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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Thursday, June 12, 2008**

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: I would like to begin by providing my ruling on the point of order raised by the Member for Deh Cho yesterday. I know we all have a great deal of important business before us, so I will try to be brief.

Rule 23 lays out a number of occasions when a Member shall be called to order. Mr. McLeod cited a number of these occasions in presenting his point of order, and I want to quote them fully. "In debate a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member:

- 1) makes allegations against another Member, a House officer or a witness;
- 2) imputes false or hidden motives to another Member
- 3) uses abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder
- 4) introduces any matter in debate that offends the practices and precedent of the Assembly."

Mr. McLeod's point of order is in response to comments made by the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy, during debate in Committee of the Whole on June 10, 2008. The committee was discussing a motion to delete a number of capital projects from the Tourism and Parks activity of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's Capital Acquisition Plan. Mr. McLeod, in stating his point of order, cited the following comments by Mr. Abernethy from page 106 of unedited Hansard: "I clearly understand why the Member for Deh Cho is upset. We are knocking off \$300,000 for the 60th Parallel Visitors Park."

In reviewing these comments, I examined closely the rules cited by Mr. McLeod in his point of order, and in doing so, I considered the following questions. Did Mr. Abernethy make an allegation against Mr. McLeod? Did he input false or hidden motives to him? Were his remarks abusive or insulting?

Despite the suggestion of some Members to the contrary, I find that the answers to each of these questions is clearly no. Mr. Abernethy made no allegations against Mr. McLeod nor were his remarks abusive or insulting. Although his reference to the Member for Deh Cho's feelings may have been incorrect or unsubstantiated, I cannot see where they imputed a false or a hidden motive to him.

The remaining question, then, is whether the Member offended the practices and precedents of the Assembly by suggesting how Mr. McLeod and other Members felt about a motion when these Members had not spoken to the motion. Mr. McLeod, in stating his point of order, did not reference precisely which practice or precedent he felt had been offended. He also made reference to his rights and privileges as a Member, which are more appropriately addressed by way of a point of privilege. This has made it difficult for me to rely on past rulings or specific parliamentary authorities as a guide.

It is my view that although it is certainly curious and unusual for a Member to speculate on the views of other Members who have not yet expressed these or any other views in the House, it is not necessarily unparliamentary to have done so. After all, the option was open to each of the Members singled out to stand in the House and correct the record if they disagreed with Mr. Abernethy's speculation.

The comments of the Member for Weledeh were also helpful in adding some perspective. Mr. Bromley observed, "Taken in context and perhaps with a lack of experience in what's totally appropriate protocol, the Member's statements were really meant to be more vicarious and consoling than accusatory." This view was supported by a number of other Members in

debate. The importance of context is supported by Marleau and Montpetit who, at page 526 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, note that "the codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical as it is the context in which words or phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not [the remarks] should be withdrawn."

Mr. Abernethy, in speaking a second time to the point of order, stated convincingly that he had no ill intent in making the remarks and did not intend them to question the integrity or credibility of the Member for Deh Cho or any other Member. I found his remarks to be sincere, and I accept them at face value. I hope that other Members will come to the same conclusion. I find there is no point of order.

I would like to thank all Members who offered their views on the point of order. I particularly appreciate the respectful and balanced tone that was, for the most part, used. Thank you, Members.

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The lead Minister for the Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative Committee, Ms. Sandy Lee.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 65-16(2) REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take the opportunity today, as the lead Minister for the Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative Committee, to provide an update on the actions associated with this initiative.

The Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative is one of five strategic initiatives the government is investing in to advance the vision, goals and priorities we developed with all Members of the 16th Assembly. This initiative includes actions that address the reality of the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories.

There are a number of important issues that need to be addressed as a part of any strategy to fundamentally alter the cost structure of living in NWT communities. These issues include transportation costs, energy and utility costs, market development and competition for goods and services, employment and income levels, and the cost of government programs and associated tax issues.

In addition to addressing these longer term issues, the Government of the Northwest Territories also has a range of Income Security programs, like the Territorial Power Subsidy Program, Income Support, housing programs and the cost-of-living

tax credit, that all subsidize the cost of the living for our residents.

While issues around the economy and refocusing government are being considered by other initiative committees, the Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative Committee is focusing its action on energy and transportation costs and ensuring programs that subsidize the cost of living are as effective as possible. The actions planned under the Reducing the Cost of Living initiative include improving transportation access to communities, addressing factors that impact the cost of goods, improving shelter and supporting individuals and families.

Mr. Speaker, significant infrastructure investments are planned as part of the action to improve transportation access to communities and better connect them. Investments will be made for additions and improvements of winter roads, construction of various all-weather bridges, surface improvement of highways and improvements at airports. We all know that improving connections to communities is a costly endeavour, but our approach is to continue to improve our transportation infrastructure to the greatest extent we can.

High energy and utility costs impact the cost of living throughout the Northwest Territories. The government has many programs and initiatives designed to address high energy costs in both the short and long term. Enhancements to existing energy conservation and efficiency efforts and expanding the use of alternative energy sources such as wood pellets are some of the new investments proposed.

Plans are also in place to undertake a review of electricity rates, regulation and subsidy programs to ensure our system is efficient and that rate structures and subsidy programs reflect today's realities and the high cost of living in our communities.

To ensure our communities are sustainable in the long term, a comprehensive hydro strategy is under development that includes continuing our work on community mini-hydro projects. Another key effort is the work underway to assess the opportunities for natural gas conversion in diesel communities once the Mackenzie Gas Project proceeds. The Reducing the Cost of Living committee is being supported in the energy area by the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, which is leading the detailed analysis and discussion on energy issues.

Mr. Speaker, the quality and cost of shelter continues to be a problem in many communities. Some of the activities around utility costs and transportation will help address this issue, but other

activities are planned to continue to address housing issues in our communities. Future activities under this action will need to include housing strategies aimed at quality of housing. A combination of new construction and greatly enhanced maintenance and repair activities will address core need, expand homeownership repair assistance and alleviate some of the infrastructure deficit in public housing. These strategies will need to build on the recent Affordable Housing Initiative that has led to substantial new construction of housing in communities throughout the NWT.

Income Security programs are a cornerstone of the government's support for individuals and families. These programs are designed to help people become self-reliant. Implementing the next steps in the new income security model is a significant component of the action of supporting individuals and families. These next steps include aligning the other income security programs, including public housing rental subsidies, with the new income security model and increasing support for case management to improve regional delivery of Income Security programs.

Mr. Speaker, while we call this initiative Reducing the Cost of Living, it is clear there are great challenges and no easy solutions to support our residents wherever they chose to live in our territory. Solutions that address the fundamental issues related to cost of living will take commitment and time. The actions we have planned, we believe, will help address the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories and contribute to achieving our goals and vision of strong individuals, families and communities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF BRIGADIER-GENERAL CHRIS WHITECROSS

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to recognize the service to the North of the outgoing commander of Joint Task Force North, Brigadier-General Chris Whitecross.

Since she arrived in 2006, General Whitecross has travelled widely in the North, elsewhere in Canada and overseas. During the past two years the North and the concerns about Canadian sovereignty and security have been of much greater interest to Canadians everywhere. Wherever she has gone, General Whitecross has been a strong advocate for the North and for the Canadian Forces in this part of Canada.

In the North the Canadian Forces are represented by over 1,500 Canadian Rangers, over 1,600 Junior Canadian Rangers and over 400 cadets. In my riding there is an active Canadian Ranger patrol and also a Junior Ranger patrol group.

The Canadian Rangers are Canadian Forces reservists, and they are the eyes and ears of the Canadian Forces in the North and provide assistance to regular army troops when they operate in the North. As volunteers, Canadian Rangers support search and rescue in most communities in the North. The Junior Canadian Rangers is the largest youth program in the North and is based on community values and helps pass on local traditional knowledge and values. Both the Canadian Ranger and the Junior Canadian Ranger programs are strong and effective in the North and make a real contribution to local safety, national sovereignty and preservation of land skills.

As Commander, General Whitecross has helped inform decision-makers in Ottawa on northern concerns. She has fostered strong ties with other government departments, both territorial and federal, and improved relations with the regions and communities. As a woman in this position of authority and command, she's been inspirational to women in the North.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, colleagues. General Whitecross has also served in the public as a volunteer with St. John Ambulance and Rotary International and as an official during the Arctic Winter Games.

On behalf of all Canadian Rangers and Junior Canadian Rangers in Nunakput and the Northwest Territories, I'd like to thank General Whitecross for her work in the North, and I wish her and her family every success in the future.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER IN NAHENDEH COMMUNITIES

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about the quality of drinking water, particularly in smaller communities. Two communities in my riding have had problems with their drinking water. In one community the water is quite discoloured. The school is even now boiling the water before allowing students and staff to drink it. In another Nahendeh community the well that supplies the community with water is quite old and the water is

very hard. This has caused pipes to corrode, and people are worried about the quality of their water.

Mr. Speaker, in response to questions I raised earlier in the week, the Minister outlined the steps communities that have concerns with their drinking water should take. I understand that community governments have the primary responsibility for providing clean drinking water to their residents, but I also believe the management of water quality is a shared responsibility between communities and the Government of the Northwest Territories. I think that more needs to be done to make sure the smaller communities have the support they need to be effective water-management technicians.

Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that appropriate training, tools, support and resources are in place for communities and that there is adequate oversight on the part of government to make sure our community water supplies remain safe. I ask that the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs work with his colleagues in Public Works and Services and the Department of Health and Social Services to review the support available to communities and ensure that the tools they need to do the job will be in place. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET PROCESS AND POTENTIALLY AFFECTED EMPLOYEES

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to speak about the budget process and notification letters sent out to employees. We've had much discussion about this in the House in the past three and a half weeks. The fact is that the government sent out notification letters to potentially affected employees prior to letting Regular Members know about it.

It took over three weeks to get any response from the government. Regular Members were left for three weeks answering calls and e-mails from constituents who had received those letters. We did not have any prior knowledge of where and who these notification letters were going to. It is clear that the government has pre-empted the 2008–2009 budget. These potentially affected employees are being moved around prior to any final decisions being made by this Legislature.

As if this is not bad enough, they are also notifying employees who may be affected by the reductions in the '09–10 budget. This is completely and utterly unjust — not to mention confusing — to Regular Members, Government of the Northwest Territories employees and the public. I just don't understand how a duly elected body like the 16th Legislative Assembly can make decisions in isolation from corresponding legislation being discussed and

agreed to by all 19 Members of this House. It is just not right. The residents of the Northwest Territories deserve better.

Where did the direction come from to proceed with notifying employees for next year? Certainly Cabinet did not let us know. The Regular Members have had to find out through questioning various Ministers through the budget exercise currently under review. And, Mr. Speaker, it is abundantly clear that employees are receiving notification letters for the '09–10 budget year. Just on Tuesday I was left wondering again: what is this Cabinet thinking when the Minister of Human Resources, when answering questions during the ITI Main Estimates reviews, states: "I would have to confirm whether in fact we are sending [out] notices"? And this one: "In the case of ITI, they would have received written letters, but I don't know about the other departments." If the Minister of Human Resources doesn't know whether or not potentially affected employees in the '09–10 budget are all receiving letters, then we have a problem. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, there has to be some type of plan or coordinated approach over there in Cabinet to deal with these issues. We've been here for three and a half weeks and I just don't see it. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to respond to the Minister's statement in regard to reducing the cost of living. There are a lot of good things in the statement, but I think we've got to face reality. There are differences by way of geographical differences in the North. We all have different costs associated with logistics: moving goods and services, the high cost of energy and the high cost to operate in a lot of our communities and regions throughout the Northwest Territories. I think we have to be realistic when we deliver programs and services, that they can actually fit every community in every region in the Northwest Territories — which, realistically, we know they don't. We can talk about highway strategies; we can talk about hydro strategies. But at the end of the day, if it's only going to please the few in the southern part of the Northwest Territories and do very little for the people in the North, I think it's no longer a strategy; it's simply a reality that basically does not fit.

We talk about reducing the cost of living in the communities where we all know the highest cost is, where the highest operational costs are, and where there are the highest costs of goods and services for individuals to purchase. Yet I hear we're looking

at the possibility of conversions to gas and other types of energy initiatives, like hydro. I think before we jump into that basket we should learn from the experience in Inuvik by way of the conversion process or learn from the experience in Norman Wells, where they became too dependent on gas. When the tap gets turned off, there's a major cost to convert.

The other issues were on transportation. We talk about connecting our communities. The only thing I see is connecting existing highways by a chipsealing program on existing infrastructure and very little by way of really connecting communities — in particular, the gravel sources around our communities, Tuk and Aklavik, that I moved a motion on in this House. Yet, again, there's nothing in the statement about that type of connecting communities — gravel sources and connecting us to existing highway systems. I think it's critical that we do things by way of consensus, but again we're being told on this side of the House: This is the way it is. This is what the government is going to do. Here's your check sheet. That's exactly where they're going, with no consultation from this side.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Robert McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, yesterday Prime Minister Stephen Harper did something that no other Prime Minister did before him. He stood in the House of Commons and formally apologized for the government's role in the assimilation of aboriginal people.

I was especially interested — and I watched a few clips afterward — in the reaction of a lot of the aboriginal leaders and a lot of those who went through the residential school system. Many said that while the apology was good, it will never do anything to close the door on this part of our history, but they were glad to see the government formally acknowledge they played a large part, and this would help them on the difficult road they have to healing.

I was especially impressed yesterday with a couple of Members from this House who spoke very passionately about their experiences in going through the residential school system. If you want to bring out the emotion in a lot of aboriginals, you bring up the residential school system and it seems to happen. I spent a few months in the hostel. I was nine years old. I ran away too much, so they just gave up on me at the end. But you see, I had the luxury of having family in the community that I could run away to. A lot of these folks didn't have that opportunity. They were taken from home. I know of

an elder from the Yukon who was taken away from home at six years old and didn't see his hometown again until he was 15. This was in the early days of the residential school system.

I went to school with a lot of these people. I played hockey with them. Some of my best friends today were from the residential school system. So there was some sliver of good that came out of that.

This is a reason we've had so many suicides and addictions and family problems. We can't blame it all on residential schools, but it had a large part to play in it, because it took a lot away from a lot of people.

I admire the resiliency of so many people who went through this. They've gone through the rough times that came along with it. They've changed their lives. They've turned it around. These are the people who know the value of treatment and addictions treatment. They are the ones who are continually pushing for treatment in the home community.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. McLeod: I was saying that these people know the value of treatment. They know the value of having that treatment in your home community, your home area, because it has happened before. A good way to solve the problem is to take them out and send them away: is this what we're proposing to do again? That's why some of the aboriginal groups are trying to put healing centres in their home region, their home territory, something that this government has to pay close attention to.

The apology and all that went on yesterday will never close the chapter on this book. As Mr. Menicoche said yesterday, this is a chapter that should never be closed. This is something that should always be taught in the schools to the children, because they come to appreciate and realize what people before them have gone through. This is something that should always be taught, because if we have to learn anything from dark days in our history, we have to ensure that those days never happen again.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BUDGET PROCESS AND
POTENTIALLY AFFECTED EMPLOYEES

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In considering ITI in Committee of the Whole, a topic was discussed that left me thoroughly confused.

We have heard that no changes will be made to the Business Incentive Policy until extensive consultation with stakeholders has taken place. Even then, any changes proposed would not take effect until the 2009–2010 fiscal year.

These actions are curious on several fronts. I'm referring to the actions of the Department of ITI. First, we haven't passed this year's budget, let alone the 2009–2010 budget. Second, we don't know what is going to happen to the BIP if we are sincerely embarking on a meaningful consultation with stakeholders. Third, I believe the employees associated with the BIP — and this was very confusing — have already received notification of positions being potentially affected. If we follow what has happened to other potentially affected employees and the premature implementation of redeploying these employees into new positions, this could create a very difficult situation.

The handling of this initiative to review the Business Incentive Policy has been completely inappropriate. Much unnecessary confusion and stress has been created for BIP-registered businesses and the employees in our public service charged with managing this program. This is just one of many demonstrations of this government's seeming inability to manage the operations of this government.

What are we going to do? The program laid out by our Cabinet colleagues appears to be unfolding and marching ahead in spite of the calls for consultation and clarity from this side of the House. We are all looking forward to returning to our constituencies this summer, but given the actions of this government that took place immediately upon our departure after our last session.... Although I'm looking forward to going home, I'm afraid of what could happen in the ensuing months until we get back together in this House.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BUDGET PROCESS AND
POTENTIALLY AFFECTED EMPLOYEES

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I've been using my Member's statement quite a bit lately to discuss the treatment of GNWT employees in relation to the budget reductions. I want today to also follow up on statements made this week during Committee of the Whole by the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment as the committee reviewed that department's budget.

During our discussion on the department's affected employees, the Minister stated — and I quote the unedited Hansard — "...there are no positions with affected employees in the 2008–2009 budget,"

meaning all the positions are vacant but will be eliminated this year. Shortly after, in answer to questions from my colleague Mr. Abernethy about how many employees are affected and/or have received notice that their position is affected, the Minister said, and again I quote from the unedited Hansard: "The reason for that is that all employees potentially affected both in 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 have been advised."

I have to say that the Minister's statement made me think: What? We're laying off people for next year's budget? Not only are we causing angst and emotions among employees affected by reductions in this year's budget, but we're creating havoc with the emotions of even more employees by advising them of potential layoffs to take place a year from now — this for a budget that hasn't even been developed or printed yet, not to mention it's a budget unseen by Regular Members. Are we trying to drive people from the public service? This is one sure way to do it.

The Minister also stated Tuesday, "That was the practice we've been following," and "It was felt that it was important that we advise the employees." Who made those decisions, and on what basis? It is unclear right now if this action cuts across all departments, but I know for certain that ITI and Transportation employees have been notified that they are potentially affected in the 2009–2010 year.

Regular Members have had no input into the proposed budget for 2009–2010. They've had no chance to discuss the department's business plans with the appropriate Ministers, yet departments are advising staff that positions will be eliminated in April 2009. What was it I said last week? Oh, yeah; I said: Where in this scenario is the opportunity for us to comment on the proposed options and implementations? I can only come to the same conclusion today that I did last week: in this scenario there is no opportunity.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Ms. Bisaro: The actions taken by some departments to advise employees affected by reductions in the 2009–2010 budget a year in advance are ill-timed, insensitive and unconscionable. They have put unnecessary stress on our employees and their families. Small wonder we're not the employer of choice anymore.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE COMMITTEES

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to talk about the strategic initiative committees - Building Our Future, Maximizing Opportunities, Managing This Land, Reducing the Cost of Living and Refocusing Government. In general, I actually like the concept of these committees. I like them because I believe they are a way we can actually start digging into government and changing the way we do business. I do share some of the concerns that Members on this side of the House have. I think they need a little bit more tweaking here and there, but in general, I like the concept, and I'm glad they exist, and I'm hoping they're going to do good things.

However, as a Member on this side of the House, I do have one fundamental problem with them. To explain that, I'll just go back a little bit. In October, 18 Members decided who would be the Cabinet Members. We gave those Members a hard job. They are responsible for taking our direction, and that is all 18 Members' — not just the 11 on this side but all 18 Members — ideas and concepts and implementing them through the public service, which basically means taking the strategic direction of this House and putting it into practice. They run and manage the departments, which is hard and takes a lot of time.

The strategic initiative committees are about strategy. They are about strategic initiatives. I feel and believe that Regular Members should be included in those committees, given that it is strategic direction. It is not implementing our strategic direction. This is actually setting some strategy and setting some direction and selecting some activities that are going to go forward in business plans. I believe, as Regular Members, we deserve the right to be involved and cooperate and collaborate in setting that direction.

Then Cabinet will be able to take that direction and implement it within their own individual departments, which is the job we've given them and the job they've accepted. I really would like Cabinet to take a long hard think about the fact that these are strategic initiative committees and think about actually allowing us to participate as active, full members on these committees. Not all of us — maybe one or two of us per committee, maybe one per committee — but someone who could certainly be a liaison between the 11 of us and Cabinet on each of these strategic initiative committees.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROPOSED COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD
IN LUTSELK'E

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. On April 1 of this year, with the exception of education, all GNWT government services for Lutselk'e were transferred from the South Slave to the North Slave region.

The community has been asking for this for some time, and now it has become a reality. The leadership feels this is a good opportunity to become more involved with respect to the delivery of GNWT services for the community residents.

In conjunction with this transfer, the leadership has taken a proactive approach with this issue and has been discussing the issue of implementing a community services board-type approach that would see the community assume full responsibility for the management and administration of some or all of the GNWT programs and services currently being managed by the GNWT. Doing so would allow for an improved community-based decision-making process that would enable the community to better manage the needs of its residents.

The administration model that the community is considering would be very similar to that of the current Tlicho Community Services Agency. The Tlicho Community Services Agency has been operating since 1997, so the model is already in place.

Lutselk'e is a community of 400 residents, not all of whom are band members. The only elected government is the Lutselk'e Dene Band, which is responsible for the delivery of many programs and services through contractual arrangements with the GNWT. The chief and council are also responsible for all of its band membership no matter where they reside. They're also responsible for the management of all land resources within the traditional territory. In short, the Lutselk'e band is very busy and has wide-ranging government responsibilities.

With Lutselk'e being a community with only one governing body, the Lutselk'e Dene Band, and with the recent election of the new chief, former MLA Steve Nitah, and new council, the conditions and timing support the wishes of the leadership for the community to take advantage of this opportunity.

When the community wishes to take the next important step, there will be a transition period, a learning curve, that will present its own set of challenges for both the community and the GNWT. It is during this period that the community will need the support and assistance of this government to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

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

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, colleagues. In my recent statements about government programs and services in small communities I talked about the need to engage communities in finding solutions. Here is a perfect opportunity for that process.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRUST IN CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about trust and consensus government. The Prime Minister's apology yesterday to our aboriginal people for the shameful injustice done to them was entirely appropriate and widely endorsed by Canadians, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike.

It led me to thinking about how this situation could possibly have developed, and this led me to think about this government, our responsibilities and our decisions and, further, the real need for effective consensus government and to consider the challenges we have faced in the short life of the 16th Assembly, both in our internal relationships and our relationships with our public.

We live in a world of great complexity and information overload but with an increasing capacity of our communities and partners to take on expanded roles and responsibilities. Mistrust can form, from political and management systems within our broad society that shield or even reward deceivers and within which misinformation can be a powerful force. There is no denying increasing levels of mistrust in our political leaders — that's us. There is an opportunity for this government and this consensus approach to get it right, at least to improve the process and the level of trust we enjoy.

First, to deal with the issue of trust requires transparency, and this House goes some way to providing this. But also we need the ability to monitor ourselves, our performance, to learn from our mistakes and to experiment with new ways. To monitor performance, we need a forum for the three pillars of government, the private sector and the non-profit sector to present and discuss information and perspectives. I note that this requires commitment of support to non-profit sectors to ensure and enable their ability to fulfill their important role.

We also need to learn from our mistakes. Our system is young, still untried and striving to improve in a challenging world. Perhaps something like a small committee of Cabinet and Regular MLAs

could capture the lessons learned along the way and recommend adaptation to it.

Finally, we need to experiment, to try new approaches and new bodies within ourselves to incorporate our learning. Consensus government is both an opportunity and a challenge. Let's be sure to engage with both its form and its content to foster increasing trust and innovative...

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

Mr. Bromley: Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS OF NURSING PROFESSIONALS

Mr. Hawkins: Merci, M. le Président. Today I wish to speak about the use of locum nurses. I think we all know that nurses are the backbone of delivering health care in the Northwest Territories. They are the first line of contact in smaller communities, and these communities rely upon them to keep them healthy and to make sure their residents get the level of health care they need.

In the larger communities with hospitals nurses are an absolutely essential part for the smooth operation of those facilities and often in achieving those patient outcomes. I know that I speak on behalf of probably all Northerners when I say we certainly owe a debt of gratitude to those persons who take up that vocation of nursing. However, we need to do a better job in reducing stress and making a stress-free environment, because the current staffing model is inflicting serious problems on our nursing situation.

We've all heard stories of nurses who have trouble accessing vacation time or professional development opportunities because of the shortages of nurses to cover them off. We've also heard stories of nurses employed by Stanton who are reluctant to answer their phone after hours because they know someone from the hospital's calling them to work overtime when they're on either their family time or their day off.

We continue to hear the frustration on the part of nurses employed by the authorities in our hospitals and in our communities about the agency nurses that are better paid and do not have to pay for their expenses, such as accommodation and travel. Mr. Speaker, this is a swivet that needs to be dealt with in a timely way.

Between burning out our nurses with the overtime they work and the morale-breaking effect surrounding them, the usage of locum nurses is a

financial cost that is hurting our system. It is clear we need to examine this and overhaul the process we are using. The nursing staffing model that's used in our communities and hospitals will be our end. We need to fix it.

I seriously know that hiring more resident nurses in the NWT would result in a lower overall cost to our system, and it certainly would dramatically improve the working relationships we have in our workplace. I will be encouraging the Minister later — as well, I'll also be encouraging the Minister of Finance — that this is a business model that makes sense.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONGRATULATIONS TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN SAHTU

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to name 20 people right now. From Chief Albert Wright School: Twyla Etchinelle, Kyle Yakeleya, Brendan Norn-Lennie, Vanessa Kenny-Andrew. From ?ehtseo Ayha School: Carla Kenny, Doris Sewi, Valerie Makeinzo, Sheldon Takazo, Shane Naedzo, Chelsey Elemie, Louie Nitsiza, Connie Modeste, Kayleen Kenny. From Mackenzie Mountain School in Norman Wells: Evertt McCoy, Joel Erb. From Chief T'Selehye School in Fort Good Hope: Nathaniel Kelley, Lindsay McNelley, Lloyd Edgi, Ian Jackson and Carrie Kakfwi.

Other Members talked about a time in their life when their parents had received them in their loving arms and grew with them into their lives. These young people I named are today going to be celebrating, with their communities, achieving in an education system, recognizing their accomplishments to get a grade 12 diploma and continue on with their life.

These young people have struggled through the education system, through growing up in the small communities. I've seen them. Actually, Kyle is my nephew. I remember him being six years old and growing up. I know the troubles and the challenges he went through, and obtaining his grade 12 is remarkable. All of these children we have in the Northwest Territories have gone through some difficult times in their communities.

My message to these students in the Sahtu region, and to other students, is that life is out there. Life will be challenging. There are a lot of successes in life. Take these challenges with the goodness of your heart. Pray for some powerful guidance in your life that will help you deal with things. Things are tough out there. However, there are successes out there. Many of our people here today have recognized the success of the people of the Northwest Territories.

I wish them well, and I thank the parents, the teachers and the families for supporting these young people's lives. God bless you all. Mahsi.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to welcome our guests in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 321-16(2) BUDGET PROCESS AND POTENTIALLY AFFECTED EMPLOYEES

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Premier. It gets back to my Member's statement and discussions we've had in this House regarding the deliberations over the '08–09 budget and notification letters that were sent out to employees.

I know, going through the process, that there have been decisions made by the government to notify employees not only for this year's budget, but if you look at Transportation and ITI, there's a clear indication that notification letters have been sent out to employees who are going to be affected in the '09–10 budget.

I'd like the Premier to explain to me and explain to the House how the government can operate like this without us having passed the legislation that would give them the authority to do these things.

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members were aware that when we looked at our target for reductions and reinvestments in the Northwest Territories, we talked about two years of planning and implementation that would happen. We were fully aware, from past experience, that with some of the reductions that are accepted in one year the full impact doesn't occur until the following year. So the numbers of potentially affected employees — and that's the term we use, "potentially affected," until the budget passes — was discussed. All employees were informed of being potentially affected. So '08–09 employees, '09–10 potentially affected employees were notified.

I am fully aware that those employees cannot be removed or their positions terminated until that budget is passed by the Legislative Assembly, but the numbers we're using for potentially affected employees are the numbers that Members are aware of.

Yes, there was a concern about timing of that notification. Members were to be made aware before the message got out. That didn't happen. But the fact is that since that information got out, all the numbers there are included in '09-10, except for those that haven't had any decisions made. For anything further we would have to come back in our '09-10 business plan process coming up.

The Member is right; notifications went out to potentially affected employees, but the only ones who are approved in '08-09 will be the ones that get implemented through this process.

Mr. Ramsay: That, to me, is very confusing. I've been here for four and a half years, and I can only imagine how confusing it is to our public service.

I'd like to know — just so we're clear here — what else is happening out there that we don't know about. I'd like the Premier and maybe the Minister of Human Resources, who didn't seem to know what was going on, on Tuesday, to give us a list of people who have received written notices of notification and those who have received verbal notifications, as the Minister of Human Resources referred to on Tuesday. Can we get that list?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, we have shared the list of potentially affected employees — '08-09, '09-10 — with Members. There are initiatives that have to be reviewed on which no decisions have been made. For example, the Business Incentive Policy is one of those. We're going to go out with consultation. No final decisions have been made on that. We're going to work with committee. We're going to go out to the public and the business community to get input. Once we decide on how that program gets changed, that's when it goes into the business plan process.

Clearly, Members have been given the information of potentially affected employees. It included '08-09, '09-10. We laid it out the same way as we laid out the fact that the reduction targets would have to go for two years. From past experience of governments that had to make decisions on reductions, it's fully realized that some of the impact of making a decision this year will not be felt till the next year. But the initial impact starts this year. In some cases, that will happen.

In other cases, where it's '09-10, clearly a decision for an ultimate change in that program and delivery and the people affected will not be made until that '09-10 budget comes before this House.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, yes; we have received the information on reduction exercises in '08-09 and '09-10. I think the Premier maybe is missing what I'm asking for here. I'm asking for employees who have received notification letters. It's one thing to show us in the information we receive from you guys that these are the reductions. Are we just to guess which employees are going to get notification letters? Some are; some aren't. As we move through the process, we're seeing that's the case. Some are getting verbal notification. Some are getting written notification. So what is it?

I'd like to know: who is the lead Minister responsible for coordinating this effort government-wide? Is it the Premier, or is the Minister of Human Resources?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, this scenario started as a result of when we first talked about the fact that we were going to have to reduce our budgets, the fact that we had to live within our means, and it would be over two years. We were going to try to find enough money for reinvestment scenarios as well. We haven't met our target, and we've had to lower our reinvestment target as well.

The fact of how we did it was laid over a two-year process. The list we've shared with Members — the decisions and direction we've set... Members have been notified of that. We will get the information to the Members to clearly establish the fact that the list we've given Members is the same. No other discussions have been made on any further reductions in future years, because we're going to go into a business planning exercise coming up.

In fact, we've sat down now, as a result of some of the back and forth in Committee of the Whole, to clearly set out the guidelines as to what the process is, and we'll share that with Members as well.

For the record, when we talked about reductions we had to make as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we were urged by Members and the UNW that if employees were to be affected, we give them as much time to do their planning and to know they were potentially affected. We've done that. We've been following that practice. It is different from what we've done before. With the confusion it's caused, for future practice in this area we may have to go back to the traditional way of doing business.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know which Members the Premier is referring to when they consulted with us on sending out notification letters and what form that was in. Maybe I wasn't at that meeting; I don't recall that.

The implementation has started; we can't deny that. Again, people are being moved around. This is happening government-wide. I'd like to know which Minister — is it the Premier, or is it the Minister of Human Resources? — is responsible for sending out notification letters to employees. Can we get a list of notification letters that have gone out to each individual employee? We know they're impacted — that we can read — but where have the letters gone, and who has been verbally told that their job is going to be affected in the '09–10 budget as well as this one?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. A couple of questions there. I'll allow the Premier to answer one or both if he wants.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, from the list that was shared with Members, potentially affected employees were all given notification: '08–09, '09–10. That's information we've shared with Members. There are other decisions that are yet to be made that we're not making decisions on. It has to go through the business plan process, and that authority then has to be given in the next budget cycle.

We're going to get the full list again and share it with Members to ensure that everybody is working from the same sheet as we plan to do our business. In fact, as Members go into the business planning cycle, any new initiatives will be put on that table for discussion and input as to whether we go down that path or not.

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

QUESTION 322-16(2)
STATUS OF HIGHWAY NO. 7

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation. I just want to raise the issue again of Highway no. 7 and how the muddy sections are really impairing movement of people between our communities of Fort Simpson, Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte. I'd just like to know: can the Minister provide me with a detailed strategy of plans for the repair and reconstruction of these deteriorating sections of Highway no. 7?

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for raising this question in regard to his constituency and the Liard Highway.

The department did review the locations on the Liard Highway and identified the areas that do need reconstruction, some major reconstruction, in terms

of upgrading the road we have. We have kept the road open to light traffic. We're hoping that in the next couple of weeks we would lift the ban on heavy use by vehicles.

The department has outlined a two-phase approach to reconstruction and fixing up the Liard Highway. We hope to do the first and second phases within one month's time. I would be happy to share the detailed information with the Member so he can communicate this to the good people in Nahendeh.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, that was my next question, to try and ascertain the timing of when they're actually going to do the repairs. I'm glad to see it's going to be done in about a month. Will the Minister advise the affected communities — Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson — of the timeline and of the work plan as well?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised a good point here. He has brought it up before, and we certainly listen to his concerns. We have stepped up in terms of our communications in terms of notifying the communities that are going to be affected in that.

We're hoping that Mother Nature is on our side in terms of re-fixing up the Liard Highway. We would again reassure the Member and the communities of Nahendeh that our department is notifying the appropriate people in the communities in terms of any type of changes to the road reconstruction.

Mr. Menicoche: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise me and the public as to why it's taken so long to begin these repairs on these sections of Highway no. 7?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, one of the factors that remained out of our control was the weather in terms of the rain we had in the fall time and the early spring rain we had. The thawing out of the roads is because of the way these roads were constructed. When we took them over, we started to notice that some of the roads weren't properly laid down in terms of building these roads, so we have to look at some of those sections here. It's also because of, as I say, the weather we are dealing with. We are doing our best with the contractors and the staff to fix this road once and for all so that we can start doing further justice to the Deh Cho Trail, as it's known.

Mr. Menicoche: Absolutely, and I think it's critical to residents of Nahendeh that the road will be reconstructed and not just repaired. If I can get that from the Minister one more time.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, with all of our infrastructures, one of our priorities is to protect our existing infrastructures as we look at other

areas in terms of balancing our investments across the Northwest Territories. I want to let the Member know and let the people in Nahendeh know that since 2004 this government has spent over \$16 million in reconstruction of Highway no. 7, so we are looking at road reconstruction. It's right across the board. That's one of our efforts for the safety of the travelling public on the Deh Cho Trail or any other road in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 323-16(2)
USE OF LOCUM AND AGENCY NURSES

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I talked about the use of locum nurses and the stress it puts on our territorial system. My question to the Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services is: what work has been done on doing a cost-benefit analysis, weighing out the cost of locum nurses and the stress on the system due to overtime and other expenses related to that?

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

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is an ongoing effort and process to hire as many nurses as possible so that we reduce the vacancies, reduce the use of locum nurses wherever possible. All the health authorities have made some progress in that area. Since January we have hired 58 nurses within all of our health authorities. Currently we have about 42 positions out of 60 filled in the communities. We do have stats that show the use of agency nurses has declined considerably.

We do understand the nursing profession is in constant stress. It's a national and international market. Our latest stats show that the average overtime — down at the Stanton Hospital, for example — is about two hours less than the national standard. We understand we need to continue to work on that, and we believe we are making some progress.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I should thank the Health Minister for that answer, because someday I will ask that question. I'm sure that's an important question to ask. But my question wasn't answered. Actually, it wasn't even close to being answered. Has any work been done on a cost-benefit analysis to compare things such as locum nurses, the cost that is incurred on our system versus a cost to the system such as overtime and other costs related to that? Has that benefit analysis been done?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Absolutely. A hundred per cent. It's being done every day.

Mr. Hawkins: The Minister sounds like she knows the details of that, so I'd like to know what the details are of that when we compare the two.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, there is no question: locum nurses cost more than regularly staffed nurses. Everybody knows that.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see the Minister chooses to answer my oral questions the same way she answers my written questions: avoidance and whatnot.

What is this Minister doing to change that fact? I have heard that Stanton as well as other places could reduce the amount of overtime, stress on local nurses and the stress on the system at large if that was changed around. What is the Minister doing to hire more nurses to make sure we get these locum nurses out of our system?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to the Member that since January 1, 2008, 58 indeterminate or term health care professionals have been hired in eight authorities. We have hired 24 nurses at Stanton, two in Tlicho, eight in Deh Cho, 14 in Beaufort-Delta, four at Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, three in Fort Smith and three in Sahtu. I'm telling the Member I agree with him that we need to continue to hire more nurses, and we are doing that.

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

QUESTION 324-16(2)
TSIIGEHTCHIC FERRY SERVICE

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just following up on my questions yesterday to the Minister of Transportation. I have been making inquiry in regard to the ferry service. Where there was scheduled service the last number of years, now all of a sudden it has been changed. I'd like to ask the Minister: exactly when did they change the scheduled service that was in place for the last three or four years? Now they've gone to a different system. Why was the public not notified?

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for his question. The previous government had made a change in terms of the ferry services. It was on a scheduled service. When I did check into

it, it was changed over to the demand services. It is my understanding from the department that changing over to the demand side has benefited the operations, benefited the travelling public. It seems this is a way to have the service run in the Mackenzie River at the Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, Inuvik locations.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, people in the Mackenzie Delta knew when they were able to catch the ferry on the Inuvik side. They knew on the hour, and you were able to be there. You were on the half-hour in Fort McPherson. You knew the ferry was going to be there. Now that they've changed the system, it is confusing to everybody. On the other hand, it's going to cost this government in excess of 40 per cent more to operate on basically an as-and-when and not through a scheduled system. If we're talking about saving money, it's the perfect opportunity for this government to show we're setting an example.

I'd like to ask the Minister: are you aware of the 40 per cent savings on the scheduled service by way of the operational costs over that of a ferry on an as-and-when-needed basis?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Member raises a very good point in terms of the cost efficiency and savings to the operation, even to the services to the travelling public on the Dempster Highway. We have done an analysis. We have looked at the efficiency of our operations in terms of on-demand versus the scheduled services. If the travelling public in the Mackenzie Delta through to Inuvik — the residents of Inuvik, McPherson, Tsiigehtchic and the businesses — do wish to look at a scheduled service, then we certainly would be happy to sit down and look at the options of changing from on-demand back to a scheduled service. There are pros and cons. However, if that is the wish of the constituents of Mackenzie Delta, we're very happy to sit down and look at this and implement this type of change.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, if something is working perfectly, you'd think you'd allow it to continue on. There was nothing wrong with the system. The system was working; people had basically adapted to it. They knew when the ferries were going to be there. Because of this change, it has caused some chaos in the regions by way of medical travel, people trying to set up their appointments, people travelling to make their appointments in Inuvik, and also for meetings in our communities.

I'd like to ask the Minister here today: will you seriously consider going back to the scheduled service that was in place for the last four years? Why did they have to change it? I'm asking you to implement the system that was working before.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I will seriously consider going back to a regularly scheduled service. As I said before, the previous government had changed the schedule due to some safety concerns. We were receiving more complaints on the regular scheduled services. However, I guess that's the change. I am serious, and I will change it if that is the wish of the constituents of Mackenzie Delta.

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

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, this system is going to save the government money. It's going to save people's lives from speeding down the highway to make the connections with those ferries, and at the end of the day we'll also have a system that works. Maybe I'll have to ask the Premier to get some action on this. Why are we getting away from systems that work? Then the Minister has to go back and consult more. We're wasting time. Implement the system that works.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, as I've let the Members know today, especially the Member for Mackenzie Delta, there are certainly things that need to be considered. There were strong reasons why they changed the system to what we have today. If there is a strong feeling from the region in terms of what we're hearing from Mr. Krutko, we certainly would look at the system and change it back to what it was before. However, we need to clarify some things in terms of making this change.

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

QUESTION 325-16(2)
NOTIFICATION OF
POTENTIALLY AFFECTED EMPLOYEES

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to keep my questions very, very short. They're to the Premier. We talked extensively about the letters sent out to potentially affected employees. What does "potentially affected" mean?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The potentially affected employees would be those who are possibly affected pending the outcome of our decisions in the House. As we shared with Members, the letters have been put in that format about "potentially affected."

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, so "potentially affected," then, means subject to the outcome of discussions in this House, subject to the passing of

the budget. How many letters were sent out to potentially affected employees?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, letters went out to those we'd agreed were going to be a part of this budget and the '09–10. We had talked about the fact that we're going to try to achieve our targets, but we knew clearly that we wouldn't be able to achieve those in one year. So we've had to go over two years. As I stated earlier, at some point we make a decision, even in the '08–09 budget, and the department starts to reduce that area of program delivery.

Potentially affected employees can be affected both mid-year and as late as we are in this fiscal year. We know that even though departments have this goal, it's going to take some time to finally achieve that target once approved in this House. The list we gave to Members has been used, and those are the people who were notified. As I had committed to the Member earlier, we'll get that, once again, to the Members, and we'll confirm and make sure that everybody is on the same page.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, my question was very succinct: how many people received a letter as potentially affected employees? The Premier didn't answer that question, so let me say that around 135 employees received letters. We'll just use that because I didn't get an answer. The Premier can correct me if he wants.

If these were potentially affected employees, subject to the outcome of the budget debates and the passing of the budget, my question is: how many have already in fact — not potentially — been affected, have moved around, have been redeployed, have been affected to date?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons for informing employees early of their positions being potentially affected was to give employees an opportunity to look at other options they may have, whether it's within the department, moving to another community, deciding for early retirement. All those things can be considered. Departments have been encouraged to find placements for those potentially affected employees.

Now, arrangements may have been made with those employees as to what's happening. We've had some employees who, when they were notified, have looked at further education opportunities through our system and have been granted that area. There are a number of things that have happened, but that has been with the work of those who are potentially affected.

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

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to assume that if I worked for the territorial government and I got a letter saying that my position was potentially affected, I might begin to look around at other options and other scenarios, because I may have a family to feed or I may have a mortgage payment to make.

Now, I'd like to ask the Premier: did the people who have already taken reassignment or early retirement or who have looked at other options do so on a completely voluntary basis? I think there is a legal aspect to this. I'd like to ask the Premier. Did the Cabinet and did the Premier seek a legal opinion under human relations/human resource law and labour standards as to whether or not it was an okay practice to tell people: Heads up. You might be losing your job, but here are some opportunities to take advantage of in advance? Did anybody seek a legal opinion on this action?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as a government, when we set direction in a number of areas, we have our Justice department sit with us and give us advice on a daily basis when we look at decisions.

Did we go out and seek a special opinion? No, we did not in this case. We sat down with union representatives. They informed us that if employees are to be affected, the earlier the notification the better. So in fact we've met the criteria that are in place and extended it, in fact, by going out early on.

In discussions with the union and with Members, they're saying that if there are to be potentially affected employees, give those potentially affected employees early notification as much as possible. We've gone down that path, and now we're dealing with some of the fallout because it's a different practice that's been put in place.

The other piece of that is the fact that as we continue to go down this path, we have to review: is this a way of doing it, or was the traditional way the better way of doing it — that is, sticking to the 21 weeks' notification?

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

QUESTION 326-16(2)
GNWT STRATEGIC SUPPORT
FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for the Premier.

We agreed in our early discussions of our goals and priorities that there are a number of cross-departmental issues we wanted addressed, one of which is support for the voluntary sector.

Given the collapse of the Volunteer Support Initiative, despite the government's adoption of it and claims of support, what is being done to bring government-wide coordination to addressing that situation?

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

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the commitments we've made is to look at our involvement. There are a number of factors here.

We've had the groups come together and work together, and they've put themselves under the umbrella of the voluntary sector. When there's a group of non-government organizations, those are the ones that get contracted to deliver a service on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories in a number of cases.

The Government of the Northwest Territories over a number of years has worked to strengthen our role and position with these groups as well as with the voluntary sector in a number of areas. We've committed to looking at our relationship there, how we focus and where it is positioned. Is it still in Municipal and Community Affairs, or should it be under Executive, as some Members have said? We're prepared to look at that, and that's the initiative we're going down, to have another look at this, especially in light of the news that came out about Volunteer NWT making their announcement about shutting down because they have no additional funds or that their funds have been totally reduced by the federal government.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that, yes, the shutting down of that initiative seems to fly in the face of the remarks of the Premier.

Given that the lowest unemployment rates in Canada and one of the highest average incomes in Canada are in the Northwest Territories, right here, can the Premier possibly think the feds backing out of their funding for this initiative is possibly justification for our failure to support this sector?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, for the record, the federal government did not renew their commitment. Our government has to deal with this on an annual basis as well. From time to time we're given money that has a window to it — three years, five years — and we know it's going to come to an end. We do put pressure on to try to continue programs. We've got some issues we're going to have to bring to the table around existing arrangements we have with the federal government that could have a further negative impact on us.

This sector and that group were definitely affected. Then last year, short term, we put additional money

on the table. That was one-time money as well, and everybody was aware of that.

In our system, with the arrangements we have, we're going to look at how we strengthen our relationship from the Government of the Northwest Territories. We can't tell the federal government how they should do it. We write letters of support and try to encourage things, but from our side we're going to look at our arrangement and try to see where we can strengthen the relationship.

Mr. Bromley: I have to re-ask that question. Does the Premier possibly think that, given that we are one of the richest jurisdictions in Canada, we can possibly use the feds backing out of their commitments as a reason for us not fulfilling ours and stepping in where need be, more than on a one-time basis?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, let's set the record straight as well. Yes, on the books the Northwest Territories is one of the better jurisdictions for GDP. Does that turn into more money for the Government of the Northwest Territories? I share my message with finance ministers across this country who say: Just because it looks good on paper, that doesn't make it a fact that our bank account is growing.

We've had to make decisions, and we've made a decision in this area. We continue to support at the level we have in the past. In fact, through our initiatives we're going to look at how we can strengthen our relationship.

For the record, we haven't backed out of our deal or arrangements. We're going to look at how we strengthen it. Is it coming up with additional money to keep Volunteer NWT in place? Well, that is an area we haven't addressed.

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

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Premier for those remarks.

I'd say we probably need some innovation in our revenue generation. Does the Premier agree that a fully functional and self-representing voluntary, non-profit sector is a key component to government effectiveness?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, of course. In every one of our communities, especially in our smaller communities, where the services aren't as abundant and we don't have the benefit of all the groups that can collect in the larger centres, it's very important.

We've worked with Municipal and Community Affairs in those areas, trying to strengthen our

relationships, and in fact, as mentioned, we're going to try to step up in a number of areas.

Does that mean we can just come up with money to match an existing process? We haven't done that in this budget. If Members want to continue the existing process, then through the business plan that's an option. We work with Members, and if there's support for that initiative, then that can be reviewed.

But going ahead in this budget, we're setting out a process where we have as the GNWT the existing relationship, and we're trying to see where we can improve and strengthen that. That is a commitment from this government.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland.

I'd like to take a moment to welcome our guests in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 327-16(2)
POTENTIAL NEW REVENUE OPTIONS
FOR GNWT

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's well known that some of the problems of our budget are due to the fact that we have revenue problems. Revenue problems are directly related to our corporate taxes and how we receive them.

Our budget clearly outlines that we're losing about 50-some million dollars in corporate taxes this year. My question to the Minister of Finance is: what is he doing on revenue options? What is he doing to put new revenue options on the table for the Territories to go forward so we can make up for these ups and downs in our revenue stream?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad, obviously, that the Member has looked at the Budget Address I gave a number of weeks ago. I talked about coming out with a paper that would address potential new revenue options. Once we go to committee and look at where things are sitting now and what options are out there, we'll take that paper out to the people and businesses of the Northwest Territories and get a response from there and look at where we will put some focus and energy.

There is a whole number of areas that can be looked at for potential revenue generation. The thing we have to look at is how much of that spin-off

has a negative impact on the cost of living of individuals and businesses in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer, but it didn't have any details. When are we going to see any options here that are laid out? One of the challenges I have to face day to day if — if — I support this budget, of course, is that I have to face people who ask me: What did the government do to potentially raise revenues in some form or another to help avoid some of these cuts? It's not just about the layoffs; they're closing off programs.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, as I stated, we're preparing a paper to go forward to committee. Once we have committee agreement that we can take the paper out to the public, we're going to do that. By going into detail now, if I start running down the track and listing carbon taxes, listing a higher corporate tax, listing a higher payroll tax, a tobacco tax and so on and so forth, I'll be accused of making decisions by myself.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, part of the challenges I'm having here with this issue is the fact that if I look through the budget, you don't even see your sin taxes challenged in this budget. Why weren't sin taxes raised in this particular budget? Why aren't there new initiatives on the table now going into this budget year?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, let me refresh the Member's memory. When we talked about this two-year plan of trying to live within our means — reduce in a number of areas, reinvest in areas — we made a commitment that in '09–10 we're going to find an additional \$10 million a year to add to the revenue base. Maybe the Member can recollect that now and remember that we had a discussion about coming up with another \$10 million.

Further to that, in the Budget Address I said that we would look at new revenue options and be prepared to come back and go out to the people of the Northwest Territories so that they can have their say in this area as well.

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

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, we get enough at the cost of the Minister, so certainly if we get a dig now and again, that's okay too.

The issue really is: when are we going to deal with this issue? The fact is that there are no revenue-generating initiatives in this. We've heard: We're going to think about it. We plan to do it. We hope we'll get \$10 million in our revenue stream. But people are asking: When? From my point of view, I

need to know when we're going to do this. Mr. Speaker, will the Finance Minister tell us today when we will see this discussion paper?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, again, for the memory of the Member so he can clearly share that with the people he's spoken to about taxes, we said we would raise \$10 million more in '09–10. We shared that with Members.

As well, through the Budget Address I committed that we would look at going out for public consultation this summer to get input from the people and businesses of the Northwest Territories on new revenue-generating options.

We're prepared to come to Members. In fact, we hope we will be able within the next week or two, depending on Members' schedules, to put a document in front of Members so they can look at it. But if the Member has ideas for new taxes right now, maybe he can share them with us.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 9, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Written Questions

QUESTION 23-16(2) USE OF LOCUM AND AGENCY NURSES IN THE NWT

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly hope I have better luck with my written question than I did with my oral questions.

Mr. Speaker, my written question today is to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the use of locum and agency nurses in the Northwest Territories.

- 1) Please provide the details as to the number of agency nurses and the hours in total used in the last two years, by community and by facility.
- 2) Please provide a costing on the use of agency nurses over the last two years, based on the criteria posed in question 1, in as much detail as reasonably possible that shows all costing factors.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 6 of Orders of the Day.

Mr. Speaker: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6 on the order paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

Unanimous consent granted.

Mr. Speaker: Return to item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, honourable colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome some friends from Goring, London, England, Janet and Richard Goodenough, and to also welcome Ann Little from Yellowknife. Thank you and welcome.

Mr. Hawkins: It gives me pleasure to recognize the other Mr. Abernethy in our gallery, our Member's father. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 10, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

QUESTION 12-16(2) TU NEDHE RESIDENTS SUFFERING FROM RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 12-16(2), asked of the Hon. Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, by Mr. Beaulieu on May 23, 2008, regarding Tu Nedhe residents suffering from respiratory illnesses.

Community-level incidence rates for respiratory diseases are currently not available.

Asthma and other respiratory diseases are not reportable conditions. As a result, existing administrative data — health insurance registry, physician services, hospital discharge and community health centre data — is used to estimate the prevalence and incidence of certain diseases in the Northwest Territories.

This data provides the Department of Health and Social Services with broad indicators of disease-prevalence rates to direct program planning and evaluate outcomes.

Data provided by the nursing staff of the community health centres indicate that 20 individuals in Fort Resolution and five individuals in Lutselk'e are known to have a chronic respiratory disease. This reflects the number of individuals who visit the health centre for periodic assessment and management of their disease but cannot be used as absolute prevalence indicators.

While airborne dust particles can contribute to an increase in respiratory symptoms in individuals who have asthma or other respiratory illnesses, tobacco smoke remains the top environmental irritant affecting NWT residents with asthma and other respiratory illnesses

QUESTION 13-16(2)
TU NEDHE RESIDENTS
SUFFERING FROM DIABETES

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a response to written question 13-16(2), asked of the Hon. Sandy Lee, Minister of Health and Social Services, by Mr. Beaulieu on May 26, 2008, regarding Tu Nedhe residents suffering from diabetes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Diabetes prevalence and incidence rates are not available at a community level, as diabetes is not currently a reportable condition. However, data obtained directly from the health centres indicate that ten individuals in Lutselk'e and 45 individuals in Fort Resolution receive regular diabetes follow-up.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 11, replies to the opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

**Notices of Motion for
First Reading of Bills**

BILL 13
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 16, 2008, I will move that Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the first time.

BILL 14
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 16, 2008, I will move that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time.

BILL 15
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 16, 2008, I will move that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time.

BILL 16
WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS ACT,
2008-2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 16, 2008, I will move that Bill 16, Write-Off of Debts Act, 2008-2009, be read for the first time.

BILL 17
FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT,
2008-2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 16, 2008, I will move that Bill 17, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008-2009, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 12
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Bill 12 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Human Rights 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; Bill 11; Committee Reports 2-16(2), 3-16(2), 4-16(2), 5-16(2), 6-16(2), 7-16(2); Tabled Document 37-16(2); Minister's Statement 62-16(2).

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

**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 Bill 8; Bill 11; Committee Reports 2-16(2), 3-16(2), 4-16(2), 5-16(2), 6-16(2), and 7-16(2); Tabled Document 37-16(2); Minister's Statement 62-16(2). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday when we left off, we were on general comments for Municipal and Community Affairs. We'd like to continue with that today. We would like to then move on to the Department of Transportation, and time permitting with extended hours, we would actually like to make it to the Department of the Executive today as well.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, we will take a short break and continue on.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the break we decided to continue with Municipal and Community Affairs.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009
DEPARTMENT OF
MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs if he will be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, I will, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Is it agreed that the Minister bring in his witnesses?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

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

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Minister, if I could please get you to introduce your witnesses.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me today Debbie DeLancey, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, and Laura Gareau.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. When we finished last night we were on general comments, and I believe Mr. Krutko was next on the list. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to Municipal and Community Affairs I believe we've gone a long way toward empowering communities by giving them more responsibility for the operation of municipal affairs. I think we still have an obligation to assist whenever we have to, to help communities with capital projects. I know that we're

focusing saying: You're going to get the gas tax; you're going to get the other types of tax revenues. But I think when you're looking at a population in small communities such as Tsiigehtchic or other communities, where you're getting a little under \$100,000 in taxes, there's no way you can build any major infrastructure using chipseal or whatnot on the community roads. I think we have to realize we can't neglect that responsibility.

As a Member of the 14th Assembly, I think we previously established a committee to look at how small communities cope with the challenges they face in dealing with capacity issues, such as trying to get people in the community to deliver the fundamental programs and services, from SAOs to financial officers to planners. I think that challenge still exists out there. Also, there was the issue in regard to capital. I think there was a whole bunch of recommendations that came out of that process. I think those recommendations still stand today in regard to dealing with these challenges we face in the small communities. By simply saying, "We gave you the legislative authority," we're walking away. I don't think we can walk away from some of these communities, especially the smaller communities. It's something I feel quite strongly about.

Also out of that committee report came a recommendation to look at the Main Street Chipsealing Program to deal with the health issue around dust control. That program has been in place for a couple of years. Again, that program no longer exists. I think it's one of those programs that MACA, Transportation and the communities were able to use to improve the quality of life in our communities. When we talk about the priorities of the 16th Assembly, that's one of the priorities I was looking at — that type of program continuing on. I think it's important we do assist when those types of capital investments are being made, but more importantly that we have the capacity to help them on the larger capital investment side but allow them to maintain and operate it through their tax revenues and whatnot.

Like I say, they're going to receive those extra revenues, but it's not enough to make a capital investment such as a major chipsealing program in a community or building any big public infrastructure like a water treatment plant, things like that. You're talking millions of dollars, which a lot of communities can't carry.

In regard to the issue around the School of Community Government, I was a full supporter of that. I know from going to a couple of their graduations that we had individuals graduating not only from Municipal and Community Affairs. We had people there from the Housing Corporation. We had people there from the band councils. We had people there from the different charter communities. I think that program has assisted communities to

build home-grown capacity by way of financial officers, band managers and community administrators. I think that has to continue. It's critical that we aren't seen as offloading that responsibility to the community level now while we still have challenges with capacity issues. More importantly, the accountability that we expect from municipal governments and the program officers is.... One of the guiding principles of governing yourselves is to be accountable. If you don't have the capacity, how can you expect them to be accountable and also give them that authority?

I'd like to leave a question with the Minister. What is going to be there to replace the School of Community Government and, more importantly, to continue that assistance with communities, especially in regard to small community projects?

The other area I believe we have to seriously take a closer look at is.... One of the things we hear a lot about is the different committees that have been established through the ministerial committees. There's very little buy-in by way of municipal communities. When I talk about the energy committee and groups like that, most communities are developing their own energy plans. They are looking at how they can save energy, how they can save cost, especially if they can save in the area of operational maintenance. For most of them, they can reduce the cost to operate their water treatment plants or the cost to transport water from point A to point B. They're also able to save money by way of generating power by way of power distribution, expanding systems like residual heat, looking at other types of new energy technology to put in place for communities, so they'll be able to expand that capital infrastructure but also deal with community planning and whatnot. Where do we want to see our communities in the next 10, 15, 20 years? We have to start developing these energy plans in regard to communities today for the expansions in the future.

The other area I'd like to touch on in regard to Municipal and Community Affairs is granular resources. As we all know, it's been an issue in this House for a few years, and continues to be, with very little support from the other side. Communities have to realize that the incidents we had by way of emergency measures — floods in Aklavik; we had the flood in Hay River this year — are going to become more common occurrences. The ocean levels are rising. We're seeing shoreline erosion in parts of the Tuk. We're going to see the effects on coastal communities more and more than we've ever seen before. With the extreme weather patterns we're seeing by way of changing from major storms to megastorms, which we plan for, we have to have systems in place so communities have access to ground resources to be able to prepare themselves for emergencies, prepare

themselves for these types of disasters and not wait for them to happen.

In regard to the granular resource in Aklavik — the project I'm talking about — I know, working with MACA, the community has looked at that site. I am compiling information on that particular gravel source. That site has some 20 million cubic yards of gravel. That's even bigger than the Frog Creek source, which is one of our bigger granular sources in the Mackenzie Delta. The government has to find ways of not saying, Sorry; you've got your gas tax now, and you can do it through your gas tax. That is \$126,000 a year. You're not going to be able to build that type of capital investment with \$126,000 a year. Again, I think this department still has that obligation to ensure that granular resources are accessible to communities and not to wash its hands of it like other things that seem to be happening here.

The only issue I have around MACA is the area where they're — I hate to use the word — offloading. I know that was an issue in the 13th Assembly when we had the title "community empowerment." Back then that was the biggest fear of communities. Is this the way the government is offloading programs and services to communities and then walking away and leaving them holding the bag?

I think that through these new arrangements we have with communities, we still have a responsibility to ensure they have the ability to access our services and programs and to be able to sustain some land administration, School of Community Government, granular plans, and those type of things where we have the expertise they don't. We have to continue on with those types of program responsibilities. With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll leave it at that.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's really good to see that the regional recreation coordinator positions will be maintained in the communities.

I see that the School of Community Government is taking job cuts. For myself, I don't really agree with that in regard to the positions that are so helpful to the smaller communities. Working with some of the people who are affected, I think it's a great loss for this government and for MACA. They do a good job, and I hope they will be able to reshuffle them in the mix of jobs with the government.

In regard to youth services, the youth are our future. We are depending so much on them. We are not going to be around here forever. For the smaller communities, the youth program with the

youth centres and stuff like that, it's all good, and I'm happy for the funding. The youth are our future for the Northwest Territories, and we have to support them. If that means a little extra money in regard to different sporting under MACA — the Aboriginal Sport Circle, Arctic Winter Games — I have no problem with that, nor will the Minister, I hope.

In regard to the shoreline erosion in my community of Tuk, at the RCMP point they have to be able to finish that, because every year the ocean is rising, like my colleague Mr. Krutko says. You see it when you get in the community. You get three- or four-foot waves coming into the main harbour or the community where it once was sheltered, but now it's not. There are about 500 or 600 feet there that have to be completed. I look forward to working with the Minister of MACA on trying to get this resolved and taking him on a visit to my communities in Nunakput.

With the water treatment plants it's good to see that we do have a new water treatment plant in the community of Tuk coming this year and that Sachs Harbour's water treatment plant is up and running. Water has always been a big worry for the community of Tuk. This year they fell short, to 17 feet when we needed 19.6 feet. So everybody's been on the water slowdown. Being springtime, having children digging in the mud, having fun — you can't. You've just got to say: You can't do that. No water. Go wash in the ocean.

It's really serious in regard to the water treatment — not only the water but the water refill in the community. It should be done a lot earlier. MACA has always been good in regard to the Beaufort-Delta with the regional supervisor. He's really good to work with, and for any questions you do have, he's always there — and Ms. DeLancey as well.

Other than that, that's all I have to say right now.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to do some repeating here, but I'm not going to apologize for it. I'll start off with — no surprise — a real need for some added support to the volunteer sector, the non-profit sector. I'll be asking questions about that and seeking some intelligent short-term responses on that.

I also want to say that "emergency planning coordinator" will come up in my comments, for the same reasons we've already heard. In a longer term planning sense I see a major role for MACA in the community-adaptation plans to climate change. I suppose we need to look no further than yesterday's news when we learned about the loss

of bridges and roads in Pangnirtung, Qikiqtaaluk, and the complete and totally unexpected draining of a lake in the northeast U.S., due to high floods that soon came up and a drainage channel that drained the entire lake. These are things we know are going to happen. I was a little bit disappointed. I haven't gone through the complete statement again, but I didn't see much on this at all in the Minister's statement. I'll be raising this in the details.

Chipsealing. I want to add my voice to emphasizing the need and the role for Municipal and Community Affairs to be an enabler and a facilitator for helping communities take advantage of nearby infrastructure projects to get some chipsealing done within the communities themselves for the benefits that those bring, especially for small, non-tax-based communities such as N'dilo and Dettah.

I want to also put in a strong word for programs that support our youth, help develop their potential in all ways. I know there's been some recovery of effort in that direction, and I see this as a good place to invest. I'm sure we'll be talking about that with the new initiatives.

Under the New Deal I am aware of the community energy plans and capital plans and the integrated community-sustainability planning. I attended some early workshops on that as a representative of Whati and Ecology North. I was disappointed in those processes, in them not connecting the dots between things. I don't think communities are still very aware of what's coming down the pipe in terms of things like climate change. Certainly they're getting tune-ups in the way of energy costs and so on. Again, if we can really get that going and initiate it, I think there are some gains to be had.

I'll just mention another discomfort I had. I've seen many things like this in governments over the years — not just here but in northern North America, where I have had experience — of jumping into something in a big way as opposed to building methodically and gradually. So I'm a little bit nervous.

Again, I'm a little bit uncomfortable with the term "off-loading," but this transfer or devolution of a massive amount of responsibilities to our small communities, as opposed to a methodical or decade-long program or something.... The core there is the need to develop community capacities. On that, I know it's a big hit for the Community Development Fund, and I support the ability to do community finances. I know there's a huge role for community government there, the School of Community Government. I appreciate that, but there are still some major challenges. We can all think of some very specific examples where communities are very challenged. I just want to say I hope there's a real sensitivity on that. I'm certain

there must be a strategy within the department, but it makes me nervous when I see, at one time, handing over big responsibilities and at the same time cutting back on support for community capacity building. I'll leave it at that.

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

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought maybe you were going to give up on me.

I will try to carry on from where I left off yesterday. I think I was talking about the voluntary sector initiatives and the loss of \$10,000, which had been earmarked for the voluntary sector and is no longer part of the strategic initiative. I have to add my voice to Mr. Bromley's and others' who've said that we need to support the voluntary sector. It has a huge impact on all of our residents.

The NWT has the second-highest rate of both formal and informal volunteering, and I think that's something that needs to be taken into consideration. Another statistic is that half of NWT residents who are 15 years of age or older volunteer in one way or another, and it's a job that improves one's quality of life simply because you're giving back to the community. I would encourage not just MACA — and I think I started on this yesterday — but throughout the government that we look at volunteerism, the voluntary sector, what they do for us, and determine an across-the-board initiative that will prop up our voluntary sector. I would hope we could find \$50,000 in this year's budget to give to Volunteer NWT so they can continue. They certainly do good work, and they are in touch with every community in the Territories.

I'd like to touch on the New Deal and the transfers of responsibility to communities. I approve of that strategy, but I am concerned. I think I mentioned this before. I am concerned about the capacity of communities to handle the responsibilities to deal with capital projects, to deal with the finances that are going to be involved with larger sums of money and so on. I hope that MACA is monitoring what communities are doing, how they are doing — whether they are struggling or they're in trouble. It goes to the School of Community Government as well, where we need to make sure that every community in the Territories has the capacity to deal with these large responsibilities we are giving to them. I'm not so sure that's happening. Some communities are doing quite well, but others, I think, need a lot more support. Kind of along the same lines is the lot of the community development coordinators. I'm not too sure what that job is....

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Are there any more general comments? Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Chairman. I consider the Department of MACA to be a key department in the Government of the Northwest Territories. A very important aspect of our work as the Government of the Northwest Territories is assisting communities to build up their infrastructure, their roads, other assets and so on. So MACA with their New Deal has devolved that responsibility to the communities. I think it's a good way to go. I haven't heard any complaints from either of my two communities on the lack of support for them to develop a plan, although I haven't seen the development of a plan from the two communities. I am sure that if either of those two communities had any problems in developing capital plans for themselves, it would be no problem for the department to assist the communities.

I guess the one factor that is going to be difficult to get around, aside from what I spoke of earlier on ownership and so on, will likely be that the communities will not be able to do long-term planning now. Although long-term planning would be possible, it would be difficult.

I don't know how we're able to get around that factor. Even though the GNWT itself as a whole gets its money on an annual basis — the budget's voted in here on an annual basis — the GNWT is able to fairly accurately allocate a five-year plan. Again, I don't know the details; I'm just looking at the standard pitfalls of devolving responsibilities to the community.

I'm hoping the community would be given some certainty that the budgets will stay relatively consistent over the next four or five years. I think it's important that the communities will then develop their plans to address their needs. When the communities begin to see that the plan is in place, that the money is flowing fairly consistently within the next couple of years, and so on, they would provide more detail in their plans and with more certainty. I would say their planning could be a little bit earlier. Probably a lot of the backlog of infrastructure issues in the communities could be caught up. I think all of the communities would see improvement in their infrastructure around the community.

Another key reason for my indicating that MACA is a key department is because of their involvement with the youth. It's not cut and dry, because MACA is not totally responsible for the youth, although the Minister is. I'm somehow hoping that there's greater emphasis placed just on the youth budget alone, to have some staff applying some sort of constant effort into addressing the issues of the youth.

I've indicated in the House that I see huge, positive results of dealing with our youth today. I think we will see positive results in the communities in the future. I think that everyone who's elected to the

House has the understanding that if we don't address the issues with the youth, then our social costs of addressing the youth in the future.... The youth we don't assist today could have become more productive citizens in the future, the adults who are running our communities in the future.

I'm hoping this government is the government that turns around and places more emphasis on the youth and starts to do serious things, such as getting proper recreation into the communities and making sure they're working with the youth and that they have the youth workers in the community working with them. I think that at the end of the day, you could see positive results, such as reducing the costs toward the Department of Justice in housing young offenders in a couple of locations here in the Territories.

The healthier youth would also benefit all aspects of this government, including Health and Social Services, Education, in the income support area, the public housing area with the Housing Corporation, the home ownership area. As soon as a youth becomes an adult and becomes a productive adult who's able to pay their own way, it's one more family or one more person, whichever way we want to look at it, who comes off the government social system and starts to contribute their fair share to society, as ideally it should work; we all pay taxes and we all contribute to society. Then individuals who are in need, in legitimate need, are the individuals who will get assistance — people who can't or don't have options of working and so on.

This government has to be able to put the money in with the youth, maybe pay a little bit up front to save a lot of money down the road. It's something I've advocated in the House almost since day one. That's something that is essential and important. It's something we shouldn't miss the boat on. I'm not sure the government will be ready from now until March 31, 2009, to make this shift, but I'm hoping that in the budgets coming up in the near future this government is able to do that.

That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. General comments, Ms Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: One last point. I'll try to get it in. I wanted to advise the department of my concern about the projected reduction to the sport and rec contributions in the next budget year. It's over \$1 million. It's a serious concern to me that if we reduce funding to our sport and rec organizations, we're going to lose an awful lot of what is basically free labour — the people who volunteer their time to work with our kids. It goes for the youth organizations as well. That's my last one, and I finally got it out.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We're done general comments.

For a response, Minister McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Members for their comments yesterday — comments of appreciation. We certainly welcome them, and it gives us some indication that we're working along the lines the Members would like us to be paying attention to.

Of course, MACA has a very broad mandate, and there are a number of things we have embarked on in the last while. The biggest initiative that has taken a lot of energy and a lot of focus with our government in this department has been the New Deal. It's been rolled out now for a short while, and it seems to be working well.

I know a lot of Members have raised concern about the smaller communities and their capacity. It's something we're also monitoring. We're also working with the larger centres that have certain issues. We haven't moved away from providing support. We don't intend to move away; for the most part, we think things are going well. Communities are excited to be able to make decisions on their own without us interfering or having to put our stamp of approval on it. There's a lot of work involved. There's a lot of planning involved that communities hadn't had to do up to now. Most of that stuff was done through our government and through this department.

The five-year plans are coming into place. There's a lot of excitement over that, and there's a lot of discussions happening. We have energy plans that need to be compiled. We have provided money to Arctic Energy Alliance to hire a community energy management coordinator who is working along with the communities.

Things seem to be on track. There was initially a presentation done to committee, and we had some good discussion and response about the concerns. A lot of concerns came forward. I was quite pleased we were able to compile that information and make some changes as to where we are heading.

We have a lot of concerns, as the Members do, over the issues in the area of youth. We felt that by re-profiling the positions in recreation, we could expand most of them to incorporate the responsibility for youth.

We didn't get that same kind of sense that it was a good idea from the general public. Youth organizations felt that recreation workers, recreation development workers in the regions, should stay as they are. We heard the same kinds of comments from mostly the Members we talked to. As a result, we decided to change our approach and stay with the status quo and keep the

recreation development officers and refocus on the issue of youth.

A number of Members have raised it here today and yesterday. It is something we need to have a better approach on. We had some early discussions with the Northwest Territories Sport and Recreation Council. They are of the same opinion. I think there's a real push from all avenues here to do something. We need, of course, to take a step back to see what that is and to see what resources we can put toward it. Hopefully, through the business planning we'll have a better approach to deal with some of these issues. We still have significant investment through some of the departments, and there are a number of other departments that have also provided programs for youth.

There are issues around water that have been raised also — the reservoirs. In an attempt to look at the issue and meet the national standards, we have been looking at and upgrading water plants and, in a lot of cases, replacing them over the last five or six years now. I think we've almost dealt with every community that had issues. There are some that will be replaced this coming year. There are still four that were kind of dropped off the plan as we moved our capital to the communities. However, now with the Building Canada Fund, and if we can get the dollars approved, we anticipate that we'll be able to deal with some of the last remaining four water plants, and that includes the two that were mentioned by the MLA for Nahendeh.

Mr. Ramsay had raised the issue about making tough decisions to reach our targets. It's a very tough exercise, as everybody in this House knows, to look at reductions or re-profiling dollars.

We had, I think, a really tough challenge in front of us, and I was quite proud that our staff was able to deal with it. It was a very trying exercise, as most of our dollars flow to the communities — 80 per cent of our money goes to the communities. We have a lot of statutory obligations to meet, and we also had made some commitments through the New Deal that we had to support.

We have received the recommendations from the committee, and it recommended reintroducing a couple of the community development officers. We are looking at ways we can put that into the program and maximize our usage of those two positions.

We have, as Members know, reduced our School of Community Government staff from ten down to six. With those six positions, we have to focus our programs to the community governments and leave some of the other programs we were providing in the area of administration to other agencies and organizations such as Arctic College and others.

We would like, however, to use the two positions we've had for community development and combine them with the School of Community Government, which would bring our staff in that organization up to eight. At the same time, we would reclassify four of those eight to have additional responsibilities that would combine community development responsibilities and School of Community Government responsibilities and put those into the regions. That would leave us with four positions in Yellowknife and one in each of the regional centres of Inuvik, Norman Wells, Hay River and Fort Simpson. We feel that the community development officers — the new positions.... I don't know if we have reached an agreement as to what we're going to call them, but for the time being we're calling them community capacity development coordinators. They would have the responsibility of delivering training and also the community-development support the communities need.

The issue of volunteers has come up a number of times from the Yellowknife MLAs. Volunteer NWT, of course, has decided to close their doors. They were an agency that really worked well with us, as they were a point of contact. They were, of course, of good value. However, with the loss of the funding from the federal government, it was just financially impossible for them to continue. It's a loss to us in the Northwest Territories. We need to find a way to deal with that. There are a number of initiatives that we had committed to support, and we'd like to do that. It was really tough to find any dollars internally, at a time we are reducing our budget, to incorporate a new program that we didn't have historically. We didn't get any new monies through the new initiatives for this except for a small amount of \$10,000. Volunteer NWT had indicated to our staff that they needed, I think it was.... Well, they needed from us at least \$130,000. They needed a lot more to operate. I think it was, overall, \$250,000 or something closer to that amount. It was quite a gap from what we had to invest.

We still continue to provide support to volunteer initiatives internally. We still have a number of things we will continue to provide. We still have program dollars that can be applied for. Last year we had \$20,000, and I think only \$2,000 of that was applied for and utilized.

There is, as the Member for Tu Nedhe raised, still a lot of work we need to do with the band communities — the band governments and the communities that are classified as settlements. Right now the situation is that they can't own property, and that is an issue for us as we move forward with the New Deal. We have been meeting with the settlements, and we have been meeting with the band councils. I think we have another one this coming week. We'll have some in the immediate future. We've come together and looked

at options we can utilize. We still need to explore those further. We would like the band governments and the settlements to be on par with other communities, to be able to take advantage of the New Deal. As they are not in the position to own property, that requires us to hold it for them and also requires us to be part of the process. They need our agreement to make the necessary investment in capital, for sure.

We have been working with sport and rec over the years to look at the gym teachers and how we can incorporate them as part of our sport programs. We did have programs to provide some opportunity for the gym teachers to get further training. That is not something we can continue to provide.

There is still a desire from many of the sports organizations to take a step back and have all the organizations and the Sport and Rec Council review the mandate and review the games — the multi-sport games such as Arctic Winter Games, the Canada Games and those kind of events — and see if we are all in agreement on where we want to go next. We'd like to be able to get together and develop a strategic plan that would incorporate.... My own assessment is that we're all looking toward putting more focus on communities.

I think a lot of the issues that were raised today and yesterday are very similar. I think the issue Mr. Krutko raised is something that needs some attention from this government. There are a number of communities in the Northwest Territories — I think it's four; it may be five — that don't have an easily accessible source of gravel. We need to work with the other departments to be able to do that.

We have combined, and provide on a regular basis, the gravel strategy that allows all the departments to work together — Public Works is the lead — to assess what the need is in the community and to work with Transportation or whoever so that if there's going to be a crusher in the vicinity, there will be enough support for the crusher to allow every government department, including community governments, to purchase their gravel. The gravel resources are now flowing to the community as part of their revenues, and they can certainly take advantage of that. We just need to make sure the communities are in the loop, that they know when the crushers will be in the area or when there is a gravel-crushing program in the region.

There is something new, I guess, just recently. The federal program for disaster financial assistance has changed its rules a little bit to allow not only for repair of disaster areas but an allowance for mitigation. We'll certainly check to see if that will provide any new dollars to the community of Aklavik and others that have been affected by floods and other disasters.

The issue of climate change, of course, has been raised again as an issue by a number of people, and it has been raised in the House during this session. We have, as part of our Building Canada Fund, put some dollars toward research and development in this area. We also have, as I mentioned before, a community energy coordinator, who will work with the community. This is a joint initiative with DOT to help the communities do a lot better planning and investment as we move forward.

I believe that's all the comments I have regarding the opening comments.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. General comments, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to thank the Minister for all those commitments. I haven't heard that in a while in this House, so it's something to celebrate.

I was talking to a gentleman who was originally from Europe in regard to asphalt. With asphalt, basically you can haul it over a long distance, up to four or five hours, before it will set. I know that in Inuvik they are producing asphalt for the expansion in the Inuvik area. I'm wondering: has the department ever looked at a plan to deal with the laying of asphalt? We talk about main-street chipseal. I think it's something we have to look at.

I notice that under Transportation, Transportation wants to take on that responsibility in-house. If they're going to take it on in-house, that means they're going to require the appropriate equipment to lay asphalt, chipseal, whatever.

You mentioned that the Main Street Chipsealing Program, which has been in place a number of years, has been cancelled. The whole idea was that MACA was the one that basically worked with the communities to identify the dollars and that Transportation was the department that had the engineering expertise to manage the project. Is there a possibility that the department could look at some sort of territory-wide initiative that can deal with this dust-control problem in the communities, deal with the issue of accessing asphalt, chipseal or whatever where there's already an existing operation? That alone will save money for the communities in the long run and also develop a territory-wide program that will benefit all communities.

I feel this is achievable and is something that should be seriously looked at by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs along with the Department of Transportation. If Transportation wants that infrastructure, then Transportation can provide that service to our communities along with

the highways. I think that's something that has to be considered.

After having that discussion with that individual at the airport, where he was mentioning that there was a certain type of asphalt you can get now that you don't have to set right away and that you can transport over a couple of hours and it will still hold before you have to lay it, I think that's something we should seriously consider. I know there are quite a few projects in the works. We're looking at Highway No. 6, Highway No. 7, Highway No. 5 and work that's going to be going on in different airports. There are projects going on in the Inuvik area, and I think that should be seriously considered by the department.

I'd like to ask the Minister if that is something he can possibly look at in light of the cancellation of the Main Street Chipsealing Program: if we can sort of enhance it and come forward with a new initiative that's accessible to other communities throughout the Northwest Territories so we can improve the dust control in our communities.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. As a note, that question is probably more related to detail and, more specifically, to 4-21. However, I will get the Minister to answer the question. Mr. Minister.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member indicated, we did have a chipseal program. I think we did a total of seven communities over the last while with the Main Street Chipsealing Program. The program was then rolled into the capital that went into the formula.

We had done a study for all the communities in the Northwest Territories to look at different ways each community could be applying dust suppressant, and it looked at the different soil conditions. It really focused a lot on a chipseal product called DL-10, another product called EK-35, End-Dust, and calcium. I don't believe asphalt was included.

Asphalt is a very expensive product to apply. At the time I don't believe even Transportation was using it on their roads; they were using chipseal. It's something that is probably fairly new if a community is utilizing it, and I would certainly talk to Transportation about the possibility of utilizing this. The DOT had delivered all our programs when we had the Main Street Chipsealing Program, so we'll refer them to take a look at it. We as a department have not looked at using asphalt as a dust suppressant.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Well, I think that's something that should be looked at regardless of whether it's asphalt or not. As long as it's not mud, we're okay.

I think that in a lot of communities in this day and age, a lot of the first impressions people get when they go into a lot of our communities are of the amount of dust or mud they have to walk through. That's the impression they leave those communities with. I think this is an opportunity to bring our communities into the 20th century. I think that when we go into other parts of the world — Africa and Latin America — most of those other countries are a lot poorer than we are in the Northwest Territories, yet they have pretty well groomed road systems. That's something we have to seriously look at.

I'd just like to leave that with the Minister. Hopefully, we get just as good a response from the Department of Transportation when we get to them, because we don't seem to be getting much lately.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. There's no question? We're done with general comments? What is the wish of the committee? Details?

Some Honourable Members: Details.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All right. We'll start on page 4-7. We'll actually defer 4-7 until after consideration of the detail. So we're on page 4-8, information item, Active Positions — By Region.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Active Positions — By Region, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Okay. We're on page 4-9, information item, Active Positions — Community Allocation. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I feel it's only fair, in the absence of my colleague here, to ask what the basis was of the decision to lay off employees.

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the basis to lay off positions was in the exercise to balance our budget and also to allow for some dollars to be identified so they could be re-profiled.

Mr. Bromley: Okay. Thank you. I think all departments probably got that similar instruction, and I'm wondering how that was applied here. What were the criteria for laying off a person versus not laying off a person? Also, what numbers were vacant versus filled and their current status?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I did indicate in my comments that we had looked at, first of all, protecting positions that were part of our statutory requirements. We also looked at protecting positions for our commitment to the New Deal. This included all core community government programs. We did eliminate 23 positions. Of those, 14 were filled and nine were vacant.

Mr. Bromley: One more question on those: do we know what proportion of those who were laid off were aboriginal?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Roughly 35 per cent of those were aboriginal. I should add that we did add two positions back into the equation with the community development officers.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you very much for that. The ones that were filled, occupied positions: have they moved on, or have any of those positions been recaptured in other jobs? Or are those the two the Minister was referring to?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we can confirm that two were recaptured. I'm not sure we have the information the Member is requiring. I believe all the people who were in filled positions are currently in those positions. There has been some discussion with a number of them about looking at other vacant positions within the department. However, I don't believe anything formal has been concluded yet in those discussions.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, in the area of notification letters that went out, I'm wondering if the department has sent out any notification, whether written or verbal, to employees who may be affected by '09-10 reductions.

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we sent out 25 notification letters initially. As things got re-profiled and changed, there are only actually going to be 23 positions that we anticipate will be affected. We're also rolling two positions back. All the notifications have gone out. We don't have any positions that will be reduced for next year. Having said that, there are still ongoing discussions with some of our committees on refocusing government that may come forward with other direction, but we don't anticipate having any next year unless that happens.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, I'm just wondering. The Minister said they're not anticipating any further staffing reductions in '09-10. Is that correct?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, Mr. Chairman. All our targets for positions are being done this year.

Mr. Ramsay: I'm a bit confused, because some of the reductions in '09-10 included positions. Have they been moved back to '08-09?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Member if he could repeat the question. I didn't catch all of it; sorry.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Ramsay, could you please repeat the question?

Mr. Ramsay: I'm a little bit confused, because in the information we received at committee, there were obviously positions for reduction in '09-10. Now you're telling me there are not. So I'm wondering: have you moved the reductions in those areas back to '08-09?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, all our reductions are done this year. There might have been one position that was identified, and that has gone to Refocusing Government for discussion. As I said earlier, we have 23 positions that we targeted for this year, and notifications had gone out earlier for 25. We have all our reductions being done for positions this year. We have a number of program reductions that will probably happen next year. But as to positions, these are the only ones.

Mr. Ramsay: It just could be that this department hasn't sent out notification letters to these employees. I count nine or ten that are going to be impacted in '09-10. Again, I'm just confused at that information, so I'll have to sort that out. I don't want to quote from a document I have here, so I could maybe sort that out in a different venue. But there is some discrepancy there for me.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we'd have to see the document the Member is referring to. But we have, as I said earlier, 23 eliminated positions, and those are all for this year.

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

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the '09-10 budget, I'll talk to the Minister and his staff about the nine or ten positions I heard about in a different venue.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay.

Information item, Active Positions — Community Allocation. Agreed?

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Active Positions — Community Allocation, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We'll move along to the next page, page 4-10, information item, Revenue Summary. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to know: are any of those revenues given back to the communities — are they basically given those revenues? Do they keep it any of it, or a portion of it, as part of the means of generating revenues for communities?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the only one at this point, I think, is some of the revenues that are transferred to Tlicho community government. And those will probably increase as we transfer over to others.

Mr. Krutko: Is there any plan to allow communities to retain these revenues that they basically bring in? I'm looking more like a lottery take, by way of bingo licences and stuff like that. The communities do handle a lot of that stuff through their authorities by way of issuing licences and whatnot.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The revenue from the lotteries is, right now.... Only some communities are utilizing or getting a portion. The review fees, of course, is something that goes to Yellowknife. Land leases or revenue from land, taxes and stuff of that nature, we have been transferring through the New Deal back into the communities. We'll continue to look at where and how we can help the communities raise revenue.

Mr. Krutko: Does the Minister have any idea when he'll have this review done and communities can see a possibility of being able to generate other revenue sources? You mentioned lottery licences, quarry fees, planning fees, registration fees. A lot of this stuff municipalities are doing right now.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we could provide more in-depth detail to the Member if he'd like to see what we're providing now. We certainly could give that to the Member, or to all the Members, in written form. Our discussions with the communities are ongoing, and we certainly include ways and means of raising revenue. There's been some early discussion; however, this is not something we have sat down and have an agreement to do and any time frame to do it in — not at this point, but it's something that has to be done at some point.

Mr. Krutko: I noticed that under the Municipal Rural Infrastructure funding tax, for tax-based communities, their amount is going up by \$200,000, and the non-tax-based communities went down by almost \$2 million. I am just wondering: why is there such a drastic drop in non-tax-based and an increase in tax-based?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the money for tax-based communities went up because the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund has provided dollars — this is a federal program — to the communities in the area of water and water treatment plants. For this year there's \$1.779 million. Next year, however, that program will expire and sunset and there will be no new dollars in that area.

Mr. Krutko: I also asked about the non-tax-based amount, which declined by almost \$2 million. He didn't elaborate on that one.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, actually the non-tax-based communities got more of the MRIF money than the tax-based; they just took theirs earlier. The money that went to non-tax-based communities, which was 50 per cent of the pot, has already gone down by those communities. These dollars are still flowing to the tax-based communities, as they needed to provide a matching amount.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Information item, Revenue Summary, 4-10.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Department Summary, Revenue Summary, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along. Page 4-13, Activity Summary, Directorate, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$4.558 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Directorate, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$4.558 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to Page 4-14, Activity Summary, Directorate, Program Delivery Details.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Directorate, Program Delivery Details, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 4-15, Activity Summary, Directorate, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$168,000; Contributions: \$390,000; Total Grants and Contributions: \$558,000.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Directorate, Grants and

Contributions, Grants: \$168,000; Contributions: \$390,000; Total Grants and Contributions: \$558,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 4-16, Information item, Directorate, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Directorate, Active Positions, information item (page 4-16), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 4-17, information item, Directorate, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Directorate, Active Positions, information item (page 4-17), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 4-19, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$7.864 million. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to get a sense of some of our human resource positions in this area. I'm wondering if there were any deletions in this specific area under Community Operations?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are two positions that are being targeted for reduction: the community emergency management coordinator position and the legislative and political development advisor position.

Mr. Hawkins: Are both those positions staffed? And if they are, have alternative arrangements been made to either do their duties, or have they been reposted somewhere else?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, there's one position that's staffed and the other one is vacant. I don't believe any alternate arrangements have been made for that position that was filled.

COMMITTEE MOTION 49-16(2)
TO REINSTATE \$120,000 FOR COMMUNITY
EMERGENCY COORDINATOR POSITION
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, at this time I'd like to make a motion, please.

I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding in the amount of \$120,000 for the proposed elimination of the community emergency management coordinator position under the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, under the Community Operations Activity.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A motion is on the floor. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I made this motion because I strongly believe this is a mistake — not in the sense of a wrongdoing, but as an oversight — in the sense of the choice of the position that was picked.

I think this is a position that provides a lot of value throughout our territory. It provides emergency management assistance throughout and to every community here. You don't have to look any further than the flood in Hay River the last time it was used.

I think in a position like this it's easy to say we could find someone else to do it. But what really happens here is that you develop an expertise and a skill level that is ready to respond immediately when we have a situation. One could say that we could find binders and books and get other people to manage it if that situation arises.

The fact is that when an emergency happens, you want someone well-versed in the skills and abilities to be able to manage this and control the situation. And the fact is that you need experience and insight to do this. If we start eliminating these, the theory may be... Why do we even question first aid training, for goodness sake? Someone may say: Well, we have a manual in the office, and if somebody fell down and needed first aid, we'll just go open the manual and we'll work our way through it. In the reality of emergencies, you need primary responses and professional responses, and that's why we train people in these types of areas, to make sure they're ready.

A year or two years ago Aklavik had its flooding, and we needed those professionals at that moment when that action happened. We just cannot predict these things. I wish we could schedule disasters, but we can't. That's why we always have to make sure we have staff, that we have the ability to do that type of work.

Mr. Chairman, I don't think this is a small move. I think this potential deletion has a larger effect on how we look at our preparedness throughout the Territories; how we work with our other search and rescue volunteer associations throughout Canada and the Northwest Territories; how we stimulate that work; how we work at the local level.

We have to make sure our territorial response team is ready, and I think this is a big thing. We look at our joint emergency preparedness, and we lose all of these talents and skills. Like I say, it's easy to just turn around and say: Well, somebody else

should pick up these duties. But there's a reason we have experts, and this is an area I would define as expert. Somebody just can't walk in and take this role and assume these duties.

That's why I'm concerned about this move. As I gave notice to the Minister yesterday, I hope he had the night to think about it. Certainly I would hope he would take the time and take this initiative back to FMB and plead the case and hear that there are Members like myself who feel this could put our communities-at-large at risk.

The other area that I'll just touch on briefly — because I know there may or may not be other Members who want to speak.... The fact is, this plays a key role in making sure our airports are safe through emergency planning. This job is responsible — in my view and as I've understood it — to every community airport throughout the Northwest Territories. I mean, there's a relationship built. This position isn't just at headquarters; it's doing the work throughout the territory. It may be located here, but all of its work is in the 32 other communities, bringing them together to make sure they are prepared, skilled and ready.

I'd certainly like to request a recorded vote now on this issue, while I'm speaking. I will now allow other Members to speak if they so choose.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would not be supporting this motion. I believe that communities such as Aklavik have proven they can develop their own emergency plans. They can respond to emergencies locally by working with the RCMP, local municipal organizations and community organizations. Communities have been developing these plans for years. We don't need somebody in Yellowknife to tell us how to respond to an emergency.

For myself, communities have the ability to take this on as part of taking on their responsibility to govern and also being able to show that they can manage emergencies just as well as anybody else. If anything, in the case of Aklavik, they didn't want help. They were able to manage it through their Emergency Measures planning committee that was in place and that they activated again this spring when the water was high. They were ready. They know how to deal with emergencies when they come. They know how to respond to it. We have organizations; we work with the inter-agency organizations in our communities.

If anything, I think that money could be better spent preparing community plans, preparing communities. Give them the resources to do that, rather than

basically having a position here in Yellowknife. With that, I will not be supporting this motion.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. Question is being called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All those opposed, please stand.

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell): Mr. Krutko.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All those abstaining, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The results of the recorded vote on the motion are eight in favour, one against, and seven abstaining.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We're on page 4-19, Activities Summary, Community Operations, Operations Expenditures: 7.864 million. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask the Minister: what sort of monitoring is in place that assures us the New Deal is working successfully? I've heard that the infrastructure projects that are being undertaken are successful. I'm wondering what mechanisms are in place to document that sort of thing and, as well, of course, success in the financial planning area, health and safety, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the biggest indicator we use for monitoring is the feedback we get from the community governments. So far, most of the feedback we have had been positive. We're not getting very many complaints.

We do provide monitoring for all our communities. And we, first of all, of course, look at the audits that the communities provide. We look at the financial trends. We have staff who work with the communities on capital. We have our energy

coordinator and other staff working on the integrated community sustainability plan. All those things packaged together give us a pretty good snapshot of where and how the communities are doing.

Mr. Bromley: I know those mechanisms or systems are in place out there. I want to make sure that somebody's actually monitoring that and have the Minister assure us that all of those are positive trends.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we have regional superintendents in all the regions and are monitoring whether we use all these tools at our disposal.

We also, I should add, Mr. Chairman, have a very good relationship with the LGANT group, the local government administrators of the Northwest Territories. They have provided us very good feedback on some of the challenges different communities are facing. Things have been very good with them also.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We're on page 4-19, Activities Summary, Community Operations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$7.864 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$7.864 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 4-21, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Grants and Contributions, Grants: \$350,000; Contributions: \$4.667 million; Total Grants and Contributions: \$5.017 million. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Again, you know, under Dust Control, there was a program I mentioned earlier in regard to the main street chipseal that I believe was last year. I'll just ask again: is there a possibility of us looking at an alternative for dust control and trying to get some money in there? It is an issue for communities to have to deal with.

I know you're saying: Well, let them take it out of their tax money. But when you have a small population, like in the case of Tsiigehtchic — 170 people — the amount of money you get for that in regard to the federal taxes you get by way of gas tax — it ain't going to do much in dealing with that problem.

I'd like to ask the Minister: are you willing to look at the possibility of, either through the business plans coming up next fall or whatever, looking at that item of dust control? It's listed here, but again, there are no dollars in there. I think it is an issue for our

smaller communities. We can't leave it to the smaller communities to deal with.

There was a motion that was passed in this Legislative Assembly by way of the 14th Assembly, as one of the recommendations that came out of that special committee. I think that, sure, we have some budgetary restraints, but we also have to deal with the health issues in our communities. One of the major aspects in communities is dealing with the issue of dust control.

I'd just like to ask the Minister: are you open to working with the other colleagues and Members on this side of the House to look at such an issue?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I had indicated earlier that the chipseal program had been rolled into the capital for the communities. Each community has the option of going with whatever type of dust suppression they'd like to go with. A number of communities have indicated that chipseal is not something they want to have in their community, not because it's not a good dust suppressant but because of the O&M costs on it.

We really worked hard with the federal government when we negotiated the gas tax funding. We were successful in having them give us the flexibility for our communities to apply those dollars also for community dust control. So there are a number of avenues already in place for communities to utilize funding.

MACA does not have a capital budget right now except for what was being carried over. It would be a challenge for us to put something new of that nature in place without pulling back from what the communities already have in their budgets.

Tsiigehtchic, as the Member mentioned, has a fairly good budget. Their budget is a little over \$2 million a year, and that's a significant increase. We would certainly work with other departments and the community if they wanted to talk about dust control. Look at the analysis that we've already done. We know what is the best type of suppressant that should be utilized in all our communities. We've done the analysis on the types of soils. We'd certainly be happy to sit down and talk to them about it.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, that's exactly my point. You have the expertise. You have the surveys. You've done the research. Why should the communities start all over again and have to invest their own money to start from ground zero? We already have a lot of those reports in place. That's why I think it's important that you do keep some expertise either in

this area or give it to Transportation, whoever. But at least retain that in the Government of the Northwest Territories' budget by way of MACA or whoever else. I think the expertise that's going to be needed — the research reports, the soil samples, whatever — is already there. Let's maintain some presence in that area so that communities can be able to access this government to seriously look at that.

Again, I'd just like to ask the Minister if he would seriously reconsider looking at some sort of a presence by way of dust control. We can't do it in this budget unless we delete something and add to it, but I think it's important that we do have some resources in that area so we can assist communities with that item.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree we shouldn't be getting rid of any expertise we have in this area. We don't plan to.

The program still can be applied. Each community has the ability to do so. Our capital planners are still available to work with the communities. We don't intend to change that. DOT still has the expertise to apply the product. In fact, the amount of money in this area has increased, if anything, because now we can utilize the gas tax money to do some of the chipseal.

If the Member would like us to meet with his community to talk about a program and start planning for it, we'd be happy to do so.

Mr. Krutko: As for me, I'd just as soon have the government reinstate the Main Street Chipseal Program. At least it's there. People can apply for it. There are matching funds, or we can access federal infrastructure dollars. That's more power to the communities. I think that eliminating a program that didn't even get a chance to get off the ground — I mean, it has improved the quality of life in those communities that have been able to implement it.

Mr. Chair, I'd like to move a motion.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Go ahead.

COMMITTEE MOTION 50-16(2)
TO ESTABLISH A MAIN STREET
CHIPSEALING PROGRAM
(COMMITTEE MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED)

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, I move that the committee strongly recommend that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs take immediate action to reinstate the Main Street Chipseal Program.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The motion is on the floor and is being distributed now. Thank you. The

motion has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are a lot of new Members in this House. This program was first put in place in 2003–2004. It put chipseal in several communities: Kakisa, Fort Providence, Fort Good Hope, Fort Resolution, Fort McPherson, Tuktoyaktuk. Yet there were other communities that were also on the list, but because of a change in program responsibility by way of community empowerment or operating.... I think that to be fair to those other communities, where they were able to access federal dollars and also able to work through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, this was shown to have improved the quality of life in those communities.

I'd also mention that there was a motion passed in the 14th Assembly in which from a special committee we requested the government to implement such a program. Mr. Chair, the main reason I'm moving this motion is that I believe that for small communities where dust is an issue we have to find an alternative, and this is one of the alternatives. I'd like that to be considered by this department so they can reinstate such a program and so it can assist other communities that haven't had that opportunity.

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I feel I have to make a couple of comments for the record.

First of all, the whole principle behind the New Deal was to put more autonomy into the communities, allowing the communities to make decisions that affected their communities. We rolled out a new capital program that included the money for the chipseal. This is factored into their capital dollars. We negotiated for new gas tax funding to be flexible enough to be utilized on chipseal. There is a lot of chipseal, and there is a lot of ability for communities to apply chipseal and to plan for it.

We still have kept all our support mechanisms to help the communities move forward. We're seeing that a number of communities are planning to do chipseal in the whole community now, not just one stretch of Main Street. I think we're going to start to see more of that as communities really get more focused and more organized.

It will be a challenge to pull the money back. We're already putting in a hand to the communities. How do we tell the communities: The government has decided that you shouldn't make your own decisions anymore.; we'll do that for you and reduce the capital. I don't think it would be well

received within the communities, and I encourage Members to really consider what the outcome of this motion would mean.

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

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In light of that information that the responsibility was devolved, I know that some of my communities do have the ability to look at different options, up to and including asking about the EK-35 that's put on runways and that kind of stuff. I'm not too sure how this motion will affect the devolved money, because then we'll just take it back from them and say that we'll do the Main Street Chipsealing.

In terms of this motion it doesn't really make sense, in that light, to be taking the responsibilities back from the communities. It's something that's theirs that they can decide on, and that's fair. I really can't support this motion. If anything, I would abstain.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure about the process here. I would like to propose an amendment.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Can you please outline your amendment to us?

Mr. Bromley: Yes. I propose that we remove the words "reinstate the" and replace it with "work with communities to establish a." So the entire amended motion would read: "I move that the committee strongly recommend that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs take immediate action to work with communities to establish a Main Street Chipsealing Program."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Any Member can propose an amendment to a motion, but we will need it in writing. We'll take a short break while you and the Clerk work on this amendment.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, committee. We'll call the committee back to order. Mr. Bromley, I understand you have a motion. Could you read your motion into the record.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to withdraw my move to amend the motion.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Just to confirm: you wish to withdraw your amendment to the motion. Is that correct?

Mr. Bromley: That's correct.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All right. There is no motion to amend. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to amend the motion.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Please proceed, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, I move that Motion 50-16(2) be amended to delete the word "reinstate" and insert the words "work with communities to establish a."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Any Member can make a... We have a motion to amend from Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko, can we please get you to read the amendment into the record.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, I move that Committee Motion 15-16(2) be amended by deleting the words "reinstate the" and insert the words "work with communities to establish a."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion to amend is in order. To the amendment? To the motion as amended? To the amendment, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've talked to a number of communities over the past number of years and other Members of this House. I think part of the main issue is that it's already rolled into the capital funding that communities get. With the mover's indulgence here, I'd like to make an amendment to his amendment, if I could. I know that may complicate things, but it would read, "I move that this committee strongly recommend that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs take immediate action to work with communities to find a way to fund the Main Street Chipsealing Program outside of existing funding."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Before we can go with that, we'll have to actually deal with the amendment that's on the books right now. Just for the record, we need to deal with this amendment first, and then we can come back to yours later. To the amendment, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I'm concerned because when I see this come forward I see it as... The New Deal money was indeed a process as to how communities were supposed to take care of this problem of chipsealing their streets and whatnot. I see this as complicating the waters without having it negotiated through MACA to get a sense of its real impact. The challenge I see is that this amendment now has them working to establish this. What's going to happen is that MACA's going to turn around and say: Well, if you want us to work with communities now, we're going to have to start taking money back to manage it. I see the

amendment muddying a very difficult situation to begin with. I don't think the amendment actually helps the situation. I think it makes it worse. This should be negotiated out of the New Deal money if that's really the intent of the bigger motion as a whole.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the amendment? To close, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to remind the Members: the Main Street Chipsealing Program was only for non-tax-based communities. It wasn't for all communities. I think the motion makes it clear that we want to work with communities to ensure this program is there, that there's an option they can look at.

My argument to begin with is that the expertise, the surveys, the studies — all that reporting — has already been done by MACA. MACA has that expertise in-house, and I don't think we should lose that, because the small communities don't have the capacity to deal with it. If they want to hire engineers and do surveys and everything else, there's a cost there that they can save on. I think that someone who represents small communities.... This motion is for the smaller communities. It's got nothing to do with the larger centres. The motion is clear. The Main Street Chipsealing Program is for non-tax-based communities, which came out of a motion of a non-tax-based committee that was looking at trying to find ways to improve the quality of life in communities. All this does is force MACA and the communities to work out a way to reinstate this program so the communities have that option to look at main street chipsealing, but also take advantage of MACA's expertise in this area.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the amendment. Question has been called.

Amendment carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): To the motion as amended, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The motion definitely has merit. The issue of main streets in small communities — non-taxed-based municipalities that are not paved or chipsealed — is a pressing issue in communities. However, it is somewhat complicated by the fact that the money for this type of work was given to communities. It was pulled out of the normal funding and given to communities in the New Deal funding as capital so that communities would have the prerogative to decide if this was a priority or something else within their community was a priority.

In general, I support the concept of helping communities deal with this issue of main street; however, if it would involve taking money back out

of New Deal funding and removing that discretionary prioritizing of capital projects in communities, then I think it's something we just need to further discuss and debate. I think there are a number of amendments on this department, and possibly we will not be closing this department off today. I would like a chance to consider the consequences and alternative options.

Having said that, I do believe it is an issue. I just want to make sure we are not asking for something that may in fact be good for some communities and not for others. To the motion, I would abstain on the grounds that I would like more time to come up with something we have a chance to work through and talk to the Minister about.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion as amended, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I thought the amendment would kind of speak to the fact that we're not going to tell communities what to do. I think it still does this, and I'm not really comfortable with it.

Communities have worked very hard, Mr. Chair, to get that autonomy, to self-direct their own interests and put their priorities where they lie. That was the whole focus behind the New Deal. Communities did speak about the lack of capacity and expertise in dealing with their projects, be it building water plants or anything else. It kind of touches on that, but in terms of chipsealing we can't really force a community to do chipsealing if they've got other priorities. That's what this motion kind of does.

If there was another way of talking to the department to say, "Look; communities need assistance in planning their projects, whatever they may be," then that would be a more effective use of the department's resources.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion as amended, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support main street chipsealing to help communities control things like their dust as well as to improve their lives. But I'm afraid, without knowing more about this.... It looks to me as if it takes away money from the communities — sort of New Deal money. And, ultimately, that choice will be taken away.

It was just mentioned about autonomy. I mean, I've never heard a community want to look the other direction by saying: I want MACA to run our stuff. I think communities feel they've learned and earned that respect and authority to plan their own projects and their own priorities. If it turns into a situation where they've been given money under the New Deal and it's got to be taken away, because now it's got to be worked in some relationship with

MACA.... I can't speak for MACA or how they're going to do their finance calculations, but I suspect they're just going to take a formula piece out of everybody in these communities that normally would be focused in on, and I think, as a whole, they'll suffer.

I'm a little uncomfortable with the way it's sort of walked on our table this afternoon: you know, sort of like: This is how it's got to be and whatnot. I would prefer more time to go through this and understand the impact of potentially taking away funding that rightly belongs to the ambition and the priority of every community.

Again, I recognize the problem. I support the issue in principle. The concept makes sense. I mean, it makes a lot of sense. But, Mr. Chairman, I can't support the motion like this without knowing what the impacts are.

It's easy to say: Here; this motion means there's going to be chipsealing in every community. I'm okay with that. It's the question of: what does it mean about who's going to pay and where's the money going to come from and how do we figure this out in the plan? It's the negatives that cause me concern at this time.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion as amended, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, for years communities have been saying: We want the ability and the power to make our own decisions, decide what's best for our community. I think the New Deal has given them that power, and if they want to use it for main street paving, chipsealing their main street, then, you know, that'd be their decision.

By putting it back in here, I'm not sure where we're going with this. I'm willing to support any of the Members bringing motions forward, but there are times when you just have to say, "Maybe this might not be the best for communities. Is this what the community wants?" I'm just afraid if we go there, then — I think it's been mentioned a couple of times — money may have to be pulled back.

I'm sure there's the expertise within MACA if the communities decide to take advantage of it, to get some input and just get some help from MACA in deciding how to go about it. But at the end of the day, the decision should be the community's as to whether they want their main streets chipsealed or not.

I'm just not sure where we're going with this. We seemed to have spent a lot of time on this one particular motion and the amendment. I'm saying let's just let the communities decide for themselves if that's what they want to do and not just put it all

back on MACA again. They have been trying to give the power to the community. I'm a big supporter of that.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion as amended, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't see any indication here that there would be a decrease in the capital for the communities as a result of this motion. I see the motion indicating that they will work with the communities to establish a main street chipsealing program. As far as my communities go, one community's done; one community is not done.

I support the motion because I feel it would increase the funding to a small community to get additional money to do some work on at least covering up some of the dust. I think that's an issue.... It sounds to me like the dust-control program has also been delegated to the communities. I'm not seeing this as a motion that indicates that money will be shuffled or reduced at the community level.

My assumption is that this motion is to decrease the amount of money that's being decreased in MACA overall and not roll it into the \$28 million that goes in communities at this time.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion as amended, Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm having great difficulty with this motion. I support the concept of the New Deal and know that communities are happy to have their own autonomy and to use their funds as they see fit. I don't know where the funding for this program would come from. I sense there's a feeling on the part of the mover of the motion that there's an unfairness here, that some communities got done and some did not.

Perhaps MACA could provide a bit of extra funding over the next several years to communities who are not done and earmark those funds only for a main street chipsealing program, in order to make it equal, so it wouldn't be felt that the communities that got done while the program was in place got something and the other guys got nothing.

But you know, if this was intended to only apply to non-tax-based communities, I'm not from one of those so, for many reasons, I don't feel I can vote on this motion, and I will abstain.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion as amended, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate what I see as part of the intent of my colleague's motion here, which is that, even though we have a new deal and we've transferred a lot of responsibilities to communities, there still is an important role for Municipal and Community Affairs in providing expertise and so on. I think they're aware of that. This is an attempt to engage some of that expertise in a way that helps communities achieve their goals.

I think there have been important issues raised by the Minister, that there is funding available for this. That's the extent of my remarks. I just wanted to recognize part of the intent there.

There's one thing I would assume this motion to include, which I would really support, and that's a report from MACA that looks at the communities where this has been done and reports on the success of that program and the gains or the difficulties that have been encountered in that program to date.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion as amended. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to make an amendment to the amended motion, if I could. Right after the words "chipsealing program" it would read "outside of existing funding levels to communities" and in its entirety would read: "I move that this committee strongly recommend that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs take immediate action to work with communities to establish a main street chipsealing program outside of existing funding levels to communities."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Any Member can make an amendment to a motion. We will need it in writing. We will have to take a short break in order to get the amendment prepared in writing.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

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

We're on an amendment to amend the amended motion. Mr. Ramsay, if we could please get you to read your amendment to the amended motion into the record.

Mr. Ramsay: I move that Committee Motion 50-16(2) be further amended by inserting the words "outside of existing funding to communities" after the words "chipsealing program."

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. On the amendment to the amended motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate why the mover made this. My question — really out there — is, although I know it won't be answered in this forum.... The fact is, it now looks like we're funding. The motion here says we should fund this twice. We give them New Deal money. The money inside there, at the authority of that municipality, exists. They have funding if they choose to chipseal or choose not to chipseal. That's their choice. We've empowered them with that ability. Now this sends the message to MACA that they now have to find more money, assuming they don't draw back that funding. Saying "outside of existing funding to communities" further muddies the water, because now, truthfully, it looks like a suggestion that we fund them twice.

If chipsealing isn't funded properly, I want to know. If chipsealing isn't getting done, I think we should have that discussion. I don't believe any community should not have chipsealing. I think every community should have it where they need it.

I know that the original person who made the first motion probably is only going to think I'm against small communities. Whether he's grimacing or not over there, in his own chuckling way, you've got to get the message that I'm not against small communities.

I'm concerned about the design of this motion and its outcome. I try to support motions, whether I agree or disagree with them, if they help small communities or help my colleagues here. To me this clearly says: funded twice. It puts it as a real challenge; all of a sudden we've got a Finance Minister who says our finance cupboards are bare, and now we have a motion to fund it twice. We are funding it already, I think, and I have nothing that tells me otherwise. I have no other position to assume than that's the case.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the amendment of the amended motion, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: The reason I moved the amendment — I think there's some concern out there, and Mr. Hawkins raised a bit of it — is that communities would be impacted by their New Deal money. That's the issue we have to get over and we have to tackle.

I don't want to see that New Deal money getting impacted. I don't want to see a chipsealing program take from the existing funding communities get. What I want to see — this is why I'm supporting my colleague Mr. Krutko, from Mackenzie Delta, on this — is because it is a health issue. It's an important issue in small communities, the dust issue. We've talked about that for a number of years in this Legislative Assembly. It should be something we concern ourselves with. I don't believe that it

necessarily has to come out of existing funding that flows through to communities.

I think we can, if we make it a priority of the government, get some money and earmark it for a chipsealing program. It has nothing to do with the New Deal money. It should have nothing to do with the New Deal money; I don't want Members to get confused about that. We're going to be going through strategic initiatives. We're going to be sitting down with the Ministers. We're going to be talking to them about what's important in our communities. If chipsealing main streets in our communities is important to us, then we better find some money to address it. It doesn't necessarily have to come out of the New Deal money and the capital money that's flowing through to communities.

I just want Members to understand that. I think this amendment to the motion, outside of existing funding levels to communities, addresses that. It's a recommendation that the government take a look at it. It's not going to impact the funding that goes to communities. And if it does, then we've got a serious problem and we're going to have a good look at that. In my estimation, this speaks to the issue, and it also speaks to the fact that communities are not going to be impacted.

It's hard to believe that in today's day and age, every community in the Northwest Territories doesn't have main street chipseal. That is a goal this government should set, and we should try to attain that goal. We should be setting some money aside each and every year, outside of the existing funding, to address that issue. Do a couple of communities a year. It wouldn't take us very long before each and every community in the Northwest Territories has its main street chipsealed. I think that's the intent of the mover of the motion's idea on this. I support that, and I hope Members do support the amendment. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Are we ready for the question on the amendment to amend the amended motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Question.

Amendment carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): To the motion as amended. Question.

Motion as amended carried.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Let's get back to it. We're on page 4-21, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Grants and Contributions, Grants:

\$350,000; Contributions: \$4.667 million; Total Grants and Contributions: \$5.017 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Grants and Contributions, Total Grants and Contributions: \$5.017 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All right. Page 4-22, information item, Community Operations, Active Positions. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, a quick question. I believe when it was asked earlier, the Minister said there was a loss of two positions, but our information looks like four. I just wanted to figure that one out.

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I'll have Debbie DeLancey answer that.

Ms. DeLancey: Yes, thank you. There is a reduction of two positions that have been eliminated as part of the proposed budget reduction process. The other two positions: one was a sunsetted position, so the funding has expired, and the fourth position is one that has simply been transferred to another division in the department.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. We're on page 4-22, information item, Community Operations, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Active Positions, information item (page 4-22), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving on to 4-23, information item, Community Operations, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Community Operations, Active Positions, information item (page 4-23), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): All right. Page 4-25, Activity Summary, School of Community Government, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.861 million. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I'd just like to ask the Minister what support for individuals will be there to assist communities when they're requiring financial questions or dealing with administration items. Is there going to be a source by way of your department to assist communities dealing with capacity issues?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we have a number of resources still in the communities or working with the communities. First of all, each region has a superintendent who deals with the community governments and is in contact and works with the community governments. We also have the new capacity coordinators who will be in the regional centres, and each region has one.

Mr. Krutko: Just in regard to the School of Community Government: what training opportunities will communities have to build capacity? The whole idea of the School of Community Government was to work with other government agencies — Housing Corporation, Indian Affairs — in regard to the municipalities. Will there be an opportunity for training for people to build capacity going through this program, as there was in the past?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, all our core training programs are going to stay in place. We're going to focus on community governments. What will probably end up not being delivered is some of the administrative support programs that can be carried out by different organizations and Aurora College.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Page 4-25, Activity Summary, School of Community Government, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.861 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, School of Community Government, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.861 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along. We're going to page 4-28. Information item, School of Community Government, Active Positions. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On 4-26, I just had one question, and that was when the department might be able to come forward with a strategy or plan to work with Aurora College on delivering programs to communities, and training to communities, and the discussions that are going on with Aurora College. When might we be able to get an update on that?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a number of partnership arrangements already in a number of different areas, including fire fighting, and I think it's NAIT and other organizations. We have started some discussions about some of the programs that are probably coming off our list with Aurora College, and it will take some time. I would expect sometime in the fall

or toward the end of the calendar year we could update the committee.

Mr. Ramsay: I'm just wondering if the department's plan is to migrate the entire training and learning component of the School of Community Government over to Aurora College, or are you going to keep any portion of that down the road?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, it's not our intent to transfer all the programs to Aurora College at this point. We still have the resources, and the communities still have the desire, for us to continue to deliver core programs. We're going to be focusing on community government and community government responsibilities.

Some of the other programs we deliver in the area of administrative support and administration.... We'll have those discussions to see if Aurora College can put them up, or another organization.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Moving along to page 4-28. Information item, School of Community Government, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, School of Community Government, Active Positions, information item (page 4-28), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Page 4-29, information item, School of Community Government, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, School of Community Government, Active Positions, information item (page 4-29), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 4-31, Activity Summary, Lands Administration, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$2.980 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Lands Administration, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$2.980 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 4-34, information item, Lands Administration, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Lands Administration, Active Positions, information item (page 4-34), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 4-35, information item, Lands Administration, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Lands Administration, Active Positions, information item (page 4-35), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if there would be agreement to go back to page 4-30 briefly.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The Member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to page 4.... Mr. Bromley, can you please confirm which page you wanted to go back to?

Mr. Bromley: Page 4-31.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): The Member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to 4-31.

Unanimous consent granted.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): We shall go back to page 4-31. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of dealing with trespassers on land, this remains a bit of a thorny issue, and I know the department has been active working on it. Unfortunately, there's a huge role played by other governments, and it just has seemed impossible to deal with the situation, to get those other governments engaged. I am wondering if the department has considered putting a citizens' group together, if you will, to try and deal with these lands issues that can't be captured solely under MACA's jurisdiction but affects all of our residents.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Minister for MACA.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is an idea that has come to us some time ago. We have put together a working group, and the members in the working group are ourselves, Municipal and Community Affairs, and the few people from Akaitcho. INAC has also joined us recently, and the city, I believe, is also part of the committee.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you for that. I appreciate those remarks. It's good to know that is out there. I was actually thinking of a citizens' group, not necessarily wearing any hats to the table, but able to talk to each other in practical ways, rather than from their official positions, and make recommendations to help deal with this issue.

Hon. Michael McLeod: I would expect that would be something either the city or an interest group would look after. At any rate, we would expect that to be organized at a local level.

Mr. Bromley: I guess that's one way to look at it. I'm looking at it as a Member of this government that has been unsuccessful in dealing with the issue other than in a very limited way. The way in which we have full authority, we can sort of move as we can. I have been impressed with getting groups of people together that are able to look at things a little more objectively, even though they may be members of certain groups and so on. I am hoping this government would see a role for itself in some new and innovative approaches there.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we're always willing to consider any suggestions that come from the Members. I still personally think it may be a challenge to do so, recognizing that we are trying to work with other agencies, other governments, and to set up a lobby group to lobby ourselves or Indian Affairs. It may prove to cause some problems. We'll take the recommendation, however, and see if there's any avenue to develop this further.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Any other questions on page 4-31? If not, let's get back to 4-34, Lands Administration, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Lands Administration, Active Positions, information item (page 4-34), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-35, Lands Administration, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Lands Administration, Active Positions, information item (page 4-35), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Sport, Recreation and Youth; Activity Summary; Operations Expenditure Summary: \$2.504 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs; Activity Summary; Sport, Recreation and Youth; Operations Expenditure Summary: \$2.504 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-39, Sport, Recreation and Youth. Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 51-16(2)
TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to move a motion.

I move that this committee strongly recommend that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs take immediate action to develop a strategic plan that identifies concrete actions including the

necessary investments to provide meaningful support to the voluntary sector; and further, the department include the strategic plan within the departmental business plan to be considered in the fall of 2008.

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

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A lot of Members in the House have talked a significant amount about the voluntary sector. I've been one of them, talking about the voluntary sector since right at the beginning of this Legislative Assembly, especially since the strategic plan. I was quite happy we did manage to get additional support into the strategic plan for the voluntary sector.

The voluntary sector in the Northwest Territories is quite diverse. It includes those pure volunteer organizations but also non-government organizations. The NWT has the second highest rate of both formal and informal volunteering in Canada. More than half — 53 per cent — of the NWT residents 15 years of age and older volunteer with a group, compared to 45 per cent of Canadians in southern Canada and other territories. Eighty per cent of the people over 15 years of age volunteer informally.

Examples of informal volunteering include activities such as helping others with housework, shopping, babysitting or paperwork. More formal things are things such as the NGOs. NWT volunteers give an average of 153 hours per year. In 2004 the contribution of NWT volunteers was equivalent to 1,553 jobs. If paid to do the work, the value of that contribution would be well over \$68.9 million.

Where people live, their age, education or income does not necessarily affect whether people volunteer. Most commonly reported activities include support for children's activities in and out of schools, sports and recreation, organizing events in church and getting involved with non-government organizations.

These facts are important because it stresses how important volunteering is in the Northwest Territories. In our strategic plan, I think we need to take that next step of supporting a central organization that helps bring all of these volunteer organizations and NGOs together. Every one of these volunteer organizations and NGOs — they are all fighting and they are all struggling for their own existence. They're so focused on getting themselves up and running that they're not able to focus in on the bigger picture — the entire sector.

That's where an organization such as Volunteer NWT comes into play. They are able to be a

champion for all volunteer organizations and NGOs. They champion the cause and champion the purpose of the sector and work with governments hand-in-hand. If you find solutions, things such as formula financing arrangements and financing structures that will help these NGOs and volunteer organizations survive and be sustainable, they can do what they do the best, which is support healthy living in communities.

We're making the motion in MACA. Personally, I think it probably shouldn't be in MACA. I think it should probably be in the Executive, but traditionally MACA has been the department that provides this type of support to the central body, which is Volunteer NWT. Basically what we're suggesting is: we know the federal funding is gone. We know that Volunteer NWT has shut down. They can be brought back with a little bit of help from MACA, a little bit of money — not some tiny amount like \$10,000, but enough to help them with their operational requirements. They've gone out in good faith, and they've managed to collect some money. Unfortunately, the money they were able to collect wasn't enough to help them do their operations. It was able to help them with some of their programming and some of the research, but they still need some operations money.

This organization includes members from all over the territory. They are truly a territorial organization, working on the behalf of all volunteer organizations and NGOs. Basically we would like MACA to find some money, put together a plan, and work with the organization for the best interests of people of the Northwest Territories.

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

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to back up my colleague's statements there. The voluntary sector provides jobs, training, leadership on social justice and environmental issues, recreation, cultural opportunities.

Volunteer NWT is unable to obtain additional support from either the federal or territorial governments, so it's had to end its operations effective immediately. But they had \$79,800 lined up in funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, as the Minister acknowledged. This is a real lost opportunity for us and this important role.

Volunteers and voluntary organizations are all about taking responsibility for what happens in their community, and that's exactly what our hundreds if not thousands of volunteers do. Statistics clearly show that the NWT has major social problems compared to elsewhere in Canada, so there's a big role for the voluntary and non-profit sector here.

I just want to note that when we support our volunteers, we are working together to address many of the goals set by this 16th Legislative Assembly, such as a strong and independent North built on partnerships, an environment that will sustain present and future generations, sustainable, vibrant, safe communities, and healthy, educated people.

I know, also, that my colleague mentioned the MACA versus Executive aspect of this issue. I know the Premier is listening, and I know he has expressed a commitment to doing something about this, but I want to again add my voice.

I will clearly be supporting this motion, and I'm requesting a recorded vote.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Question is being called. The Member has requested a recorded vote.

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell):

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay,
Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Robert McLeod,
Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Beaulieu,
Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): All those against, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

Principal Clerk of Committees (Ms. Russell):

Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Roland, Mr. Michael McLeod, Mr. Yakeleya.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The count of the vote is ten in favour, none against, five abstentions. The motion is carried.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 52-16(2)
TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO PROVIDE
MEANINGFUL SUPPORT
FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a committee motion. I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to develop a strategic plan that identifies concrete actions, including the necessary investment to provide meaningful support for youth programs; and further, that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs include the strategic plan within its departmental business plans to be considered for the fall of 2008.

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

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This contribution to youth has been eliminated from the MACA budget. I think it's important to keep all the youth money in. This is for sport, rec, youth; mainly the majority of the budget is for regional youth contributions.

I've said enough about the youth. This is more money for the youth they want to see eliminated from the budget.

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

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I will be supporting this motion. It speaks to one of my views: that we've got to continue reiterating and following up on the mission and vision statement of the government that youth is important to us as a government and to us as a jurisdiction and a territory. Working toward and developing a strategy and integrating it into our government is very, very important, so I'll certainly support this motion.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be supporting the motion. Having the experience of growing up in a small community, I believe that every opportunity you can have to invest in productive and creative challenges for youth, giving them a good experience, will help lead them to the growth of better things and give them the chance of greater opportunities. Idle hands do the devil's work, as they say; I think that investing in youth keeps them on the right track.

I'm fortunate enough to say we had good investment when I was young. We had a community centre, and a lot of us spent a lot of good time there. You know, I think a solid investment kept us on track. Of course, the beatings at home from time to time to keep us on the straight and narrow didn't hurt.

Laughter.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, for the record, that was just a joke. If my mom goes back and reads this, then I will get a beating.

Mr. Chairman, the fact is that whether you're in Yellowknife or a small community, the more you can invest in the opportunities for youth, whether it's in sports and recreation or some type of art program, you can help develop and foster that creativity in young people to help make them better people. With that comes responsibility and growth. If you can keep them away from those sour things known as drugs and alcohol every chance you get, I think we've made solid investments.

I'd like to think we could never put enough money into this budget, because I don't think you ever could. But you can't do everything; we know that. This motion speaks volumes to the fact that I'm certainly committed to the growth of our youth. Every chance we get, I definitely want to see if I can help support them. With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll be supporting this motion, and I thank the committee for the time.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Question is being called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 4-39, Sport, Recreation and Youth; Activity Summary; Grants and Contributions: \$1.1 million. Total Grants: \$1.1 million. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask about the sport and recreation contributions. I'm given to understand that the sport and recreation contributions will be reduced by \$1.075 million in the next fiscal year. I wondered if I could get an explanation as to where those reductions will come.

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the Premier's address indicated that sports and recreation funding will be stabilized and that there will be no reductions in that area.

Ms. Bisaro: Mr. Chair, that's good to hear. So we can assume that contributions will be at least at 2008–2009 budgeted figures?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, initially there was an intent to look at reductions in year 2. That has been changed, and there are no plans to reduce funding in this area.

Ms. Bisaro: That's great. Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 4-40, Sport, Recreation and Youth; Activity Summary; Grants and Contributions: \$1.1 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Sport, Recreation and Youth, Grants and Contributions — Continued: \$1.1 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Information item, page 4-42. Sport, Recreation and Youth; Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary; Sport, Recreation and Youth; Active Positions, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 4-43, information item; Sport, Recreation and Youth; Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary; Sport, Recreation and Youth; Active Positions; information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 4-45, Regional Operations, Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$95.015 million. Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With respect to regional operations, the Minister and the ministry are well aware that I tendered many, many motions at this particular sitting. I'd had a huge outcry from my riding and all my communities about the importance of the regional operations, the community development worker, the recreation and the sports, recreation and youth operations in the Deh Cho region. I have received many, many petitions and e-mails, which I've forwarded to the department. I was told that because of this work we're able to save all the recreation workers in all the regions.

I also believe that the intent — the intent of my communities, the leadership, the youth that filed those petitions with me and I with the House — was to save our sports, recreation and youth regional cap.

While we're very happy to have the recreation coordinator positions kept, there's still one more important worker that does important work in our community, in our Deh Cho region, in the Nahendeh riding. That was the youth worker, the youth program officer position.

With that, Mr. Chair, I've been doing some research. Because it is a deletion, I would like to move a motion with regard to that position in this line item, Mr. Chair. With that, I've got a committee motion.

COMMITTEE MOTION 53-16(2)
TO REINSTATE \$71,000 FOR YOUTH
OFFICER POSITION IN
THE DEH CHO REGION
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Menicoche: I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding in the amount of \$71,000 for the proposed elimination of the youth program officer position in the Deh Cho region under the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs under the Regional Operations Activity.

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

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In the preamble of this section I indicated the reason for the motion, and I'll just speak to it again.

Part of our consensus-style government is that we're reflective of our population, their needs and their demands. I believe that I began this process doing just that, Mr. Chair. I got my phone calls; I got the leadership contacting me. There were petitions filed with me, and I consequently filed them with the House and with the Minister's office. I sent him numerous memos and e-mails about the fact that recreation, sport and youth delivery is very, very important.

I, as the MLA for Nahendeh, could not support any centralization of any of our activities. In fact, it should be devolution we should be striving for. I'm really happy to see there was some movement in that. But once again, the people's intent was to save all the workers in the region. I believe that this motion will speak to that, to reinstate that position.

I utilized our full tools and the full resources available to me. I made Member's statements, I questioned the Minister in the House, I brought it to our committee. I worked with it in our in-camera briefings with our very important Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, working with the Chair, and utilized that time to state our concerns and bring it forward.

Once again, Mr. Chair, it's here before us in Committee of the Whole. I'm moving this motion to reinstate this position, because the people have spoken. Mahsi.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We talk about youth being a priority, and here's a good opportunity for us to show that.

I know MACA contributes money to youth, but when you start to make reductions and you target youth and sport specifically, then you're obviously going to get an outcry, because youth and sport are important in the communities.

MACA still does what they have to do in the communities, as far as that goes, but this one here is another one where a youth worker, not being paid a huge amount of money, is being affected while there are others sitting in senior management, higher paying jobs, who really don't contribute as much. I'm not questioning what they do, but these people contribute on the front line, and I think that's got to be recognized.

With that, I will be supporting this motion that my colleague from Deh Cho put forward.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Mr. Menicoche, do you want to wrap it up?

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to say one further thing. The department classified this position as an anomaly, but I think these youth worker program officer positions should be more of the common, more of the regular and more of the normal for delivery of programs in all our regions.

With that, Mr. Chair, I'd like to request a recorded vote.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. I'll allow the Minister to respond to the motion before we put it to a vote. Mr. McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Yes, Mr. Chairman; just a couple of quick points. First of all, somebody referenced that the motion was brought forward by the Member for Deh Cho. The Member for Nahendeh is the one who raised the motion.

The point I wanted to make, Mr. Chairman, is that this is an anomaly position. It was a position that was in the region, titled Community Government Advisor. The money was intended to be utilized for a position to work with land claims in the region. There was not a lot of movement in that area, so the dollars were rolled into a youth position, and that's how this region ended up with one position.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Question is being called. A Member has requested a recorded vote. So with that, all those in favour, please rise.

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

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

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

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The result of the vote is nine in favour of the motion, none against, five abstentions. The motion is carried.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 4-45, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$95.015 million. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I mentioned in my opening remarks that I would be asking about climate change adaptation plans. As we know, the Northwest Territories is extremely vulnerable to

climate change. We can easily be overwhelmed by the pace of the change, if the predictions are anywhere near true. So far, they've been underestimates of what's occurring. It's going to take a real organized adaptation effort in an attempt to minimize the social, environmental and financial losses.

In the North, as everybody knows — this department certainly — there are many agencies and governments and players at the table. Some are not at the table. Adapting to climate change will include a major coordination challenge. Given all these things, we need an early start and we need a regional start, a regional effort, because we have a jurisdiction the size of which is unequalled by anybody but Nunavut in North America, and we have many climates. But we need a regional component to this. The coordination is also important, because many agencies offer opportunities for various degrees of funding. For example, I know the Government of Canada announced \$14 million for northern territories for climate change adaptation, so there are opportunities out there.

In a report in 2007 by the National Assessment of Climate Change, it was recognized that NWT communities can expect about \$420,000 in costs to infrastructure due to damage from melting permafrost. It could be less if we go after it aggressively early on. But this figure did not even include damage to roads, water reservoirs, sewage overruns, or the need for all-season roads — which we are about to hear about soon — and the costs associated with that. Nor — I have to point out, unfortunately — did it include the current cost of fuel, which has gone up about 40 per cent since that report was written.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he's started on regional planning climate adaptation plans. I know, from my earlier work in a non-government organization, that they have some work going in two regions, the Deh Cho and Akaitcho. But I'm wondering if MACA.... I see MACA is playing an essential coordinating role, so I'd appreciate any comments on that.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, the answer to the question the Member is raising is yes; we are starting to enter the whole area of climate change and climate change adaptation.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, I'd like to have a little bit more detail on how it shows up in the budget here.

Hon. Michael McLeod: We're doing a number of things as a department. Some of the comments made by the Member, however, fall outside of our

responsibility. The \$420 million anticipated to affect communities is not infrastructure that we're in charge of. However, we do work with communities, and we've started to work with all the communities to start looking at energy and all issues around energy and energy change and climate change. We have hired an energy management coordinator to help the communities move forward on that issue, and we've identified dollars. One of the biggest things we can do at this point is to start to identify resources to have better planning done and better planning developed.

I've already indicated to the Member that we have identified some money through the Building Canada program that would work toward research. This would be developed along with the Department of Transportation. We'd look at different issues along the lines of adaptation and also research.

Roads are a big issue, both for Transportation and for us in the area of community roads. We do contribute \$50,000 to the Arctic Energy Alliance, and we also contribute another \$150,000 for the position I mentioned earlier.

We do a lot of initiatives together with other departments, especially the Department of Transportation, to pilot and test new ways to deal with climate change.

We are renegotiating the gas tax shortly. One of the areas we intend to include in part of our negotiations is the ability to use these resources in the area of climate change adaptation. There are quite a few things we're working on and working toward bringing forward in the area of climate change and adaptation.

Mr. Bromley: I appreciate those comments from the Minister, and I appreciate all those projects that are happening. Many of them — for example, the energy plans and the work with Arctic Energy Alliance — are of course mitigation, especially reducing the cost of living, I hope, but in the process, reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

Unfortunately we're in a situation where there is a certain amount of unavoidable climate change, which will happen only over the next four to six decades if we can get it stopped very soon. It's that change that I'm talking about adapting to. Rather than preventing climate change, in this case I'm looking for sort of a comprehensive strategy, perhaps a format for community plans and a process for implementing them, dedicated funds and so on, that actually address things like how buildings should be built now given the uncertainty in climate, how roads should be built now given the uncertainty in climate, and all those sorts of issues — sewage lagoons that could, with excessive rain

storms, as we've heard, all of a sudden drain out and so on: pretty practical community plans that bring this sort of information to the table in a practical way. I'm not so much looking for research, although I'm very glad that research is happening, because that can always improve that.

I think the degree to which we can plan ahead in a methodical and municipal way is the degree to which we will avoid the need for emergency planning coordinators and so on. So yes, I'm looking for a comprehensive strategy. Does the department have one? Are they contemplating one that engages each community in developing a plan — ideally, a regional plan, because as I say, we have such different climates across our huge territory.

Hon. Michael McLeod: This is an issue we've really only entered as an area of real concern in the last while. We have been moving toward having adaptation plans. However, the Member is right: we are probably only doing a lot of mitigation efforts. We are really in the early stages of getting a handle on what we can do or where we can go with the communities. We're operating more on a project-by-project basis and doing a lot of the baseline analysis of where we need to go.

One of the tools we have for our use is the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. Other departments are doing things in their areas of responsibility — building design; Public Works is looking at that.

Overall, government-wide there is a committee put together.... There are actually two communities, I believe. But from the Cabinet area of responsibility, we have an Energy Committee that is headed up by Bob McLeod, and the deputy ministers also work together to try to deal with this issue. However, I have to say we don't have an overall plan, and we're still in the early stages of maybe moving toward that.

Mr. Bromley: Mr. Chair, again I very much appreciate those comments from the Minister. I am somewhat aware of the other things that are being contemplated and getting off the ground. I just wanted to know if it was in place. If not, perhaps it's something we can discuss in the business planning for next year.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we recognize there has to be more effort put toward this issue. We will commit to looking at more planning and better organization for climate change adaptation for the business planning process.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just regarding the smaller communities, is MCA working

with the communities on the increase — the high cost of fuel and power — in the upcoming year and trying to help them reduce and find ways to save?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister Michael McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I guess a couple things. First of all, we are recognizing that the increased cost of fuel is an issue. It's something we deal with, with the communities when it comes forward through us as a forced-growth issue. It's really becoming a big issue within our government with all the departments that utilize fuel.

Through our energy planning with the communities, we're looking at different ways, and the communities are looking at different ways, to reduce the cost of fuel. Through the Public Works department, we are looking at reducing the cost of fuel: a different supplier, a different route — Over the Top — to serve the communities from Norman Wells north. This will bring down the cost overall for the next year.

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Minister, if that Over-the-Top route doesn't happen this year — I'm not privy to that — will there be any supplemental monies given to the smaller communities north of Norman Wells?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we're planning to do the Over-the-Top route this year. We don't expect to have any problems. We've been assured by the carriers that it's an area they're quite comfortable.... They've been practising. They've been taking test runs through that area, and we should have no problems. However, having said that, if there is an issue we do have extraordinary funding to cover that.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's good to know that the extraordinary funding will be there if the communities need it for the shortfall of fuel.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we're quite confident the Over-the-Top route will be successful. We will have a tanker coming up for the season.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. More questions on regional operations? If not, agreed?

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$95.015 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 4-47, Regional Operations, Activity Summary, Grants and Contributions, Community Government Grants and Contributions: \$44.711 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Grants and Contributions, Community Government

Grants and Contributions: \$44.711 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): On page 4-48, Regional Operations, Activity Summary, Grants and Contributions, Contributions: \$10.420 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Grants and Contributions — Continued, Contributions: \$10.420 million; Infrastructure Contributions: \$29.293 million; Other Grants and Contributions: \$84.424 million; Grants: \$55,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Regional Operations, Grants and Contributions continued, Contributions: \$1.05 million. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 54-16(2)
TO REINSTATE \$150,000 FOR
YOUTH CONTRIBUTION PROGRAMS FUNDING
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Beaulieu: Mr. Chair, I have a committee motion. I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding in the amount of \$150,000 for the proposed reduction of youth contribution programs funding under the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, under the Regional Operations activity.

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

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It has the same background as the other youth contribution programs, which were for eligible organizations. This is for eligible youth initiatives. Again, it's just trying to prevent the government from removing any contribution or funding for youth initiatives, youth programs and so on.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Question is being called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Again, we're on page 4-49, Regional Operations, Grants and Contributions continued, Contributions: \$1.5 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Grants and Contributions — Continued, Contributions: \$1.5 million; Other Grants and Contributions: \$1.555 million; Total Grants and Contributions: \$85.979 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Information item, Regional Operations, Active Positions. Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just noticing again in the Beaufort-Delta that there are six positions affected. It's going from 16 down to ten. I noticed back in the department summary that it was 16 to 11, so I'm assuming we're losing five. I'd like to ask the Minister if the six positions.... How many of them are filled? Are they all for '08-09?

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

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I believe in the Beaufort-Delta there are six positions. Three are filled, and one is being re-profiled and put back in. So I guess there are two positions that would have people in them.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for that. I think I also asked the Minister if they were for '08-09 or '09-10. I'll just end with that. But if the Minister can provide me a list of the two positions and titles, that would be appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That will be all.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to confirm for all the Members that the positions targeted for reduction are for this year and none are for '09-10. We'd be glad to provide the Member with the positions that are being affected in Inuvik.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, there's something I've been bringing up for years now, and nobody seems to pay attention to me, but I'm going to ask it again, on this page, because it reminds me. Yellowknife is headquarters, North Slave is not called Yellowknife, Klitcho is not called Ray, Deh Cho is not called Fort Simpson, Sahtu is not called Norman Wells, and the Beaufort-Delta is not called Inuvik, so why is the South Slave called Fort Smith?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA, Minister McLeod.

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, I didn't name the positions. We have regions that are titled differently. The Member's correct. The South Slave is called South Slave and others such as the Fort Smith region.... Of course, the regions are comprised differently in different departments also.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Could we, please, in the Department of MACA refer to the South Slave as the South Slave?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we actually call the Fort Smith region South Slave. That's what we call it, for the most part. We certainly can raise that issue with the Finance Minister for consideration if there's concern over what we call the region.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Well, that would be good. It's just that Hay River is the largest community in the South Slave, and it's just odd that we go by Fort Smith. When I have to go and look for spending in my community, I have to look under "Fort Smith."

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. Minister of MACA, will you take care of that?

Hon. Michael McLeod: Mr. Chairman, we hear the Member's concerns and we'll have that discussion with the Minister of Finance.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. So we're at information item, Regional Operations, Active Positions.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Active Positions, information item (page 4-50), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 4-51, information item, Regional Operations, Activity Summary.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Activity Summary, Regional Operations, Active Positions, information item (page 4-51), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 4-52, information item, Work Performed on Behalf of Others.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Work Performed on Behalf of Others, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 4-53, information item, Work Performed on Behalf of Others.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Work Performed on Behalf of Others — Continued, information item (page 4-53), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 4-54, information item, Work Performed on Behalf of Others.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Work Performed on Behalf of Others — Continued, information item (page 4-54), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay; we can move back to page 4-7. Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 55-16(2)
TO DEFER CONSIDERATION OF
OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the department summary for the Department of

Municipal and Community Affairs Operations Expenditures at this time.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Motion is in order. Motion is being circulated. Question is being called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay; we're at page 3-5, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Community Operations, Infrastructure Contributions, Total Infrastructure Contributions: \$4.282 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Community Operations, Infrastructure Contributions, Total Infrastructure Contributions: \$4.282 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Activity: \$4.282 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Committee Operations, Infrastructure Contributions, Total Activity: \$4.282 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 3-8, Regional Operations, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Infrastructure Contributions, Total Infrastructure Contributions: \$29.293 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Regional Operations, Infrastructure Contributions, Total Infrastructure Contributions: \$29.293 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Capital Planning Assets, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$1.421 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Regional Operations, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$1.421 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Activity: \$30.714 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Regional Operations, Total Activity: \$30.714 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department: \$34.996 million.

Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Regional Operations, Total Department: \$34.996 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree we've concluded the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan at this time?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

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

What's the wish of the committee?
Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, we would like to proceed now with the Department of Transportation Ministerial remarks.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya, if he has opening comments in regard to his department's Main Estimates. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure to present the Department of Transportation's Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2008–2009.

The Department of Transportation operates and maintains the territorial transportation system, including 27 community-based airports; 2,200 kilometres of all-weather highway; 1,450 kilometres of winter roads; and five ferries connecting the highway system at river crossings. The department also administers road licensing and safety programs as well as the local community access road program.

We are proposing an operating budget of \$95.9 million for 2008–2009, including amortization to operate the territorial transportation system. This represents an 8 per cent increase from the \$88.3 million budget for 2007–2008. This forced-growth funding will help cover increased contract costs for construction materials, maintenance of highways and airports, and ferry operations. The increasing cost of fuel, gravel and other construction materials, as well as collective agreement increases, contribute to the rising operational costs that are beyond our control.

We have listened to Members, communities and the transportation industry. These Main Estimates represent our commitment to address priority transportation system needs across the Northwest Territories, improving safety and stabilizing rising maintenance costs. This is a result-orientated plan that will advance the vision, goals and priorities of this Assembly and make significant improvements to the northern transportation system that our communities and our economy rely upon.

I'm confident that this plan is strategic and balanced and that we're making the most appropriate investments given our funding limitations.

Significant exploration and efforts have gone into finding more efficient and effective ways to deliver essential transportation programs and services across the NWT. The department has proposed O&M reductions of approximately \$2 million, or 2 per cent, of the 2008–2009 budget. These budget reductions were difficult to determine. They were carefully selected to minimize the impact on program service levels while also being accountable to the impact on our employees. The department is confident that the operational adjustments can be implemented with a minimal impact on the level of service provided to the public. A number of initiatives involve adopting new business and program delivery approaches, providing additional contracting opportunities and maximizing the capacity of regional management.

As a strategic initiative to reduce the high cost of living in the North, accelerating the construction of icebridges across the Mackenzie and Peel rivers has been proposed to extend the operating season of the Dempster Highway. The proposed use of ice-spray technology to construct the Dempster Highway icebridges is forecasted to open the crossing to full-load capacity three to four weeks earlier than using the conventional ice auger flooding technique. The resupply of goods can shift from expensive air transportation to more affordable ground transportation for a longer period of time and reduce warehousing, storage and logistic constraints for retail operations and industry. We continue to examine other ways to help reduce the high cost of living in our communities.

Under the Managing This Land Strategic Initiative the department is also continuing to work to mitigate and to adapt to climate change. The department proposes research in a number of areas to better understand and assess the impact of climate change on the NWT transportation system. These studies will help us to perfect existing infrastructure assets, maintain transportation service levels, direct infrastructure needs into the future, and develop innovative approaches to better service our transportation system.

One of the major challenges faced by the department is the recruitment of marine engineers. Under the Maximizing Opportunities Strategic Initiative the department has proposed a made-in-the-North training program to address this critical issue. The department's long-term goal is to provide all required training, from entry level to Master, in the Northwest Territories and to have all the marine positions filled by Northerners.

The department's capital plan has a total budget of \$56.4 million for the 2008–2009 fiscal year, a 20 per cent increase from last fiscal year. The capital plan is focused on investments to meet increasing traffic demands and to improve connections to

communities. The proposed investment will reduce the cost of living, improve safety throughout the Northwest Territories and provide business opportunities in our communities.

We are entering into the last year of the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund Program. Significant improvements to the transportation system have been achieved through this partnership with the federal government. A total of \$15 million is budgeted for 2008–2009 for ongoing projects. Investments include \$2 million each for the Mackenzie Highway, Ingram Trail and the Liard Highway, \$5 million for the Dempster Highway and \$4 million for the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road Bridge Program, including a bridge over Blackwater River.

Major strategic infrastructure investments are proposed under the Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative. Winter roads connecting in the Nahendeh and the Sahtu regions will be improved to better withstand the challenges of climate change. The Tu Nedhe and the Thebacha region will be better connected through the proposed chipsealing programs on the Fort Smith and Fort Resolution highways.

The improvements proposed across the airport system will help stabilize the cost of air travel and community resupply and satisfy regulatory requirements. Runway extensions at the Fort McPherson, Fort Good Hope and Tulita airports are included in the proposed projects.

As Members know, this government recently signed the Building Canada Plan Framework Agreement. Negotiations are now underway on the funding agreement. This funding will help address the pressures of resource development, promote economic diversification across the NWT and allow us to continue making progress toward the goal of completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway to the Arctic coast. Important new capital projects such as the Kakisa River Bridge, the Yellowknife bypass road and the Tuk Gravel Access Road could be constructed under this program. We will also undertake planning studies on proposed projects like the access to gravel supplies west of Aklavik.

The growing volume of traffic generated by the North's economic activity, estimated at an average of 7 per cent per year, affects all modes of transportation. The greater frequency of ferry crossings, more aircraft landings, higher passenger volumes and record levels of commercial vehicle trucks present the department with tremendous challenges. This budget proposal strives to match the public demands for transportation services with the government's vision and requirements of fiscal discipline.

Those are just some of the highlights of the Department of Transportation's proposed Main Estimates for the 2008–2009 fiscal year. There are many other positive and exciting projects and initiatives that the department expects to accomplish. This includes, among others, a gateway and trade corridor through the Mackenzie Valley, which has potential to rearrange logistics for major resource development in western Canada and the North and can add increased opportunities for construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. The plan reflects the importance of the transportation system to our quality of life and the government's strategic initiatives. It has incorporated the advice of Members, standing committees, communities, aboriginal leaders and industry. I look forward to continuing to working with you to address the vision of the 16th Assembly and truly see that as Northerners we can build the North by working together.

Mahsi cho, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to introduce the Chair of the committee that's responsible for overseeing the department's Main Estimates, Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee met with the Minister and his staff on April 10, 2008, to consider the department's 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates. The committee noted that the department is proposing to spend \$95.947 million in operating expenses for the fiscal year 2008–2009. The proposed budget for the department's capital plan is \$56.437 million.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates. For those comments I'm going to pass the floor over to the committee's deputy chair from Nunakput, Mr. Jackie Jacobson.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Contracting Out of Own-Force Labour

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

guarantees that the private sector can deliver services on behalf of the government for less.

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Committee members were concerned with the lack of initiatives to address climate change issues. The Department of Transportation accounts for more than half of the NWT's greenhouse gas emissions, and the impacts of climate change are already apparent in the degree of damage to the NWT roads and runways as a result of melting permafrost.

Members understand that research is currently being conducted to study the effects of climate change on the NWT transportation infrastructure. The committee looks forward to the results of the research and requests that a detailed action plan be developed to establish transportation options that would reduce impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Chair, that concludes the committee's review of the Department of Transportation Main Estimates. I'd like to thank the committee, committee staff, Ms. Patricia Russell and Ms. Cate Sills. That concludes the economic development infrastructure report.

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in. Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce your witnesses, please.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my right is Deputy Minister Russell Neudorf, on my left Assistant Deputy Minister Daniel Auger.

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

We can turn to page 9-7, Operations Expenditure Summary for the Department of Transportation. We'll defer that to the end. We can move to 9-8, Active Positions by Region. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again I'm going to sound like a bit of a broken record here. I see that your department is going down by three positions. I was wondering if the Minister could give me a bit of a breakdown on the processes they used in order to identify which

positions would be targeted for elimination within the department. Of the three positions it looks like you're going down, I'm curious if you could also tell me if these positions are vacant or filled and whether or not three is actually right. I kind of get the sense there might be a few more down and then you might be adding some back. Could you give me a bit of a history on your process and your status?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Abernethy. I'd like to state that we were given a direction as a department to meet our target base in terms of the reduction. I instructed the department to look at the best possible way in terms of how we will maintain our level of service and the positions that would be affected. I'll ask Mr. Neudorf if he would provide the details of the process and how we came to the conclusion you're reading today.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department, like all departments, was requested to come up with a budget reduction target, and we went through that process.

As we went through it, we had two objectives. First, the level of service that Transportation provides to the public was important. We wanted to find reductions that would minimize or not have any negative impact on the level of service that Transportation provides to the public. The second issue we wanted to address was that we didn't affect the long-term integrity of our infrastructure. We wanted to make sure we could maintain the funding we have available to us now so that we wouldn't be sacrificing some short-term budget reductions for some longer term issues. Of course, as part of that, we went through the process, identified a number of reductions and then tried to find those that would also have the minimum impact on employees, on the HR factor.

For '08-09 there are actually four positions to be reduced. One of those positions is currently filled. You'll see on sheet 9-7 that there's a net reduction of three. We also added in one other position. It was an historic double-fill, and we just had to correct some of the accounting on that position. That's why the net is three on that.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you for that, Mr. Minister and Mr. Neudorf. As we've noticed with a couple of the other departments, there seems to be a bit of an anomaly in the number of staff who have actually been notified that their positions are

affected. I'm under the impression that there is actually a significantly larger number of employees within the Department of Transportation who have been told their positions are being eliminated. After we did a bit of digging, it appears that a bunch of these are actually '09–10 positions. Can you give me a bit of an idea of how many positions are actually going to be laid off in '09–10? Of those positions that are being laid off in '09–10, how many are in fact filled, and how many are vacant?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In '09–10 there will be 14 positions laid off. The number of vacancies in '09–10 — sorry; I stand to be corrected there. Mr. Chair, 14 positions are going to be reduced; layoffs will be 13.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'd like to just break into this conversation briefly, if I could, and introduce and acknowledge some visitors to the gallery here. We have the Hon. Richard Neufeld, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Government of British Columbia; the Hon. Barry Penner, Minister responsible for water stewardship; Mr. Greg Reimer, deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources; Miss. Joan Hesketh, deputy minister of Environment; Mr. Jim Mattison, assistant deputy minister, water stewardship division; Miss Natalie Poole-Moffatt, ministerial assistant; from BC Hydro Miss Susan Yurkovich, senior vice-president, corporate affairs; and Mr. Hugo Shaw, director of site C, BC Hydro. If I've missed anybody, my apologies. Welcome to the House. An illustrious bunch from whom we could learn much, from the very progressive province of B.C., my personal heroes. Welcome.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Moving onward, Mr. Abernethy. Were you done?

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've raised concerns and questions about the fact that we've seen the department has already begun the process of notifying, or at least some of the departments have already begun the process of notifying, staff that they're potentially going to be laid off in '09–10, which we obviously think is a little on the premature side. These 13 individuals in the 14 positions: has the Department of Transportation notified them that their positions are affected and that they're going to be laid off?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: We have sent letters to the potentially affected employees for '09–10.

Mr. Abernethy: Mr. Chair, I'm just curious if the Minister could tell me whether or not these individuals were given a date as to when their last

day of employment with the Department of Transportation would be.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, no; we haven't given a date. We have given them a notice of potential layoff. We haven't given them a date yet.

Mr. Abernethy: No real question, just a bit of a comment, similar to the comments you've already heard. I think it's fairly unanimous on this side of the room that we think it's a bit premature to have notified employees whose positions are going to be affected in '09–10. Obviously, we'd be curious how you guys came to the conclusion that it would be appropriate to notify people in '09–10 when we haven't even done the '08–09 budget. Like I said, I have no questions, just a bit of a comment. I'm sure others will be asking questions on this topic, so I'll stop and give them the floor.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Moving on to Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I guess that with respect to the regional positions, as well, I just wanted to clarify that the 310 positions did include the airport personnel at Fort Simpson. I just wanted to ask that, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much. I was going to ask that, and I do have to voice my objection to reductions in future years, but I can speak to it later on the line item that specifically refers to airports, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We'll move now to Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up on the questions of my colleague from Great Slave. I'm just wondering if the department is advising people and notifying employees that they're going to be potentially affected by a budget that is going to happen in '09–10. I'm just wondering: where does the direction come from to make those decisions to send out notification letters? Does it come from HR, or does it come from the Premier?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: When we started the exercise of reductions within the government, Mr. Chairman, that was a coordinated initiative by the Ministers and also working with the HR Minister. We also heard from the Members, and I recall

some of the discussion from the Members in terms of the potential impact of this reduction exercise.

Mr. Ramsay: Was it the department's decision to send out notification letters to employees, or was it somebody else's decision to send notification letters out to employees?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The people of the Northwest Territories. This was done on the discussions among my Cabinet colleagues. We heard from the Assembly, the Minister responsible for HR, Mr. McLeod, so it was a Cabinet decision that gave this direction.

Mr. Ramsay: Again, I've heard different versions of the same kind of story. It's very confusing for me, and it's confusing for the employees who have received notification they may be impacted a year from now. I was just trying to get a better understanding of how the command went. The Minister said the Assembly, but it wasn't the Assembly. It was Cabinet that made that decision. I just wanted to, again, get on the record that Regular Members had no part in sending out notification letters to affected employees, not in '08-09 and not in '09-10. I just wanted to state that quite clearly, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, I do apologize for the mistake in my answer. I do take that back. It was on the direction of the Cabinet that we sent the letters out to the affected employees.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are all the employees who are potentially affected receiving written letters? If they're receiving written letters, whose signature is on those letters? Is it the Minister? Is it the Minister of HR? Is it the Premier? What does that letter look like, and who signed it?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, all letters were written by our department, and Mr. Neudorf, our deputy minister, was the signatory to those letters.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the Department of Transportation has anybody received a verbal notification that their job may be affected by future budget decisions?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, all letters were written to the affected employees. This initiative was coordinated with the Human Resources department.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Any further questions?

Hearing none, we're on page 9-8, Active Positions by Region. Then Active Positions by Community, page 9-9. We have a question here. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just trying to follow up on some other questions to be relatively consistent as to my questioning. Although some of this has been asked, I just wanted to get a sense for my own perspective, even if it's for my own value, as to how some of these positions were evaluated. That said, just so I'm one hundred per cent clear, I believe there was a net change of three, as you can see on the bottom line, although there was one position that was double-filled to some degree. If I understood the Minister's answer earlier, I think one position was filled. If that's correct, what position was the one that was filled, and what was the outcome? Was that fully transferred to another section that had an empty position, or are they just given layoff notice and just put on that potential status?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll have my deputy minister give those details.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The sheet shows a reduction of three positions. That's a net of three. We have four potential layoffs in '08-09. We had a double-fill that had to be appropriately accounted for, so that added one. One of those four positions was filled; three are vacant. The one that's filled is a data-entry clerk in a corporate services headquarters position.

Mr. Hawkins: To continue just where I left off, has that person been given notice that they're laid off, or do they have another position they'll be sliding into?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The person is being given notice, and we do have a plan for that person.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you to both the deputy and the Minister, of course. The unit that this data-entry clerk came from: how large of a unit was that?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Can I have the Member repeat the question? I wasn't following.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Certainly. Mr. Hawkins, would you please repeat the question?

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you. How large of a unit was it that the data-entry clerk came from? In other words, how many staff in that particular unit did the same or a similar job?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is one other data-entry clerk in headquarters. We do

also have a number of other similar types of positions in the other divisions and in our regions. The way we do propose to accommodate that reduction of that position is to actually disperse some of that work the headquarters position was doing to the other divisions — to the other regional, similar types of positions.

Mr. Hawkins: I thank the deputy minister for seeing right through my question, which was: how are they going to deal with the workload? I'm glad to hear that's been thought of, because that would have led into my next question, about the evaluation. So obviously they did some evaluation.

I have just one last question in this particular area at this time. It certainly has to do with how this position was selected — not so much in the sense that it's a fact you had to find a position to reduce, but more in the sense of an evaluation. In some units, as I understand it, there were four people there. They decided they can only fund three positions. They go to a competition. I was just curious on how this particular position was singled out.

I'm not saying I like that sort of carnivore process. I don't think that's healthy for a good organization. But in some cases we had said we had preferred more of a strategic approach to how a position was reduced. This appears to be strategic, as in someone was singled out. I'm just curious on why that process seems to be a little different from other processes done and followed through by other departments.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: My understanding, and through the process we've carefully looked at all the positions — the potential affected positions — is that we could accommodate this position here.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I'll carefully accept that answer.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on Active Positions, information item, page 9-9. Agreed?

Department of Transportation, Department Summary, Active Positions — By Community, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 9-10. Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. With respect to airport landing and other fees, I would just like to know: does the Minister have a breakdown of the fees by airport?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Yes, we certainly can accommodate the Member for Nahendeh in terms

of... We can certainly come forward with the information. We don't have it right in front of us here. However, we'd be happy to fulfill his request in terms of the airport fees.

Mr. Menicoche: I was just trying to get some facts, but maybe I'll just ask the Minister directly. In terms of airports' busyness, in terms of volume of traffic, I'd just like to know: where does the Fort Simpson Airport stand in that regard? I know that Yellowknife's our busiest. Maybe the Minister can break down the level of activity. Which is the most? He doesn't have to go all the way to the least. I was just trying to find out where Fort Simpson fits in terms of that, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, the busiest is the Territorial Yellowknife Airport here. The second busiest airport is the Norman Wells Airport, followed by the Inuvik Airport. From there, we would have to get this information to the Member in terms of the busyness of all the airports in the North here. We'll be happy to oblige him very shortly in getting the numbers as to the busyness. We just would require time to get the information over to him.

Mr. Menicoche: Did he say he was going to get that shortly or tomorrow or next week? When was I going to get that response, Mr. Chair?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, we'll get it for the Member tomorrow.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we're on page 9-10. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of things. Under Airports — Concessions, would that be every airport, or is it specific or relegated down to just one or two airports? How does that concession line break out as revenue?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The concession is all airports in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Hawkins: I don't know the exact wording of this next question, but I'll do my best. As I understand it, when planes fly over and they have to use our services, I thought they had to pay some type of fee on how that works. I'm not sure if it's to federal Transportation, to us as a local airport... If we could just confine it to the Yellowknife Airport; it may be confusing to try to open this up to the whole territory. It has to do with flight paths and whatnot. If the Minister could inform me on exactly how we would phrase that terminology, and then how much

money we receive, and how that sort of works and how often it's used, and where it would show up under revenue, if I have this somewhat correct.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, this service is provided by NAV Canada. NAV Canada collects the fees; we don't have to collect any fees at all.

Mr. Hawkins: The territorial government doesn't get any money, if some flight from who knows where going to who knows where uses any particular service or is flying in our airspace as described, I guess, I guess. Is that correct?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The Member is correct in terms of the flights in navigation. However, if they do land at one of our airports, they are charged a fee.

Mr. Hawkins: No, that's just a shame, but.... Okay, thank you.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 9-10, Revenue Summary, information item. Agreed?

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

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 9-13, Corporate Services, Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Recognizing that the biggest source of greenhouse gases we have in the Northwest Territories — and typically for every jurisdiction, I think — is emissions from transportation sources, I would like to move a motion, if I may. I'll read the motion, Mr. Chair.

COMMITTEE MOTION 56-16(2)
TO TAKE ACTION TO DEVELOP STRATEGY TO
REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Bromley: I move that this committee strongly recommend that the Department of Transportation take immediate action to develop a long-term strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources; and further, that the department include the strategy within its departmental business plan to be considered in the fall of 2008.

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

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned, this is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions. I know this department is well aware of the impacts of climate change, that they're struggling to keep ahead of the impacts, that

they are dedicating research dollars — at least federal research dollars, and I would think some of our own dollars — to try to come up with solutions for it. I think one of the difficulties is that the efforts are mostly focused on the symptoms rather than the source.

We really need a long-term strategy — this won't happen in the next six months — a thoughtful and comprehensive and effective strategy that leads to the gradual and ever-increasing reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to prevent much more serious climate change. It's on that basis I moved and support this motion.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Question has been called.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 9-13, Corporate Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$8.514 million.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Corporate Services, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$8.514 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Information item. Moving on to page 9-14, Corporate Services, Active Positions. Agreed?

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Corporate Services, Active Positions, information item (page 9-14), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 9-15. Information item, Corporate Services, Active Positions. Agreed?

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Corporate Services, Active Positions, information item (page 9-15), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 9-17, Activity Summary, Airports, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$27.887 million. Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much. With respect to our operations at the airport, Mr. Chair, I should state for the record that I'm opposed to any decision to contract out the operations and maintenance done by the Fort Simpson airport staff. The tentative plans underway, of course, are for '09–10, beginning April 1, but now is the time to act. I believe that now is time for our committee to tell the Ministry of Transportation that it's important to our community.

It's too bad I couldn't get the figures earlier on the airport fees, et cetera. I'm sure I could make the case that Fort Simpson airport is at least the fifth or sixth busiest in the Northwest Territories, and there would be a good argument for retaining the existing staff there. It's out from Yellowknife over to

Whitehorse and the traffic that comes this way, Mr. Chair, not to mention the additional tourism that occurs in Nahanni National Park and all the outfitting. That's another region, too.

I believe there's value in keeping those positions. I just want to also say I have been lobbied quite extensively by the people of Fort Simpson. I just want to say, as well, and let the Minister know it wasn't just a union doing the lobbying; it was the community. That's a very small community, Wrigley — all sending petitions, and I filed them in House — letting the government know this airport is busy. We don't want to degrade it. We fear, for several safety factors, this just cannot be done.

We've got a good stable workforce. We've got good qualified people at these positions. People kept saying, Mr. Chair: Look; hasn't the government learned from the ferry fiasco, where we had to repatriate the ferries from the contractor? It didn't become manageable. We don't want to see that starting all over again.

And the whole thing is about contracting out, only to be re-taken over in four or five years. What have we gained? What have we really, really gained in this adventure except to create lots of hardship, disrupt families and disrupt the operations. We've got a good stable workforce. I don't think it makes sense to do it all over again in four or five years and to try to build it up again.

So I've done that. I've done questions here. I've done Member's statements. I've made it to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Investment. I've stated my case there. And I'm stating my case here again. With that, I'd like to move a committee motion, Mr. Chair.

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-16(2)
TO REVERSE THE DECISION TO CONTRACT
OUT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE OF
FORT SIMPSON AIRPORT
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Menicoche: I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reverse its decision to contract out the operations and maintenance of the Fort Simpson Airport under the Department of Transportation, under the Airport Activity.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't support us contracting out services as a way of doing business. I'm not convinced we get best value over the long haul. I realize it is a short-term solution, sometimes, and probably the most effective in the short term. But ultimately, it creates

a band-aid situation, whereas, as the Member described a moment ago, I see that we'll end up pulling it back into the public service, not unlike the ferry services that were highlighted by the Member. A number of years ago Transportation privatized the motor vehicle registry, and that's been brought back in.

I'm just not convinced that privatizing public services — ones I would describe as core, principled public services — is the way to go. I'm not convinced the change will be positive for both the community and the quality of service they provide.

Mr. Chairman, I'll be voting with the Member and probably most of the committee, of course, on this motion. I'll ask at this time for a recorded vote to demonstrate how serious we are on this issue.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am supporting this motion. I know the Member for Nahendeh attended the briefings we had with the Department of Transportation during the review of their Draft Mains and made it abundantly clear that this move by the Department of Transportation would negatively impact not only Fort Simpson but the region of Nahendeh.

I fully support his efforts. I know there's an outcry in the communities that use this airport. In most cases, there have been examples of it. I sat through the briefing, and the Department of Transportation can't always say that contracting out is the best way to go.

In this case I don't know if everything was counted or measured into the equation when the department came up with the rationale to contract out the operations and maintenance at the Fort Simpson airport. We don't have to look too far to see contracts, not just with the Department of Transportation but government-wide, where you always think you're going to get a better price — it's going to be less expensive if you go outside — and that's not always the case.

In some cases individuals or corporations or companies that end up getting these contracts end up taking the lion's share of the money south with them when they go. I'm not saying it would happen in this instance, but it's a possibility.

I think the positions need to stay in Fort Simpson. We need to be supportive of the positions we do have in the smaller communities. I certainly do support my colleague Mr. Menicoche's efforts in keeping this alive and trying to get the department to reconsider its direction on this.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be supporting this motion. I support retaining the Fort Simpson airport with the public service staff that are there. I support Mr. Menicoche in his efforts to see these positions and these employees and these families not disrupted on something that might or might not work out.

I'm not satisfied with the level of detail that was provided by the department to actually prove this would mean any cost savings at all. It's fine to say we're going to cut this many positions and save this much money. What about the severance to end the employment of these folks? What about the costs of contracting? How predictable is that going forward into the future? How about when the community economy picks up and this equipment that's used at the airport — if it's not dedicated — is needed somewhere else?

There are concerns of public safety. I say if it isn't broke, don't try to fix it. It's working well the way it is. I will be supporting this motion completely.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, will be supporting the motion. I think Fort Simpson airport is a regional airport, and I think we can't downgrade that service. We have similar airports in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Yellowknife. They do connect the North to other jurisdictions by way of the Yukon.

Also, as Mrs. Groenewegen mentioned, we've learned from our decision to look at the whole area of ferry operations. We're seeing that supp coming forward in the next couple of days. A lot of forced-growth items are because of the privatization of those contracts. Negotiating with the unions and whatnot is a forced-growth item that is having an effect on contractors providing that service, because the unions are now basically demanding northern allowances and everything else.

Again, I think it's important to realize that this is part of the Northwest Territories infrastructure, and we have to realize it's a very critical link to the economic viability of the North by way of the pipeline route that's going to go through Fort Simpson, the oil and gas potential, the tourism potential, the Nahanni Park expansion. This is a very unique economic stimulus to the economy of the Deh Cho region and the Northwest Territories.

For the sake of the economies of these regions we should not be laying people off. If anything, we should be hiring more people in those regional centres to generate and stimulate the economies

and finding other areas where we can reduce those costs.

An area that was mentioned earlier, by way of a motion, is that we can find savings by looking at energy plans, looking at wasted energy and reducing the costs, by way of ferry operations, how we operate and maintain our equipment, and how we service our warehouses. There are savings we can produce simply by changing the way we do business, without laying people off.

With that, I will be supporting the motion. I think we have to realize that this airport is an essential, critical infrastructure of the Territories. It is a regional airport and should be treated like a regional airport and not downgraded to something lower than that.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to make some comments for the record and kind of get a sense of how the Members will be voting.

I'd like to state for the record, in terms of the decision around the Fort Simpson Airport, Mr. Chair, that the potentially affected employees are proposed for '09–10. We would be having some further discussions in the business plan in the coming months, in terms of the potential issues here with the Fort Simpson Airport.

For the record — for the people of the Northwest Territories — we do not contract out any airports. We contract out services. When you contract privatization — let me be very clear to people — that's not taking ownership of the airport.

We still maintain ownership of all 27 airports in the Northwest Territories. We have contracted out at 21 out of 27 airports in the Northwest Territories — to bands, to local aboriginal companies, to northern companies, to hamlets. They have done a good job. Twenty-one out of 27 can't be wrong, in our eyes. We have looked at that. I have asked my department to go back to see what the level of service was, and not to downgrade the level of service at those airports. That's our number one priority in the Ministry of Transportation.

We looked at all the airports. For the airport in Fort Simpson, for example, in 2004, the number in terms of business was 3,061, compared to Yellowknife at 44,065 or so. The airport in Fort Simpson is not as busy as we thought it would be. Mr. Krutko is right.

Hopefully, when we have a good signal from the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline in terms of their offers, in terms of economic development happening, then we would see an upgrade of our airports.

We have talked to other airport service deliverers in terms of the way they're doing work. They are talking about the potential of economic benefits with their local aboriginal, local northern, local municipalities in terms of taking care of the airports for us. We have high standards in those communities.

The reduction will happen as we potentially put it in for 2009–10. We are going to have to come back to a business plan with the Members here and talk about it. I have talked to my officials, looking to see whether we could look elsewhere.

The ferries contract operations are totally different from the Fort Simpson operations, which we were talking about. It's two different situations; it's apples and oranges. The Fort Simpson ferry operations were based on the urging of that government to provide that service for travellers.

We are maintaining a level of service with the other airports. I asked the department again to look at this issue, and I said, "As long as we do not drop the level of service in our airports."

I look forward to coming back with the business plans and talking about this again. We are open to suggestions and options. We have to abide by the direction to meet a target we feel would have the least impact on services to the airline companies that use our operations.

We have looked at our other airports. We have taken the opportunities to work with the contracted employees and sought their feedback in terms of how they would improve their working capacity and the capacity of the communities.

For the record, Mr. Chair, that's all I want to state.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Yakeleya. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to say I am in support of this motion. I didn't attend the briefing for this particular department, but I haven't seen any data that can convince me contracting out is going to save us money.

I hear the Minister talking about bands and so on, local businesses taking over such contracts, but I wonder whether or not there is an organization in Fort Simpson that has offered to do it — if there is anybody ready and willing.

I also understand this is a next year's reduction, but it has to be talked about now, because the employees have already received notice of their being affected.

In my experience to date, I haven't yet found that contracting out will necessarily save money. If it does save money, it very often lessens the quality of the service that is provided.

I have my doubts, and I would seriously ask the department to provide firm rationale and strong facts and figures, which I would need to convince me that contracting out the operations and maintenance is going to be an improvement on what we have at this particular time. That said, I am in support of the motion, Mr. Chair.

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

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, am going to be supporting the motion for all the reasons you've already heard today.

In addition to that, one of the areas that concerns me is.... I'm of the understanding that the employees who are targeted to be eliminated have been told they stand a really good chance of getting a job with the contractors and that they shouldn't be too awfully worried about their future because they'll be working.

That disturbs me. That suggests to me that they aren't valued by this government. By being removed from the government and sent to a non-government employer, they'll lose their pensions. We can't guarantee their salary is going to be the same. They've become comfortable with what they know, which is what they get paid. They are earning a pension; they're long-term employees. If they leave our employ and get a job with a private contractor, that's great — at least they'll be employed — but they won't have the same benefits and advantages they do right now, which demonstrates to me that maybe we don't value our employees as our most important resource.

In addition to all the other reasons, that's one of the reasons I'm supporting this motion.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any change in the way we deliver a service in communities is a cause of concern to those directly affected by that level of service — or the employment, in this piece.

If you take a step back and look at what we've done over the lifetime of this government, the Government of the Northwest Territories.... At one time all work that was done in regions was done by central departments, whether it was Public Works and Services, Housing and so on. I recall a time when, for example, to do any body-work in our community of Inuvik — and that was a regional centre — we had someone flying out of Yellowknife to do the work, because that was the way government did business. I was, in fact, employed by the Department of Public Works and Services as an auto mechanic, and we travelled to the Inuvik

region to all the communities to service those communities.

Now those communities do it for themselves. They have contracted that work. They've taken it over. They've taken over delivery; they've taken over operations. They service it, and they've built up the capacity. In fact, as you were informed, there's interest in Simpson to do the work.

We have to try to take a step back. It's difficult when this is happening, I agree, but if we take a step back as a government and look toward what's happening, do we not hear from Members of this Assembly about capacity in communities, the ability to get the job done and building that capacity? Is this not one of those ways of doing that, when we have other airports that are operating fine and doing that level of service?

I have to say that if there's disagreement with this, I think the discussion about airport authorities — and I recall that happening in this fine city — should be off the table as well, just as we look at the way we do business.

It is something that's difficult, but from time to time we have to look at how we operate and whether what we're doing is the best thing overall or if this is an opportunity to build more capacity in communities and regions.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier Roland. Question has been called. I'll ask the mover, Mr. Menicoche, to conclude the debate.

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I thank my colleagues for speaking in favour of the motion. I'd like to thank Cabinet for their opinions.

I believe what we're talking about here, Mr. Chair, is an experiment that's gone wrong, and we want to bring it back again. Fundamentally, we cannot be doing that as a government. That's the definition of crazy, by the way: it's where you keep doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. This is a case we've proven is wrong, and we just cannot go down that road again.

I'd like to thank Mr. Krutko for bringing up the fact that it does operate as a regional airport in that west section of our Northwest Territories. It services all the communities down there and up the valley as well, toward Norman Wells.

Although Mr. Minister speaks about apples and oranges, it's still the same thing. You can take the spots off a leopard, but it's still a leopard once again.

To me, Mr. Chair, in all the discussions with everybody I've talked with and all my colleagues and with committee, we talk about the Premier wanting to go down the road of fiscal restraint and

reallocation of funds for strategic investment. But I keep saying that it's strategic to keep what we have, especially something that's working. It's going well, and there's good reason to keep it. There's no good reason not to keep it. That's what we've seen, and that's what we keep saying over and over.

Mr. Minister asked for suggestions and options, and that's what we're telling him. That's our suggestion and our option: you keep that airport staff and you keep that airport running at the level of service that is provided for the traveling public out there.

Above all, it's been said it's for the '09–10 budget, but you brought us down this road. You've mentioned it in our committee; you've sent the letters out to the employees. You told us to wait for business plans, but we cannot do it, because I know how government works. Silence is assent, and we're not silent and we're not assenting to this.

With that, Mr. Chair, I'd like to call for a recorded vote.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Members have requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): The results of the recorded vote on the motion: ten in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): We were on page 9-17. Mr. Jacobson.

COMMITTEE MOTION 58-16(2)
TO REVERSE THE DECISION TO ELIMINATE
JAMES GRUBEN REGIONAL AIRPORT
MANAGER POSITION
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reverse its decision to eliminate the James Gruben Regional Airport manager position under the Department of Transportation, Airport Activity.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the Main Estimates the airport is known as the Tuk Airport. About four years ago it was changed to the James Gruben Regional Airport, so that's what I'm speaking to.

In regard to the position at the regional airport, the airport manager's position, it worries me that the oil companies have three to four helicopters based out at Tuk. We have daily scheduled flights plus numerous charters for the oil and gas and local businesses.

In regard to the issue of this position, the length of our runway is 5,000 feet, and we're capable of landing a 737. I would not like to see that affected for so little money and savings.

In my riding everybody likes to talk about this pipeline, but everybody forgets where the oil and gas is going to come from. It's in my riding. With the pipeline boom, once it goes, it's going to be busy — not so much in Tuk in regard to the actual construction phase but with the filling of that pipeline with the offshore drilling.

I think this is a really important position in the community in regard to the safety of my people, and I really wish the Minister would take that into consideration.

I'd ask my other colleagues if they'd like to speak on that, and I'll come back to you.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to support my colleague from Na-nuk-put. I think he....

Mr. Jacobson: Nunakput.

Mr. Hawkins: "Nu-NAK-put?"

Mr. Jacobson: Nunakput.

Mr. Hawkins: I'm tired, it's late... but I still support him.

Laughter.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, resources in the community are very important. Although we've spoken about it many times, it's certainly worth noting again that when we start yanking out solid jobs in communities that provide a real, meaningful service, where they have a use and they belong, it has a real impact on the economics of the community. I think we've challenged that community by taking these opportunities away.

The other thing is the scale in the community that you want to make sure stays there. As the Member points out, quite correctly, the issue is.... When we need the job — and theoretically again, even though the department has probably built a case saying they don't need it, which I don't agree with, by the way — all of a sudden you've got to now find someone to be there. I don't think we're going to realize true savings on this, and we give up the quality service that's being provided there.

Mr. Chairman, I'll just mention now that we'd like a recorded vote on this motion as well, just to make sure it doesn't get forgotten. Again, I'll be voting for this. It's another fine effort to convince other Members on this issue, no different from the efforts brought forward by Member Menicoche, about how important these positions are to the community.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I'd like to comment for the record that this position in Tuktoyaktuk at James Gruben airport, this proposed affected employee is scheduled for 2009–2010. I'll give my comments to Mr. Jacobson in terms of if this would come up again going forward.

Mr. Chair, our department was given a task, and we've run to the task vis-a-vis looking at reductions of our operations with the least impact to services in the Northwest Territories. I do not take this task very lightly; I've had some long discussions with my deputy and discussions with the staff. It's very painful. I come from a small community. I know what it's like in small communities. I also know the opportunities these people could look forward to when they're given a task — like creating opportunities for themselves. We are going to come back to this item. For the record, I'd like to state that very clearly from the department's view.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As usual, I'll be very brief. A position like airport manager in a community the size of Tuktoyaktuk is a very important one. If there is the work there to be done, the position to manage that work should be in Tuktoyaktuk. To move the responsibility for the airport in Tuk to Inuvik is a clear case of centralizing and moving things from small communities to larger communities. For that reason alone....

This is not a make-work project. Mr. Jacobson is absolutely right. The airport is going to get nothing but busier in the next while with the economic activity we anticipate, and this is a backwards move. I think it is regressive. We need to think

forward and keep the airport manager's position in Tuktoyaktuk as a resident.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will be brief. I support my colleague Mr. Jacobson in his quest to have this decision reversed to eliminate the airport manager position in his community.

The Minister said this position is coming up in '09-10. This individual got a notification letter. What does the Minister and what does the government expect Regular Members to do when people in our communities are getting notification letters on a budget for next year? Do they expect us to just sit by and continue to take that? No. We're going to stand up, and we're going to defend ourselves, and we're going to argue that what you're doing is wrong. In this case it's wrong. We've got no defence. We could go through the business plans next fall, and regarding that position, the guy's been notified for five months.

It's not the Department of Transportation's fault in this. They had to go out; they had to do their reduction exercise; they had to identify positions. But the way it's being done is wrong, Mr. Chairman, absolutely wrong, and I support this motion.

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

Mr. Menicoche: Thank you very much. I, too, will be supporting this motion and my colleague from Nunakput. They face the same issues as I do: a similar-sized community and a reduction in services that the travelling public has been used to, and trying to reduce those. As well, I've gone on record; when the whole cutbacks began, I stated right off the bat that centralization or relocating positions away from communities is something I could not support. I'll be supporting this motion.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Question has been called. Sorry; Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will be supporting the motion. We talk about capacity issues, but we're talking about a 5,000-foot runway here. I was in Beaufort Sea when the boom was on, and now with the land sale of \$1.2 billion, this region will boom again. I don't think it's a question of when; it's a question of it's here — it's happening.

I think you also have to realize that this position manages more than Tuktoyaktuk; it manages the Beaufort communities. Looking at this department, looking at your budget, you basically have increased your budget by \$4 million from last year.

You haven't cut anything, but you've cut individuals' jobs. Yet you are able to continue to grow to the tune of \$4 million.

I will be supporting this motion. We can't lose sight of the fact that airports are an integral part of our infrastructure, especially for oil and gas and mineral activities that are going on out there. We have to ensure we have a manageable infrastructure and have people on the ground where that infrastructure is. I will be supporting the motion.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Question has been called. Members have requested a recorded vote. Mr. Jacobson, I'll ask you to conclude the debate on the motion.

Mr. Jacobson: Mr. Chairman, in regard to this position in the community of Tuk, it's based out of Tuk, but three of the other communities it served were Sachs, Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk. This position, I think, really should be reconsidered by the Minister and his department in regard to the safety of my people.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Question has been called. Members have requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): The results of the recorded vote on the motion: ten in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): We were on page 9-17. Mr. Abernethy.

COMMITTEE MOTION 59-16(2)
TO REVERSE GOVERNMENT DECISION TO
REDUCE LEVEL OF ONSITE MANAGEMENT
AT FORT SMITH AIRPORT
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to make a motion.

I move that this committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reverse its decision to reduce the level of onsite management at the Fort Smith Airport under the Department of Transportation under Airports Activity.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Motion is on the floor and is being distributed now. Motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not going to say an awful lot, other than we feel as consistent about these positions as we do about those that are in Simpson and those that are in Tuk. It's a medium-sized community. It's quite busy. It's got the college. There's lots of air traffic. In the future there's probably going to be a lot of activity given the Taltson expansion, as well as a bunch of the infrastructure and a bunch of the other things that happen to be going on in Fort Smith. We think this is untimely. We wonder about the notification for '09–10. We're not sure it's a necessary move, so we're moving that we keep it status quo for now and see where we go from there.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First, I'll ask for a recorded vote to make sure that gets on record.

I just want to emphasize that even though this is a Ministerial riding, Regular Members are fighting for the principle of this issue. The issue is that we don't like this process. We're able to look way beyond partisan issues and fight for the people of the North, no matter what airport this is.

I think the Member for Thebacha is crying. I wouldn't assume that, though. We're speaking so passionately about the riding of Thebacha.

I'm also voting for this, as well, because if we don't vote for this — just like the other two issues — what we're setting is a blueprint on our process. By acknowledging that this is sort of the format of how this is proceeding, we relatively accept it. I think, as you've seen through the last couple of motions, we're not assessing this process. Even though it is a '09–10 budget, Cabinet has, through their process, brought in these issues. I think it's important for us to highlight them. By voting for this motion, we say we don't agree with this. When Cabinet does go away and work on these blueprints — called the budget — they will know how we feel in advance, so maybe some true work can be done to reverse this.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, again I state very clearly that those reductions we've set weren't taken very lightly, and that we had to look across our operations into each and every region in sort of a mix and a match in terms of how we're going to meet our reduction targets and in terms of how we're going to maintain the level of services. What is first and foremost in our minds is the safety level of our people travelling and using our roads or airports or our marine services. This is the question. I've gone back to the deputies in terms of challenges and in terms of how this will affect transportation services.

Number one is to maintain the integrity of our transportation facilities — roads and airports. This arrangement here is a different type of managerial arrangement, based on the number of flights into each of our community airports. We had to look deep down and hard in terms of how we make these decisions so they would have minimal impact on employees in the communities. The managerial type of arrangement we made with this specific community, this specific airport, is that we would look at — similar to the other airports — how we move things. Then we would come back to the community and have some further discussion. This discussion, again, is proposed for '09–10, and we would have further discussions and certainly take in the comments of the Regular Members. I know, for us, it's been a long, drawn-out process. It's very tiring. But we also take these reductions very seriously.

Again, we would respect the wishes of the Assembly here. We have looked at our target reduction, and we feel that would have the least impact on the services at our airport.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Question has been called. I will call upon Mr. Abernethy to conclude the debate on this motion.

Mr. Abernethy: I'll be really fast. We understand how difficult it is to make any decision that involves the laying-off of staff. When it comes to communities like Fort Smith and Inuvik, they're taking a huge hit. Tons and tons of positions are being eliminated out of those regions and out of those communities.

Related to this motion, we'd seriously think it would be a good idea, in the future, when you're hitting on a community pretty hard, to actually have the departments talk and think about the impacts you're actually inflicting on a community. Twenty or 30 positions is an awful lot for a small community to take.

We encourage you to look at this again, make sure you're making the right choice and, we hope, put some of these positions back.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Question has been called, and I believe a request is on the floor for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Clerk. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): The results of the recorded vote on the motion: ten in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that we report progress.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. A motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and is non-debatable.

Motion defeated.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): We're on page 9-17. Activity Summary, Airports, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$27.887 million. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to move a motion to report progress.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): We have to conduct a piece of business, I believe, before we can.... Very good. The motion on the floor to report progress is non-debatable and in order.

Motion defeated.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Okay, folks, let's have some order and get some work done here. We are on page 9-17, Airports, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$27.887 million. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: I just have a question to the department. I notice that under your strategic infrastructure investment funds you do have airport runway expansions. I met with the Minister on this

issue, but I think you should be aware of it as a department. I don't know if you realize it, but under the Gwich'in land-claim agreement, you had access to the Frog Creek gravel source for 20 years. Your 20 years is up in 2012. If you're going to do any planning, you'd better make sure you've planned around that. You will be charged access and fees and whatnot after 2012.

I'd just like to ask the Minister: has that been taken into consideration? Knowing you have the airport expansion for the airport in McPherson for 2010-11 but knowing that's cutting it pretty close, is there a chance of moving that up?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. He and I did have this discussion. It has raised some concerns, and I informed my officials about our discussion. My understanding regarding this Frog Creek issue in terms of the gravel source is that we are close to working out an arrangement with the Gwich'in government in terms of using the gravel source. We are close to completing this agreement and hope that we would see a resolution to this issue within the next few years and have enough gravel for the expansion of the Fort McPherson airport.

Mr. Krutko: I'd just like to ask the Minister in regard to airports: are there any scheduled plans for doing an extension at the Aklavik airport in the next number of years, which would be helping those other communities that basically depend on airports to also have an opportunity to see an expansion?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, we've just completed the airport runway extensions study. In the recommendation report, the top three airports, in terms of expanding the airports, were Fort McPherson, Tulita and Fort Good Hope. However, I'd have to get my officials to talk about the Aklavik airport runway.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Very good. Mr. Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister mentioned, we just recently completed a study based on a number of requests we were getting from communities for a similar type of work to just ensure the runway lengths are adequate for the services that are provided. The Minister mentioned the three high-priority extensions that were recommended from that study, and we are actioning those. There are no other extensions required at the present time to meet the existing, and near-term, service levels.

Mr. Krutko: The airport study: is that an airport strategy that we build from, in regard to work we're

proposing for future development so that we can share with other jurisdictions? I noticed the Minister released that publication last week about the three different territories dealing with different infrastructure issues. Is that part and parcel of that overall strategy?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: One of the interesting discussions I had in terms of the various jurisdictions.... I've talked to Mr. Lang, the minister of transportation for the Yukon government. We had some discussions about working together, and one of the areas we looked at was the Fort McPherson airport expansion project we want to do. We have different jurisdictions, different needs. We do have various development project plans, and then we completed the airport runway length study, so we are seeing where we can work together in terms of helping each other through our trials and needs in terms of our transportation in the North here.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. No further questions.

We're on page 9-17, Activity Summary, Airports, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$27.887 million.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Airports, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$27.887 million: approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): And on page 9-19, Airports, Grants and Contributions: \$25,000.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Airports, Grants and Contributions: \$25,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 9-20, information item, Airports, Active Positions.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Airports, Active Positions, information item (page 9-20), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 9-21, information item, Airports, Active Positions.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Airports, Active Positions, information item (page 9-21), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 9-23, Highways, Operations Expenditure Summary. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm just curious about how much work is planned for this summer on Highway No. 3. I've been on the highway a fair bit. It needs almost warranty work, and it's just barely finished. I'd be surprised if the paint on that road is dry yet. I mean, the heaving, or, as some field professionals would

describe it, the ice lensing, has caused some twists and turns.

I'm just wondering what work's going to be done to repair that. It's a shame that that highway, just completed, already needs work.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, I want to state also that the crews on all our highways do very good work. They have worked very well. We have contractors up in the Beaufort-Delta. We have contractors in various areas in terms of the Gwich'in area. We have our own-force work in various locations. All the contractors and our own-force work have done an excellent job.

I want to state that on Highway No. 3, they are going to be doing some line-painting work there. I'd ask my assistant deputy minister to get into the specific location of Highway No. 3.

Mr. Auger: As mentioned by the Minister, we do maintain this highway with our own-forces. This summer, what we plan to do is to fix the depression we are experiencing on a section of the highway, especially where we do have some permafrost degradation. We will be filling those depressions and also chipping over. As part of the regular maintenance, we're also going to do the line painting.

Mr. Hawkins: Is any of this...? Well, I should first say I wasn't questioning the quality of our road crew, in the sense of their work or their efforts. It was more about the context of the warranty of that road. It's brand new. We had the launch, the ribbon cutting, when Minister McLeod was the Minister there. He quit the job as soon as the road needed warranty. He was there for the ribbon but not the maintenance.

The issue for me is that the road's just finished, and it already needs maintenance. Isn't there any warranty issue we're able to take up with the builders of this road?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, very rarely do our workers, contractors, our own-force get the acknowledgement for the work they have done. I wanted just to state that while I had the opportunity.

The comments from Mr. Hawkins in terms of warranty work.... Certainly, there are various different types of warranty in terms of our highways construction or any type of work we do in the Northwest Territories. On certain specific warranties, I would like to ask my deputy to talk about the warranty work he's making reference to.

Mr. Neudorf: The section of road between Betchoko and Yellowknife is, of course, going over

an area that has much discontinuous permafrost. We are very challenged to maintain the safe driving surface that's on that road because of the level of non-melting we're seeing in the road.

When we come to when we did contract construction of that road over a period of ten years, we asked ourselves what type of warranty would be reasonable for a contractor to provide. In this case, we determined it was most cost effective to just ensure a regular warranty. A contractor always warranties against any material defects and workmanship in the quality of the work. We did not ask them to warranty against permafrost and what might melt further on underneath the road.

We are maintaining that road, doing a good job, as the Minister said, with our own-forces. I also have a chipseal overlay budget that allows us to address some of those things in a more significant way when that's required.

Then in our Building Canada Fund, which will come up here as well, we're also proposing to take another step back and see if we can be a little bit more aggressive even on some of the reconstruction of those most severe problem areas to ensure we're minimizing the amount of O&M and the amount of repairs we have to do on that road.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: My concern, as well as that of a number of my constituents and a lot of people I know in Yellowknife, whether they live in my riding or not.... The fact is, there are a number of people who drive out. It seems as if an area was just finished, then chipsealed, then painted. You barely get through a season before it seemed to degrade quite significantly. Even the last time I was out on that road, which wasn't that long ago, you could see significant adjustments, which causes me to wonder what's happening here.

I just find it odd that we wouldn't put some type of workmanship warranty on there that addresses the issue of the heaves there. The question arises, which is: was the technology there to build it properly or was the time taken to build it properly? Was that time used wisely? The permafrost issue is significant, and it causes grave concern when we've spent at least \$100 million, I'm sure, on that highway, if not a lot more than that. It just seems like we didn't get the \$100 million-plus lifespan out of that. That causes concern here in Yellowknife.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say that we are challenged very, very uniquely in terms of building roads in the Northwest Territories.

The road that was built, Highway No. 3 — I'm very confident it was built to the best of the ability that the Northwest Territories builders can build a road. That road is very good. I have seen roads in the Northwest Territories that we are reconstructing right now. People in those regions would appreciate that we continue to reconstruct the roads.

I would say also to the drivers on all our roads to drive to the conditions of the road, to the speeds of the road, and know that we are continuing working on our roads, here on Highway No. 3. I know there's a lot of people who travel. I do travel, my family does travel, and my family does travel on Highway No. 3. We see the workers out there.

We are doing the best we can in terms of balancing our investments right across the Northwest Territories to ensure that everybody has the ability to enjoy their existing roads. We're protecting that infrastructure. We're going to continue to invest right across the board to see that people right across the North enjoy the roads they have right now and also to improve them. I appreciate the people from Yellowknife in terms of the many travellers we get here. We'll continue working on the roads, on what we can do to improve.

We're also very open to look at new initiatives, new technology in terms of how to deal with the permafrost, how to deal with the thousands of trucks that come by here from the mining companies. We are looking at ways we could improve our roads system. I think the people in this area are very lucky because of the quality of work that has been done on these roads. We will continue to improve, and I hope that through this budget process you would give us the opportunity either to build or not to build in the North.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Moving on, Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. Menicoche: Just with respect to highways, there are many, many kilometres that go through my riding. Second to housing, I get lots of inquiries about concerns about the conditions of the highway, and I would be remiss not to mention it this evening.

Of late, of course, is the condition of Highway No. 7. People are patiently waiting for it to get repaired. I think I brought it up in the House earlier today during question period, trying to get some answers about when the work will begin, et cetera. But I can appreciate as well, of course, Mother Nature has to cooperate. As long as there's a plan in place, I can go home and let them know the work's going to begin soon. That was the reason I asked the Minister to please draft a letter to the community. The leadership will be getting the phone calls and the e-mails, just as I am, too.

One of the particular things I wanted to achieve during this budget session was to ensure that chipsealing identified for Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 7 is in the capital plan. I've been working with the Minister on that, and of late he said it is in the capital plan. I'd just like to get some assurance it is, and where along the line it is, because we have several different types. Some are five-year; some are 15- or 20-year. And then there's one way down the line. I'd like to know which one is on there, Mr. Chair. With that, I'd turn it over to the Minister.

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

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the unique and unusual circumstances Mother Nature is playing on us on Highway No. 7 is heavy rainfall. However, I'm sure the people of Nahendeh and certainly the Member, in terms of the reconstruction outlined by my officials and our communication strategy... They also have to provide me with plans of how we're going to reconstruct the sections that need to be reconstructed on Highway No. 7. That road will be closed from time to time. This is due to a proper reconstruction of the road here.

However, in terms of the chipsealing of our roads, we'd like to see all our roads be properly reconstructed, and they would be considered into our capital needs assessments and reconstruction. We are looking at all roads. Hopefully, all roads would be properly reconstructed, properly maintained, and then we can start... Hopefully, one day I would see chipsealing on sections of Highway No. 7. You guys so passionately talked about our roads over the last couple weeks here in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Menicoche: Absolutely. All of our roads have got to be properly reconstructed and rebased. I know that of the last round of CSIF funding, which ends this year or next, a lot of those resources are dedicated to Highway No. 7 — for the most part, I believe, Highway No. 1 from the Providence junction toward Fort Simpson. I think it's 30 or 40 kilometres, down where the culverts were replaced, as well as Highway No. 7 from the B.C. border toward Liard. Those are particular sections I would like to see some planning on, some movement toward chipsealing those sections. If there are any identified areas, those would be the ones.

The Minister didn't really say which capital plan the goal is to put it on; it certainly is my goal and the goal of Nahendeh residents to see it worked toward. Particularly when the pipeline talks were imminent, there was an argument about whether you chipseal the road and then have the big trucks roll over them and destroy them, or do you leave it

a gravel road and then pave it after the trucks have all passed through? I don't know. I haven't seen any facts or figures, but I'm sure the department has. I think that many, many other jurisdictions chipseal or pave first, and that affects the safety of everybody involved, with the enormous projectiles and everything from many, many vehicles.

Just on that alone I'd like, once again, to ask a question. Maybe the Minister would show me — it doesn't have to be tonight, but soon — the capital needs assessment and just where Highways No. 1 and No. 7 would fit with the new Building Canada Fund. I'm sure that's intended with the CSIF funding that's expired.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, the chipsealing of these highways is within these departments' capital needs assessments.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Moving on. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, would like to raise the issue in regard to our infrastructure. Over the years we've seen some incidents where we're lucky we didn't lose any individuals' lives because of the collapse on the Dempster Highway, the road collapse in regard to Highway No. 7. I think it's an important part of our infrastructure. It's just like anything else: we have to take care of it, and we also have to ensure that we maintain, upgrade and also evaluate, assess and test.

We can't lose sight that this government was sued at one time for \$1 million because of an accident that happened around the Yukon border on the Dempster Highway, where the road collapsed. There was ice that melted under the road. The road gave way. There was an MLA from the Yukon who was driving an 18-wheeler. The wheel hit the pothole, and basically the vehicle went and flipped, and he died.

We can't lose sight that we were sued once because of the condition of the road, through no fault of our own but because you don't know what's underneath by way of ice and ice melting or permafrost and also because of the aging infrastructure we have. Most of this infrastructure was built back in the '50s going into the '60s and on to the '70s. I think that infrastructure is not immune to wear and tear, and we do have to continue to invest in that infrastructure.

On the side of safety, I know that in this department safety is your number one issue. I think we also have to realize that a lot of these things could be prevented by simply doing better inspections: making sure we go out on the road, check the culverts, check the road conditions. If there's a pothole in the road, you don't just go and fill it in

and put a flag in it. I think you have to assess how big of a problem you have by way of melting permafrost from underneath the road versus from on top.

I think this problem will become more and more apparent because of what we're seeing with global warming. We're seeing sloping in the mountains, and streams are now basically washing themselves out. I think we have to do a better job of making sure we continue these inspections. I'd just like to ask the Minister: because of these situations, have we increased the number of inspections on our highways to ensure the culverts are being checked regularly? Are we checking to make sure that when we see a pothole open up in the road, it is basically being worn out from underneath versus up to top? There is the bigger problem underneath, though. I'd just like to ask the Minister: exactly how often do they do that, and are we expanding the inspections of our highways?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member raises a very, very, very good point in terms of safety of our highways and the safety of our infrastructures along the highway. We do say we are going to work continuously on this and improve our inspection process. I would ask the deputy to outline the detail in terms of our improvements and where we see these inspections would be very important to our management of the reconstruction of our roads.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Neudorf.

Mr. Neudorf: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, inspection so we do understand exactly the current state and condition of all of our infrastructure is fundamentally important. It's the basis for all of the numbers that are in the document you have here, particularly on the capital side as we do that programming. You'll also notice in some of the details here that there's \$220,000 additional money for phase 2 of an enhanced structures inspection program.

We do have a standard that we follow, that our personnel follow as we inspect all of our structures along the highway system. When it's a new structure, we're there every year to ensure there is no warranty-related work. If we've been there a few years and we find that it's functioning well, then we will look at it every two to five years, depending on the structure. When we go and we may find an issue, depending on the nature of that issue, then it would warrant some additional inspections, so we'd come back more frequently.

It is a very, very important subject to us, as the Minister said. It is very important that we know and understand exactly the condition of our infrastructure so we can maintain it.

Mr. Krutko: There's another issue I'd like to raise. As long as I've been here in this Legislature, going on 12 years, I've always pushed the road from Aklavik to the Dempster Highway, and again we're still talking about it 12 years later.

I was always told that in order for that to happen, it had to fall within the highways strategy of the Northwest Territories. Yet it seems we're realigning roads. We're looking at roads into the North Slave geological area. We're talking about roads up the Mackenzie Valley. Is that strategy still a basis of any decisions this government makes by way of infrastructure, that it has to be part of the NWT strategy?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The highway strategy that Mr. Krutko is speaking about is something that the department has been following. It also has adapted the strategy from time to time and will continue to adapt as the issues come forward, and by the concerns and by the circumstances of the development in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, as I stated, I've been pushing this issue for 12 years, and we haven't even got to the gravel pit yet. The priorities of this Assembly are to have sustainable communities, develop our local economies, reduce the cost of living and also to connect in our communities. Most of us in our communities are not asking for a four-lane highway. All we want is a road where two pickups will pass each other in the dark. We don't care if there are potholes or if there's permafrost pushing up from underneath as long as we get to drive on something, because we're used to it up there.

In order to start this, we do have to make an attempt to deal with existing road systems, either our winter roads or expanding our systems. We can't take it lightly that with global warming in Arctic coastal communities and deltas, with the rising ocean levels, these communities will be threatened. The coastland will be threatened. We have to realize we will not be able to depend on ice roads. We will not depend on serving and providing services to communities unless we deal with that challenge.

It's not unique to us; we've already seen in the last ten years where our winter season for ice roads is shrinking, and we're basically down to five or six weeks now where before you were down to three months. We've got to be realistic that it's real, that it's here. Whatever strategy we use, we have to keep in mind that that is an element we have to

build into any of our strategies, build into any of our plans. Again, let's at least start. You know, I don't care if it's a footpath or a four-by-four track. Let's get something out there so communities can see we are trying something.

We're not going to build the Taj Mahal. I don't care if there's permafrost pushing it up, making the road a little rough. We have to be realistic that most people, you know.... Give them something and they can build from that. We've seen that experience in communities that had initiative: the road to communities like Jean Marie and other communities, which started off as a simple community initiative by community access road projects. Now you have a pretty decent road, simply by these community initiatives.

I know we've tried different initiatives in the past. Again, I'd just like to point out to the department that we have to build that into whatever strategy. Again, we have to make an attempt to connect our communities to our existing infrastructure or highways. In my case, get me to the gravel pit, and we can go from there.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chairman, the Member spoke very passionately in previous days and again tonight. I certainly hear what the Member is saying on behalf of the people of Aklavik. We certainly had some discussions. I also understand that Minister McLeod might come out and have some discussions in terms of the role of the department and how we can get together. As Mr. Krutko mentioned, how can we best put together this package with the people of Aklavik in looking at this important gravel site they've identified over a number of years and through various motions, raising it in various forms? We are certainly going to look into and go in there and say, "Let's work on this." That'll be the link to updating our strategy in terms of connecting communities.

I come from a community similar to what Mr. Krutko's talking about. I know the importance of some of this stuff to the people. I'm willing to go in, as I said before, and talk with the people of Aklavik and the different departments to see what the steps are in terms of putting a good plan together for building something for the people of Aklavik.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with the Member for Mackenzie Delta; Highway 8 does need a lot of work. Something I'd like to see maybe come in the business plans is money that's earmarked for maintenance on Highway 8 every year. How that money is used, I think, is in most cases up to the regional office. I would like a directive to come from the Minister's office that dust control be an absolute priority for next summer

because — you've been on the highway in the dust — it's just unsafe, unhealthy driving conditions. I just wanted to add my voice to that.

Also, looking at the '09–10 reduction proposals, I noticed there was an amalgamated position of customer service coordinator and secretary into a new position of administrative clerk, and one position is to be eliminated. I'm not quite sure, and I think that's going to be my question.

I have had a couple of inquiries from folks in Inuvik who work for Transportation. I know there are two of them who have been given letters. They were going to create one position and have these two basically scrap over the one position. I was quite concerned about that. Maybe this is not the one in Inuvik, but I know there were a couple of people in Inuvik who were given affected-employee letters. I just want to know, if that's the case, if it's for this year or next year, or if this is it right here — the amalgamation of the two positions.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The Member has raised the issue of safety. We certainly take that very, very important issue to our planning table. When we look at the existing infrastructure, I would make a note of it in terms of the Member's request, in terms of looking at the Dempster Highway and his wishes that we see what we can do in terms of the dust-control issue here. We've increased our level of dust control. However, we can do better, and I think the Member and I and this Assembly need to have some further discussions on how we go about that.

As to the issue of the affected employees for '09–10, my understanding is that one member does want go on an education leave in terms of her position. The other one has agreed to go through the retention policy of HR for the newly created position. Now, this is again all potential, proposed effect, so it's not for sure for sure.

Mr. McLeod: I appreciate that. That was the Inuvik positions I was referring to. And the Minister, in response to the question from Mr. Krutko before, mentioned he was from a small community, so he's quite familiar with the driving conditions. That's fine and that's nice to say, and talking about strategies is another nice thing to state, but you know, the Minister on this of the House has raised the issue of highways a few times, when he was on this side of the house. Now the Minister is in a position to have some direct input into all of the stuff he was complaining about, or all of the issues he was raising when he was on this side of the House. I would remind the Minister not to forget he did raise those concerns.

You know, he's saying we have to look at the strategy, we've got to look at this, we've got to look at that, but the bottom line — and I think it's something we've been trying to get across — is it

needs to be done. We can study it to death. We can write all the strategies we want, come out with all the glossy magazines we want. The cost of producing all of these magazines could've been dust control for probably a couple of kilometres, if not more. You talk about dust control being applied to the Dempster, and I've driven on it this year. I've driven on it last year. It's like 50 feet, a hundred feet, little stretches. So just to remind the Minister of that.

Just to go back to my position before I close here, Mr. Chair, the Minister is saying that one person has applied for educational leave. That basically leaves the position to the other person, who because of staff retention will be offered that position more than likely. I believe this was part of the plan, and in notifying them so soon, they were maybe hoping they would eliminate themselves from the whole reduction process by taking on something else.

If that's the case, if the one person has decided that they're going to school, it's going to cost us money. It's going to cost us money because we have to pay a severance package and that, so I don't think there's a huge amount of savings here. In the overall big picture of the whole budget, we see a few positions.... I think my colleague from Mackenzie Delta mentioned \$30,000 for marine assistants. We've got little bits and pieces of money here and there. These are all front-line people, and it's something we should really have a look at.

As far as strategies go, let's just face the fact that this stuff needs to be done. Let's just not study the thing to death; let's just do it. Let's just do it, because we say the health and safety of the people in the Northwest Territories travelling our highways is a big priority. I think we have to just quit talking about it all the time and just do it. And maybe I should quit talking about it too.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Chair, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes brings up a lot of good points in his comments to me, and certainly I take them very seriously. I look forward to having this discussion as we look at investing our dollars across the Northwest Territories in terms of transportation, and I agree with him. Let's get it done. Let's get it built. Let's get building.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. We are on page 9-23. Highways, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$48.290 million.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Highways, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$48.290 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Flipping to 9-26. Highways, Active Positions, information item.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Highways, Active Positions, information item (page 9-26), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 9-27, information item, Highways, Active Positions.

Department of Transportation, Activity Summary, Highways, Active Positions, information item (page 9-27), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Page 9-29, Activity Summary, Marine, Operations Expenditure Summary. Mr. Krutko.

COMMITTEE MOTION 60-16(2)
TO REVERSE THE DECISION TO ELIMINATE
MARINE EQUIPMENT MAINTAINER
ASSISTANT POSITION
(COMMITTEE MOTION CARRIED)

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a motion I'd like to make on this page. It's in regard to the marine equipment maintainer assistant position, based out of Abraham Francis Ferry in the Peel River. Again, this is one of those things where this individual has made his livelihood — he's basically made his career — around the Department of Transportation in marine operations. He's moved from Hay River to Providence to McPherson; he's raised a family in our community. He's now being told after all those years of service that we're going to let him go.

Looking at his salary for the summer season, it's \$30,000. I think for us to think we're saving \$30,000 and then we find out the department is basically growing by \$4 million compared to last year's budget, with really no cuts except for a nice, warm, cozy body that's being eliminated.... We have to be fairer to our employees.

With that, I'd like to move a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that the committee strongly recommend that the government take immediate action to reverse its decision to eliminate the marine equipment maintainer assistant position under the Department of Transportation, Marine Activity.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Motion is on the floor; it's being distributed now. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be supporting this motion, even though this demonstrates that large communities can help small communities. I'd like to make sure that's on the record.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Comments for the record, Mr. Chair. We are working with the affected

employee, '09–10 reduction. We are working very closely with this employee, and we're looking at options. However, we clearly heard the Member for Mackenzie Delta on this issue.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I think it's.... We talk about home-made talent, people who made a career in our operations. We're having problems recruiting people in the area of marine operations, from captains to engineers to, in some cases, deck hands. These people have made a career of this. Now what kind of a message are we sending? We say we want to train them and give them these opportunities, yet the people who have made a career of it are let go. I think it's the wrong message. Again, I thank my colleagues for their support, and I will ask for a recorded vote.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Question has been called, and the Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): The results of the recorded vote on the motion are nine in favour, zero opposed, seven abstentions.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): I call on Mr. Robert McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Chair, I'd like to move we report progress.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. 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 and report progress. Order! Thank you, Mr. Minister, 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; Committee Report 7-16(2); and Report on the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates, Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, and would like to report progress with 12 motions being adopted. 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? The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order.

Motion carried.

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

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the Day for Friday, June 13, 2008, 10 a.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) Return 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
CR 5-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates
- 19) Second Reading of Bills
Bill 12: An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
CR 6-16(2): Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2008–2009 Draft Main Estimates
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
Bill 8: Appropriation Act, 2008–2009
TD 37-16(2): Main Estimates 2008–2009, Volumes 1 and 2
Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
MS 62-16(2): Government of Canada Residential Schools Apology
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
- 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 Friday, June 13, 2008, at 10 a.m.
- The House adjourned at 10 p.m.