the near future. I think there are some obvious ones there.

Under Adult Literacy and Basic Education I see we're maintaining our support there. We did have a very interesting series of workshops and talks with a national expert in this area.

I think there were some interesting relationships revealed there where we could get even bigger returns from a little bit more of an investment in literacy and adult education.

I'm hoping we can see a gradually increased level of support in this area. I say "gradually," because sometimes it's most effective, in terms of building programs, to increase resources very gradually rather than one big lump sum. And then about the time we have capacity built up to use that effectively, we're taking resources away. But again, based on all I've learned — and I know you've got lots of experts in the department — that seems like some real potential for some win-wins. I'm going to leave my introductory remarks at that. Thank you for this opportunity.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll move along to Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of comments, some of which may have been stated already. But I will restate them, as they are important to me.

First off, I was a little surprised that there's been an addition of seven positions to the total number of positions for the department. That surprised me a bit. I am very pleased to see the additional funding for the arts. I think it's long overdue, and I look forward to the advancement of arts in the Territories and arts programs in general. I think it's an excellent investment.

I was also pleased that the department responded to the committee's concern in regard to the loss of the wage subsidy program for apprenticeships. I think it's a bit of a saw-off in the middle — that we're going to maintain the wage subsidy for small businesses, and particularly municipalities and some of the other small organizations that use apprentices a lot. The fact that it was originally scheduled to be totally deleted, to me, was

definitely not a positive, and I didn't see how that was going to assist us in training people for the jobs that we need in the North now and in the future. I'm very glad to see that that was reinstated, at least partially.

The statement by the Minister in his opening remarks that we are decreasing the pupil/teacher ratio by 0.5 in this next 2008–2009 year to provide students with trades and technical opportunities.... I'm unsure how reducing the pupil/teacher ratio is going to assist schools in small communities. I would think that there are certainly some that don't have high school level grades, so I really don't understand how trades and technical programming in those schools is going to be assisted. Certainly the other portion in communities that do have high school level, but have a very small enrolment.... I'm not sure how reducing the PTR is going to enable them to take advantage of this particular opportunity.

The other thing that I wondered about with this reduction in PTR is whether or not there's going to be any monitoring by the department to determine if the education authorities are using the extra teachers for trades. It's entirely possible that they will take the reduction in the PTR and use it for staffing of other programs. I'm wondering whether or not there's a monitoring program, or at least some method of monitoring how the authorities are using their extra funding?

In reading the remarks and seeing that we're spending \$70 million on income security programs, it kind of blows me away. I am also very surprised that we're spending an additional \$6 million from last year on Income Security, and we're adding five positions for those programs. So I do have some questions for the Minister when we come to that. It seems like we're throwing an awful lot of money into these programs, and I wonder if it's what we should be doing.

In general, the budget.... In the opening remarks it indicates that this budget is an increase of 3 per cent from last year's budget. It concerns me that there are few reductions in this particular budget. It concerns me also that we're spending a lot of money on new initiatives when we can't meet the reduction targets that were set out. I have some questions in regard to initiatives when we get to that point.

Lastly, I'd like to talk a bit about daycares. I agree with the committee report that we need more daycare spaces. I think the department needs to be creative, as is suggested in the committee report, in terms of looking at every building that is being built, or every government-owned building that exists in a community and trying to incorporate, if necessary or if possible, daycares into some of the government spaces that exist. It's not feasible in every community, but certainly I would guess that we

have buildings that are not 100 per cent utilized, where we could probably offer some daycare space to an organization in a community.

I want to reiterate — I think it's already been mentioned — but daycares need to have some sort of stable funding, some sort of knowledge of what their funding is going to be on more than a day-to-day basis. Currently, daycares are funded for children who happen to be there; if the child is sick and doesn't come, they don't get the funding. It creates a very volatile funding situation for them, and I think the Minister and the department need to seriously consider some sort of long-term, stable funding for daycares, similar to perhaps what the education authorities do. Base the funding for daycares on their last year's enrolment, or something similar. That's all I have at this point, Mr. Chair. I will have questions when we get to the appropriate sections. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll move along to Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With the budget before us from ECE, I do think that a lot of new initiatives may be premature, but I think they're good initiatives. I just want to speak specifically on some of the issues impacting my region, my communities.

First and foremost, I know that the department's working hard on trying to accommodate our teachers and the teacher housing issue. I know that it affects not only this department, but I think they're working along with Housing and one other department in trying to address this issue. Time and time again, over the last three or four years in one of my communities, particularly Fort Liard, teachers seemingly think that they have accommodations only to show up and find that arrangements have been changed, or else a new issue has come up and the unit's not available.

For jurisdictions that are looking for new teachers, new professionals, I often, when I'm talking and dealing with people, say, "Well, if the young professionals come north, there are opportunities here." But our challenge for our professionals now, at least the new ones, is getting accommodations for them and getting that set. I would support anything the government can do in working toward this. I know that in the health field we are taking some special measures for interim accommodations for agency nurses that come up. I don't see why we cannot do the same for our teaching professionals that come up.

I was in B.C. about six months ago, just before the 2007 elections, and I picked up the paper. They have similar challenges, like I'm sure many northern jurisdictions do. But in northern B.C. what they did was they said that they're not going to provide accommodations for the teachers, but they'll provide temporary accommodations. So once

you're able to do that, I think you're able to open up a whole different way of seeing things. If we look at that avenue and look at temporary accommodation, that may mean for us to provide the accommodations, of course.

I would urge the government to look at that and start working toward that. It'll help alleviate them getting, first of all, a foothold in the North, establishing a positive experience. We do want them to stay and make a career in the North. Time and time again, studies have shown that the longer the teacher's in the community or familiar with the region, they get positive repertoire and a positive learning experience for the students from somebody they know. They gain some level of trust. It shows in the marks and the graduation rates and success rates of all the different classes that are out there. That's something that I would urge the government to look at.

As well, government has also said the communities have to take the initiative; businesses have to take the initiative. Through Housing they can get a loan and build a house and rent it back to the teachers. But in the small communities, that just doesn't work. In Fort Liard, we lumped in that, as well, Mr. Chair. It's just not workable to have one entrepreneur to build one house. For goodness' sake, even in small communities we're still approaching probably a minimum of \$250,000 or \$300,000 for a good two-bedroom house these days. To expect a teacher to pay \$1,500 or \$2,000 a month is just not doable, if you do it that way, not to mention the utilities and everything else are skyrocketing.

If we're able to come up with a plan, with a package, for new teachers and they're coming back.... I know that with Housing, I've been working with them to say, "Yeah, we've got to do multiplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes." The reason you do that, of course, is that nowadays it makes sense to share heating and share some of the O&M for buildings. That's one other way of doing it — to have central heating in those buildings. I believe that'll bring the costs down, and I think that's what we should work toward. Many of these teachers are single, or if they're a couple, they don't have big families. They're just a couple starting out, so smaller accommodations and affordable accommodations will work out.

The key thing, once again, is that I would urge the department or government to look at now, and say: "Hey, we've got to do our part here. We've got to make it a positive experience for when they come, because we do want them to stay, and we want our communities to succeed at education levels." I believe that we should be working toward that, Mr. Chair.

I think, as well, I'll just speak a bit about our capital planning. I think in our schools we've got 10- or 15-year retrofits. One of my communities, Nahanni

Butte, has been asking about the 15-year retrofit and when theirs is going to be done. When I checked with the department, they said, "Well, Kevin, it's not on there." But I believe there's a reason for having a 15-year capital retrofit, and that's to extend the life of the building to accommodate any changes in community levels or student levels. I believe that function is worthy, and I just don't see why it's not there for one of my smaller communities. At the appropriate time, I'll be asking about that through the Minister's office.

It's not only there, but we've got to look at all the other smaller communities as well — at the timing of those reinvestments for the retrofits, especially in Nahanni Butte. I've been there, and I'm happy to say it's one of our growing communities in the North. We were just recently there. Minister Sandy Lee.... We went into the school. She can probably attest to this: it's kind of cramped and crowded, but they're making do with what they have, only because that's all they have. But they're looking to better accommodate their needs to make a better working environment for the teachers, as well as the students. So that's got to be in the plan.

I'll ask the Minister again exactly what stage that's at, because I believe that's important. With that, Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

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

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, I, too, have several concerns from the Beaufort-Delta region. Probably one of the most alarming or outstanding issues that you hear from the divisional board of education is the area of accommodation for teachers, especially in the area of housing, and especially in a lot of our communities.

We did have a staff housing program in the past, where we provided housing. But for them the issue isn't around staff housing in general. They're looking at parity for teachers. Most teachers are accommodated by way of housing. It's really the construction of the nurse's residence, which is part of, usually, the health centre or whatnot. And they're saying, "If they can get it, why can't we?" They work under the same conditions in those communities, but yet they have to find their own housing. In the case of nurses, most cases are accommodated with a residence for nurses. For them, it's a question of fair....

But more importantly, since the government did away with staff housing, which has had a major effect on the recruitment of teachers, especially in the smaller communities, where we don't have market housing, it's just trying to.... It's the cost they have to pay for rent and also the cost they have to pay for groceries, power and everything else. But these are unforeseen costs until they get there. And then they get into these communities, and they are basically shocked at how high the

costs of living in these small isolated communities are. A lot of them are deterred, where they basically quit or move on, and you have to recruit someone else to fill those positions.

I think as one of the fundamental pillars of this government, education is critical. But again, we do have to be able to deliver programs universally throughout the Northwest Territories. If that means reinstating staff housing in certain areas because of certain problems we're having recruiting because of staff housing, I think we do have to address that issue of maybe looking at getting back into staff housing in those areas where there are no market communities.

I think, also, realizing the importance of the different problems we're seeing in our schools, with FAS/FAE, the psychological problems we're seeing in a lot of students.... I think we have to be open to that, because it is a reality in a lot of our communities because of alcohol abuse, substance abuse. It is affecting children in their learning in our schools.

As a government, we have to somehow look at the emotional and physical and mental side of those students, and make sure they also have the appropriate specialists and whatnot that can accommodate those communities. In most cases, the student has to be sent out, evaluated and then basically assessed, where they're sent back to the appropriate education councils. There is a major cost to that for this government. I think if you can catch it early on — especially for the younger students — if you are able to help that student to basically achieve a very successful life by way of learning and also by being able to partake in that process without feeling they're left out....

It's also so important that we do work with groups such as the aboriginal organizations. I know a few people have touched on the trades program they have in Inuvik. Between the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in, they invest over \$1 million in this program, which is a very creative way of developing programs, but through partnerships. We have to be able to work with those groups. I know dealing with the mine trade centre here in regard to learning centres, the diamond industry, and also dealing with the industry in regard to oil and gas....

I think we have to start putting more focus on post-secondary trades, looking at southern institutions in regard to SAIT and NAIT and all these other groups and organizations that are out there, so that we are able to achieve the results we'd like to see — and also being able to fill those partnerships in which it's been a proven way of developing your human resource capacity — having these types of relationships with different colleges in southern Canada, but more importantly, through Alberta, in regard to SAIT and NAIT.

I think also the other area I hear a lot of concerns about, especially in my riding, is the area of income support. It's not perfect. But also we have to realize that we have to do something to be able to work with individuals in the communities to make them not dependent on the system that puts them into that dependency role. If anything, it's to help them get off that dependency and basically make positive choices through education and career decisions and also to work with them to be able to bring down some of these social barriers that are put on people who are in that income support bracket.

But the problem I see in communities, in talking to the local contractors and whatnot, is that they have very serious problems trying to hire people locally, who can be hired locally, who basically work for these individuals. Because of the connection between their wage and the housing rent subs, as soon as you go to work, your rent increases and you're cut off income support for three months. For them, it's a disadvantage rather than an advantage.

Again, there have to be creative ways of keeping people so when they make a positive choice of going to work, getting a job, bringing in some income on their own, they're not penalized right off the bat. Give them four or five months' leeway to get back on their feet, generate some income and also be able to work with the local contractors to develop that workforce.

It's sad to say, but people actually will tell you, "Oh, I can't go to work because I'm going to get penalized." I mean, that's the wrong attitude to have.

As a government, if that's where this Income Support Program is leading us, I think we have to turn it around and send it in another direction, because that was not the intention of how this program was going to be working.

I think, also, another area that we have a real problem with, especially in our smaller communities, is the balance between elderly homeowners and elders who are in social housing — the elders that want to maintain their own independence, their own lifestyle, and also be able to work with their families and sustain that independence as long as they can and hopefully don't have to leave the community, and can live a full life in their home communities. We have to do whatever we can to sustain them. Elders who are in social housing don't pay any rent, but for someone who is staying in their own home and wanting that independence, you're looking at about \$18,000 a year.

I think we have to find that balance between someone who is in social housing, who's basically being compensated for \$18,000 for free rent, free subsidy or free housing, and somebody who's in

their own home. How do you balance that and retain that \$18,000? Sure, we give them a fuel subsidy; we give them tax breaks. I know there's a power subsidy. But, again, I think you have to illustrate the benefits for both groups and not have one group feeling that they're left out and the other group basically feeling guilty for getting something for nothing. I think it's important that we seriously look at that, in regard to this income support review process, so that you can find a fair and equitable program for all those groups that are involved.

I think another critical part through education is the whole area of dealing with the upgrading and whatnot in our small communities. We have these facilities; we're able to accommodate these people; but I think a lot of people that do drop out prior to high school and whatnot are going back to school. Especially seeing individuals graduating from our colleges and whatnot, a lot of these people who were out of school for 15 or 20 years went back again to try to get their high school diploma, or to go to post-secondary education or take a program through our college programs.

Again, I think it's so important that we do everything we can to invest in those programs. I know, a lot of times, that's usually the first place that you cut, but at these different levels of education, regardless of whether it's high school or going through adult education to post-secondary education and off to university and college, we have to have a holistic approach to education and realize that we have to have components for everybody to be able to fit into and not leave anybody out.

I think we are trying to make strides here, but it's in taking advantage of these programs and initiatives. With the amount of potential we have — and I don't think we're able to reach the potential by way of the diamond industry now, with the oil and gas expansions — we have to be able to have our people ready to take advantage of those opportunities. More importantly, we need to promote them to make positive choices and not get them into the social rut that we find ourselves in by way of income support and programs that they get into and they just can't seem to get out of.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We're going to go to Mr. Ramsay next. But before we do that, I'd like to recognize some visitors in the gallery.

We have with us today Foreign Service Attaché Arctic Tour 2008: 18 attachés from 16 different countries, along with their wives and spouses. We have visitors from Argentina, France, Germany, the Hellenic Republic, Mexico, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Sweden, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

They're on a nine-day trip of all territories, with visits to Churchill, Rankin Inlet, Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Dawson City, Resolute Bay, and Iqaluit.

Welcome to Yellowknife, and thank you for joining us today.

I'd also like to recognize Tony Whitford, our Commissioner, in the gallery as well.

Now we'll move along to Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to start off my general comments by thanking the Minister and the departmental staff for the flexibility that they've shown with École St. Joseph. Where there's a will, there's a way.

Interjection.

Mr. Ramsay: Oh, thank you. I think it's a fine example of government looking for a way to get things done. I think the school board did a lot in that regard, as well, but I do want to thank the department and department officials for making that happen.

I think it's a step in the right direction, looking at the PTR again, and we're lowering that from 16 to 15. That's a good thing.

The Arts Strategy: I remember the first Arts Strategy, and this one seems to be coming with a little bit of money attached to it, so that's a good thing. Again, I think what needs to happen with funding that's going into the arts.... Where it's at all possible, I'd like to see the department include Regular Members in discussions regarding where the best use of funds would be and how to slice that pie up. It's not a tremendous number of dollars, but I think if it's spent in the right areas, it could have a huge impact.

I'm concerned over a few things, and I guess the first one that concerns me is the cuts to the wage subsidy programs, and that's \$1.3 million. Instead of just doing away with the wage subsidy program, I think what should happen is we should look at targeting that money into segments of our economy that need some help. That's something I think that should have been given some thought. I'm thinking specifically about child care workers, tourism, service industry, businesses and folks who are having a tough time keeping employees. I think we could do a better job of targeting that money instead of just cutting it altogether and saying the economy is red hot. It might be, in some cases. Big business might be doing okay, but small businesses are suffering; they're having a tough time finding employees. If they could pay their employees a little bit more and get some people in the door and train them and have a wage subsidy

program to fall back on, I think that might be a good thing, Mr. Chairman.

Also, the Housing Corporation, in transferring the administration of social housing back to the Housing Corporation, I think that is something.... The last I heard, you were going out and doing some work, trying to identify what the issues were and were going to come back to Members. But it's been a long time, and I think you've heard it a number of times from Members that we want it back at the Housing Corporation. I'm not sure what you could tell me that could make me change my mind. But again, I'm not sure where that is and why we're taking so long to try to figure out that it was the wrong decision to make in the first place. I'm not quite sure why we're taking so long.

I'm also concerned about the student child care subsidy as well. I know there might not have been as big an uptake on that program as the department would have wanted, but if it's designed specifically for people who are attending post-secondary studies in the Northwest Territories, I think it loses a bit. I could see us using that daycare subsidy for students, even if they're going back to high school, because sometimes young people will get pregnant in high school and have children in high school. In order for them to go back to high school, I think we should make that program available to those individuals as well. So instead of cutting the program, I think we probably should look at the parameters and open it up a bit and then maybe see if there's a need to cut it. I do have constituents that access that pot of funding, and I'd hate to see it go. I think it's something we should have there.

I spoke about this before, Mr. Chairman: the need for more physical education in our schools and the need to get children more physically active. There are schools here in Yellowknife where I'm concerned that they're not getting enough time in the gymnasium. There's a school without a gymnasium, and that's problematic for me. We should be ensuring every school built in the Northwest Territories has a gymnasium — that should be a policy that we live by — and we should be getting more than an hour or an hour and a half a week in the gym if you're in elementary school. I know there could be more funding becoming available to schools, with the lowering of the PTR, and there might be some opportunities for hiring additional staff at the school level. I just think there's not enough time spent in the gym.

That was about it for my general comments, and I'll have a number of questions as we go through the details. Mahsi.

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

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few general comments on the Department of Education. I'm pleased that there's going to be \$1 million spent on children and youth in the department. That's an important aspect for some of the smaller communities. The two small communities that I represent don't really have a stable place where they can run their daycare and so on, so they have a tendency to move around a bit. It will be good to see the department pay close attention to making sure that daycare is available in the smaller communities on a consistent basis. It's not really available on a consistent basis. I'm not sure that the full magnitude of what that causes is really apparent, because often when daycare is not available it's an opportunity for people just to stay home with the kids. We need to be able to make those things available — and that's not occurring — because that has other implications to it.

As far as the pupil/teacher ratio goes, the change in the PTR has very little impact on small communities. I do believe that the change from 16 to 15 allowed the department to add three jobs in the South Slave Education Divisional Council and the southern schools. I'm not sure how the three jobs are distributed, but I'm fairly positive that it's not going to achieve the thing that's most important to the schools in Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution, where they're trying to get some specialized teachers to be able to teach gym and also industrial arts, home economics and whatnot. How this is going to work out.... My assumption is that if a drop of one student for the PTR nets three jobs, then I'm assuming that half a student would net 1.5 jobs. So still, a total over two years is maybe 4.5 jobs. Again, with seven schools — and especially with myself representing the two smallest schools, probably, in that riding, most likely the two smallest schools in that divisional education council — the increases don't really help. I will ask questions on whether the department has had an opportunity to have — or examined the possibility of having — some sort of base level education standard for the schools regardless of the size and whether they recognize that teaching towards just the curriculum now is basically designed for students to move from the high school education to further post-secondary education, which is maybe not in the trades field and the other physical types of fields.

I'd like to see more specialized teachers put into all of the schools as a base minimum so that everyone has a gym teacher and somebody that can teach them industrial arts and some sort of compromise made at the schools and with the department in order to make that happen. It's so important to the students that the department shouldn't just stand by the pupil/teacher ratio and insist that that's the way problems will be resolved. Those issues will never get resolved by sticking with the same system that has been going on for 20 years in these

communities, where they may have never had a gym teacher, for all I know. There may have been some teachers that were able to teach gym, for example. So it would be good to see the department do some work in that area.

Again, just briefly on another topic: income support and the public housing subsidy. I'm pleased to see that the department is paying some attention to resolving some of the issues there. I would look forward to seeing the results of that within the next few months.

I see a positive thing in the trades support. I think that supporting trades is something that arose from some of the students coming out of high school with some propensity to want to work in a trades field if they've been given some exposure. So that's the reason I go back to the specialized teaching. I think we need to have that component of the job in place in order to take full advantage of any sort of trades support that's going to be introduced by the department.

Teachers' housing is an issue everybody talks about. That's also an issue in my riding. The interesting thing I found was that, doing a rough calculation of the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, it shows that from the time the budgets were put into place, there's an increase of about \$35 million. I don't know why that occurs, but I know that the standard reason is that they come into the initial budgets with class D estimates, so I guess we have to do something about tightening up that process. I believe that is on the way, but it's very glaring with this budget, that there are huge increases in all of the capital acquisition. Like I said, \$35 million — that's a substantial chunk of money to be missed, I guess, in the original estimates, so that would be something that I wish the department would review closely and check out the capital, or capital investment, or the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, to ensure that in future the estimates — or anything that's happened this year — are as accurate as possible.

Aside from that, that's what I have for my address to your opening comments.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. General comments, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of things I want to touch on in my general comments. I want to talk about the policy of inclusive schooling that we have here in the Northwest Territories.

I think there are some really good things to be said for inclusive schooling, but not when it's not adequately resourced. If it is not adequately resourced to allow for classroom assistants and

special-needs assistants, then it puts a tremendous stress on the teacher. You're going to be, in any case, dealing with students at many different levels of, I guess, development. I want to say "capacity," but I don't know if that's the right word. Any teacher is going to be dealing with a range, a spectrum of kids, you know, everything from gifted children to children who are maybe slightly more challenged developmentally.

To put teachers in fairly large classroom settings without the resources needed in the classroom I think is doing a disservice to the teachers. It's doing a disservice to the children, the students, and I have concerns about it. This is something I hear quite a bit about from teachers in Hay River, so I am very concerned about it. You can do a certain amount with volunteers in a school, but it is not the solution on a consistent or sustainable basis.

Being from Hay River, where we have a lot of students who do go into areas of trades — and there's a lot of employment in our community related to the trades.... For anybody who has toured our school, we do have a very good opportunity for high school students in Hay River to become involved, to some degree, in preparation for occupations in the trades. I think we do need more of that. We need more support for what we have in Hay River.

What we have done is pretty much attributable to two particular individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in terms of improvising and using innovative ways to try and create as much opportunity and experience for the students as possible at the high school level. I think we need to become more involved in that opportunity. I think the academic stream is good for some children. I think that other students would be greatly served by knowing and participating in things other than perhaps post-secondary, college or university programs.

The nice thing is that there is a tremendous demand for trades in the Northwest Territories, and right now trades are a very profitable occupation to be in, in the sense that they are very well paid as, say, compared to years ago. The demand for trades is going up, and the amount of money that a qualified tradesman can command in a job is quite amazing. So I would like to see more focus on that.

I think we need versatility in our apprenticeship programs. I know there are students who have embarked on apprenticeship training and then for various reasons wanted to take their theory training in places other than where it was offered in the Northwest Territories. That has been strongly disallowed by the folks at the apprenticeship office, and I think that is too bad. I think that could be a detriment to people realizing their potential in this

area. If it does not cost the government any more money, if it is absolutely cost neutral to the government, I think that students in the trades should be allowed to access that training at NAIT or SAIT or other places. A lot of people in the Northwest Territories do come from other parts of Canada. They have family; they have friends; they have people they can stay with. I think that by prohibiting it, it's just creating a barrier that could, if it was dealt with, allow a few more people. I think we need to do everything we can to encourage them.

Some of the other issues that Members raised they've already covered off, so I won't repeat them.

I have to say this because a few years ago I made a statement in this House about the amount of homework that children have, and everybody thought what I said was absolutely outlandish. I've noticed that some other jurisdictions in Canada have now actually moved to pretty much abolish homework. The position that I had on it at the time was that we send our children to school to learn, and we try to turn parents into teachers. When parents don't cooperate with the program and become teachers and supervise homework and provide that structure and discipline for their kids at home at night, those students tend to suffer in the school system. No homework: bad student. Issues at home that would distract parents from being able to take that sit-down time with their kids to supervise homework equal the students not learning the same.

I think that if kids go to school from 9 in the morning until 3 or 3:30 in the afternoon, we should be able to take that time — it's like going to a job or anything else — and make the most of it. I don't think we should be trying to turn parents into teachers. It's nice of them to be involved if they can be, but the students shouldn't suffer if they aren't. That is just something I've thought for many years, having had three children almost go through the school system. I've got one that's got a couple courses yet to go. I think it's discriminatory too. It sets the child who does not have that level of commitment from the parents to be involved in that after-school and evening support at a disadvantage.

As I said in my statement I made a few years ago in the House, I think life is too short. I think it's too stressful on kids to have to go home and do hours of homework. You know, maybe there should be more time for some fun. I think that when they're at school, they should be very focused on their academic training, and their academic training should be very focused on the basics.

I wasn't a great student. I missed a lot of school because my parents had a business. It's like kids who go on the land with their parents here in the

North. My parents had a family business, so I went to work in the store. In the agricultural community around where I grew up, if it was harvest time, the kids missed school. But somehow, in spite of all of that, we came away with basic, good education in math and English and grammar, enough to stand us in good stead to participate in life's experiences. I didn't have post-secondary education, but it was a solid enough foundation that I could embark on things without too many obstacles, just with that basic foundation.

I would like to see a real focus on the meat-and-potatoes kind of education for the kids during the day. Don't load them up with homework so that you make them hate school. I just think it's too much stress on our kids today. You know, if you're lucky and your parents are already teachers or something, you might just turn out to be a genius by school standards, but for the average family that is dealing with all of the challenges of parenting and working and extracurricular activities that they may want their children to be involved in, I just think a whole lot of homework is not a good idea. I know it's maybe a strange position to take to those who are in the education field, but it's a life issue.

I think my point has been proven by the fact that there are jurisdictions — I just heard it in the news the other day — that have actually taken a position to limit homework for children in their education system. So you might want to think about it and check it out in other jurisdictions to see what's happening. I just hate to see children feel like they are somehow less prepared or that they're a failure in school because maybe they didn't have the home situation that had the structure that could get them doing a lot of homework in the evenings.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be pretty brief. A lot has been said already, although I may echo a few areas that have already been spoken to. For areas that I do miss, I wouldn't want people to think they're less worthy. They've been raised quite well by other Members.

I'm just going to follow along with the Minister's statement. There was early childhood education that I wanted to highlight. I'm a big believer in this. What I'd like to see eventually is that this becomes a more coordinated approach. There are a number of bodies out there operating independently. I think that when the government talks about fiscal restraint and synergies, this is one area we could do a lot more with.

I've had the experience with a number of Members from this Assembly to visit Whitehorse. They offer early childhood development opportunities there. They encompass their programs with specialists

who help kids with speech and other developmental issues. I think that's just the next step in our progression to providing sort of an all-inclusive plan for kids. What I'd like to eventually see is a coordinated approach in this regard, and I think it's just a matter of time coming. I'm just looking for the spark in the department to respond to it. Whether they get an oral question this week or next week from me or not I can't say, but I'll tell you that at least this is their notice that it's coming. The fact is that I think, like I said, it's the next progression in the area that we should be getting into and coordinating a little better.

The other thing is that we have a number of organizations, whether they're individual daycares. I mean, everyone can plug into larger opportunities to ensure that our next generation gets the full strength and support coming into the system and as they progress forward. We need that layer system to work together with them. That network needs to be coordinated and organized, and I guess that's kind of why I'm highlighting it in that method.

I will highlight the next area, which is the pupil-teacher ratio. It's certainly a good day for education every time you hear that the department takes a new leap forward in the way of delivering school funding and to ensure that schools can maximize their opportunities. I think it's a fantastic stride that's been taken. Principally, although I don't disagree with formula-based funding where it makes sense — and it certainly makes sense out there — the problem is that we have a small community school in a small community, and you start losing sort of your base. All of a sudden you've still got to operate and maintain and tend to staff at a small school.

How it applies in a large centre, as far as I'm concerned, is probably similar but different. I've always believed that schools should be funded on the principles of what they are, and they're a community as well as an education system. As I view it, every community — the school, that is — should have its principal, should have its administrative staff. It should have a gymnasium. It should have a library teacher.

I've always believed that these elements need to be the building blocks of each community school, whether they're in a big centre or a small one, long before you get into the pupil-teacher ratio. With that, you know, you go to one of the schools in my riding, whether it's Sissons or Mildred Hall, or you go to my colleague Mr. Jacobson's school in Tuktoyaktuk. They will have things like libraries and maybe a science lab teacher to make sure we're delivering a compatible, comparable education system throughout the North, to make sure that no child is given a lesser opportunity.

I think that's the formula that I eventually want to see. I don't expect groundbreaking movement on this, but it's something I'd certainly hope that the department would see in time: that every school deserves these things, whether it's a combination of things. I think it really, ultimately, would be a combination of how that goes.

I will highlight one Member in particular here: Mr. Ramsay. He and I both wrote a letter at least a year ago or so for École St-Cyr here in Yellowknife. They're operating without a gymnasium, and we were the only two who wrote a letter in support at the time. I agree wholeheartedly with his comments saying that no school should be without a gymnasium. The fact is that it doesn't matter for what lame reason someone didn't want to come on board with it. Every school needs an opportunity to have their kids have physical education. I think we do them a disservice as to — it's getting difficulty to hear in here, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Could we have some order in the House, please, to allow the Member to conclude his comments.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As far as I'm concerned, we do the children there a disservice. When we always talk about the principles of supporting education, it shouldn't really be a matter of what community you're from or what region, what big community you're from or what school system you belong to. These principles are our basis of belief, and they're the fabric of why we do things. It shouldn't matter, again, where you're from, what language you speak, what your background is. The same things, I believe, should be spread throughout.

As far as programming goes within the school, I certainly think there need to be more support mechanisms. I've often spoken about the fact that I think school systems — each school district, that is — should have a social worker in there making sure they're available for the kids. Your teachers are your teachers, whether they're seen in a good light or in a negative light some days, the enforcement side. The fact is that they're your teachers; they're not social workers. I think every school system could benefit from someone like that. When I've raised the issue of attendance or whatever problems come in, I think school systems could benefit from something like that. I talked to a couple of districts already, and they think it's a good idea. I think it's an evolution, again, of the education system, where we can now offer the best product to our students, and that's really all I'm after.

Mr. Chair, as time runs out, I'm just going to quickly touch on these things. I won't go into as much detail. I see there's a new investment of \$500,000 for the Arts Strategy. I've spoken in this House about my support for that. I certainly would like to

see an awards-level culture-recognition program, whether it's recognizing it through a yearly event or whatnot. I think it continues to further strengthen people's belief in what they do. We can talk about the business of life, but sometimes it's the quality of life that we tend to forget about. I think the arts always bring quality of life.

Mr. Chairman, as far as college programs go, I'm pleased with the investment that goes to Aurora College. I certainly take no issue with it being in the community of Fort Smith, although it makes you wonder from time to time. My issue really has always been and will continue to be about safety of students and certainly the interest level of students, whether we're running programs in Yellowknife, in Inuvik, or anywhere else. The fact is that if they're not subscribed to, I think we have to start to ask ourselves why we're running them there. To the credit of Fort Smith — and I have said this publicly — they do have good programs running there, so I wouldn't want it to be thought I can't recognize that as well.

Mr. Chair, moving on to career and employment development, although I don't see it here, I'm sure it's just a matter of a briefing note or two away from mentioning the Foreign Worker Program, that I've talked about. I think it fits very well here under the career and development area. I think that will be our next strength, leading into helping bring the North forward in employment strength. We have a number of employers out there that struggle to find technical expertise. It just doesn't exist in this small market, and we can only keep sending so many advertisements to Edmonton and Calgary and continue not to be able to fill these jobs. Then there are the middle-level or lower-level job opportunities. The business sector is just hungry out there for any opportunity to employ anyone. I think this would be a good bridge-building opportunity for our North to continue to build our base of not just population but our diversity.

Mr. Chairman, even with a foreign worker in the Northwest Territories we still get our grant for Canada on that recognition. They don't actually have to be a Canadian citizen. They can be someone here on a foreign-worker pass, and we still qualify for that. So our Finance minister, even though he's on short days, I'm sure knows that it's money in the bank if we can get them here on our roll call when they do our stats across the territories.

Mr. Chairman, as I highlighted about Aurora College, I can't forget the fact that I'm very supportive of further extending our trades here in the North. Just recently I've talked about the cooking school opportunities that exist before us. I would certainly hope that that isn't missed. The value it can bring is not just in the fact that we could be developing opportunities, but we could be

expecting more from ourselves, which I think is something really interesting in and of itself. We could put a higher demand on the skill level we offer people, and I think the need and desire for that extra skill level is out there.

I'm hearing about mining camps that want trained staff at a higher degree. This is certainly the window of it for cooks. Throughout our city there are a number of Red Seal chefs, and there's great opportunity to expand this service. Mr. Chair, I don't think this is a complicated program. I know the Minister has spoken and is, in his words, cautiously optimistic in his way of supporting this. There's still a lot of ground to go forward before it's, obviously, embraced fully, and a lot of work still needs to be done before it becomes a real possibility.

That's it, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to provide those first few comments. I'm pleased with the department and the work the Minister has been doing. Lastly, I'll say that I'm pleased with the relationship the Minister has had with the committee members both on social programs as well as with individual committee members doing their work. Thank you.

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

Mr. McLeod: I'll be very brief here. I know the Minister's been listening to all the comments made from this side of the House, and he's anxious to respond and say yes to all of our asks, so I won't take up too much time.

The thing I've noticed with this budget — and we talk about a budget of reduction — is the word "increase." I've said that with a couple of other departments, and I will continue to have that view as we're going through the budget process with the different departments. This is one that is a very important department, because it is the Education department. So with that I can probably see a slight increase. I've had an issue with budgets coming before us with the word "increase."

The one thing that I would like to comment on is early childhood development. The Minister is well aware of the Children First Society in Inuvik continuing to try to get an early childhood facility. Studies and research have proved that if you can catch them at an early age, you have a better chance of developing them and getting through the system and teaching them. That is their idea, and that's what they want to do.

They're having an awfully difficult time of it, though. They at first asked for some money to help with the facility, and it was just "No, no, no" to everything. All they're asking for is just a piece of property to put this building on that they're going to raise the funds

for themselves. Even at that, they seem to be running into one roadblock after another. We talk about early childhood being important. These are folks that are not just talking about it. They're trying to do something about it, and it just seems that they run into "no" all the time. We don't want to have them lose interest in trying to push their project forward. They're not asking for \$20 million or \$30 million from the government to put their project up. All they're asking for is the donation of a piece of property. I think that's something this department should seriously look at. We can drop millions of dollars on correctional facilities — just bang, like that — and here these people are trying to do something to educate the children when they first get them, and have them go through the system and not have to become wards of the state or clients of a correctional facility.

I think this would go a long way, and I still will continue to push that, as they are pushing it. We've had some meetings with the Minister, and it seems like we try to make some progress, but then we're right back at square one. So that's one of my big concerns.

Another one is the training dollars. Sometimes there's just so many different programs out there you almost get dizzy trying to figure out what's what and where to go and how to access money. You've got ten people administering a program that only one or two should be able to do. I have a concern with that. But the training part of it.... The Mobile Trades Unit in Inuvik, I think, was a good investment. It'll be seen in a few years how much came out of it, but I think for now it was a good investment. It was in partnership — like the Minister likes to mention — with some of the different aboriginal groups. CIBC was actually a partner; the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, and some stakeholders in industry were partners with that.

So I'm looking for some positive things coming out of that, because you well know that trades, as a couple of Members have mentioned, are in high demand. The more we can encourage people — youth — to get into the trades.... Not just youth, I've seen 40- and 44-year-old apprentices still coming out with their journeymen certificates. Years ago Public Works used to have apprentices. We had a huge maintenance shop. We had 30 to 40 people, 30 to 40 trades and apprentices, and seven or eight alone just in the carpenter shop. The way they offer it now is good, as they get out and do some actual hands-on training. We did have a lot of apprentices, for instance, in the carpenter shop. We didn't have as much hands-on experience as I would have liked, but there isn't a door knob in the world that I can't fix, because we did a lot of door knobs.

Interjection.

Mr. McLeod: A former DPW apprentice knows what I'm talking about.

So I see an opportunity there to really push for apprentices, apprenticeship training. I'm glad to see they reinstated some of the money towards the employers to offset the wages, and I think it's a good thing. I think apprentices within the GNWT are underpaid. You can make more working at the local grocery store than you can as an apprentice, so that's something that has to be looked at. But I don't think it's this department's responsibility. I think it's Human Resources, and it's got something to do with this plan that we always hear about. So I don't think it was a fair process.

We try to encourage people to get into the trades, but we don't make it worth their while. At the end of the day, when they're certified, they will start to reap the rewards of their training. But until then they have to live on basically next to nothing. I have a concern with that, which leads me to my next point, which is the income support. I am not a firm-believer in able-bodied people being able to collect a lot of money off the government when you see so many people trying, struggling. There are some out there, I know, who need the support, and I fully support that. There are some disabled people, some elders who need the support. I fully respect that. I see a lot of disabled people regardless of their disabilities still trying to go out and work. I really respect that, while too many able-bodied people are sitting at home. Maybe we just made it too generous for them to stay at home. I know it's not a popular comment to make, but it's the truth.

I think it's something we should have a look at. I think we did agree to bump up the level of income support, but some we may have to look at again. There are people who do continue to need it. There are people living in areas where the cost of living is just unbelievable, and they just can't make the money to keep up with it. But I also think that there is some abuse of the system. I've heard it from contractors who find it difficult to find people to work because they are doing better on income support. So I think it's something we have to look at — if not look at, I think we have to enforce and monitor a lot better. Put these people to work: they can't just be sitting at home watching TV all day while people are out there working and paying into it by way of taxes and stuff like that. So I think it's something we need to have a look at, and monitor, and enforce and make sure the money is going where it should be going.

So, Mr. Chair, I think I have pretty well said enough for one day. I'll be looking forward to getting into the page-by-page. One other comment I do want to make is back in the Minister's statement, which says that Ministerial colleagues and I have made decisions using the priorities of the 16th Assembly

as a guide. There might be some truth to that, but also the Regular Members weren't really consulted as much as we'd like. We did come up with a lot of priorities, and we did see some of them.... I can't remember how many, but I think there may have been a few that have been implemented or put into the budget. But this is some food for thought for the future.

You know, we have to work as 19 Members in here, and we want to make sure that everything that comes in the budget — all the business plans and everything — is a reflection of the views of all 19 Members. At the end of the day, Cabinet has decision-making powers along with the department. I'd like to see Cabinet exercise their decision-maker power a little more over the department, until they get to the point where they realize it's us on behalf of the people of the NWT that are the driving force behind how government should operate and not just be steered in the direction that the bureaucrats have been steering the government for too long. Maybe this is a good thing; maybe they get to realize now that we have the decision-making power and we intend to exercise that. If it means change.... They have been doing things the same way for so long. They are kind of resistant to change, and I think this is a good example of that. I think it is something that we are going to push quite vigorously on this side.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to make a few comments. I have 38 seconds to go, but I am going to stop here.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Comments? I believe that's it for general comments. We'll allow the Minister to respond to those general comments.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Most of these issues certainly will be addressed in the detail. A lot of areas, Members have stated, are important factors to consider. There have been some changes: training of early childhood workers while they're away, arts and performers and culture, increasing funding.

Some of these areas have been stressed in this House, and we did listen to the Members. ALBE — Adult Literacy and Basic Education — has been an ongoing challenge at the community level, but we are certainly noticing that and focusing on where we can improve in those areas. The PTR — we are heavily focused on improving this area. Inclusive schooling: that's also increased by 19 per cent. So those areas that we touch on will certainly benefit the North.

Income Security has been a big issue lately. With respect to the transfer, it's still ongoing. We've done a lot of work in that area. We did present to the committee, I believe, two weeks ago — gave them

an update on the progress we've made. I think we're making great strides in that area.

Income support, as Mr. R.C. McLeod has pointed out — I think it's important to highlight that as well. We are, as a department, focusing on that area. We need to have our community members have productive choices, and one of the areas we're currently developing and want to implement is Ready to Work, as well, in that area. We will be working with Aurora College and different institutions, having a program in place for them, so they can be available for work, prepped for work. We are doing as much as we can in that area.

Teachers' housing is an issue that we've been faced with for a number of years. We met in Norman Wells, I believe, a month ago, and every single chairperson from each region — five regions — did stress the frustration, the losing of the teachers, the recruitment. Recruitment is a challenge. The first question they ask is: what kind of housing do you have? So for that, we invited the superintendent of the group.... All the superintendents were there. The spokesperson met with us this morning; myself, HR, and also the Housing Minister was there. They did give us some options to work with, coming from the chairs and the superintendents of the districts. So we are making progress. I believe we're going to come to some conclusion for the betterment of the communities, and we will be discussing further with the committee, of course — moving forward, finding some solutions in that area. So I think that's good news in that area that we are working together. Mr. Hawkins talked about synergy. We're moving towards that area.

Mr. Chair, most of these issues that were brought to our attention I've touched on. Elders having their own homes and elders in public units — it has been brought to our attention that there needs to be a balance; we've been told. So in those areas we need to look at the program itself. But we can certainly talk further in detail at a later time, because we still have three years of planning to go through this business planning process.

Daycare — the availability and the program itself — has been brought up in this House. There are different types of programs that are available to daycare facilities and individuals that are caring for children. There is funding in place for them.

Apprenticeship, apprenticeship, apprenticeship. That has been highlighted on numerous occasions — even Mrs. Groenewegen in Hay River — starting from school; it has been highlighted. That's part of the reason why we've invested so much in apprenticeship and are reinvesting \$1 million back into the wage subsidy to offset that, and then new initiatives. That's one area we've heard over and

over, so we've made a commitment to focus in that area.

Social workers in the schools — we've heard that if we had more money, then I'm sure a community would welcome that. But we're limited in the funding that we work with. The funding we give out to the school board authorities, it's at their discretion to dispose of in areas of interest: a program that meets the needs of the school, and also the students and the teachers.

Also, the Foreign Worker Program: we are making progress in that area. We met with our Yukon counterparts and federal counterparts, so my staff have been working with those parties. There's ongoing discussion, and we will be submitting a paper on that.

Children First Society — yes, Mr. McLeod has raised that issue. I met with the group I believe three times while in Inuvik. We did receive a letter just late last week from the mayor of Inuvik, approving that there is a lot that they've identified. We just received that, so we will be working with that within our department. So we are making progress in that area.

Mr. Chair, I think that's basically the overall general comments, because some Members alluded to other Members' statements. I don't want to take up much time on general statements, because I think the details would highlight most of those areas. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. What is the wish of the committee?

Interjection.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Detail? Maybe turn your attention to page 8-7, Operations Expenditure Summary, Department Summary: \$293.914 million. We'll defer that until the end. Page 8-8, Active Positions — By Region, information item. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As highlighted in my comments, I just want some clarity on some of the position deletions that are going on within the department. I see that the department is actually increasing by a total of seven positions, yet I'm aware that five employees have been identified and have been told that they'd be affected.

I'm curious — number one — about the status of those five positions. Are they vacant positions? Are they filled positions? I'm also curious what process the department went through in finding areas for reductions, and what criteria they used for identifying positions within the department to have

them declared affected. I'll stop there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. In '08–'09 the proposed reduction — just highlighting the active positions: the coordinator position, Education and Culture branch, one position; administrator position, Official Languages Division, one position. Going on to '09–'10, coordinator, College and Career Development, one position; finance officer, Student Financial Assistance, one position; Strategic Business Services division position, two positions. So the total reduction in that area for '09–'10 is four, and in '08–'09 it's two positions.

Also, due to sunsets that we had, the ASEP coordinator, one position; and also the career education coordinator, a half-time position, has been sunsetted. Mahsi.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to be absolutely clear, that's two positions, not including the sunsetted positions, that are being eliminated in '08–'09. What is the status of those positions? Are they filled, or are they vacant?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education? Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were three positions or people impacted. Two associated with the administrative assistant's position, because that affected two employees. Both employees have been placed and have positions. There is one affected person in the coordinator position that still has to be placed.

Mr. Abernethy: Going to the second part of my first question, I'm curious: you were given targets to find reductions, and I'm curious what criteria you used in order to determine which positions would, in fact, be targeted for deletion.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we went through the reduction exercise, we weighed the priorities that we were given from the 16th Assembly. We also weighed the various priorities that we've identified in our departmental strategic plan. We examined areas where we can possibly rethink how we do our business. Based on those discussions, we subsequently identified positions that could potentially be reduced as a result of changing the way that we do some of our work.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Chairman, I'm done.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to extend a little further than my colleague Mr. Abernethy and get a sense of the evaluation. I heard they did some work to see how they could reduce, but I'm just trying to get a sense of how they went about evaluating whether a position was needed or not. So could either the Minister or deputy minister describe the evaluation process of the eliminated positions — how they went about making that type of decision?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: With respect to the coordinator position, it was tied to one of our proposed reduction activities in the area of assessment, where we proposed to reduce some testing services. Along with that, we're also looking at how we could possibly change some of our regular reporting or receive an assessment. With that in mind, that position was identified as one that could be eliminated. With respect to the position in between the Official Languages area and the Education and Culture area, we assessed the potential for combining the work of those two positions and retaining one position in there.

Mr. Hawkins: The coordinator position.... I'm just trying to get a sense. You dropped the assessment testing. What percentage of that job was related to this testing?

Mr. Daniels: The testing itself that tied with the Alberta achievement test is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 5 per cent. It's the reporting on some of our major publications where there's a more significant impact on the workload there.

Mr. Hawkins: What about the other 95 per cent?

Mr. Daniels: There's other work that the coordinator does as well, in addition to the coordination of some of our major publications, such as our Towards Excellence document that's produced every two years. There's other work that goes on in terms of supporting the school boards and the superintendents in terms of ongoing student assessment and evaluation and reporting.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you. Could — I assume the deputy minister but, of course, the Minister as well — someone expand as to who will now pick up those duties, and how that was decided? Thank you.

Mr. Daniels: We're looking at coming up with some alternatives in terms of those other duties, whether it's other folks who work in the department or possibly working closer or having the school

boards themselves take on an expanded role in those areas.

Mr. Hawkins: I do appreciate the detailed answers the deputy minister is offering; I do want him to realize that.

Now, if we now drop 5 per cent of someone's job, which, you know, for better, for worse, let's not take an opinion. But if we agree with that, then we take away 95 per cent of their job and we give it to somebody else, wouldn't that be the same job somewhere else? Do you not consider an internal competition or...? It doesn't sound like you picked a process or a lucky recipient of who will be responding to these new duties.

So I'm just trying to get a sense of process in this particular case, because it doesn't sound like there's a plan in place to figure out what you're going to do, but you still want to do it. Could somebody comment on that?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I think this area that we're referring to, as the deputy alluded to.... It will be distributed among other staff members in that particular department. I guess the rationale for cutting this position was the demands for job requirements for NWT students that are involved with Alberta achievement testing that the Member highlighted — 5 per cent — and also rescheduling of the Towards Excellence document's biyearly schedule.

So it's just, I think, more of allocating the duties to the existing staff that we have on hand. That's part of the decision that we made as a department. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Would the Minister have any thoughts as to, now, if we distribute the duties, we're now creating similar jobs? In other departments, I see that, you know, when jobs are all similar and they don't just point the finger at one person; they — whether I agree or disagree — they.... When you're losing one position out of a group of positions, you get everyone to apply. Therefore, you still keep the best and most qualified staff on strength.

I'm just wondering if that approach is being reconsidered in this particular case, because that sounds like we've taken one job; we've given people their duties. But we're now telling them that they can't apply for the job. We've just sort of given the job to someone else. I guess I'm just trying to understand that methodology.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The duties of that position are spread out within the department, the staff that

we currently have. So once we eliminate this position, really there's no position there. We felt that the 5 per cent for achievement tests and also the other remaining 95 per cent, the workload carries on with the other staff members that we had on board, and we will be scheduled to actually list the frequent reporting of the position. So that's part of the reason why we've initiated this process.

Mr. Hawkins: Just one last question at this second, Mr. Chair, and I can go into further details that this position actually comes up on.

But I think Mr. Devitt had made mention, in some form or fashion, that this position has yet to be placed. Is it anticipated that as the Minister has a vacancy, assuming it goes forward in this form — the budget, that is — is there a position that this person will be placed in?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Certainly the opportunity is there within Mr. Devitt's department, so we are exploring other options out there within our department. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions with regard to the active positions as well. Relative to the coordinator position, I just heard the Minister state that there will be less reporting due to the loss of this particular position, and I guess it led me to wonder: does the department not think that there's a value in the assessment and evaluation that this particular position is currently doing? How will less reporting allow education authorities to keep to the high standards of programming that we want them to adhere to?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The plan is for us to move to more of a five-year cycle for our major reporting on documents like Towards Excellence. It's a similar approach that we've taken with the post-secondary indicators document that we've produced. There will be other avenues of reporting that the Education Councils are responsible for submitting back to the department on a regular basis. Our department will continue to monitor closely and work with the respective Education Councils. Thank you.

Ms. Bisaro: I accept the explanation, but I guess we have to disagree. I also would like to ask the department if more of an onus is now going to be on education authorities to provide some of this reporting, will they be getting funding to allow them to do that to the standard that is required?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. This is one area that we did talk about as a department. Certainly, we need to look at various options, because we do still have a three-year planning process. We need to work with the organizations at the community level, the education authorities. Some do have a tendency to continue with the AATs. They do have that flexibility to do so.

At one point in time the Alberta achievement test was free for the Northwest Territories, but they started charging us \$500,000 a year. Based on that, we figured eliminating that area would save us money over time, but at the same time there is interest from education authorities to continue with the process. There are functional grade levels and also assessment tools that each education authority has, and they continue checking their students in that area.

Ms. Bisaro: I understand, Mr. Minister, that the cost of the Alberta achievement test is pretty prohibitive, but I heard you say that you're going to have the education authorities do more of their own reporting. I wasn't thinking of the testing so much but of the reporting that the department is going to require of them. If they're doing more of the reporting that is currently and previously was done by the department, will they get extra funding to allow them to do that?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: This is something that we may have to look at. There aren't currently.... We don't really have plans in place at this point. Certainly, we'll take that as notice. We'll certainly work within our department.

Ms. Bisaro: I guess I would suggest to the department that if you're considering spending money or giving money to the education authorities to do this reporting, perhaps you should keep this position.

Another question that's in a bit of different area, but I'd like to know whether or not the department at this point has any vacant positions.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: At this time we're not aware of any vacant positions, but there are staff members moving on and being recruited at the same time, so at this point we don't have an actual number of vacant positions.

Ms. Bisaro: I'm not sure I quite understood that, but I think I heard you say there aren't any long-term vacant positions at this point. The only vacant positions are ones that have been vacant for a short period of time. Could I get that confirmed please?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's true.

Ms. Bisaro: I have one other question. We received some information from the department — the Standing Committee on Social Programs — in response to one of our questions. It has to do with the active positions, and it's a note at the bottom of the page under Strategic Initiatives, which indicates that the addition of 3.5 positions for Strategic Initiatives excludes a Trade Initiative estimate of approximately 20 education authority teaching positions for '08–09. I'd like to get clarification of what that note means. When I read it, I take it to mean that the education authorities will be hiring 20 positions spread across all the authorities, I presume. If I could get some comment on that, please.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The information that the Member is sharing is toward the PTR status. Mahsi.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, and that's what I assumed it was, but does that suggest that the education authorities are going to be hiring an extra...? Over all of the education authorities, are their numbers of staff going to increase by 20? Thank you.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, yes that's correct — the number of PYs toward the education authorities. Mahsi.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you. I'll just leave it for now, but I do have a question in relation to that when we come to staffing for the education authorities.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, maybe I could suggest we take a short break right now, and then when we come back, we'll have Mr. Bromley in the loop. Take a short break.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We're under Active Positions — By Region, information item, page 8-8. Wish of the committee?

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Department Summary, Active Positions — By Region, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-9, information item, Active Positions — Community Allocation.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Department Summary, Active Positions — Community Allocations, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-10, Revenue Summary, information item. What is the wish of the committee? Agreed? Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're on page 8-10. I just want to understand what the

increase in the early learning and child care was due to, from \$60,000 to \$265,000.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. That increase was due to the fact that the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development of Canada provided funding to implement the universal child care benefit.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley?

Mr. Bromley: That's fine. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Anything else on the page? Okay. We're at Revenue Summary, information item, page 8-10.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Department Summary, Revenue Summary, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Turn to page 8-13, Directorate and Administration, Operations Expenditures Summary, Activity Summary: \$7.841 million. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair. I see travel has gone up by about 68 to 70 per cent. I think, as we all know, we're trying to cut back quite a bit. Is there an explanation for that, or is this an opportunity for a motion?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: My understanding is there has been an increase through internal reallocation to reflect the actual expenditures. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 8-13. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you to the Minister for that. If I understand it, the actual expenditures have been greater in previous years; it just wasn't recognized in this accounting.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, Mr. Chair; that's correct.

Mr. Bromley: Do we know what expenditures were, or is it a mystery?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, I can certainly tell you that it's not a mystery. Maybe I could get Mr. Devitt to possibly give some detailed information on that.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, the expenditure on travel in 2006–07 was \$202,000. I believe in the latest fiscal

year it was about \$130-some thousand. I don't have the exact figure here. So the \$125,000 now budgeted is very close to last year's actual expenditures.

Mr. Bromley: That's fine. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Next I have Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering if the department had, vis-à-vis the Minister obviously, some explanation and definition as to what falls under Purchased Services, Contract Services, as well as Fees and Other Payments — they seem to cover quite a large element here — based on a further breakdown, they could offer the committee for insight.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The Purchased Services was transferred to PWS for mailroom services. The Fees and Payments, Management Services, \$35,000 increase, is through internal reallocation to cover that increase in accounting software maintenance costs. If I miss out on any, Mr. Devitt can certainly elaborate.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, if I understood, part of the question was also about what types of things were included under Purchased Services. It includes things like freight, communications, courier charges, postal, I think would be the main items that we have budgeted there.

Mr. Hawkins: If I could trouble the Minister, could we go through the same process for Contract Services, Fees and Payments and Other? Other is listed at over \$2 million, so this seems to be a significant number to go without some type of breakout.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, I'll just highlight some of the larger items.

In the case of Contract Services, it would be the systems contracts that are located there, and that's about \$400,000. There are also some other smaller amounts. Fees and Payments would include.... Things like software licences would be a substantial component of that. The largest item referred to by the Member is the Other. Almost all of this is for the chargebacks paid for TSC and central systems. Then the computer hardware and software component for the Evergreen is budgeted under computer hardware and software for the TSC.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, just a little further on those other expenses, I understand we have a chargeback that really speaks to the lion's share, if

not all of that money: the \$2.129 million. I'm just curious as to why it's so high in just the directorate. Although you cite 32 employees under the directorate, are you picking up the expenses for anyone else, such as the school boards or any other association? I just find it a little large, that's all. Could you explain if it encompasses just the directorate or where else it goes?

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, \$3.3 million of the approximately \$3.9 million budgeted in other expenses is for systems. This includes systems for the whole department and, as well, the chargebacks for across government, which are about \$2.4 million of this. That explains why it's such a large amount.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 8-13. Directorate and Administration Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary, \$7.841 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Directorate and Administration, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$7.841 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-14, information item, Directorate and Administration, Active Positions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Directorate and Administration, Active Positions, information item (page 8-14), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-15, information item, Directorate and Administration, Active Positions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Directorate and Administration, Active Positions, information item (page 8-15), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 8-17, Education and Culture, Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary, \$173.231 million. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to seek a little information on this page. I just want to get a sense as to what new initiatives are planned under the arts area. I believe that falls under the Culture and Heritage division, possibly. Could the Minister expand on where some of that \$500,000 will start to appear, as initiatives, that is?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The breakdown on the \$500,000 that's before us: the Arts Council and the Northern Performers, \$65,000; the new northern theatre arts for youth focus, \$50,000; the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre,

increased \$80,000; cultural projects, \$35,000; cultural organization, \$70,000; registered heritage centres, \$100,000; new emerging heritage centres, \$50,000; and contract services program planning and development, \$50,000.

COMMITTEE MOTION 34-16(2)
TO REINSTATE \$110,000 FOR THE
COORDINATOR ASSESSMENT AND
EVALUATION POSITION, DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT,
UNDER THE EDUCATION
AND CULTURE ACTIVITY
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Hawkins: At this time I'd like to move a motion. I move that this committee strongly recommends that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding in the amount of \$110,000 for the proposed elimination of the coordinator of assessment and evaluation position under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, under the Education and Culture activity.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. The motion has been circulated. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: The reason I'm moving this motion is because I feel very strongly about what they do in this position. They work with the school boards. In a time when we talk about accountability to ensure that our education system is meeting the needs of the students — obviously the ones we want to teach — I think it's principled to make sure we have our system running in a fine-tuned way. That said, we have a person here who does the work to ensure the system is working properly, it's communicating and it is providing good value. I'm just nervous at this time to hear that this position will be re-profiled in such a way that it's being eliminated, but yet some of the duties are being pushed off to other areas.

As for the document Towards Excellence right now, I'm probably not a good judge to say if we could live without it. The question is if it's a valued product. I think this whole strategy sort of needs to be thought out a little further.

As far as losing the Alberta achievement tests, it's kind of like these things come and go. This week the flavour is "Let's save some money here." That may be the end result, and it may work fine. But I wouldn't be surprised if we have a new initiative in two years, where someone turns around and says, "These are important things. How do we live without them?" So I'm just worried.

I know the Department of Education probably didn't pick this decision out of a hat, but I'm just cautious at this time to assume that enough work went into

this strategy to figure out who is going to do this. It's my understanding that this is quite technical work and requires not just integrity in the sense of competency. There's a lot to it, and just to let it fall in someone's lap and to say, "You're now going to do this duty," I can't imagine that there are too many individuals who will be running forward to say they want to do this strategy and analysis on this work.

I would define this as weakening our education system, when we constantly talk about how important it is and how we continue to deliver quality education programming. More often than not we hear about the fact that people don't feel as if there's a balanced system throughout the North, and I think this provides those types of strengths.

We talked about it at length earlier, and I don't think I need to continue any further than that. But I would like to request a recorded vote on this when it comes time to vote. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell): Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Robert McLeod.

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

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

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Results of the vote are: nine in favour, zero against, seven abstentions.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In looking at this section under Grants and Contributions, I see that \$137.498 million is going for education authority contributions. Now, this isn't a giant increase from the previous year. This is the area I was talking about in my opening remarks or my comments or response to your opening remarks.

I've heard a lot of rumours and rumblings about what's going on in the individual education authorities. A lot of those comments have been

similar to those that we have been hearing out of the health authorities: that the budgets that have been set for this year aren't a significant growth, and as a result they're going to have to do a lot of downsizing or changing how they're delivering programs. Obviously, this doesn't show us any detail, and it doesn't show us the results of the budget for the authorities. So I'll just get to the point. Are these budgets that have been targeted for the authorities going to result in job losses down the road, future reductions, changes to programs, reduction in programs so that the district education authorities can actually continue to fund and operate? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. With our Department of Education, Culture and Employment we gave contributions to educational authorities based on enrolment in the school years. As you know, there's been a decrease in enrolment, meaning there will be fewer teachers in some areas. But that's what we're faced with as challenges within our department. So that's what I think the Member is referring to: the impact on the region. There is impact throughout the North in the 33 communities that we serve. So yes, there are some impacts due to declining enrolment.

Mr. Abernethy: Were the authorities given the same sort of direction that the departments were, which was to find reductions, to find areas to reduce spending, to increase efficiencies and all of those types of things?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: That wasn't part of the process that we went through. Certainly there's going to be some relooking at the boards and agencies, under Mr. Miltenberger's leadership, the restructure of the boards and agencies. That's one area that will be focused on. So we haven't gone to the authorities to target the reductions.

Mr. Abernethy: So they weren't told to find reductions at this point in time. They're just told to live with what they're getting based on their enrolment levels.

Given that there is this work being done by Mr. Miltenberger's group there, were they encouraged in any way, shape or form to begin the process of finding some reductions within their system, streamlining, getting better value for the dollar?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, the boards are required to develop budgets that the boards approve and then submit to the Minister annually. The boards are

aware — because we fund on prior year enrolments — of the enrolment changes and the impact on their budget. But we haven't yet formally communicated the change due to the reduction in PTR associated with the trades initiative.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Next on the list I have Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I need a better explanation, I guess, of that last answer. I don't quite understand when Mr. Devitt says that the change due to the PTR hasn't been communicated. It kind of goes to my previous question. If there are going to be 20 more education authority staff due to the reduction in the PTR, you're telling me that's not reflected in this number on page 8-18?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, the increase due to the trades initiative or reduction in PTR is included in this budget. Because it hasn't been passed by the House, we haven't actually formally communicated it to the boards, but they are aware of it now because it's public information. It is included in the numbers here.

Ms. Bisaro: I guess I need to know where the increase is, because I'm looking at Education Operations & Development, Schools, and we go from a Revised Main of \$117 million to Main Estimates in '08–09 of \$115 million. So I don't see that as an increase.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair. There are a number of changes in these numbers. I'd have to actually go and list them, so if you could give me a second. They include the impact of the reduced enrolment, changes — increases — with average salary, the estimated impact of past collective agreement increases and the PTR reduction. The number that the Member is looking at is actually a combination of two school years' amounts as well: the 2007–08 school year and the 2008–09 school year. So overall I think the decrease would be partially attributable to the decreased enrolment.

Ms. Bisaro: I accept the argument that decreased enrolment is obviously going to decrease the total amount that's going to be granted and contributed to schools. But, again, like Mr. Abernethy, I'm concerned that all the education authorities are facing huge forced-growth costs, particularly due to fuel costs. I guess I would like some reassurance from the department that the forced growth of the education authorities has been considered in the funding that they're going to be getting in '08–09.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, I'll speak specifically to the fuel costs. We have a sufficient reserve in the contribution to cover past year increases due to utilities. But we fund boards at the end of the year

for utility increases based on actual expenditures. So the increases for the upcoming school year have not been built in to this amount yet.

Ms. Bisaro: My next question would be: in the school year starting in September of '08, will the per capita funding for education authorities be the same amount as it is in this current school year, the one that ends in June of '08? Thank you.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, I don't know the exact amount, but the answer is generally yes, if not a little higher.

Ms. Bisaro: I just have one other question in another vein. I mentioned in my opening remarks that I'm not sure how reducing the PTR is going to enhance trades training in every school in every education authority. I would wonder if the Minister of the department could give me an explanation as to how reducing the PTR for a school of, say, 50 or 100 children is going to allow them to enhance the trades training.

Chairman (Krutko): Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The PTR for the trades that we talked about here, reducing by 0.5 with additional staff for trades program.... The additional \$500,000 in funding for trades, materials and supplies is also planned. Proportional to the increase in funding is also the cost for April and June of the 2007–2008 school year.

Ms. Bisaro: Let's see if I can rephrase this. If I work in a school that has 75 students in it, and I'm a principal of the school and I know that my PTR is going down by 0.5 for the upcoming school year, that's probably not going to net me very much in terms of the PY. I'm asking the department if they can advise me how, as a principal, I'm supposed to increase the trades training in my school.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I'll certainly get Mr. Daniels to elaborate on that. The 0.5 we're referring to here — that's just one area. When we get into a new initiative, there'll be other trades areas that we'll be focusing on as well. This is just one initiative we're carrying on from a previous initiative that was a ministerial directive. So if I can get Mr. Daniels to elaborate further.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There'll be, likely, a variety of approaches the school and the District Education Authorities use to increase supports for the trades in the schools. In some cases, it might be dedicated teachers; in other cases, it might be sharing of teachers who provide delivery on a rotational basis.

Ms. Bisaro: Just one last question. Do we have any schools in our system that don't go beyond,

say, grade 8 or grade 9 — that don't have 9–12 grade levels — where one would presume that the trades training would be targeted?

Mr. Daniels: There are still a couple of schools in the Northwest Territories where we have not had a full extension of the grades all the way up to grade 12. It's down to a handful of schools in a few communities. I don't have the exact number here with me or which communities, but there are a few out there yet that don't have the full grade 12 program.

Ms. Bisaro: I said it was one last question, but I have one more following that answer. If it's a school that only goes to, say, grade 8 or grade 9, I'm curious to know what kind of trades programming is going to be delivered to those students.

Mr. Daniels: If I can just maybe clarify that the 0.5 reduction in the PTR for trades is targeted at the grades 10–12 part of the school system.

Ms. Bisaro: The light bulb just went on. I'm done.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Next on my list I have Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering what proportion of the \$6-point-something million that's being added to the Early Childhood program is in this, and where those dollars have been allocated.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We've added \$1 million back into the \$6.5 million to offset the Language Nest program. In addition to that, the team of regional consultants is to be enhanced by 1.5 positions. So it's focused on the early childhood, the Language Nest program.

Mr. Bromley: I think that's partially answered my next question, and that's whether this was integrated with the Official Languages Division. As we know, the highest potential for learning language is in the early years of life.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Yes, that's part of the move, to highlight the Early Childhood, the language barrier — enhancing that area and also the sunset of the Language Nest funding. It's offsetting that million dollars to continue with the Language Nest program. So part of that is the language. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: Yes. Thank you for that. So let's see. As I understand it now, the Early Childhood has been bumped up one and a half million. We've lost a million in languages through a sunsetting. So

we've got a net change of plus half a million to those two programs. Is that correct?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The sunset of the previous funding in place that was in there for the Language Nest program was about \$760,000, roughly. So the million dollars that's going back in will help replace that funding that was sunsetted.

In addition to that, as the Minister stated, there'll be another 1.5 PYs plus another position added to support the overall administration of Early Childhood programs.

Mr. Bromley: I'm wondering, if the schools really have the potential to demonstrate a lot of our efficiencies and values to students — and I'm thinking particularly in the area of energy.... When there are particular energy-efficiency opportunities or renewable-energy opportunities — when they're profiled in the schools, made use of in the schools — they can also play an educational role.

I've tried to get this sort of thing in, but I found the department is quite reluctant to change the look of its schools and this sort of thing. I'm wondering if there's been some rethinking on that, and whether this is an opportunity that, given our priorities, the department might be pursuing in this particular program, Education and Culture?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I'm just wondering if the Member's referring to within a school or is it the school as a whole. We are working with PWS on the new building structures with our future schools. Most of them, of course, will be energy efficiency.

So those are taken into consideration. I think the Member might be referring to the current status we're at now; energy efficiency is taken into consideration. I do believe some schools have taken those into consideration as well, with the windows and so forth. Certainly, we are taking those into consideration from the schools' perspective. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. I was also thinking of programming and along the lines of things that were highlighted — literacy and ecology and sort of a new approach that's required.

When we do have renewable-energy systems and energy-efficient systems in our schools, it's an opportunity to bring that into the programming. It can apply to math and literature and social studies. You know, it's obviously tied to all of these things. It's an opportunity. So I guess I'm just encouraging, if that hasn't been done explicitly, that some thought be given to that. I see that as fundamental to the long-term well-being of our territory.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, we'll certainly take that into consideration. I believe we started a process where.... I do believe it's a social studies area. They've developed a new textbook reflecting on the North. Many pictures in the actual textbook are from the North itself. It does reflect the northern artifacts, the northern climate; the climate change is also part of that. Certainly, we'll take the Member's concern and suggestion into consideration, just to enhance our program. We're always looking for improvements in our program delivery. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: I appreciate that. By way of a more explicit example, Sir John Franklin High School has an array of solar photovoltaics that have the monitoring in the classroom, and this sort of thing, so our youth can get hands-on experience, rather than just sort of thinking about it academically or something. They can actually have real experience they can take into their own homes, and so on. I think the Minister's.... I appreciate his remarks here.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Certainly, I think we're on the path with modern technology. I think we're getting to more of an energy efficiency. Just having the example of Sir John Franklin, we can certainly utilize a similar project in other schools as well. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 8-17. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the issues I raised is better coordination through Early Childhood services. I was wondering what the Minister is doing in the sense of providing early childhood services, such as speech pathology. We do other things as well. Also, I was raising the issue of coordinating these a little better. We have inclusive schooling and we have language problems associated here, but I'm talking about early education — kids around the age of four and whatnot. I was wondering what is provided right now, and how he coordinates them.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Education.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. This was one of my areas of concern when I was a Regular Member. It certainly is one of the focuses where we have the speech pathologist and the language specialist in the schools, visiting those small, isolated communities especially. We do have visitation schedules for those skilled professions visiting schools, but I do believe that there is always room for improvement. So certainly, that's one area that has been highlighted, as the Member indicated.

We do work with Social Services and also the RCMP and different organizations, aboriginal organizations as well. So we do what we can to have an open communication dialogue with the

schools especially — the administration, the school boards. We'll continue with that service in that regard.

Mr. Hawkins: I'm aware of a couple of community service organizations that run Early Childhood programs here. One good example would be the toy lending library; and then, of course, we have the Four Plus programs that are running throughout. I'm just wondering how they're coordinated throughout to ensure we're providing consistent programming and to ensure these program providers have both the skills and competencies to be able to do this job.

The issue for me, really, is... Are we also using our resources wisely? I often wonder if somebody took the time just to bring a few of these groups under one umbrella, we'd probably get a bigger bang for the buck. As everybody's trying to pull back funding and finding new ways to fund things with less money — trying to get more out of it with less of a buck — I see this as an area that requires better coordination. With that said, I just wondered what the Minister thought of that proposal in that regard, so they work a little tighter together.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It would be one of our efforts to provide increased coordination and support for Early Childhood programs. The budget that's proposed, in front of you, is composing 2.5 positions to help in the area of Early Childhood programs to provide some of those supports for those providers out there, including monitoring of program delivery and helping programs get off the ground.

Mr. Hawkins: What about a more coordinated approach about bringing them together? Has the department examined that perspective?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, certainly that can be one of the options we can look at as a department. We've got to find, like the Member has indicated, a coordinated approach. We need to meet with these organizations that do deliver essential services to the students in the early childhood area. This is one area we can discuss with him. As I said earlier, we are always looking for areas of improvement. If this area needs some improvement, we'll take that into consideration.

Mr. Hawkins: I'll take that as a willingness to hear more about the problem and, you know, assess it at that time, so I'll leave it at that.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We're on page 8-17, Activity

Summary, Education and Culture, Operations Expenditure Summary. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Under the Official Languages Division, one of your responsibilities is the revitalization of languages. As you know, the group I represent — especially the Gwich'in language — is being threatened. Now you have the responsibility that used to be under the onus of the Languages Commissioner.

Have you enhanced those dollars to go to the different cultural organizations, and is there a top-up to those organizations that have language difficulties to ensure they're able to salvage those languages that are being threatened? I'd just like to know that. Is there ability for those groups to receive more money based on these different programs because of the circumstances they find their languages in?

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi. Mr. Chair, this area is one of the focuses of our department. As you know, and as the Member has alluded to, we are losing our languages in the North. It was one of the discussions of the Dene Nation Assembly, as well, to revive and revitalize our languages. We do have some agreements in place with the federal government as well. As you know, there is a Canada and NWT cooperation agreement, and we do have our own GNWT contribution to aboriginal groups that do deliver GLC program dollars. With our department moving forward, we're going to plan on a three-year business plan, and this will be one of the areas of focus. I believe the Member did question the House, as well, about the recommendations that were brought forward by the Official Language Commissioner. Those areas have been highlighted. That will be one of the focuses of our department on moving forward. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: In regard to the issue I raised early in the week concerning the Dene font and also having the ability to deal with it by way of the cuts and whatnot, I'm just wondering if... Knowing that you have to have the individuals who have the technological abilities to find that technology, to find the computer hardware that you are going to need to put it in place, in regard to having an IT person that can do that so that we're able to take advantage of that technology... I'm just wondering: have you been able to look into that, and is that something we can see some movement on very soon?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I appreciate the Member's suggestion in that area. There is a need for improvement in that area. We are working closely

with aboriginal groups, the revitalization and the Official Languages group. We do have within our department the language department.

There is a scheduled meeting in August to deal specifically with what the Member is referring to. I think it's important to highlight that as one of the areas where we are saving our language. That will be one of the topics of discussion at the August meeting, Mr. Chair. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chairman, in regard to languages, looking at other groups and cultures around the world, I think the most important thing in any language is to be able to use the language in regard to the day-to-day lives of the individuals that belong to those language groups.

But in the North it seems like it's not being forced on groups to promote, enhance and speak the language as a working language. I know I had an opportunity to travel to Wales a number of years ago. They almost lost their language, but the only way they were really able to bring it back was that they had to legislate it in as a working language, where people actually used it in their day-to-day commerce, their shopping. They promoted it in their stores, in regard to their signage. They promoted it everywhere as a working language.

I know that your response and also the department's is to maintain and enhance those languages. I'm wondering where exactly you're going not only in trying to protect those languages, but also to enhance them and make them officially working languages.

You yourself, Mr. Minister, know the Tlicho language. The Tlicho communities are a very strong culture because of those language abilities. They're able to use it as a working language by way of the Tlicho government, in regard to the speaking of the residents and using it as a day-to-day language.

I'm just wondering: are you are considering looking at and promoting languages more by way of enhancing those languages? I know the French are very strong in the North. They do everything they can to promote and enhance their language. I think that also has to apply to First Nations languages.

So again, I'd like to ask the Minister: is that something that's being contemplated by way of financial support, to do more of that in the Northwest Territories?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, certainly, as the Member alluded to, that's one prime area of interest for our department moving forward in the next three years, three and a half years.

As we indicated earlier, the languages in this area were sunsetted. We committed a million dollars to that. Also, the Member indicated the Tlicho area and the Gwich'in. We are slowly losing our languages, so we are stressing that, and part of that means investing some more dollars into sponsoring the ALCIC program, the aboriginal language and instructor program, and also the TEP program, which will be delivered in all regions. The hope is that we are going to recruit those teachers that do speak the language and certify them to become teachers and teach in their own schools, speaking their own languages. As part of the curriculum development, I understand the Gwich'in area and the Sahtu have started that in their schools, and we certainly want to see that in other schools as well.

What I can say here is that one of our main focuses as a department is the language development. That has been directed to us by the Dene Nation Assembly a couple of months ago. We are going over the recommendations that were brought forward, specifically pertaining to our department, and one of them is language and also the youth conference, specifically dealing with the language laws and so forth.

Certainly, that's one of the areas that my department will move forward on and improve in that area. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: A last question: could you give me the amount of money that is going to be spent on ALCIC?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, in the past it's been delivered on a part-time basis. Now we're considering full-time, so we're putting \$120,000 towards Aurora College to deliver that on a full-time basis.

Mr. Krutko: You said that Aurora College is going to be delivering the program. Is it going to be in the regional colleges or simply at one central location, say, Yellowknife? Where is it going to be delivered out of to Arctic College?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, we are currently delivering that in one of the regions, the Deh Cho region, and we're going to be delivering that in other regions as well, not just necessarily the Yellowknife area. We will be delivering in different parts of the five regions that we have.

Mr. Krutko: When do you expect to have them delivered in all five regions of the Northwest Territories?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, the one that has been delivered just outside of here, Behchoko, I believe they are wrapping up at the end of this

month. That was just a pilot project, and then we'll be moving on to other regions. I don't have a schedule of the courses and where they're going to be delivered, but we can certainly provide that to the Member.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: I had no questions.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Okay. We're on page 8-17, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Operations Expenditure Summary. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to get some details here, if this is a good place to speak to the expansion of Aurora College. I'm curious: what's the plan on the horizon to develop some strategic initiative to get Aurora College out of NUP and into an independent campus?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I'm trying to find it on this page, but I don't see it. That's part of the planning stage. That's what I can share with the Member at this point.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you very much. I can wait, but I'll certainly take that as a commitment that something is being planned.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. There is no question. We're on page 8-17, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$173.231 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$173.231 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We'll go to 8-18, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Program Delivery Details: \$173.231 million. Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to do something completely different here. I'm going to ask questions on the actual numbers in the budget. I want to ask the Minister about the Professional Improvement, \$1.4 million: is that money that's agreed to as part of the contract signed with the teachers?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We're trying to figure out which area. I do believe it was

from a previous commitment that was made, not a new commitment.

Mr. McLeod: I apologize for that, because if I'd have turned the page, I would have noticed that, like you said, the same number is under Grants and Contributions, and it does say "as per the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association Collective Agreement." So I was going too fast.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I didn't hear a question there. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to get a sense. It looks like there's a dip in school funding. Can the Minister explain why there's a dip and where it's either referenced or if he had sort of an explanation? Is it specific to a region? Thanks.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Just for clarity, are you back on page 8-18?

Mr. Hawkins: Well, for clarity, yes, but it does come up later. I'm speaking to 8-18, yes.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, if I can get Mr. Devitt to elaborate on that. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, in terms of explaining contributions, there are information pages that are perhaps a little easier to follow. This particular dip that's being referred to is actually a result of a number of changes I explained earlier but also of the decrease in infrastructure contributions associated with the capital contributions for the St. Joe's project previously budgeted. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: Okay. Setting aside the infrastructure costs of that being a dip in that particular case, has school funding been relatively the same or stabilized, which is the same thing? Is it still the same, or has it changed?

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, the actual formula funding or per capita funding, to use a simpler term, will be probably slightly higher in the upcoming year.

Mr. Hawkins: Has the department ever examined a different principle or style of funding them? As I highlighted in the opening remarks, it's my thought that schools should get a base funding and then work from there on the PTR. When I referenced base funding, I was suggesting that each school board, either the school board or how it breaks down further, should be funded at the start with a principal, a librarian, custodial staff, and then once you have a functioning community there, you can fill it, of course, with students.

But as it exists now, I'm concerned that the school boards have to make choices, and the choice they have to make is that they get into a problem where they're only given funding for .5 of a staff or less when it comes to admin or whatnot, and then they have to start scrambling to make their funding work. From what I've seen and what I've heard in smaller communities, the challenge gets even worse when your funding is based on those things and you're in a small community and you want to try to offer reasonable options for kids in learning programs.

So with all that sort of background said, has the department ever considered any other option to ensure that all schools had a base funding to them attached to principal programs?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, that was one of the recommendations or was considered as part of our discussion within our department. There has been some adjustment to the smaller schools. We increase their funding to meet the needs of the isolation of their schools.

Mr. Hawkins: Is the Minister suggesting that we have two formulas?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Mr. Chair, there is basically one formula that determines the amount of funding that goes out. However, the formula is adjusted for our smaller schools, taking into account economies of scale and that type of thing. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: Then wouldn't that be two formulas?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: We are using the one formula for all schools, but we're just adjusting to the small communities because there are some challenges in the smaller schools.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I'm not disagreeing in any way that funding adjustments need to be reflective of situations that have to make them work. If the Minister either hears me or should be listening carefully, I'm speaking to the fact that I think they should be accommodating those things.

But I think this is a formula that could work in the long haul for every school equally, where we start funding them appropriately. A building should be properly staffed and properly maintained, or else we end up getting into deficits. What I mean by that is it could be an educational deficit, where we don't have the appropriate teachers to teach all the courses needed, and therefore the kids are missing out, or we don't have the proper staff to run the facility, or it's a deficit of finances when it comes down to maintaining the building. I feel very strongly about the examination points of this.

I guess my question to the Minister is: would they take a look at other jurisdictions to see if this is their funding principle on how they fund some of the school organizations to ensure that certain sizes of school have music teachers, certain sizes of schools have librarians, those types of things? They don't fall under the typical funding formula.

That said, the leftover money — the school boards are challenged to make sure they continue to deliver competent programs, and I think they do. But I think they're already running at full pace to make sure they can deliver what they have to deliver. I think, truthfully, it's my opinion that the choices given to them are extremely limited, and it makes it excessively challenging.

With all of that said, I guess I look to the Minister and ask: would they take on the challenge to take on the task to get out there and take a look at how other jurisdictions fund their schools and see if it's comparable to the Northwest Territories, to ensure we're delivering the same solid funding levels, in principle again, to our schools as they do out there?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: It's great to compare other jurisdictions. In Ontario, of course, they get more funding than we do. But we certainly will look into that matter and find out what other jurisdictions are offering.

Mr. Hawkins: I will take that as a commitment, and I look forward to seeing that coming down my way. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for his willingness to look into that problem.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. No question. We're on page 8-18, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Program Delivery Details: \$173.231 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Program Delivery Details: \$173.231 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): On page 8-19, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$52,000 and Contributions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions: \$52,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-20. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to get some clarity as to what the professional development fees work out to in this instance. Could we have an explanation as to what they are for the NWTTA Professional Improvement

Fund? Is this for courses and training and whatnot? I'm just trying to get an understanding as to what the money goes to.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Yes, it is something that goes toward the professional development of members of the NWTTA.

Mr. Hawkins: Is this usually a difficult point — to satisfy the teachers? When we talk about not being able to pay people a certain way because of our collective agreements and whatnot, is this an area where we are able to show our respect, in the sense of funding, and appreciation to that sector that we're trying to employ? Especially when we talk about a small community, when it's difficult to get them in there.... The fact that we're able to — well, let's call it what it is, really — pad their benefits program in order to encourage them to stay out there. Because quite often we'll find that they're already behind the eight ball when it comes to renting houses or finding happy choices and lifestyles in a small community.

My issue, really, on this one, is to be able to find an appropriate balance. It's easy to say we appreciate and respect them. It's another thing when it comes to really doing it. I want to make sure we're giving that type of consideration and make sure we can. I mean, we just heard here recently that Mr. Jacobson's area in Nunakput just had a flood of staffing, and now they're restaffing. I just heard that from the Minister the other day through question period. But the fact is that if we're having challenges keeping staff there, what are we doing to make sure we can keep them there? Is this an area the government could look at to ensure that we can make sure teachers are happy?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have been providing this contribution to the NWTTA Professional Improvement Fund for quite some time now, specifically for professional development in an area where teachers, whether they go on conference or to a workshop, especially those new teachers as well — going out on the land, as part of the orientation to the new schools, as the Member is referring to.... Some new recruits are coming in not knowing the community. Certainly it is an area in the development stage, so we have committed, and we will continue to do so. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Under Early Childhood programs, I see there's little bump-up there — cost of living or

whatever. We've got a sterling record of losing our child care centres, certainly in Yellowknife. I know there are big struggles in the small communities. The general feedback I get from organizations and individuals that try and operate these facilities is that they need 100 per cent funding for the first two years, while they get sign-up and so on — get operating.

Could the Minister tell me how many child care centres and family day-homes are being supported and whether there's any increase to the support for those, recognizing that we've been losing them and they need some attention?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: What I have before me is approximately 27 different organizations throughout the North, and also 73 additional recipients with less than a \$20,000 contribution. So 73 plus 27 — we can say close to 100 different organizations have access to contributions.

Mr. Bromley: Thanks for that information. Is there a trend in the number of those facilities and the number of the children in care in those facilities? Do we know?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chairman, if I can get Mr. Devitt to elaborate on that.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: The trend in terms of licensed child care spaces for children has been an increase, say, from 2002–2003, when we had 1,269 licensed spaces. In 2007–08 we had 1,768 licensed spaces in the Territories.

Mr. Bromley: I see that our funding has gone down considerably in the last few years, as well as the value of those dollars. I wonder what the explanation can be for that and for closing facilities in Yellowknife.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, I don't have a specific explanation for the closure of any particular facility, so I'd have to take that under consideration or ask the Minister to address it.

The funding itself — the amount of funding given per child was actually increased last year, I think, by approximately 30 per cent.

Mr. Bromley: That's great. I wonder if it would be possible to get some information on the distribution of those 27 main facilities and the number of children in those facilities at some point.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Certainly we can provide what we have before us, the 27 different organizations, and also.... That was '06-07 actuals, the Early Childhood Program, the \$3.3 million and the actual children in the facility the Member is referring to. We'll gather that information and provide it.

Twenty-seven of those organizations are additional recipients of this \$20,000. They do add up to 117 for '07-08, and the number I'm referring to was '06-07. So '07-08 is 117. We certainly can provide that detailed information to the committee. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We're on 8-20, Activity Summary, Education and Culture. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get some explanation for the Healthy Choices Initiative? Exactly what that is?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Healthy Children Initiative — I believe that was the question. The contribution to the communities to provide early intervention services, and we do have quite a number of organizations that are active in it to date throughout the North. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: What does "early intervention services" mean?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: In addition to the information provided, the programming is targeted at children between the ages of zero and six years of age. So it tries to help children get off to a healthy start. For example, some organizations might run a breakfast program; that's an example of how that particular type of funding might be used.

Mr. Hawkins: That was the answer I was looking for.

Under Minority Language Education, et cetera, et cetera, we have \$2.2 million. I'm just wondering: is that flow-through money?

Mr. Daniels: Mr. Chair, yes, this is money that we in turn pass on to the education councils to deliver French language programming in the schools.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Daniels. Mr. Hawkins? All right. Page 8-20, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions — Continued.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and

Culture, Grants and Contributions — Continued, (page 8-20), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-21, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, an issue I raised a few times is the spectrum of what "arts" is, and "recognition." We have support for northern performers, and I was wondering if there were any plans in this \$137,000 to look at a program that demonstrates more of a recognition program for those who are performing the arts, whether it be music, dance, painting, et cetera — anything to raise that bar.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We do provide funding through the Northern Performers. The recognition part — certainly they are recognizing this format as well. But we'll take that into consideration as a department as we move forward. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, that answer was fine.

Under heritage and cultural projects, has the department ever looked at sending some of our heritage items out to schools — the caravan approach — to get kids a tactile, hands-on experience with both culture and history? I seem to recall that when I was a youth, these tractor trailers would show up in our community. They'd park, they'd open their doors, and kids would learn science and culture. I was just wondering if we had any programs that would fall out of this. Or have you ever considered these types of programs to get our art and culture out there, as well as our heritage items, not just to the Territories but to express what we do throughout Canada? My first question really is around the North, about giving kids more of a hands-on experience of what culture and heritage products are about in the Northwest Territories.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, under ECE there is a museum that displays these artifacts and the history of the North and its surroundings. We do get those displays out to the communities, the community schools as well. It's part of the rotation to other regions. So we are doing that.

Also, every now and then at the museum here there are different displays, depending on what's happening during the week. So I think we are doing what the Member is referring to. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We're on page 8-21, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions — Continued.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions — Continued, (page 8-21) approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-22, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions — Continued, Total Contributions. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to take a second to compliment the department — it being Education, and, although they're not up right at this moment, the Department of Public Works — for coming together and helping the St. Joe's project come forth. It was a bit of an unusual process, but it will deliver a quality product. So I just want to acknowledge that work on St. Joe's as it moves forward.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. There's no question there. Mr. McLeod.

Interjection.

Mr. McLeod: Yeah, I've got nine minutes and 58 seconds.

The \$3.5 million for the renovation shows up under Grants and Contributions. That's the same as the money in the infrastructure. I noticed in the infrastructure part of it there's \$3.5 million. Is that the same money?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, the answer is yes, it is. It's shown here because it's being contributed to the Yellowknife Catholic School District.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Krutko? No? Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Just one clarification on that, if I may follow up on the Member for Inuvik. Who's going to own the school when we're done?

Mr. Devitt: Yellowknife Catholic Schools owns the school now and would continue to own the school when the renovation is finished.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Devitt. We're on page 8-22, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions — continued, Total Contributions: \$155.448 million; Total Grants and Contributions: \$155.448 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Grants and Contributions — Continued: \$155.448 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 8-24, information item, Education and Culture, Active Positions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Active Positions, information item, (page 8-24), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-25, information item, Education and Culture, Active Positions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Education and Culture, Active Positions, information item, (page 8-25), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving on to 8-27, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister alluded to a plan potentially coming forward having Aurora College in the Yellowknife campus area move to a stand-alone basis. Is this plan being developed now, or is it something that's coming forward to the committee or Members for approval?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Within our department, we are always planning. So at Aurora College, the board of governors has indicated an interest in a new facility. At the same time we are, as a department, working with Aurora College and other schools on projects. So that's why I indicated that these are all in the preliminary planning stages. That's where we are at this point. Mahsi.

Mr. Hawkins: So could it be best described as the project hasn't really advanced very far, but the scope of the issue is still being developed?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chairman, if you were to recall — and also the committee — we did sign a new lease agreement up to 2012, so we do have some time to plan the next step up to that point. I'm not sure where exactly Aurora College and their negotiation is at this point with my department, but certainly it has been brought up to our department that there's been some pressing needs for other projects that we've highlighted here. It's an ongoing discussion with Aurora College at this point.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question in regard to the wage subsidy program. I did want to express my appreciation to the

department for understanding the committee's desire to have wage subsidies for apprenticeships be retained. My question has to do with wage subsidy programs for youth. It's my understanding that youth are up to 29 years, and I wonder if the department had ever considered reducing that age. It seems a pretty old youth to me.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Certainly that could be taken into consideration within our department's discussion, but I think we've been using age 29 for a number of years now. We'll take that into consideration for our discussions. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We're on page 8-27, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Operations Expenditures. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under Grants and Contributions, I see there's adult literacy and basic education for \$1.622 million and then, on the next page, 8-29, there's literacy funding, \$1.87 million, which is greater than the former. I also note there's no change over last year for literacy funding contributions to organizations to deliver literacy programs.

My first question is: which organizations are being funded under the literacy funding contributions, there?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I can certainly provide the organizations that are funded. We do have Aurora College, NWT Literacy Council, Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, NWT Council of Persons with Disabilities, Native Women's Association, Inuvik Centennial Library, Yellowknife Association for Community Living, Fort McPherson District of Education, Deninu Ku'e First Nation, Zhahti Koe Friendship Centre, Growing Together, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Ingamo Hall Friendship Centre, Northwest Territory Métis Nation, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, Deline First Nation and also, Mr. Chair, 17 additional recipients under \$10,000. That's what we have before us. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: Let's choose Native Women's Association. Could he tell me what the funding to Native Women's — and I believe they specialize in adult literacy and basic education program — has been for the last couple of years and this year?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The actual '06–07 funding is \$85,000. I'm not sure if we do have the breakdown of a number of years back. Apparently

it's pretty consistent, but certainly we can provide that information, which we don't have before us today. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: And '06–07 is fine, so \$85,000 last year and the year before and it looks like — can I assume it's the same this year?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: In all likelihood it will probably be the same, depending on the contribution itself with the organization.

Mr. Bromley: This is an area where I have concern, because this is very much a front-line organization, an organization that's connected with the people we really want to connect with for adult literacy and basic education. I know for a fact that organizations like this are very, very stressed. They are doing extremely important work; they are dealing with people who are disadvantaged and are accumulating disadvantages, but they're at the table trying to get an education. This flat line of support....

Mr. Chair, we had a national and international specialist here who outlined the degree of return we can get on investments in literacy. I'd just very much like to highlight this as a concern. Small organizations like this that are dealing with these people that really need this help are where we should be bumping things up. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can keep that in mind and seek the opportunity to provide a bit of a tune-up for these organizations that have been at the same level for so long, when we know what's been happening to costs. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I appreciate the Member's response in this particular area. That organization, the Native Women's Association, along with others, do deliver programs that educate community members. It is important to have these organizations at the forefront of our ECE department and we'll certainly take the Member's comment into consideration. I think this is an area where we need to relook at the structure itself. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a question relative to the college contributions that's on page 8-28 and 8-29. In both instances, it indicates an increase from the Revised Main Estimates of last year to the Main Estimates of this year. I wanted to know how the college is funded and how these contributions are determined, and whether or not there's an increase in students between last year and this year.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chairman, the college is funded on a contribution amount that is not based on enrolment. It's based on the programs that the college funds, which has an element of enrolment but, unlike schools, the actual calculation isn't based on enrolment.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you for that. Could I get an explanation, then, as to why there's an increase of about \$300,000-and-some-odd between last year and this year?

Mr. Devitt: The changes in the contribution amounts between the two academic years include the \$300,000 for the TEP program and \$120,000 for the Aboriginal Language and Cultural Instructor Program. There are changes associated with collective agreements and utilities, leases. I think those are the main changes that explain the differences between years. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Devitt.

We're on page 8-27. Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$42.941 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$42.941 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-28, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Program Delivery Details: \$42.941 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Program Delivery Details: \$42.941 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-29, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Grants and Contributions, Contributions: Total Contributions \$33.265 million; Total Grants and Contributions \$33.265 million. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see that college contributions are here for \$30 million, and I was just wondering about the correlation of apprenticeships, trades and occupations. Do those dollars not work together? Or are they kept exclusive?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: If I can get Mr. Devitt to answer that college contribution — I guess the difference from \$29 million to \$30 million.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair, in my previous answer I forgot to mention the base reduction of about \$470,000 mentioned in the opening comments. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate we are answering everyone else's question. My question is: we have a college contribution of \$30 million, but we have apprenticeship, trades and occupation money that's almost \$3 million, and I'm wondering: do they not work together? Why are they separate line items? I would think that they'd be related together.

Mr. Daniels: The college portion is the money that we give to the college for its overall administration and program delivery. The apprenticeship, trades and occupation portion, part of that would represent some of the fees that we pay to Alberta, for example, when apprentices go down there to attend technical training.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Daniels. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: No, that's fine. I appreciate that. Thanks.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We're on page 8-29, Activity Summary. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just had a question in regard to the loss of the wage subsidy program dollars, the \$1.3 million. I'm just wondering if the department had given any thought to taking that money and directing it into certain sectors of the economy to get our biggest bang for our dollar. Was that ever considered before it was just cut, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: We have a number of investments that we have made in a number of different sectors, for example, in the mining area, where we've been a partner under the ASEP umbrella, as well as in the oil and gas sector, where we've been a partner with the aboriginal teachers.

With the apprenticeship training subsidies, no, we hadn't really targeted that for any particular sector. Those funds have been used to help youth, apprentices and other people seeking training on the job in a variety of different occupations. Some of them might be related to the service industry, for example, or other employers out there.

Mr. Ramsay: Well, I don't agree with the loss of the wage subsidy dollars, the \$1.3 million. I think, as a government, we have an obligation to try to get people the training and skills that they need to succeed in their lives. That's a big chunk of funding that I believe should have.... We should have done

a better job at trying to earmark that, especially in the area of hospitality, the service industry. People are having a heck of a job staffing restaurants, hotels and things like that in the tourism side of things.

So I think we could have done better in trying to earmark these dollars for where they could make some difference, and I don't see us doing that.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: We do have other federal funding as well, the Market Development Agreement, that we work closely with. We do capture that and access that funding as much as we can. So it does subsidize in these areas. That's one of the areas that we looked at as well. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We're on page 8-29. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't keep this going much longer. But whether we have that Market — the federal program the Minister spoke of — I know we've got the apprenticeship programs, and we've got some money.

I guess for me, the bottom line is the government is not going to have \$1.3 million to put toward what I believe is an essential government service, and that's trying to get people the training and the skills necessary to make some advancements in their lives. So again, I'm just sad to see that that money's gone, no matter what it was going to go towards. It would have helped.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: When we were doing our target, it wasn't an easy decision. This was one of the areas that we looked at, because we certainly didn't want to go after the school programs. That was our last resort. So it was a difficult decision, but we had to meet our targets. So that was one of the areas that we went after. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We're on page 8-29, Activities Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Grants and Contributions, Contributions. Total Contributions: \$33.265 million; Total Grants and Contributions: \$33.265 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Grants and Contributions: \$33.265 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving on to page 8-30. Information item, Advanced Education and Careers, Active Positions. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you. What position was reduced? We've got headquarters there. It's from 17 in '07-08 down to 16 in '08-09.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: That particular program, as I highlighted earlier, was an ASEP position due to the sunset clause. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We're on page 8-30, information item, Advanced Education and Careers, Active Positions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Active Positions, information item, (page 8-30) approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-31. Information item, Advanced Education and Careers, Active Positions.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Advanced Education and Careers, Active Positions, information item, (page 8-31) approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We're on 8-33, Activity Summary, Income Security, Operations and Expenditures Summary. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll just start this discussion off by saying that I'd certainly like to see the Public Housing Rental Subsidy work its way out of this program. I'm not going to speak for other Members, but from my experience with the types of calls and discussing them with the Housing Authority, it seems like a very frustrating program — how the relationship seems to be built between the Housing program and the Income Support program.

Minister, I'm not a believer in how it's worked out. It certainly would have been nice to see it the one-window, one-stop approach. I think, over the long haul, maybe that will be how it will migrate into a working system; but right now, I'm not a believer and supporter of this in its location. I think maybe just in this area I'll leave it at that for now.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. This area has been an area of concern for the Members. We did highlight in the February session that we told the Members we'd come back with a progress report, which we've done, two weeks ago. In that area I believe there is a progression that is happening. We are opening lines of communication between LHOs and client service officers in the communities. I think we are making, I would say, substantial progress compared to where we were last fall, working closely with the Housing Corporation on this matter, with our Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I do believe we are making progress, and I'll leave it at that. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mentioned in my opening comments about the amount of money that's being spent on Income Security. According to the Minister's remarks, it's about \$70 million. We're going to a new common policy framework and model, which is going to cost us an additional \$5.9 million. I see further on in this section that we are adding five positions under Income Security. I wondered, between last year and this year, are we really adding \$6 million to this particular section? And if so, why?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The additional money is based on the Income Security model that was developed in the past few years. We did propose some increases in the rates for clients in the area of food and clothing, as well as adding some additional benefits for persons with disabilities and seniors. So that's primarily where the bulk of the \$5.9 million is coming. As part of the Income Security framework, the intent is to make sure that we are dealing with programs and supports in addition to providing financial support to people. Part of the case management approach under the model is to make more clients aware of different programs and services, such as education programs or training programs, with the intent that people will take advantage of those programs and work towards greater or increased self-reliance. Thank you.

Ms. Bisaro: I wasn't here, but I understand that when the transfer of this program took place, there was an increase in the number of bodies required to administer the program. Now we are adding another five positions to administer this program. I understand the explanation on the increase and the dollars attributed to it. I am sure some is due to the five positions, and the rest, I gather, is due to increases in the amounts in terms of a subsidy. I'd like to ask the Minister, when can we expect that we will stop adding \$5 million and \$6 million per year to the Income Security program?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: The positions the Member has highlighted.... Those positions are client service officers in our regions like Beaufort-Delta, Deh Cho, Fort Smith and also North Slave, in order to be part of the new Income Security redesign last fall — the changes. As to answering when we are going to stop, there are always ongoing challenges and changes, so I can't really say if it is going to stop now. But certainly we will inform the committee if there are any changes happening, keep them posted in what is the transition period. Mahsi.

Ms. Bisaro: I would like to make a motion, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee strongly recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment take immediate action to review and improve the Childcare Subsidy Program to ensure that child care operations receive stable levels of funding regardless of daily fluctuations in the attendance of children due to.... Oops. Wrong one. Sorry, we did that one.

Laughter.

Ms. Bisaro: I forgot to turn the page. I'll try again.

COMMITTEE MOTION 35-16(2)
ECE MODIFICATION TO THE INCOME
SECURITY PROGRAM REGARDING
RENT INCREASES
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Ms. Bisaro: I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment modify their Income Security programs to allow employed family members to stay in a family members' social housing unit without incurring rent increases where such an arrangement would improve quality of life and allow for continued independent living. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. A motion is on the floor and is being distributed now. The motion has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we've covered this ground already. I'd like to speak briefly, though, to the motion.

In the briefing with the department the Standing Committee on Social Programs discussed the fact that Income Security programs at the moment penalize a family member who moves in with another — say, an elderly family member — who is on income support. So if a granddaughter moves in with Grandma to help Grandma stay in her own home, and the granddaughter happens to work at The Bay — oh, I'm dating myself; at the Northern — then the income from the granddaughter is considered as household income, and Grandma's rental amount goes up.

The intent of the motion is that the department needs to look at this particular situation. It's certainly cheaper to have a family member stay in their own home than to put them into institutional care and have the government pay for their accommodation. So it needs to be looked at, and we are trying to encourage the department to look at this sooner rather than later and amend their policy so that basically the person who is on income support does not get penalized when someone moves in to help them out. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair, if I can speak to this. On this motion before us, we did talk about it within my department.

I guess the question would be: someone who works at the Northern Store and cares for a grandma — how many hours? That's also taken into consideration. We certainly will look into that as well. But at the same time, there are individuals who are making \$97,000 a year and caring for their elders for a couple of hours a day. Where do you stop? Where do you draw the line? It does get complicated. We do assess elders with a fuel subsidy, the Homeownership program. At the same time, there are individuals out there who are living for free. Some are working at the mine, maybe making \$150,000 a year.

So it does draw some concern to our department, as well, because we have to protect the elders. It's also based on the medical recommendations that an elder needs to be cared for. We do follow up on that with our department, but how far do we go with that? So those have been taken into consideration. I just thought I'd speak to that from the department's perspective. Mahsi.

Ms. Bisaro: I'd just like to elaborate a little bit on the intention.

It's not intended that this is a way to get around the system. But I suspect that Income Security has quite a few policies already in place and that things are evaluated, probably to the nth degree, when somebody makes an application for Income Security.

The intention is not to cheat the government. The intention is to get around if.... I'll back up. As an example, if Granny wants to stay in her house and the family hires someone to move in and live with her, there is absolutely no impact on the rent that she pays. But if her granddaughter moves in to live with her and happens to be working, then that is considered household income, and Grandma has to pay extra rent.

It just doesn't seem to be fair. I think the department certainly could devise a policy and devise certain standards that have to be met. Again it's not intended to defraud the system, but it's simply meant to keep people in their homes as long as possible. If a family member is willing and able to look after them and happens to also be working, then that income should not be considered in the calculation of the aged person's rent.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: She's closed out, because she moved the motion. But that doesn't necessarily mean....

Interjection.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Oh, we've got the "rule police" over there. So this does open the door for some unusual circumstances.

The situation as described by my colleague is such that it envisions one elderly person living in a public housing unit paying no rent and one grandchild moving in who works at the Northern Store, which we know, as a private sector employer, doesn't pay a lot of money. It doesn't envision Grandma getting a public housing unit for free and four or five grandchildren moving in, who all make \$100,000 a year at the mine. It doesn't envision that scenario.

All I'm saying is that I support the concept of some discretionary latitude on the part of the housing authorities to look at cases on an individual basis. Translation of this motion for me is "Let common sense prevail." I think that surely the government, with all of its resources and intelligence, can figure out a policy that does not fling the door open wide for abuse of free accommodation, but at the same time allows for those situations where — the key thing is — the person living in that house adds to the quality of life and the independence of the person living there without penalizing them to the point that it is prohibitive to have any family member live with them in aging years. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We'll continue on page 8-33. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, I have to briefly add my voice to those that are saying that we really can't continue on this road. I'm sure it's a tough one. There are people that clearly need support and so on, but there are also able-bodied non-working people out there that are getting a lot of support. I think we need some thinking about how we can engage those people in ways that address some of our accelerating costs. You know, cutting firewood is a pretty darn good place to start — since we've got energy issues — but also more creative ways that might add to their skills and contribute to their potential to participate in society more fully. So I just want to throw that out. I welcome any comments from the Minister before I go on here.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Certainly we, as a department, will be focusing on those individuals who are able and employable, trying to get them off income support and trying to get them to work for the elders and haul wood and whatever the case may be. That's one of the areas that my department is pursuing, to focus on those individuals who can certainly be out there. They can enter the workforce, the transition period. We're there to assist them. We have programs that they'll be taking as well. I think this will be a very modest move for the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you for those remarks from the Minister.

I have, perhaps, a different appreciation and value for haulers of water and hewers of wood. I think they're both extremely honourable vocations and contribute a lot to our thinking and our personal philosophies. I'm sure if we talked to elders, we could learn a lot about that.

But on a somewhat unrelated subject, I'd like to make a motion.

COMMITTEE MOTION 36-16(2)
ECE CHILDCARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM REFORM
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Bromley: I move that this committee strongly recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment take immediate action to review and improve the Childcare Subsidy Program to ensure that child care operations receive stable levels of funding regardless of daily fluctuations in the attendance of children due to sickness or family emergency. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. A motion is on the floor and is being distributed now. The motion has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently if a child is missing for five days from a child care facility, the facility gets docked the subsidy for that child. If several children are away — for example, if a flu bug were to hit the community or a number of families travelled to some special occasion — this loss of subsidy can be significant, and it leads to pretty wild swings from month to month.

As far as I know we're the only jurisdiction that does it this way. Most jurisdictions base the subsidy on a previous year's record of attendance, and I know that's much favoured by our facility operators. The difficulty is that the costs that these facilities have are fixed costs. They don't fluctuate month by month, if a couple of children are not there — things

like staff and rent and fuel bills. This has been brought up repeatedly by these folks that are struggling to keep these operations going.

It hasn't been addressed yet, so this motion is really an attempt. Again, I think it can be broadly supported, even by the Cabinet. It's a fairly common sense sort of thing, not a large cost to it, but it would smooth things out and support our workers in these community facilities. So I'm strongly in support of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm in support of the motion as well. I think, really, the issue here is stabilized funding for these child care providers. When they're out there and they're creating a spot and it's being held up by someone who's not paying, that puts them in an awful difficult position if the government is starting to withhold money.

I pay for child care, and at the start of the month, the child care provider says, "Where's your cheque?" I hand the cheque over, and it's for the whole month. I think the government should be paying under that principle as well. As long as that child is meeting the requirement to be there, the government should be paying for that spot.

The other thing is that spot is being held in such a way that nobody else can take it up, but that person who's providing the day-home can't make any money off it. It puts them in an awkward position that they're not making any money off this situation, so how do they pay staff? I think we should base this theory on a little more like what's happening in real life in the private sector. For a regular family to come in, they have to pay for the fees up front every month. I think that's the bare minimum of what I think the government should be offering here: if somebody qualifies for child care, we pay for that month.

You know, it's their choice. If they don't want to make whatever minimums are prescribed, then obviously we stop paying. But to start pulling out funding midway through the month and whatnot doesn't create a stabilized environment, and I think it puts the whole organization of that day-home or daycare facility at risk. I think the government should wear that, because when we're a funding source and we're pulling the carpet out from underneath these organizations, they do nothing but fall.

So the fact is this motion is a good motion that will help with that environment. It is hard enough out there to find a solid, quality child care facility or

child care home, and to be messing around with these providers, I think, is crazy.

The fact is, they need stabilized funding, and I'll leave it at that. I'll be voting in favour of the motion. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm also in favour of the motion, and I don't want to repeat everything my colleagues Mr. Bromley and Mr. Hawkins have said.

Suffice it to say the key word, too, is "stabilize." If you look at a couple of areas that the department has targeted for reductions, the \$1.242 million for student child subsidy, also the \$1.3 million I spoke of earlier for wage subsidies.... I think if we got creative a little bit, we could shore up child care services in the Northwest Territories. If you take that \$1.242 million that you're reducing and earmark it for stabilizing the funding for child care, that, to me, makes a lot of sense. Also the wage subsidy money that was cut, you could take a portion of that and earmark it for child care workers.

Those are the two things that are resulting in daycares and spaces shutting down across the territory: the lack of workers and also the fluctuations in funding. I think if we can fix those two things, operators out there would stand a chance of staying around for a while. So I'm in agreement with the motion, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that clients who are getting daycare support through Income Support should pay at the beginning of the month like any other client and that there should be a reporting mechanism back to the care provider on the number of days that that child attended. If there is a continual history of decline or attendance is dropping off, then I think that matter can be reviewed.

But I think that it's more than just stabilizing the income of the day-home or the daycare. It is stabilizing the ability of people on Income Support to get daycare, because the fact of the matter is that if somebody is trying to run an operation like this, they're not going to be inclined to accept children whose attendance there is being subsidized by the government if they're not treated like any other client, i.e., as Mr. Hawkins said, paying in advance so that they can count on that space.

So I'm interested in making sure that those people who do want to go to work and who do want reliable

and affordable child care can.... Not just reliable but regulated. A lot of people go to work, and they try to find just anybody to babysit their kids so they can go to work, and sometimes that's not the best environment for the child. I'm about making sure that those children, whose parents are being assisted through Income Support, have just as good an opportunity as any other child to access quality daycare. It's about stabilizing the service for them as much as it is stabilizing it for the daycare provider. So I will be supporting this motion.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Often in my communities that's what the providers also talk about — that they've got no control over the level of funding that they receive. Small operations in small communities depend on consistent revenue, I guess you would call it. We are providing the basis for funding them. I was thinking that we're not really asking for more for the providers; we're asking for consistent funding. You're able to do that if you're able to average it over six months or a year or whatever example or method the government would choose, should they choose to listen to us on this motion. So with that, I will be supporting this motion, to create that stability in the communities and for all our child care providers out there as well.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The question has been called. I'll call upon Mr. Bromley, as the mover, to conclude debate on the motion. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A number of good points have come out here. Basically, it's clear that we have a problem, we have the ability to fix it, and an opportunity here. O&M grants for daycares really should be changed to that of schools. Just because a child misses time at school does not mean that you lose funding for that child, and it should be the same thing for these daycare facilities. Grants could be applied for annually, an assessment made and a schedule of four quarterly instalments established. This provides predictability and also timely payment, which is another problem that a lot of these facilities face with slow payments. They just don't have the depth to be able to withstand that. Of course, this assessment process by the government could be based on attendance the prior year, and can be adjusted. So I think there are lots of good reasons to move in this direction, Mr. Chair. I think we're ready for the question.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We'll now continue to consider details for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. We're on page 8-33. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to Income Security, I think that we also have to ensure that the seniors that are in their homes are able to remain in their homes as long as they possibly can. Similar to the motion passed previous to this in regard to seniors that are in public housing, I think, more importantly, to be fair to seniors in public housing and seniors in their own homes, we have to have a fair playing field. I think it's appropriate that the seniors that do live in their own homes live comfortably.

I have a situation in my riding that I'll use. There's a senior that lives in my riding. She taught in the education system for almost 30 years. She retired. She got cancer; she's been battling cancer off and on for about ten years. She still lives independently in her home. She sews; she does whatever she can to maintain the lifestyle, and she has a pension from the government. But again, because her son works during the summer months on the ferry, her income exceeds the amount of money she's allowed to be able to maintain the seniors' fuel subsidy program, because of that extra income that her son brings in — which is about \$30,000 working on a ferry for three months of the year. He is the only one that's a caregiver; he takes care of his mom and he tries to cut wood and do whatever he can to maintain the home. But at the end of the day, she's lost.... Every year she applies year after year, being told, "Sorry, your household income is above that income threshold for the household income." If she was independent and on her own she would have got the subsidy, but because her son earns an extra \$30,000 working on the ferries during the summer months.... And again, it's one of our government employees whose job is questionably on the chopping block.

As a government we have to find a system that's fair to people — for that fuel subsidy that these people depend on and with this year the price of fuel going up — realizing that these people are struggling as it is. Even the ones that do get the fuel subsidy, in most cases they have to pay out of their pensions to get through the winter.

COMMITTEE MOTION 37-16(2)
ECE INCOME SECURITY PROGRAM REFORM
REGARDING THE SENIOR HOME HEATING
SUBSIDY AS AMENDED
(COMMITTEE MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED)

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to move a motion in regard to that matter, and I believe that it's similar to the motion passed earlier. Here is my motion.

I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment modify its Income Security programs to allow employed family members to stay in their family member's home without losing their Seniors' Home Heating Subsidy where such an arrangement would improve their quality of life and allow for continued independent living.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The motion is on the floor. The motion is being distributed. The motion has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Again, Mr. Chair, I believe that we do have to revisit and relook at our Income Support programs, but I think Ms. Bisaro was right when she stated that the cost of putting these people in long-term care, or having to pay somebody to care for these individuals in their homes.... If these people decide to move out of their homes and move into social housing, this government will have to pay the full cost of that person being in social housing.

As communities that want their parents to be close by and also be able to live comfortably in the homes that they lived their lives in with their husbands, their children — watched their kids grow up and whatnot.... For most of them, that's where home is, and that's where they want to live their lives out.

It's awfully frustrating when you know — as in the situation I mentioned earlier — a person that's worked basically for this government and put their years in by serving the people of the Northwest Territories. Then finding out later on that you have cancer and then having to battle that battle. Then find out you're being told, "Well, sorry; you're out of fuel and there's nothing we can do about it." And it's forty below and they're running around town talking to myself and the chief and whoever else to try to get fuel into this person's home.

We have to be able to, as somebody mentioned, put some humanity into what we do here as government and especially in this case. With that, it's imperative that we do have a system that's fair; we do allow for some flexibility. If it means we change exactly the income threshold that's going to be used — finding ways to ensure that the majority of the people that really need these programs, and need the care and comfort of their family members to live with them — we have to do whatever we can.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I would be requesting a recorded vote.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. To the motion, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate my colleague from Mackenzie Delta bringing this motion forward. I agree with the spirit and the intent of the motion, so I will be supporting the motion. However, there is one thing causing me some concern and that's employed family members. I'm not sure if we wanted that to include multiple family members or one family member being in that elder's home to look after them. Is it supposed to be plural? I'm not sure. Maybe I could go through you, Mr. Chairman, to ask the mover of the motion whether or not it's intended to be plural.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I will ask Mr. Krutko to provide some clarification on the motion.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no problem making the amendment to make it refer to family member, not family members. So I'll agree to that amendment.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thanks for that, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: I don't have anything further if the mover of the motion wants to move that amendment. I can move the amendment that we go to employed family member. If it's easier to do it through me, or whether you think it's easier to do it through the mover of the motion.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I'll check with the Clerk. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to amend my motion which will exclude or remove "employed family members" and replace it with "an employed family member."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The motion to amend is in order. To the motion to amend. Question.

Amendment motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): To the original motion as amended.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell): Mr. Krutko, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell): Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Roland, Mr. M. McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. B. McLeod.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The results of the recorded votes on the motion are in. We have seven in favour, zero noes, and seven abstentions.

Motion as amended carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We're going to return to page 8-33, Activity Summary, Income Security, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$69.901 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Income Security, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$69.901 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving on to page 8-35, Income Security, Activity Summary, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$9.051 million. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Although I'm in support of this, I just have a question. Apparent to that, we recently about... When it comes to our difficulty of finding people to stay in the North, or finding professionals, et cetera, et cetera, has the Department of ECE ever contemplated asking for a longer sort of remission period in order to get a little more value out of our training students when they become professionals? And hopefully they'll come back and put a little more time in the North.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We recently made some increases to the maximum student loan limits that students can borrow funding. And when we expanded the amount of funding, that also resulted in a bump up in the amount of time required for people to come back to the Northwest Territories and have their loans forgiven.

Mr. Hawkins: Well, does that actually change in the sense of... I don't know the figures; maybe the deputy knows. But for one year, when your repayment period of coming back for borrowing money for one year, has that actually changed? I know you can borrow more money now than when I accessed the program back in the early '90s. And I'm just wondering: has that formula changed? You could only access four at the time. Now it's six. And I don't know what the repayment period is.

And I guess my point really is, just trying to make sure that we're getting good value out of these students. And if we're giving them free education,

certainly, let's see if we can encourage them to stay here a little longer and maybe make their lives here.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, if I can have Mr. Dan Daniels elaborate on that, please. Mahsi.

Mr. Daniels: We did change the remission criteria slightly in recent years. It used to be that you would have your loan forgiven at a rate of \$750 for every three months you came back. That rate is now \$1,000 for every three months. And it was largely to reflect the fact that some of the loans were getting larger and larger for students.

Mr. Hawkins: Then you've sped up the process if you've gone to \$1,000 over three months. You've made it easier for them to get remission. My question is: have you ever contemplated stretching it out or demanding more of a return on the money we've invested on that?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, one of the areas that we also looked at is those communities that desperately need professions, whether it be nurses, social workers. So there is increased remission in that area. So we do what we can to have the student loan waived expeditiously while they're going through the work environment. But it's mostly in the smaller communities that's one of the drives, because we are trying to attract more of our professions in those communities.

Mr. Hawkins: More of a technical question now into this area. But my question really is.... I'm informed the plan has changed on our student grant system that, if you were less successful — in other words, you didn't complete 60 per cent, I think, of your courses successfully — you're now put on probation as opposed to before, you would lose your year of student status and you had to come back. So have technical changes happened like that?

Mr. Daniels: Yes, we were running into a few situations where students were losing entitlements to their benefits. So we changed the criteria on how we assess academic performance over a year rather than on a semester-to-semester basis, because there were times when students might have one good semester but have difficulty in another semester. And they would lose their entitlement to funding. So we did change the criteria to look at it over an academic year, rather than one semester at a time.

Mr. Hawkins: Just one last comment, which is I support the initiative if you want to accelerate the repayment of student loans and if you want to get people out in the communities with some type of education. I do support the acceleration in that

regard, but I don't support it in a small community environment. I think we're an attractive living area. The student loans are very attractive, and I know a lot of parents stay here so they can provide their children that full opportunity. It's still a very marketable benefit of the Northwest Territories. So I'm a little discouraged by what I would describe as the department moving backwards in a remission process — although I understand now that they're recognizing that students are borrowing more money. That said, it's about getting good value, and I see the kids — I shouldn't call them kids but students — returning excellent value to the Northwest Territories. Thank you. No questions.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a similar question in regard to the student grants and whatnot. I was talking to an individual who mentioned to me that aboriginal students going to Alberta can get more semesters and more years of university by way of bursaries than they can in the Northwest Territories — say if you want to go for your doctorate or your master's or your PhD or whatever — because it's based on the program that you're taking, not on the semesters that you have to take to get that support.

I know in the 13th Assembly there was a cut to the program, and they were supposed to look at it as part of the cost-cutting measures. One of the things that they cut out was the bursaries and the years that you can get added on if you go for your doctorate or for your master's or where you're basically able to achieve it; or even go for a law degree where you're looking at four or six years, but you're only covered for four years. So I'm wondering if that's something the department has been looking at in regard to re-profiling this program by way of the student loan program and seeing exactly how we measure up to other jurisdictions from aboriginal to non-aboriginal — just see exactly how we compare to, say, Alberta next door, by way of the programs that we do deliver.

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We realize there are different types of funding elsewhere, in other jurisdictions, but with our own funding we did change in this area as well. We improved it even more. We enhanced it by providing 12 semesters of grant and also eight semesters of loan to the students. If you look at it, overall it's ten years of schooling if you want: six years of being entitled to grants and also four years entitled to loans. So ten years of school should get you at least a master's program, or allow you to continue to a PhD. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: So is there a difference in regard to a non-aboriginal student versus an aboriginal student going for the same type of program?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, the aboriginal students do get the living allowance in a grant and the non-aboriginal students get the living allowance as a loan. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: Is that taxable?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Yes, the grants are recorded as taxable income; but with the status Indians, people who meet the status Indian criteria can have those grants not considered taxable income by Revenue Canada.

Mr. Krutko: Can the deputy minister clarify what "can be deemed tax deductible" means? I think you have to apply, and in some cases you may not be accepted.

Mr. Daniels: They issue a T-202A, if that's the right document. I apologize if I quoted the wrong document number, but it does report the number of grants we issued. If students are in any kind of dispute with Revenue Canada, we can certainly vouch for them on the nature of the type of funding that was awarded to them and if they got it as a student who qualifies for funding because of the treaty provisions. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Daniels. Anything further, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the department if they will be revisiting this issue in regard to the aboriginal governments and the aboriginal rights issues, because I think there is a disparity between how this program is administered to one group over another. You mentioned one group is a grant; the other one is a loan. All you have to do is come back to the North for a couple of years and it's forgiven. In regard to a grant program, you pretty well have to either pay it back or.... So I think there is an injustice of how that program is being administered.

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

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the grants that we provide to aboriginal students in the form of living allowances are not repayable. We did make some changes to meet those needs to continue on with schooling, and we did increase a number of semesters in that area. Mahsi.

Mr. Krutko: To save time I'd like to ask the Minister if we can get this information in regard to

the document form, but also I'd like to ask the Minister: when did this change take place?

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mr. Chair, we can certainly provide full detailed information on the Member's question. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I have nobody else on the list here. Income Security, Grants and Contributions. Sorry, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't get an answer to my last question. I asked the Minister: when did this change take place? He didn't answer that question, so I'd like it answered, if possible.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Like I said, I will provide that information. I believe it was around 2001 that there were some changes there.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you for that, Mr. Krutko. Any other questions, comments on Income Security? Grants and Contributions. \$9.051 million.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Income Security, Grants and Contributions: \$9.051 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving to information item, Income security, Active Positions, page 8-36.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Income Security, Active Positions, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Income Security, Active Positions, page 8-37.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Activity Summary, Income Security, Active Positions, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 8-38, information item, Student Loan Revolving Fund.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Student Loan Revolving Fund, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Detail of funding allocated to education authorities.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Detail of Funding Allocated to Education Authorities, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Moving on. Information item, Active Positions — By Region. Page 8-40. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have some confusion in this area. Earlier today Ms. Bisaro was asking the Minister some questions on 20 position increases. But when you look at this, it's actually a decrease of positions: about nine or so positions. I'm having trouble reconciling the fact that this is going down to what Ms. Bisaro and the Minister were talking about earlier, about this going up by 20 positions.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Devitt.

Mr. Devitt: Mr. Chair. The numbers here also incorporate changes due to decreased enrolment, and that's the difference. Thank you.

Mr. Abernethy: So does that mean that due to enrolment levels we've had a decrease in 29 positions; and then with the changes to the ratio we've had an increase in 20 positions, which means overall we have a decrease of nine positions?

Mr. Devitt: The numbers, here, I should point out, are just an estimate, but that's correct.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Devitt. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: I'm good, thanks.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Any further questions on page 8-40?

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Education Authorities, Active Positions — By Region, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 8-41. Information item, Active Positions – By Community.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Education Authorities, Active Positions — By Community, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Aurora College Programs. Page 8-42 and 8-43. Information item.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Aurora College Programs, Aurora College Funding Allocation, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 8-44. Information item, Work Performed on Behalf of Others.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 8-45. Work Performed on Behalf of Others — Continued.

Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Work Performed on Behalf of Others — Continued, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Returning to the summary, page 8-7. Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 38-16(2)
TO DEFER FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND
EMPLOYMENT — OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the department's summary for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Operations Expenditures at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Motion is being distributed. To the motion. Question is being called. Motion is in order.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Mrs. Groenewegen, motion to the committee.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move that we report progress.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. The motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and is non-debatable.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): I will now rise to report progress. Thank you, Minister Lafferty, and thank you to your witnesses. Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the chamber.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Can I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Bromley?

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 37-16(2), Main Estimates 2008–2009, Volumes 1 and 2, and Committee Report 6-16(2), and would like to report progress with five motions carried. And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motion carried.

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

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the Day for Tuesday, June 10, 2008, 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

- 19) Second Reading of Bills

Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

- 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, Mr. Clerk.

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 10, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 9:28 p.m.