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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 15, 2010****Members Present**

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, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:35 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Before we begin today, I would like to draw your attention to the Canadian flags that are on your desk marking National Flag of Canada Day. February 15th was declared National Flag of Canada Day in 1996. It marks the day in 1965 when our red and white maple leaf flag was first raised over Parliament Hill in Ottawa and, indeed, hundreds of communities across Canada.

The red and white maple leaf flag has become a powerful and predominant symbol of Canada. It is recognized all over the world as the flag of the people who cherish the ideals of democracy, freedom, justice, diversity and equality. It is a particularly fitting day to celebrate our flag and this beautiful country in which we live. It is also fitting to see so many red maple leaves welcoming the world to the 2010 Winter Olympics. The maple leaf is even more predominant now that Canada has won its first Olympic gold medal on Canadian soil.

---Applause

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 70-16(4):
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY
PROGRAM EXPANSION

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, reducing our consumption, reusing materials and recycling waste products are ways that we can all help reduce our impact on the environment. When we do this, we use fewer natural resources and less energy, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and saves money.

Given the opportunity, NWT residents willingly reduce consumption and participate in recycling programs. This is evident in our highly successful Beverage Container Program, with over 100 million

containers returned to date. While we have had some successes, residents are looking to the Government of the Northwest Territories to play a leadership role in expanding this popular program.

In 2008, ENR consulted NWT residents, aboriginal organizations, environmental organizations and government to prioritize products for inclusion in the Waste Reduction and Recovery Program. Items under review included paper products, milk containers, e-waste, lead acid batteries, plastic grocery bags, fuel drums and tires. Residents identified paper and cardboard as the number one waste item for recovery or recycling. Recommendations also included the addition of milk containers as the next logical step for recycling in the NWT. Concerns about the number of plastic bags around communities, on the land, and going into our landfills were also received.

Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact that paper-based materials make up the largest portion of the waste stream. Some communities collect paper-based materials for shipment to southern Canada for recycling. However, current methods of transportation are energy-intensive and expensive; decreasing the environmental and economic benefits of recycling when these bulky materials are shipped long distances.

As a result, ENR continues to look for ways to reuse or recycle waste paper and cardboard right here in the North. A three-year initiative providing financial assistance to NWT-based municipalities, organizations, businesses and individuals to initiate and develop alternate ways to reuse paper and cardboard destined for landfills began last spring. This is the second year that financial assistance is being made available for the development of innovative, alternative and progressive methods of recycling paper products.

Through our Single-use Retail Bag Program that began on January 15, 2010, NWT grocery stores now charge a 25 cent environmental fee for every paper and/or plastic bag that they distribute. This environmental fee will help reduce our use of these products and extend the life of our community landfills. This initiative is part of a larger, two-year plan to phase out all paper and plastic bags in the NWT, eliminating an estimated nine million single-use retail bags from our landfills each and every year.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that beginning today, milk containers are included as part of the NWT Beverage Container Program. All milk and liquid milk products, including milk jugs and milk substitute cartons, yogurt drink bottles, condensed and evaporated milk cans, UHT boxes and creamer bottles will be accepted at all NWT bottle depots. Residents will receive a 25 cent return on clean and rinsed milk containers of two or more litres and a 10 cent return on milk containers of one litre or less. The addition of milk containers in the Beverage Container Program will further reduce the volume of waste that goes to landfills and litter in our communities.

Money raised through the Beverage Container Program and the Bag Fee Program goes into the Environment Fund. This fund is used to cover program expenses and improve waste reduction and recovery programs, including our planned expansion into e-waste.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that waste reduction and recycling is important to the people of the Northwest Territories. Expanding the Waste Reduction and Recovery Program will maintain and improve the quality of our environment as well as significantly extend the lives of local landfills. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 71-16(4):
ABORIGINAL STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is pleased to share news about the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative that we implemented to increase aboriginal students' success across the Northwest Territories.

The department is working with superintendents, teachers and other departments and aboriginal organizations on a plan to close the gap in aboriginal student achievement. This school term we began work to increase student attendance because aboriginal students have a high rate of absenteeism overall. By the time they reach Grade 10, the average aboriginal student misses the equivalent of two years of school. We are supporting pilot projects in every school division in the Northwest Territories to address the need to increase student attendance.

An example of one of these projects is in Colville Lake school where students who attend school regularly and those with perfect attendance, participate in special activities like pizza and movie nights and computer nights in the school. There has been a marked improvement in the number of students with perfect attendance. Parents are

making a more concerted effort to send their children to school in Colville Lake.

Another attendance project is in the K'alemi Dene School where staff initiated the Creative Trails Program to encourage students to attend school, to build relationships with the students and to increase knowledge and develop skills in northern arts and crafts. Every Wednesday after school, community elders, community artisans and teachers provide instruction to the students. The students continue with the projects on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. A lot of learning, laughter and relationship building is happening. Students have participated in doing Dene beading and are learning moose hair tufting, quilling, working with furs and making moccasins.

In addition to attendance projects, department staff are working with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association and superintendents of divisional education councils to develop a culturally appropriate orientation for all new and beginning teachers. This will assist both teachers and parents to bridge the communication gap between home and school.

To get the message out in the community, we've launched a public advertising campaign. Communications materials talk about the importance of regularly attending school and explain the education system. To include youth in the campaign, the department has teamed up with CKLB Radio to have students in the community schools act as community reporters for CKLB Radio. Later this month, Mr. Speaker, we hope to have our youths' voices hitting the airwaves sharing stories from communities across our Territory.

Mr. Speaker, the longer term goal of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group is to develop and implement a territorial plan to help eliminate the achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students.

I am pleased to let you know the department is meeting with its aboriginal student achievement partners on February 23rd to 24th in Yellowknife to do further work on the territorial plan on aboriginal education. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Working Group will submit a plan to me by April this year.

Mr. Speaker, this year we are diligently working to ensure we see healthy successful aboriginal students, with informed and involved parents and community education partners. I will keep the Members informed of the progress of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROVISION OF FORT MCPHERSON TENTS TO AID HAITIAN RELIEF EFFORTS

MR. KRUTKO. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over one month ago an earthquake hit Haiti. Mr. Speaker, to date, there are over a million people without shelter. With the rainy season coming, there is an urgent need to provide shelter to the people of Haiti.

There are over 160 tents right now sitting in inventory in Fort McPherson at the Tent and Canvas Shop. The craftspeople at the Fort McPherson canvas shop can sew one to two tents each day per individual. If it is required, the Tent and Canvas Shop in Fort McPherson can go on a full-time operational basis and provide the emergency shelter that is going to be needed to the people in Haiti.

I think it's important that this government does everything it can to help the people in Haiti. We need to realize that we do have a way and means of providing emergency shelter to the people of Haiti who require it as soon as possible with the rainy season coming. This government has to find some alternatives and options to help the people in Haiti.

Like I stated earlier, we have over 160 tents in inventory sitting in Fort McPherson. I think this government, along with the Government of Canada and NGOs, could possibly find a way to move those tents from Fort McPherson to Haiti through the Canadian Military to the Canadian External Affairs department who are also working with the country of Haiti. I believe that we as a government and we as the people of the Northwest Territories must do everything we can to provide the emergency shelter that is required for the people of Haiti.

At the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister responsible for the Fort McPherson canvas shop if the government has considered this as an option moving forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NAHENDEH CORE NEED HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm going to speak about housing problems in Nahendeh. I have to tell you that I get no joy in finding that I have been right about the dire straits of housing in my constituency.

The 2009 NWT Community Survey of Housing confirms that the number of households in the NWT that are considered to be in core need has

increased from 16 percent in 2004 to 19 percent in 2009. Core need refers to households with incomes before the core need income and whose housing costs are more than 30 percent of the household income or housing without running water and indoor plumbing or housing in major need of repairs.

While 19 percent of the households in the NWT are in core need, Nahendeh tops all the regions at the highest rate with a full 36 percent of dwellings in core need. The sad reality is that every region has seen a downward spiral in adequate housing but Nahendeh has experienced the worst.

I have spoken in the House many times about housing; how timelines for completion of repairs in Nahanni Butte and other locations have not been met, how there was a case where an elder had to wait more than a year before moving back into his home, and how families have been forced to move in with relatives, leading to overcrowding. We know that students who live in adequate housing are successful at school. We know that proper housing supports better health, which leads to reduced costs to our health care system.

I call on the NWT Housing Corporation to plan for and make sure work projects in communities are properly planned, scheduled, and completed. I also call on the GNWT to turn this trend of deteriorating housing around and make it a goal that the next core needs survey is a positive one.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to continue trying to make some sense of the mess that is the Deh Cho Bridge Project. It was interesting to hear the Transportation Minister state in a media interview on Friday with CBC that finally the government admits in some fashion that it went ahead with the project despite a cost-benefit analysis that clearly indicated that the government could expect a \$53 million negative benefit from the bridge at \$165 million. Throw in at least another \$15 million and you have a project that will have a negative cost to this government and Territory of \$70 million. Not to mention that we are spending this nearly \$200 million on a bridge that will undoubtedly increase the cost of living in Yellowknife, Ndilo, Dettah, the Tlicho communities, and every other community serviced by air from Yellowknife.

There are many more questions about this project that have to be asked. Right now the project is almost half done. Up until this week or late last week the Minister and government gave us every assurance that the new design would save money and be less expensive to construct.

During a briefing last week I just about fell off my chair when the Minister said they're negotiating the deal with what amounts to be one company. Mr. Speaker, I don't understand for one second why we would not go to tender on the remaining work. Does the Minister not understand that the contractor we're negotiating with has the government squarely over a barrel? Does the Minister and government not owe it to the people of the Northwest Territories and Members of this House to get the best price that they possibly can for the remainder of this work?

Mr. Speaker, our pants are on the ground and we sure look like a bunch of fools, that's for sure. Haven't we been taken advantage of enough, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, we are being asked to approve \$15 million more for this project when there's not been a full accounting of where the dollars have gone, where and how much is charged and to who, and exactly where is the design in all of this. How can you negotiate a sole-source deal without a firm design? If we sign a deal without the completion of this design, aren't we just setting ourselves up to potential changes and cost overruns? Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Transportation at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we listened to the large amount of media coverage this morning on the Deh Cho Bridge on CBC Radio this morning, Mr. Ramsay was in for an interview, we heard the Minister's comments in the media scrum after the House session on Friday, and I've been struggling and thinking, you know, what can we do to bring some more, I guess, transparency and accountability to this whole issue of the Deh Cho Bridge.

As my husband and I listened to the news this morning, Rick, who's not known to be the politician in the family, suggested, he said, isn't this the first time you've actually had to vote money on this project, and I said, yeah, it is. Since we passed that Deh Cho Bridge Corporation Act in the 14th Assembly, this is the first time that we've actually been called upon to vote on money related to this bridge project in the form of what will be a supplementary appropriation request for \$15 million to address the cost overruns because of the many changes. He said this is the opportunity, this is your chance to get the government to provide very precise and accurate accounting about some of the things we've wondered about for a long time. When we agreed to the loan guarantees -- and that's what

they were, they were not expenditures, they were guarantees at the time for getting this project planning done and underway -- each time when we would try to inquire about where the money was being expended, for what went up to be loan guarantees in the neighbourhood of \$9 million, we were always told, of course, that the money was being spent by the proponent, which was the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, not by our government. So the normal level of financial reporting was not there out of respect for the proprietors who are the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation.

So here as we, Mr. Speaker, have an opportunity coming up where, in fact, we do have to vote money to cover these overruns, I think it would be really good for the government to get very busy trying to account to us how much has been spent on this project. I'm particularly interested in the workers within the Department of Transportation themselves, how much of their time, energy and effort has gone to work on this particular file. So that's what I will be seeking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCREASED GNWT ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING CAPACITY

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, areas near Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution are under constant pressure, various pressures from industry to extract non-renewable resources from the land. Mr. Speaker, I realize the responsibility for monitoring the land and water from an environmental perspective lies with the federal government; however, Mr. Speaker, the communities feel that our government should take some responsibility to ensure that the land and water is protected from environment degradation.

Currently, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has responsibility for wildlife and forestry. It would be an easy fit for the department to post environmental officers in the communities of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution and by having those officers work with renewable resource officers currently in place in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about environmental protection officers. They respond to things like fuel spills. These positions are valuable too. However, the communities need officers that will check the changes in the water and changes on the land as early as resource exploration is taking place.

Mr. Speaker, I stood up in this House in the past and spoke about how we can increase employment rates in small communities and how little presence the GNWT, our government, has in the rural and

remote communities. Mr. Speaker, these communities have people that are very competent in these areas and by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources creating these positions, they will have a presence in the very key area of non-renewable resource development.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, the communities and our government rely on the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Board to ensure work like environmental assessments and environmental impact statements and reviewing any type of development reports are completed. The creation of these positions will allow the communities to be closer linked with any non-renewable resource development or potential resource development being contemplated on their land and water. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STATE OF YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk today about the state of the educational facilities in my riding. Mr. Speaker, as all people in Yellowknife will know, J.H. Sissons and Mildred Hall are two gems of our education system in the riding of Yellowknife Centre.

Mr. Speaker, in 1975, J.H. Sissons was constructed. That was really the last time a hammer ever found itself into that school. Mr. Speaker, it has not been renovated on the capital plan by this government since then. Yes, it has received a new boiler, which just allows more efficient heat to roll out those leaking windows, and occasionally it has had some fresh paint. Mr. Speaker, ultimately you can't hide the fact that this place needs to be updated with a little bit of fresh paint.

Mr. Speaker, J.H. Sissons is the priority of the school's board wanting it to be updated in the short term. Mr. Speaker, if it cannot get a full renovation like other projects can, why don't we take the approach that they want some gymnasium upgrades and certainly carpet upgrades, because this school board understands that certain schools need priority listings and J.H. Sissons needs to be on that list. It wasn't that long ago when it was on the list but it has been bumped off. Mr. Speaker, you have to keep in mind that school boards need to make sure that the schools are healthy, safe and modern. It is difficult to attract students to schools that look aged.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, Mildred Hall was fortunate enough to get some updates in 2005, but 2005 presented itself as a facelift, not a full renovation as the department will try to tell you. It

did some paint, some great structural work up front of the building of Mildred Hall, but, Mr. Speaker, completely forgot about some of the important things such as some of the roofing structure, the windows and many of the walls have not been touched since the original construction back in 1965.

Mr. Speaker, the students there at Mildred Hall use their two little auditoriums to do all their gymnasium programs. They have been asking for some time to have a real gymnasium expanded, which is just not like what any other school really deserves. I think all schools in the Northwest Territories deserve a good quality gymnasium. You can only take your gym sports out so often. It is just completely unfair.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to stress that J.H. Sissons is certainly a gem because it draws out the French-speaking community and an education for them as well as Mildred Hall represents diversity of its finest. These two schools need the support from this government. I look forward to question period hearing the Minister support that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INUVALUIT PARTICIPATION AT THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and myself are proud to acknowledge and congratulate the large contingent of Inuvialuit participation at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. Through the Government of the Northwest Territories, there are 16 Inuvialuit participating in a blanket toss, traditional Inuit games, performing arts, individual arts: Mr. Abel Tingmiak, Hans Lennie, Donald Kuptana, Kyle Kuptana, Noel Leigh Cockney, Kristin Green, Marion Toutuk Green, Vanessa Anikina, Mathew Anikina, James Williams, Karis Gruben, Dwayne Illasiak, Leanne Goose, Greg Nasogaluak and Mary Okheena and Elizabeth Drescher.

Through the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the National Inuit Organization, the Aklavik Drummers and Dancers as well will participate at Inuit Across the North in a showcase celebrating the people behind the Inukshuk on Inuit Day, February 20, 2010, at the Aboriginal Pavilion. The group will be performing on NWT Day, February 19, as part of the NWT Cultural Delegation at B.C. Place. Twelve participants from Aklavik -- Carol Arey, Mary Gordon, Dean Arey, Mary Ruth Meyook, Phillip Elanik, Lori Elanik, Pamela Gordon, Colin Gordon, Alexander Gordon, Thomas Gordon, Eva Gordon, and Andrew Gordon, Sr. -- will also be all at the pavilion.

Most impressive is the two-year effort of the Inuvik Drummers and Dancers who were able to raise funds to bring more than 30 of their members to perform at the Vancouver Olympics. Although not part of the official Inuit Cultural Delegation, the group will appear at several venues through the Talking Stick Festival, at appearances in the Northern House. The participants are: Brian Rogers, William Allen, Kevin Allen, Vanessa Kasook, Patrick Gruben, Ethel Gruben, Dang-Dang Gruben, Olivia Lennie, Jimmy Kalinek, Justin Collinson, Jayda Sittichinli, Blair Rogers, Robin Carpenter, Alainna Carpenter, Keenan Carpenter, Priscilla Smith, Miranda Pingo, Lorna Delanie Elias, Sarah Tingmiak, Lillian Elias, Annie Aleekuk, Shae-Lynie Allen, Billy Lennie, Alecia Lennie, Cheryl Rogers, Patricia Rogers, Kendra Elanik, and Wendy Smith.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. JACOBSON: I won't go after that last section. During the opening ceremonies, four Inuvialuit youth participated as part of the Indigenous Youth Gathering: Margaret Noksana, Sophie Steffure, Joshua Teddy, and Chad Larocque. Working through the territorial government and ITK, Peggy Jay and Mavis Jacobson are championing the Inuvialuit crafters and carpenters with a variety of products for sale at the Northern House and the Aboriginal Village in and downtown Vancouver, and the Visions of the North on February 23 to 28 at the Richmond O-Zone Live Site. Joining the three Inuvialuit visual artists are Joe Nasogaluak, Bessie Inuktalik, and Ryan Taylor.

Finally, a big thank you to all those who supported the IRC in all the Inuvialuit communities. Please join me in acknowledging the Inuvialuit participation which will enhance the Northwest Territories presence at the Vancouver Olympics.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The press release on the Deh Cho Bridge last Friday capped off a depressing few days for me. I can't say I was too surprised to learn that the bridge project is now officially over budget. Projects the size of this one often encounter delays and cost overruns, so an additional \$15 million was not unexpected.

No, the depressing part for me was confirmation of my nagging doubts about the viability of the bridge project and realization that the concerns I've harboured about it since I began work in this Assembly two years ago were validated. I'm especially frustrated because I, Members of this

Assembly, and the residents of the NWT inherited the Deh Cho Bridge Project without input. I came in after the fact, a concession agreement having been signed three days before the 2007 elections, a project management team set in place prior to the same election, financial guarantees agreed to long before I came into this job.

I've never felt comfortable with the process used to establish this project. It certainly was not open and transparent. The government placed a huge trust in a third-party organization and along with that trust willingly set up itself and the residents of the NWT as the financial backstop for a very expensive project.

I consider myself an optimist. It's my nature to think the best of people and things. I had high hopes for the bridge project and its management that things would work out, that given time the corporation would prove itself competent and in doing so bring the project to completion successfully. Now my hopes are dashed. I feel like some unseen hand has stuck me with a raw deal. I feel like I've been backed into a corner and left with no options for a way out.

The extra project costs will impact the government's financial bottom line and we can potentially end up with responsibility for the bridge loan. But it is by no means the end of the world. With the government now more in control of the project we can minimize future risks and hopefully further costs. However, I, like some of my colleagues, fully expect we've not seen the last of cost overruns for this project.

Of paramount importance for this Assembly now is to ensure two things happen:

One, there must be an audit of the whole bridge affair. From inception to today we have to determine and document how things were set in place; what decisions were made, when, and by whom; what actions were taken, when, and by whom; and we must tally all the costs that have been incurred, including in-kind costs which are the result of work done by GNWT staff, the many, many hidden person hours spent on this project.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MS. BISARO: Two, this Assembly must set in place protocols to guide Executive Council actions that will inhibit major decisions being made in the months preceding an election. We have to shut the door on the opportunity for an Executive Council in the waning days of an Assembly to enter into any major agreement such as the one signed off with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation.

We the 16th Assembly have been saddled with the travesty that is the Deh Cho Bridge, but it must never be allowed to happen this way again.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR
HOUSING MAINTENANCE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to make comments on the recent 2009 Community Housing Needs Survey. Last week we finished with the Minister of the corporation in terms of the budget. When I left and went upstairs, I received a phone call from a distraught senior in Fort Good Hope. She's a retired social worker, she's a senior, and she was looking for help with the Housing Corporation. She had to go through the whole bureaucratic administrative process and the application and the whole information gathering. She rushed to get all this information together so she could get the application into the office to receive assistance. She said when she got back from one of the communities, she opened a letter from the Housing Corporation and was just devastated because of the rejection by the Housing Corporation.

This senior here has a busted water tank, the pipes were all frozen, her grandchildren have to take showers and baths outside of her house, they have to use a honey bucket, they have to borrow a water tank to put it through the house. She said she gives a lot of her good work to the government and this is how they're treating her.

In the 2009 survey the Sahtu region is at about 41 percent followed by Nahendeh at 32 percent, in the department of adequacy, which is about the physical conditions of places to live in a house with basic facilities to provide a safe and healthy place to live, such as running water, hot water, using the washroom, serious defects in the structure of the house. This lady here was really devastated, because she asked how she could get help. She's worked with the Housing Corporation, she's been a government employee, she's retired, she just wants to live comfortably. This type of weather is cold and this type of application takes 10 to 12 weeks to get approval and be processed.

I'm going to ask the Minister how to administer the program so that people like this can receive assistance right away under emergency care or seniors care so she doesn't have to live like this anymore.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 322-16(4): DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got some more questions today for the Minister of Transportation. It goes back to my Member's statement talking about the Deh Cho Bridge Project. Obviously the government's coming back looking for another \$15 million because of the increased costs on the second half of the project, the superstructure, as it's called. I'd like to ask the Minister today why exactly the government, who is project manager now, is negotiating with one company. Why hasn't this gone out to tender, given the cost of this superstructure? Why are we negotiating with one company?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has been pretty clear on his feelings on this project and he's even taken a page out of what's happened in the New Brunswick government not too long ago about the pants on the ground statement. I'm glad he didn't try to sing it.

Mr. Speaker, it's pretty obvious why we are negotiating with one company. We have very limited time to make this project work and if we had gone to a competitive process, of course, we would be adding to the construction period. We'd have to prepare the tender documents and all the related material that's required to go to a public process, and that probably would have added another year to the construction period and also to the bottom line of what this bridge is going to cost. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the industry folks I've talked to say that it's unprecedented in this country for a project of this size to be negotiated with one company. In fact, I know our time is limited but, Mr. Speaker, it would appear to me that the other thing that's unlimited is our ability to spend money.

Mr. Speaker, I think we've spent enough on this project. I think the Minister and this government should duly and rightfully go to the marketplace and get the best price for the remainder of the work on the Deh Cho Bridge Project. I don't care if it takes six months. I don't care if it takes a year. If it's \$10 million or \$12 million less than the price that they're, so called, negotiating with this one company, I think the people of the Northwest Territories deserve better than just going to negotiate with one company, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, obviously, I disagree with the Member. I know he doesn't care about how long it would take. We would have to translate that into what it would cost,

added cost to what's already built in to this supp that we have yet to bring forward. We would expect a good portion of what the \$15 million ask is, is already interest and cost of delaying the project. We would have to add that amount to another year of delay and that would be quite significant, Mr. Speaker, over and above the \$15 million. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, obviously the government hasn't learned much. It negotiated a contract with ATCON, allowed the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation to negotiate a contract with ATCON, and we all know where that's gotten us. I want to ask the Minister, who ultimately calls the shot on whether this project would go to tender and which project team is doing this. Is it the former Deh Cho Bridge Corporation project management team or is it our project management team, Mr. Speaker? Because I'd like to know that.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the project is being developed and moved forward under my watch. I assumed the responsibility for this file a year and a half ago. I take full responsibility for anything's that's transpired during that period. We are calling the shots. We've moved into a project management position. We have new people and a new team put in place. Also, we have negotiated a new contract along with a redesign. So, Mr. Speaker, we have turned that corner and we are anticipating some good results as we move forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the Minister on this. I really think that, like I said, we owe it to the public, we owe it to the Members of this House. The project is in such a mess that I think we've got to look for a win where we can get it. I think we could have gotten a win, given the current economic climate in western Canada and getting other companies out there to bid on this project, so I disagree with the Minister on that.

I'd like to finally ask the Minister, what is he negotiating this contract with this one company on when, you know, I haven't heard that the design work has concluded. So I'd like to know exactly what he's negotiating and with what design. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. I apologize to the Member if he hadn't heard that we have concluded the design. We've said it on a number of occasions and we'll say it again: The superstructure has been concluded. There is still some electrical work and toll collection portion along with the catwalk that has to be finalized. We expect that will be another two weeks. There's enough there to move forward for shop drawings and a negotiated contract with the company.

Mr. Speaker, I have to state that we've taken every avenue to make information public. The Member is quite aware that I have made every effort to ensure that Members had whatever documents I had to share so that they could be involved with this project. Mr. Speaker, I don't pretend that the project has not had its share of problems.

When I assumed this department, this file a year and a half ago, I made a judgment that I needed to provide whatever support I could to make it work, and that's what we're doing now. There are still challenges, but we still feel this is a project that can be concluded in the next couple years. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 323-16(4):
EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR
HOUSING MAINTENANCE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. I want to ask the Minister, in terms of the Housing Corporation, in terms of the policies and the programs that the Minister is responsible for, I want to ask him in terms of how do we help a lady like this that is in a bad situation in terms of her house in regard to the conditions she lives in in Fort Good Hope.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, without having the name of this constituent, and if the Member would provide that, then I would commit to the Member that we'll follow up with it and see if there's anything that we can do. Pretty well all of our programs are application-based, so there's that process that we need to go through too. But if the Member is willing to provide me with the name and the details, then I can commit to him we'll follow up with it. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I appreciate the gesture from the Minister in terms of this specific person. Now I want to ask, in terms of the administration and the flexibility of this program, he's supposed to be simplifying these programs, the government and the Housing Corporation administration. Does the Corporation have an appeal process in place where if there's an application that does get rejected, that there can be an appeal process to a body rather than just to the Housing Corporation?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, at this particular moment there is no official appeals process in place. However, we are putting the work together to come up with an official appeals process and our intent is to have that in place by the next program application cycle. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the next program cycle, in between now and the next program cycle, I mean, this is only one of many concerns I have from the region. And certainly I will probably ask the Minister again, is there an interim appeal process or do we just go to the process that we're doing now, MLAs coming and seeing the Ministers?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, going to the MLAs and Ministers should be a last resort. However, without an appeals process in place, we're seeing a lot of that and we're hoping to get away with that. If this could be dealt with at the district level, that would be our preference. They would be able to speak to the district director and make an appeal to them and see what comes out of that. Hopefully, by the time we go through the next application cycle we'll have fewer and fewer appeals being made to the Ministerial and MLA level.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the process between now and the next application cycle, in terms of going to the district, is it also possible that the applicants could go to the local housing authority boards in terms of working out some type of an appeal process? I know that's something that could be considered rather than to the district office. Would the Minister look at something in the interim?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, these are the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation programs so we stay away from using the LHOs. They have their own process that they have to deal with as far as rentals go. So as of right now there are, basically, a couple of options: they could speak to the district manager and then, as we've seen in many cases, a lot of them are speaking to the MLAs and that's being relayed to the Minister. We do try and follow up with all the inquiries we get and see in each particular case what the situation was, what was the reason it was turned down. Until we get the new official appeals process in place, right now these are their only two options. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 324-16(4):
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Transportation. I would like to follow up on my statement with regards to my take on the bridge. I have some questions for the Minister relative to the monitoring of the project by the GNWT. Since the concession agreement was signed, from the time the concession agreement was signed until the end

of last summer when I believe the government took a greater interest in the management of the project, I would like to know from the Minister what kind of monitoring of the Deh Cho Bridge Project and of the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation was undertaken or was being done by this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A project of this nature requires very strict scrutiny by all people involved. There is also the Canadian Bridge Code that has to be followed. We had people from the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation that provided oversight and inspections. We had also independent engineers that provided oversight. We had our own people that were on the ground and providing checks and balances. We also, for the first year, had a team of people that worked together to review all issues and all documentation that were coming forward. We had a fairly strict oversight and inspection process on this project. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for the answer. I guess it begs the question, then, if we did have that kind of fairly large involvement in the project, if we were doing that kind of monitoring, it is no secret that this project has run into difficulties. We had problems with the contractor. We have had problems with the corporation and their management of the project. Why then did we have such great difficulties? Why are we in the situation we are in at this point? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yes, the Member has laid out a number of issues that we have been challenged with. The design was, of course, one issue that we had to wrestle with. We had a contractor that had to be replaced. We also had a developer that had fairly limited capacity. Those are issues that we tried, for the most part, over the last while, to improve with adding resources. We have changed budgets. We have added more people that we thought we could lend to this project. We also brought in different firms that would work with the different areas in terms of enhancing this project. We felt that we made some significant changes over the first year. The second year went fairly smoothly. We had one big issue, of course, with one of the piers. Pier three had a bad pour and had to be redone. Things seemed to be changing. I thought we were around the corner with putting a new plan in place, a new design, a new contractor. That is where we are at right now. Of course, given that we are going to add a year or two, that adds to the interest. It also requires us to make the payments on what the lenders are going to need for their first year's payment on the debt. There are a number of things that are out there that are adding to the project and the cost of redesign is

something that was expected to lead into further significant savings. However, it did allow us to have some savings but not enough to cover what it costs to add a year to the construction terms. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his response. I mentioned in my statement that I think that it is necessary at this point and I have to give credit to my colleague Mr. Bromley, because he was the one that first raised this in committee a while ago, but we need to have an audit to know how we got to this current situation that we are in, to determine what actual costs are, whether it is actually going to be \$181 million or if all the hidden costs add up to several more million. I would like to ask the Minister if he will commit in this House to an audit of the project from its inception until to date. We need to know where we are at right now. Will he do that audit to determine how we got where we are? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, given the level of discussion in the House over the last while for the life of this project, I am not sure if the Member would be satisfied with us doing an audit on ourselves. That may be something that we need to talk further. The Auditor General has been involved and has looked at components of this project. I am assuming that the Member is talking about a full-blown audit of this project. I think that would have to come at the direction of this House or at least by the Finance Minister. It is not something I can commit to. But if the Member is satisfied, we certainly can, at the conclusion of this project, do a review of everything that has transpired, including all the numbers that have been out there in terms of budgets and actual spending. I can commit to that if that is what the Member is looking for. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I guess to clarify, I am looking for an operational audit and also a financial audit. I think, at this point, what I am looking for, and I think some other Members are as well, is to know how much we spent to date, how much we intend to spend to complete this project, because I think there are a lot of hidden costs which aren't out there. I guess, at this point, I would say yes, I would like a full-blown operational and financial audit when the project is done, but within the near term I would like to see a compilation of all the costs that we have incurred to date. I wonder if the Minister can commit to that. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't want any Member to assume we have hidden costs. We do have a tracking of all our expenditures. We could provide that information. We would have to see how far along it is in terms of presentation. We could also provide the breakout of

what is being planned for the dollars that we are going to be requesting through the supplementary appropriation. I have no problem to commit to that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 325-16(4):
NAHENDEH CORE NEED
HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to ask the Minister of Housing if there are some questions on the 2001 Housing Survey that was released. He did mention in his Member's statement last week, too, and concurred with me that the core needs survey was definitely increased in the Nahendeh riding. Just in those terms there, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, given the numbers of that survey, what is his strategy going forward, most particularly in decreasing the numbers in the Nahendeh riding? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through all the investments that we are making, we had hoped to see some of the numbers coming down. We are assuming that the next one that we do, the numbers will definitely come down. I can advise the Member that the numbers on the survey that was just completed will go a long way in determining our infrastructure budget for the 2011-12 fiscal year. We have already dealt with the 2010-11, so the 2011-12 budget will be determined a lot by the community needs survey figures. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I understand there are some investments already in the Nahendeh -- I have six communities -- that may alleviate some of these numbers. I think the survey is completed every three or four years. Is there a way for the Housing Minister to do an interim assessment to track and see how our core needs is in the Nahendeh riding? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the needs survey is done every five years, but we have had a significant investment in the last three years. It runs out after next year, so we are looking at doing a kind of an interim survey at the time to see how much we have affected the survey numbers. I do believe that once we do this two-year cycle the numbers will be down quite a bit.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I certainly would like to see the Minister commit that there is a new survey or at least a mini survey for the Nahendeh riding that can be done this coming fiscal year. The numbers are true. We have huge overcrowding issues, we have lots of old houses that need retrofit and/or replacement.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have significant investment in the Nahendeh riding for 2009-2010. Some of those projects are just being completed. There's approximately \$10 million being invested in the Nahendeh riding and then when we go to the 2010-2011 budget there's an additional \$5.2 million being invested into housing. That's actually one of the lower investments across the Northwest Territories, but we're believing that will go a long way towards addressing some of the Member's concerns about adequate housing in Nahendeh. I think this will go a long way in determining and improving the condition and having more units on the ground in Nahendeh.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for quoting me some of those millions of dollars of investments in the Nahendeh riding. I think the key thing is that I'm not too sure why the core needs numbers remain high. I think one of the things we'll have to do in the interim this coming fiscal year is to do another survey for the Nahendeh number. I know that lots of units are indeed coming up, but I'd like to see progress in the Nahendeh riding and not the numbers going the other way.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: There are a few things that are taken into account when they're doing the community needs survey. There is the suitability and adequacy, and I think through the major M and I program we're taking steps to address that. There's a huge investment in M and I throughout the Northwest Territories, not just in the Nahendeh riding. There's also the affordability. So these are all factors that are taken into consideration. After we're done with this major investment that we've had for the last two or three years we should go back and do, as the Member's said, a bit of a mini survey to see how it's addressed the need in the communities. We're quite confident the numbers will change.

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

QUESTION 326-16(4):
DRUG TESTING FOR
AVIATION INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Transportation today and it is not about the bridge.

I'm not fond of flying. Something about flying through the air, being hurtled through the air at 500 miles an hour in a culvert with a cone on the front doesn't really make sense to me. But I had occasion to hear a radio interview not so many months ago and something caught my attention

that kind of caused me some concern. I've been mulling it over. I think the young man that was being interviewed said that he had a problem with a crack-cocaine addiction and that he had been working as an aircraft maintenance engineer for a local aviation firm, and that he had decided on his own volition to quit his job doing that because he felt that it could be putting the travelling public at risk because he was high on crack while he was at work. It led me to wonder if the government, our government, if Transport Canada or some legislating body has responsibility for enforcing or dictating some kind of drug testing for people who are in those types of careers.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member paints a picture that would make anybody nervous, especially flying through the air at 500 miles an hour in a culvert with a cone on it. I'm not totally sure if there is any formal testing in the area of drugs. We are aware that the federal government, who has the responsibility in this area, does have rules related to alcohol and that there is medical testing that has to be done on a regular basis, but I think that's only every so many years. I could point out, though, that most aircraft companies have built into their safety management systems drug testing, but I would have to follow up with the federal government to see if there's any intention or if there's any formal testing, for that matter.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: It's definitely not my intention to cast in any negative light any private carriers or small companies, but we do hear and have heard debate and controversy over the years about people, whether it was a violation of their rights to have mandatory drug testing in certain areas. You hear about in the oilpatch. I certainly know that large companies have their own in-house policies on drug testing and it's particularly stringent, I believe, on anybody that's involved in the transportation industry, and certainly for pilots, as the Minister says. I know there are medical tests and tests that are performed on pilots. It's the folks that are in the maintenance shops that are working on the maintenance of aircraft that I'm concerned about. I suppose this could carry over to anybody that's working on equipment that's used for public transportation. I would like to ask the Minister if he could suggest if Transport Canada does not have such policies or rules, if it is within the mandate of this government to legislate or regulate industry in this regard.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Transport Canada does have rules related to alcohol consumption and aircraft operations that pilots must comply with. Whether or not we can also apply rules from the

level of the territorial government or Department of Transportation NWT would be something I'd have to explore and see if there's any mechanism that we could put in place that would give comfort to the Members of this House and to the general public that there is some screening or involvement that the pilots are not... I take it it's more than just pilots in this case, but I would have to look at it. I'd have to talk to somebody who's involved in the safety aspect.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 327-16(4):
RENOVATIONS TO J.H. SISSONS
AND MILDRED HALL SCHOOLS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about some concerns of a couple of the schools in my riding. They are quite the gems in our educational system. They represent great culture and certainly diversity in our community and I think they do very well.

As I highlighted, the schools have not had complete updating. As I mentioned about Sissons, it's been 35 years the school has been in our school system and the school has not been updated in a fair way; acknowledging outside of that, of course, the boiler and the paint. Mildred Hall has been 45 years in the education system and other than half the upgrade that it rightly deserved in 2005. My question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is: what would it take to get these two schools properly back into the capital planning process to make sure that these necessary updates and renovations get done in a complete and reasonable way?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. These two particular schools will be part of the educational review that's underway currently. That report will be done in the spring of this year. Based on the outcome of that, we're going to highlight the most critical needs, the most emergency requirements, such as other regions' most critical needs as well. Those two schools will be part of the discussion as we move forward after the spring.

MR. HAWKINS: Does this educational review take into account the significant amount of deferred maintenance on these two schools that is outstanding to date?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We have to keep in mind that there have been renovations and major retrofit that has happened in Mildred Hall in 2005. So that will have to be taken into consideration as well. There are other schools that have not been

upgraded due to various circumstances. So those are the discussions that we need to have going forward on capital projects for this fall. So, Mr. Speaker, the educational review will consist of the space of the schools and also the age and enrolment is a big factor as well. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer from the Minister. Is the Minister aware that J.H. Sissons is the priority of YK No. 1 to be updated and the fact that it needs things like a fire alarm panel update? It has many combustible materials that need to be addressed and it turns into a bit of a health and safety problem. Of course, I'm not trying to alert the fire marshal, but the reality is the school has a lot of upgrades that need to be done. Mr. Speaker, are these types of things that will help make it on top of the priority list, from his point of view? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, these schools and all schools are a priority to my department. There are no immediate health or safety issues with J.H. Sissons. So those are the areas that we are looking at; the most critical needs, the emergence of it, that we're going to highlight in the coming months. Mr. Speaker, yes, we're going to compile all that information and we're going to highlight the most critical needs of the schools. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the Minister making it quite clear there is no, sort of, immediate safety concern for the kids, and I wasn't trying to portray it in that light, but the fact is, these are the types of upgrades that the school system feels is a priority. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has a deferred maintenance policy program and I'd like to know where these two schools sit in the territorial Deferred Maintenance Program, how much is booked against them for the two schools and where does that put the balance of the deferred maintenance of these types of projects against our budget on that regard. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, part of the plan is to have a review of the Yellowknife schools and bring forward the review at the conclusion in the spring, then identify those two schools if there's a priority to renovate those schools. One of them has been renovated already. Mr. Speaker, those are the types of important discussions we need to have for this fall capital planning. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 328-16(4):
INCREASES TO GNWT ENVIRONMENTAL
MONITORING CAPACITY

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke of the need for environment officers in Tu Nedhe. I'd like to ask the Minister of ENR questions. Could the Minister tell me if there are any regulatory impediments to hiring environment officers in non-settled areas? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe there are any regulatory impediments. The big impediment would be just access to sufficient resources. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister advise me if the GNWT takes any environmental responsibility on land and water? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we've exerted our political and moral authority for sure on the water. We've spent a significant amount of money with the Water Strategy. We are looking at a land use framework. We are very concerned with environmental protection on an ongoing basis as it comes to contaminated sites and in those types of areas. So we have a very clear and vested interest in those areas. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister agree to discuss immediate environmental needs for the Tu Nedhe insofar as resource development and exploration goes? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We'd be pleased to sit down with the Member and any of the leaders from his constituency, from the communities, to talk about some of the pressing issues that may be out there. We recognize there are resource development initiatives throughout the area and we'd be happy to come to a table to have that discussion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, assuming that the communities are still looking to have some environment officers in their communities, would the Minister agree to place these important positions in the next business plan process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we'd be happy to have the initial discussions and we'd be more than willing to look to map out exactly the role of these positions and what they would do and the impact and the possible need in other parts of the Territory with an eye towards seeing what

could be possible by the next business planning process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 329-16(4):
GNWT RESPONSE TO JOINT REVIEW PANEL
REPORT ON THE MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources as the lead Minister on the Joint Review Panel review of the MGP and it follows up on some of my questions I asked a couple or three weeks ago. The process established by the National Energy Board for public comment is peculiar, not only in that the final public hearings will apparently be held before the federal and territorial governments have responded to the report. The process also contains no mandatory requirement to make public the positions that the two governments take to the JRP around the end of May, I believe, or early June, sometime in June. As lead Minister for the JRP, can the Minister commit to make this government's response to that report public at the time it is provided in May or June by posting the GNWT's correspondence to the NEB website so the public can be aware and respond with any concerns? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a fairly lengthy commitment that the Member requested, so I'll take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 330-16(4):
2009 COMMUNITY HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation in regard to the recent report on the housing survey. I want to ask the Minister, in terms of his research that's starting with the report with discussions with the staff, I want to ask the Minister, has the Corporation found out any reasons why the increase in terms of the survey in terms of the adequacy, the suitability or the affordability in terms of these numbers. It's very disturbing in terms of the numbers that are increasing. They should actually be decreasing. Has the Minister had any type of an indication as to why the increase?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is right; there are some factors that are taken into account when determining the needs survey. You can put houses on the ground but there is still some existing stock that needs to be taken care of: the suitability factor, there's the adequacy factor and affordability. These are all taken into consideration. With the investments, as I stated earlier, that are being made now, we're quite confident that all these numbers will go down when we do the next survey. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, with the existing stock on the ground and because of the existing stock on the ground, it means that we have some real major problems in terms of major repairs. In the report it says out of 33 communities, 25 communities need major repairs. The Housing Minister has indicated that now with the investment now coming into the Housing Corporation, hopefully in five years, that we'll see a decrease in these numbers here. However, Mr. Speaker, in the last three or four years we did receive some major dollars in terms of federal government and now we're going to be running out of the money. So I want to ask the Minister how we are going to see a decrease in these numbers with the funding cutbacks from the federal government.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, because the investments made by the federal government and matched by the GNWT over the last couple of years we're expecting that these numbers should go down. The Member is correct; we have approximately \$19 million going towards major M and I's this year. Then there's the home repair program where a lot of money will be going to. We're not adding so much new public housing into the stock. A lot of what we're doing now is replacement of older public housing units. So all these are taken into consideration, but we're quite confident that when the last of this major investment lapses in two years then we will see a decline in the numbers in the needs survey. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, in one of my communities there are lots of vacant homes. Some people want to see if they can get into these vacant homes. However, because they were built in the '70s or late '70s, it makes it quite hard for them to get them to upgrade the units in there. Is there something that we can do in terms of having people come into these old units through the government programs they have now to see if they could make it suitable, make it adequate for them and affordable for them to be a proud homeowner?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we have identified vacant units or older units in some of the communities that we would like to remove from our stock. However, we have to be careful that we don't

just hand them over, because then there will be a requirement or they will come back asking for money to repair these units. So we have to make sure that it is something that is feasible for the corporation and something that the potential homeowners realize that they can take on. We are making quite an investment in the homeownership part of the delivery. So there is \$14 million, I think, this year alone into the Homeownership Program. Next year we have additional money going towards homeownership. We are taking steps to address this. We have been having discussions. There have been a couple of communities that are quite interested in taking over some of our older units and then they would do the work and then they would then use them as housing for staff or professionals that are coming in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Minister if he could also look at the communities in the Sahtu? Because the Sahtu has the highest adequacy percentage in the Northwest Territories with 41 percent. Could he look at it in terms of bringing down this number in terms of the adequacy means no bathroom, running water, no hot water, plumbing and electrical issues? Could he look at that in terms of bringing those numbers down in terms of a commitment that he made earlier to the MLA for Nahendeh?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I will make a commitment to all 11 Members that we will be doing what we can to bring the housing needs down. There is an adequacy issue, obviously. A lot of this is homeowners that have received home packages from the Housing Corporation that are looking to make some repairs to them. We are doing what we can to assist them, Mr. Speaker. I have made a commitment that once we are through this two-year cycle of the major investment that we have had, I am very confident that we will see a decline in the needs numbers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 331-16(4):
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address my questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I was struck by a comment that the Minister made last week from Thursday, actually, when he was responding to a question from Mr. Beaulieu. I quote from unedited Hansard, a portion where Minister Lafferty stated, "Mr. Speaker, just for the Member's awareness that we are looking at moving early

childhood education into schools since enrolment is down in the Northwest Territories.”

I would like to ask the Minister if he could expand on that statement a little bit. It is not an idea which I had any awareness of. I wonder if this is something that he could elaborate on for my benefit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We are exploring all options as we can to deal with enrolment challenges that are at our doorstep when it comes to all schools. As you know, throughout the Northwest Territories, enrolment is down. This is just a preliminary discussion that we are having on possibly having the early childhood as part of the school programming to increase the enrolment issues at the schools.

Mr. Speaker, I can certainly provide detailed information once it is available to us. All I can say now is, I guess, a preliminary discussion that we are initiating and discussing. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that it is preliminary and that it is probably in discussion stages, but if I can get a little bit more information. Early childhood can span a fairly large number of years. Is the Minister talking about early childhood such as pre-kindergarten or are we talking about early childhood such as from zero to five years of age? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, those are discussions that we need to have with experts at the school board level and also with our department. Those are the types of options that we may have to deal with whether it be zero to five or pre-kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, again, this is all too preliminary. We just threw out an idea so people can grasp of sharing some ideas or suggestions on how we can improve enrolment issues throughout the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Minister talk about getting some information and some involvement from school boards and so on. I think they would be extremely interested in providing some input to the department on this particular issue. I think also that exploring this issue is going to have an impact on businesses who operate daycare centres. I wonder if the Minister can talk about if there is any consideration at this point on how businesses which operate as daycare centres or early child care centres, how they are going to be considered if they are brought in under the GNWT. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we currently provide funding to these facilities and establishments. That would be the daycare, the

home care and so forth, other areas that we sponsor through our early childhood programming. Mr. Speaker, those will definitely be taken into consideration. We definitely don't want to have an impact whether they be in businesses. We want to come up with a solution to deal with enrolment issues. Mr. Speaker, yes, those types of discussions need to happen now so we can resolve this issue and come up with a solution. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am frowning because I don't really understand how bringing early childhood children into the schools is going to deal with the enrolment issue, but that is another issue. I just would like to have the Minister confirm for me, he mentioned that he wants to hear from various school board authorities and I presume also operators of daycares and child cares. Does that mean that he is open at this point to comments from these particular groups, agencies and individuals? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are always open to ideas and suggestions from various groups from the community members on how to improve our educational system, whether it be enrolment issues, the space issues. We are challenged for the space issue in Yellowknife, for example. Mr. Speaker, that is why part of the educational overall plan is to highlight the key areas. Mr. Speaker, yes, we are open to any ideas or suggestions from the general public-at-large. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 332-16(4):
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few more questions for the Minister of Transportation pertaining to the Deh Cho Bridge. I listened to the Minister when I was talking about the design earlier. The government has always said that the design was essentially completed. It has been essentially complete for six years now. According to the Minister, most of the components of the redesign and the design work are concluded but not all of the components are concluded. I am wondering if the Minister could elaborate a little bit more. Are we setting ourselves up for more cost overruns on this project because we do not have all the components on that design work concluded? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a question I asked our own staff

and our project management team. We believe all the components are concluded sufficiently that we can make the next steps in terms of entering into a contract and start the construction process. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: The next question I have for the Minister, and we've talked about March 1st being an important date, I want to get back to some of the earlier questions I had on why the superstructure didn't go to tender. People I've talked to in the industry and other companies that are out there in western Canada that could have bid on this work tell me that they could have had numbers into this government inside of 30 days.

I'd like to ask the Minister again, how come the project, the superstructure, the second half of this project did not go to a tender?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'm not sure if the Member expects me to change my answer, but I just responded to that very same question a few minutes ago. It's a result of timing. When we had information on the change of design concluded far enough, we did have engagement with our previous contractor. Those didn't result. We recognized that we were not going to be able to conclude those discussions and, therefore, terminated our relationship and entered into discussions with a company that was familiar with the project and that was willing to move forward with this whole project and provide budgets and figures that we would be able to explore. We felt comfortable and confident that we'd be able to conclude it with this company.

MR. RAMSAY: I apologize if it sounds the same. March 1st is the key date that I wanted to put out there. If the government and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation knew the problems before March 1st, like I said, it would take 30 days to go to the marketplace, get some pricing for the superstructure. That didn't happen and now our backs are against the wall. We're going to negotiate a contract that we obviously won't be able to get out of. We won't have any latitude. There's nobody else bidding on this work. It's one company. Again, I think given what's happened with this project and the history of it, at the very least we should have gone out to the marketplace and tried to get the best price we could have. That obviously didn't happen. Considering we've done a wholesale changeup on the project management team, it would only make sense that we would go to the marketplace. I want to ask the Minister, if we changed out the project management team, how come the decision wasn't made to go to tender, which would have got us within that March 1st timeline?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The pieces that the Member is referring to in terms of deciding to move forward with the actual negotiations with a different firm was decided upon prior to having the decision

made to remove the project management team and have a new team put in place. The project management team change was as a result of this cost overrun, that triggered the discussion. It was decided at that point that we had to make changes. There are a lot of other things that have to be factored into this decision. We have a company that's been able to identify the steel production, the places and slots that we've had to reserve in terms of guaranteeing that we're going to hit the November 2011 time frame that's been set out to avoid further cost to this. There are a number of things that have to be taken into consideration. Of course there are a lot of other companies that are out there. We did go out to, I'd like to remind the Member as he goes back and relives history here, that we did go to a public tender at one point. We had one company come forward and they had prices that were not acceptable to us. We have a company that's experienced, we have a company that's familiar with the community and the project, they have identified the ability to do all the different pieces and parts that need to be accomplished to make this move forward, and we're quite satisfied that they'll be able to do it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That company is also familiar with the fact that the Government of the Northwest Territories today is up against the wall. They know we're in trouble with this project. We're negotiating from a bad, bad position. Again, I've talked to people. This is unprecedented for a government in Canada to go to a sole-sourced contract on a bridge like this. Unprecedented. I'd like to ask the Minister who exactly makes up this new project management team. I'd like to know that.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I'm not able to provide that publicly at this juncture. There is a company that we have decided to use. I'm not sure if all the agreements have been signed. I'd like to confirm that prior to providing that information. I can provide that to him today in confidence, if he'd like. Along with this company we will be utilizing at least one person from our own sources that has already been working for us for some time and is quite familiar with the project. I can provide the information, I'm just reluctant to give out information that hasn't been finalized and put out in the public yet.

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

QUESTION 333-16(4):
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue on with these questions. This is obviously, for all intents and purposes, a government project now. We've taken it on lock, stock, and barrel by

the looks of things. I'd like to ask the Minister, when he talks about contracts that are outstanding, what are we waiting to sign? Are we signing this project management team up to a contract? If that contract hasn't been signed when is it going to be signed and who is it going to be signed with? I think this is a public government and we're talking about public funds. The Minister should be able to stand up and tell us who exactly that is.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely. I agree with the Member 100 percent. Let's be real here, though. We have a supp that we are bringing forward in the next couple of days and we will have to answer those questions. This is getting ahead of the game. We haven't formally been in a position to put that in front of Members. We are discussing, I guess, the terms now, but there are a number of things that we need to sign, and we will sign once we know that we have an arrangement and we have the approval of this House. I'm sure the Members are not going to be very satisfied or very happy with me if I sign a contract for so many millions of dollars that locks us in while I don't have the authority to spend the money. So first things first. Those things will be brought forward and we plan to have that information ready and inform the House of the different players that are involved. We haven't formalized any agreements 100 percent, we haven't signed off with the contractor, so there are a number of things that we are still working on and we made that clear. We still have to work out the transition agreements with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, for example. The supplementary appropriation for \$15 million has not reached the floor of this House yet. We can commit to providing that, we intend to provide that, and that will come.

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like to ask the Minister, with all these things outstanding, how can the Minister with any certainty be sure that \$15 million is enough to cover all the bases on this project?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The discussions are concluded, the signing off has not been done, and I'm quite reluctant to throw the names and company titles out into the public until we have that kind of discussion in house. We have looked at this project from every angle. We have had people that are outside of our government, outside of the bridge project itself look at our numbers. We are confident that we've captured all the different costs or pieces that are out there in terms of what it's going to take to conclude this project. We've looked at the claims, we've looked at the interest, we've looked at everything that needs to be paid out before we move forward. It's all captured in the \$15 million that we will be bringing forward in terms of a supp.

Is it 100 percent foolproof? Of course not. We don't know and won't know until we look back as we move forward, I guess.

MR. RAMSAY: I appreciate the Minister's response. I guess the last question I'd have is whether or not the Minister understands that, as I said earlier, for a government project which -- let's not fool ourselves; it has become a government project -- it's unprecedented for work of this nature on a project like this in this country of Canada to be sole sourced, that this is completely unprecedented, Mr. Speaker, the way this project is moving forward. Unprecedented. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Maybe I have to remind the Member this is not the only project that we've sole sourced. The school in Inuvik is sole source also.

Mr. Speaker, this project started off as a public process with a tendering portion that was built into it. It has led into a number of changes and we certainly have heard in this House the challenges that have concerned the Members. We've made every effort, I want to assure the Members, Mr. Speaker, that I've taken the opportunity to meet with our staff, with the Bridge Corporation, with everybody that I could to see if we could influence the project moving forward smoothly and the transition being able to happen without any extra costs. I was very confident that we were going to be able to achieve that as we looked at changing the design. Of course, it was of great concern to myself and to my Cabinet colleagues and I'm sure to the Members of this House, that we weren't able to do that.

We have come in now with a project that's 10 percent over budget, and that's something we'll have to debate and have approval from the Members of these Chambers to get the go-ahead. Failing that, we won't be able to conclude this project. We would be in a very difficult situation. But I'm very reluctant to sign off on a contract until we have that discussion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Replies to Opening Address

Mr. Bromley's Reply

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to take stock on where we are in our achievement of the principles of consensus government. Last summer we renewed our commitment to consensus government with the approval of the guiding principles for consensus government in the NWT.

On Friday past, the Minister of Finance raised the principles as a foundational document of this government and reminded us of our agreement and dedication to them.

Mr. Speaker, we worked hard as a Caucus to develop these principles, because of serious concerns with the health and integrity of the practice of our consensus government. Some Members had serious concerns that the executive direction of government had descended into a despotic form without respect for including the views and concerns of Regular Members in the decision-making process.

I'd like to quote some of the guiding principles we committed to: "consensus government is not defined by the absence of party politics. It is defined by the ability and willingness of all Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together with their respective roles for the collective good of the people of the Northwest Territories;" "Open and respectful communication between all Members is the most essential feature of consensus government; except under extraordinary circumstances, Members of the Legislative Assembly should be made aware of and have opportunity to discuss significant announcements, changes and consultations or initiatives before they are released to the public or introduced in the Legislative Assembly." "Use of the element of surprise is inconsistent with consensus government. The role of the Caucus is fundamental in the effectiveness of consensus government. Caucus provides a venue for all Members to set broad, strategic direction for the Legislative Assembly;" Mr. Speaker, "to discuss matters of widespread importance to the Northwest Territories as they arise;" "the Premier and Cabinet are appointed by the Members of the Legislative Assembly to provide overall leadership and direction in accordance with a broad strategic direction set by the Caucus. Cabinet must have the ability to implement this strategic direction effectively and efficiently but in a way that reflects the concerns of Regular Members and maintains their support."

I've often spoken about the track record of our Executive in consulting Members and seeking their mandate, albeit most frequently concentrating on failure to consult. I have pointed out instances of the leadership attending meetings with other governments and making deals with no mandate from this Assembly. The Premier's comment two years ago at the northern leaders' meeting saying a carbon tax would not be considered was an example. I have spoken in criticism of the failure of Ministers to report back on their activities at intergovernmental meetings. On this front, things have improved with the reports from the Ministers of Health and Industry, Tourism and Investment upon their returns from national meetings.

Last week I made a statement in this House on the vital importance of public transparency and the matter of this government's reaction to the report of the Joint Review Panel on the Mackenzie Gas Project. I directed questions to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources in his capacity as lead Minister for the project. I asked this Minister in two sets of oral questions whether this government intended to participate in the consult to modify process of the National Energy Board, which is a first procedural point in making responses to the recommendations of the panel. The Minister went to some length in not answering my question then said he would take the questions as notice.

On Thursday last week, I got an answer to my question when a constituent provided me with a copy of a letter filed to the public registry of the National Energy Board on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories that day under the consult to modify process. The day after, Mr. Speaker, the response was tendered, the lead Minister provided a copy of this document to the Members of the Legislative Assembly. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I must learn of my government's position on critical matters like the JRP process by retrieving that information from the NEB's public registry.

Mr. Speaker, on the 29th of January, according to Hansard for that day, I asked the Minister of ENR: "Does the GNWT intend to file a submission with the National Energy Board on or before February 11, 2010, the response to the Joint Review Panel report and recommendations and if so, how will we involve the MLAs and the public in the preparation of this submission?" That's February 11th. Thank you. The response, Mr. Speaker, from the honourable Michael Miltenberger was: "Mr. Speaker, I'll take that question as notice."

Well, the Minister of ENR would not tell me in this House whether this government would take part in the consult to modify process and before he fulfilled this undertaking to respond to my question, this government filed the response to the consult to modify process two weeks later. On Thursday last, any of my constituents who had read the GNWT letter on the registry would have known more than me, as a Member of this House.

Mr. Speaker, I and some others are Members of both the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure. Both the Minister of ITI and the Minister of ENR responsible for the JRP file are aware of these committees' desire to have input into any response this government makes on the Joint Review Panel report before the response is given. Indeed, in response to my questioning on the 29th of January, the Minister replied, according to Hansard, "We have committed to work with committees."

The February 11th response to the JRP report says that “the NEB should reject recommendation 8-6 from the JRP, which related to the establishment of the greenhouse gas emissions target or a series of targets in connection with the MGP facilities.” On January 29th, in response to questions about the process the government intended to follow in developing and submitting their responses, the Minister responded: “We know we want it to be clear, comprehensive and be able to stand scrutiny and be shown to have followed due process.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, the situation we have here today speaks to the government’s ability to fulfil its intent. The Minister of ENR is a member of the Special Committee on Climate Change. The committee was set up as a central clearing house for a coordinated government attack on the crucial issue of climate change. I spend a lot of time and effort participating in the work of the Climate Change committee. Greenhouse gas emission targets is the most important item on that committee’s agenda. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we have repeatedly highlighted the need to have input on issues in that committee relevant to their mandate. I consider the failure to do so in this instance clearly the mandate of this committee to be a major failure of this Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of short months ago, this government spent in excess of \$50,000 to attend the 15th conference of the parties in Copenhagen because of our concern about the change in climate and the cost of potential devastation it is causing or will cause both here in the North and globally. The Premier, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources and three Regular MLAs, which I was one, returned espousing our commitment to take this on, to take the responsible lead given the ongoing absence of any federal leadership whatsoever. Indeed, we said sub-national governments like ours will save the day. Yet when I look at the government’s published response to such issues with respect to the Mackenzie Gas Project, we are recommending that we reject rather than strengthen the recommendation that attempts to ensure management of emissions. The government sweepingly rejects rather than strengthens attempts to manage future impacts resulting from the basin opening nature of this process, those aspects that ensure the project could go forward as sustainable development. This government has formally rejected a JRP recommendation on greenhouse gas targets and Regular Members have to read about it in a public registry.

Let me highlight those guiding principles for consensus government once more. “The opportunity for all Members to have meaningful input in important decisions is fundamental.” “Except under extraordinary circumstances, Members should be made aware of and have opportunity to discuss significant announcements.”

“Caucus is fundamental to the effectiveness of consensus government discuss matters of widespread importance to the Northwest Territories as they arise.”

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod. What is your point of order?

Point of Order

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on Section 23(i). The Member is suggesting that we are withholding information from him. I would like to point out that he is an intervener in the Joint Review Panel process. As such, by providing information to him, he would have unfair advantage over other interveners in the process. For that reason, I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I take your point of order. I might allow a bit of discussion on this point of order. Do you want to speak more on the point of order, Mr. McLeod?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through the regulatory process, there is a process of intervening with the report. As far as I understand, the Member is listed as an intervener with the Joint Review Panel process. As such, it is to make sure that we have a fair process. We have to make sure that if we provide the Member with information, it has to go to all of the interveners in the Joint Review Panel process. As such, the Member, being an intervener, found out about the fact that we filed the statement with the National Energy Board like all the other interveners did. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At no point have I said that this information happened to go to me directly. I am seeking legal advice as an intervener. As it happens, I resigned from intervenership just last week, but if I get advice to step out of committee when this comes forward, I will do that. I have not spoken once about me getting this information directly. I have spoken about committee. I think due process as the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources committed to includes responding to the request from both of those committees for input and any response.

Speaker’s Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I am taking this point of order under... In thinking about it, I understand that the Member for Weledeh was registered as an intervener. However, I don’t see any reason why that should prevent him from speaking in this House on the review JRP and I don’t think he is asking for any information. I am

going to rule that there is no point of order and allow the Member to continue in his presentation. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it is of any comfort, I have not been active as an intervener since I was elected. This process, as you know, started a number of years before I was elected.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I was going to remind people of these principles of consensus government. I just mentioned the last couple. "Caucus is fundamental to the effectiveness of consensus government to discuss matters of widespread importance to the Northwest Territories as they arise." Number seven, "the Cabinet must act in a way that reflects the concerns of Regular Members."

Mr. Speaker, what is going on here? My statements in the Assembly called for transparency, and the public sharing of information was an undertaking from the Minister to disclose his plans on the request to modify process. The lead Ministers know committees want input before any responses are made. I will repeat that. The lead Ministers know committees want input before any responses are made. We have a special committee reviewing exactly this issue and we have travelled the world drumming up support for aggressive action on climate change. And yet now we have a public government letter of response and I will quote some principles again, for what they are worth. A government response making a "significant announcement" on a "matter of widespread importance to the Northwest Territories" that in no way "reflects the concerns of the Regular Members".

Mr. Speaker, the February 11th response was the first in a series of input points that will roll out to the final decision of the NEB. It will almost certainly approve the pipeline application. The government's failure earlier to develop a realistic socio-economic agreement for this project doesn't stand out well and this is our first step for this government has failed in its avowed commitment to our lofty consensus government principles. It has failed to make itself responsible or accountable to this House and it has, in so doing, given away our responsible positions and, in my mind, some potential new authority on some of the most crucial matters dealt with in the JRP report.

I will be asking the Minister of ENR why he does not consider it his first duty to respond in the Assembly on undertaking of notices or to include the views and concerns of the Members in his deliberations or to inform the committees of the positions he has concluded and why only those with sharp web research skills applied daily can keep abreast of this government's biggest actions.

This Assembly began on a style of executive highhandedness. To save the practice and meaning

of consensus government, Caucus gathered together yet again to lay out rules in the hope that this government would finally apply standards of ethical responsibility to its behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, this system of government is falling apart. We learned Friday of the latest disasters in the bridge construction. All this government can do is complain about Members telling the taxpayers their sensitive little secrets. Mr. Speaker, we are entering into a lengthy process of comment on the biggest capital works project ever to be undertaken in this Territory, possibly in Canada. We are going into it with a government that is apparently incapable of building a bridge across a mile of water. It has bungled this bridge project at every step, informing the Assembly only when the government is dragged into public light and only when it needs more money to fuel the latest rocket on the budget and only to the degree that they feel they must. Regular Members must continually probe until precisely the right question is asked in order to pull the most critical and meaningful facts out. Public confidence in this government simply does not exist.

There are other financial vulnerabilities that we are only just learning about. Our ability to borrow is paper thin. We will soon be at the point of deciding which critical human needs we will be unable to meet. Will it be the health of our citizens through a lack of adequate hospital facilities? Will we be cutting resources for our scattered programs dealing with the burden of poverty? How about child care, early childhood education, building schools, environmental protection and other core needs?

Now this government has embarked on fulfilling its public trust in relation to the Mackenzie Gas Project. This is the point where this government must say what it will, can, and can't do in the face of the mammoth economic, social, and environmental impacts this project will create. It must state our positions recognizing our restricted authority and current and future vulnerabilities.

As the JRP report recommends, the project should not be going ahead unless the full range of measures needed to deal with its impacts are taken. These measures will be costly and this government is nearly broke.

If this government can claim one unblemished record, it is for low-balling, underestimating, failing to predict, and failing to plan for the consequences of its major undertakings. Without the intimate involvement of all Members, I do not trust this government to cost the essential measures and secure the funds necessary to prevent the MGP becoming another financial millstone. I will not permit this government to commit us to financial, social, and environmental tragedy.

This is the last time this government will say anything on this project without the knowledge,

involvement, and consent of the Assembly. The rules of behaviour established and the principles for consensus demand -- they demand -- that this government work with these Members in matters of public policy.

I won't read from these principles again. I expect the Ministers of this government to go away and read these principles. I am putting these Ministers on notice that each and every action on this file and every other file that crosses their desks will be rigorously studied for their fulfillment of these principles in every word.

I will be asking questions on these matters over the coming days. I will be asking the lead Minister for the Joint Review Panel report to explain these actions. I will be asking about his plans for including committees in the review and decision-making processes of the JRP. I will be asking him for his commitment that all statements and positions brought forward through these processes be made public so that all our citizens can be aware of their government's actions. I will not be accepting the arguments for secrecy contained, for example, in the recent memo regarding JRP consultations with Members, noting that even the memo itself states that concerns about confidentiality do not preclude updates to Caucus on the process. I will be expecting a lot more than updates.

Depending on those answers I will be asking the Premier why he believes I should maintain my confidence in this government. With the dismal level of public confidence this government currently enjoys, mending these ways will be a matter of this government's survival. I will no longer accept the violation of the principles we have agreed on and that are the foundation of this form of government.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 73-16(4):
FORT MCPHERSON COUNCIL MOTION 30-10:
ELDERS HOME CARE FACILITY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a motion passed by the Hamlet of Fort McPherson supporting the elders care facility in Fort McPherson.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Motions

MOTION 13-16(4):
COMMUNITY LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES,
CARRIED

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS elders make up 9 percent of the population of the Northwest Territories and this population segment is increasing faster than the remainder of the population;

AND WHEREAS the aging population has an obvious need for long-term care facilities;

AND WHEREAS many elders contribute to their communities, teaching traditional skills and knowledge and helping sustain aboriginal languages;

AND WHEREAS when elders remain in their respective home communities they continue to have the support and company of their family and friends;

AND WHEREAS there is evidence of community need for long-term care facilities as demonstrated by recent correspondence from the Tetlit Gwich'in Council that indicated there were 123 elders over the age of 60 in Fort McPherson, of which 25 elders are between 80 and 96 years of age;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the Government of the Northwest Territories develop a program for community long-term care facilities for elders and that funding for construction of such facilities be included in the 2011-2012 Capital Budget.

MR. SPEAKER: There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I bring this motion forward at the request of the community of Fort McPherson, who has tabled in this Legislature a petition of almost 140 names and information that has been provided by way of the motion I have just presented from the Hamlet of Fort McPherson supporting this initiative.

To have 123 elders over the age of 60 shows that there is a very high percentage of elders in Fort McPherson. At the present time a lot of our elders have to leave their home communities to go into Aklavik, Inuvik, Yellowknife, and even Dawson City and Whitehorse. I think it's about time that we as a government try to accommodate communities with high pockets of elders and provide this type of care for those elders so they can remain in their home communities and close to family members and friends.

Elders play an important role in the development of our communities by providing knowledge, guidance, and the support that a lot of elders give to the community leaders, schools, cultural groups, and youth groups. Fort McPherson has a very vibrant elders organization, the Elders Council of Fort McPherson, which is associated with the Youth Council of Fort McPherson. I think it's critical that we start to find ways to work with the youth supported by the elders to direct our young people to making the right decisions and choices going forward. I think this is something this government has to seriously consider by looking at the whole area of health care. Not only health care, but housing in general. How do we house and sustain our healthy communities whether it's a single family unit or how people age in our communities? I think often we simply look at elders as a segment of our population who eventually will find their way into our care facilities. But it seems like a lot of these facilities are designed and constructed in large urban centres like Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife, and Inuvik. We have to facilitate those communities that show and demonstrate high pockets of elderly people in their communities and accommodate that segment of our population.

I would request support from my colleagues in the House. I think this is not unique to Fort McPherson and that elsewhere in the Northwest Territories we have to find programs and services to assist elders in our communities and provide them the care they need and show them the respect that they deserve.

With that, I look forward to the debate of other colleagues in the House and I would like to ask the Members to support this motion going forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the seconder of this motion I am a strong supporter of providing as many services as we can to our small and remote communities. This is one of the needs that is consistent in my riding.

The motion speaks for our support of Fort McPherson. At the same time, I still believe it's a strategy that our government has to work towards for all our smaller communities.

Our people have asked me time and time again for long-term care facilities in their communities and I believe that our strategy has to work towards that. I know that we certainly do have it in our regional centres. I know that it doesn't have to be cost prohibitive. They're not asking for major facilities. At the same time it would still be the centre of the community where we have our elders, the keepers of our traditional knowledge who wouldn't have to leave their smaller communities for the larger centres. I believe it has lots of value for our communities.

With that, I'd just like to say I will certainly, as the seconder, be a strong proponent of this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I will be in support of this motion also. It's something that in the Sahtu region we have long hoped for from this government here in terms of seeing improved services and other services that other communities have in facilities and good programs.

I know we've been asked by the Sahtu on many occasions to see if there are ways to bring elders home from Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, or Inuvik back to their region, back to their homes. I know there are many elders that are in various programs in the Northwest Territories that deserve our utmost attention and support to see if we can give them as much support as possible in taking care of them and looking after them.

These elders that we talk about are the ones that really had a hard life on the land. But they also said they had a good life. They are also in a place now where it is up to us as leaders to look after them with respect to their home care, health care, and paying any type of power bills or Northwestel bills. They really need help. I don't think these elders would do that to us if we ever went in the bush with them, they wouldn't leave us and say make it on your own. I think we have to really change things around. I really like this motion and I would like to thank the Member for bringing it forward to seek support from the Members here.

In saying that, I want to just say let's do something right for the elders and give them what they deserve. Let's help them out in this day and age.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add a few notes about the principles and policies behind the long-term care facility planning within the Department of Health and Social Services.

Persons currently placed in long-term care facilities in the NWT may be of any age. They may be placed in a facility specializing in a certain type of care. There are those who are severely disabled, cognitively impaired in early to advanced stages, frail and elderly and those who need respite care or palliative care in hospital settings or long-term care facilities.

As the Member has mentioned, our senior population is the fastest growing in comparison to enrolment in schools, for example, which we see is declining. There is no question that we need to work together to plan for this but we need to consider some options and the facts involved in this.

I believe most seniors and elders prefer choices that permit them to preserve their independence, quality of life, and personal dignity. Long-term care facilities, while an important service option for the most fragile, dependent, and ill, it's not the first choice for most seniors. We currently admit individuals into long-term care based on their need. Their care needs, not their age. The need to institutionalize an individual is only an option when it is no longer possible for an individual to live independently in the community.

I'm 46 years old and in 14 short years I may be considered for an institutional setting, but I'm hoping that that's not going to come. We shouldn't be planning to keep too many people in institutional settings.

I have seen stats. Right now, we have about 10 percent of the population who are seniors, but in about 30 years we may have up to one-third of the population that's over 60.

Mr. Speaker, long-term care facilities are designed to provide care for individuals with the highest level of care needs who cannot live independently even with assistance. The trend and delivery in long-term care is to increase community capacity and supports so that individuals can live in a non-institutional setting as long as possible. The department is working with the Department of Public Works and Services on a long-term care planning study. The intent is to develop a long-term care prototype and joint health centre for when current facilities need to be replaced. GNWT is developing facility design standards and prototype designs for long-term care facilities that will provide a basis for development of appropriate facilities in the future.

A prototype design will set the standard that will be used for all facilities to leverage the benefits of standardization and efficiency of building design, programming, staffing models and operational methods. Long-term care facilities will be designed with the flexibility to support aging in place once a person has been admitted to a facility. These new facilities will support implementation of client centre care and the supportive pathways approach which emphasizes providing a home-like approach, maximizing independence and quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, planning for long-term care facilities is aligned with the Foundation for Change directions of an integrative system in which residents of the NWT can access beds regardless of the region in which they live. By designing and building a prototype, the GNWT will not need to reinvent the wheel for every new facility but can redefine the prototype as experience is developed.

Integration of community-based services and...(inaudible)...links will be strengthened to enable persons with long-term care needs to move seamlessly from one service to another.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to leave with some of the stats about people who are admitted to long-term care facilities right now. Right now, the NWT admission criteria requires an applicant for long-term care to be 60 years of age or older, but the average age of admission is much, much older. For all long-term care admissions between 2005 and 2009, the average age of admission was 76.5 years. Of those, 47 percent of residents had some level of cognitive impairment and 72 percent of residents were classified as level 3 to 5. The remainder being level 1 and 2.

In 2004, the average age of admittance to a long-term care facility in southern jurisdictions was 85 years of age and the average length of stay was two years.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the motion that the government needs to plan for this, but I think we need to be careful about how we define the need for long-term care and that not everybody who turns 60 should be considered to be ready for this sort of setting. We will have to work together as a Legislature to make sure that we use our resources well, because each of these facilities will cost at least \$12 million to \$15 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I will allow the mover of the motion to say some closing comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I demonstrated, there's 123 elders over the age of 60. Also in that statement, I also revealed that there is, from the ages of 80 to 96, 25 people. The elderly person is 96 years old.

Mr. Speaker, we realize that the fastest increasing population we have is the aged. At some point, we are going to have to deal with it. It is an issue that we are going to have to confront across Canada.

In the Northwest Territories, we are no different I believe we have to act now and find ways, as the Minister stated, to work together. This is a perfect opportunity. The community has illustrated a need. There are 123 individuals over the age of 60 and at some point in their life, they will need some form of care. I believe it's those people, the 24 individuals over the age of 80, that can demonstrate a need in that community, so that we can accommodate, facilitate and, more importantly, deliver programs and services that are designed by a community for the community and has the support of the community. It has to have the ability to design a system we can use in other communities. Call it a pilot project. I think we have to get on with this issue, because it's apparent we are being confronted with this issue whether it's Fort McPherson, Fort Simpson or any other community up and down the valley.

I, for one, Mr. Speaker, am requesting a recorded vote. I request my colleagues to support me in this endeavour because on this issue, we have to deal with it head on and this is a good place to start. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Bromley, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: for, ten; against, zero; abstaining, seven. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act; Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011; Minister's Statement 47-16(4), Transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy; and Committee Report 5-16(4), Report on the Review of the 2008-2009 Human Rights Commission Annual Report, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'll call Committee of the Whole to order. Today we have under consideration Bills 2, 4, 7, Tabled Document 62-16(4); Minister's Statement 47-16(4); and Committee Report, 5-16(4). What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to continue today with the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and then Environment and Natural Resources, in that order and see what kind of progress we can make today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. With that, we'll take a short break and then begin with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. As we agreed prior to the break, we will begin with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. At this time, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible if he has any opening comments. Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Go ahead.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here today to discuss the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' 2010-2011 Main Estimates. The department's main estimates indicate that \$91.288 million is required for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This is an increase of \$5.2 million or 6 percent from last year's main estimates. The funding change is related to increased funding for community governments to address forced growth, ongoing increasing strategic investments to focus on youth programming and services, and the establishment of stable, ongoing funding to support large multisport games events.

Of the \$91.2 million in funding required for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, \$71.1 million or 78 percent of the total budget is to be provided in the form of grants and contributions, primarily to our key stakeholders: community governments. The capital main estimates, approved in fall 2009, provided \$28 million in infrastructure contribution funding for community governments in 2010-2011 to plan for and address their capital infrastructure priorities.

MACA's main estimates include almost \$3 million in increased funding for strategic initiatives that support the 16th Legislative Assembly's goals of healthy, educated people. A large portion of this strategic initiative funding is allocated to youth, including an increase of \$200,000 for youth programs, the establishment of \$400,000 in new funding for regional youth sports events where the department will provide funding to support sports events for youth in each region, and increased funding of \$450,000 to provide for the establishment of three new regional youth officer positions.

There are currently two existing youth officer positions located at the Inuvik and Deh Cho regions that provide youth programming to all community governments throughout the Northwest Territories. The increased funding will result in new regional youth officer positions in the North and South Slave regions to deliver enhanced youth programs and services in each region.

MACA is developing a territory-wide Youth Development Strategy to ensure the priorities identified by youth, community residents and Members of the Legislative Assembly are addressed. The Youth Development Strategy will improve our efforts to continue successful programming and develop new tools. The increased funding in 2010-2011 will support the delivery of the Youth Development Strategy and will provide a framework for our various youth programming and services. MACA is currently consulting on the development of the strategy and anticipates that it will be released publicly in the fall of 2010.

Funding of \$500,000, unchanged from the 2009-2010 fiscal year, is also included in MACA's budget for youth centres. MACA first established this program in 2008-2009 and there has been significant interest and uptake in the program since that time. In the current fiscal year, MACA has provided funding of approximately \$17,000 each to 30 different youth centres. The centres use this funding to provide for core operational costs, allowing the centres to use funding obtained from fundraising and other external sources for youth programming.

MACA's budget also includes an increase of \$415,000 for enhanced implementation of departmental initiatives related to the Healthy Choices Framework. This framework is an interdepartmental initiative of MACA, Health and Social Services, and Education, Culture and Employment. In the current fiscal year, MACA has a budget of \$200,000 and is using this funding to work with our partners to pilot an after school physical activity program. Eighteen pilot programs will be implemented throughout the Northwest Territories over the period of January to June 2010.

The pilot programs will promote physical activity by providing for the purchase of much needed sports equipment and the launch of new physical activity initiatives. Increased funding made available in the 2010-2011 budget will be used to expand this after school program.

During the current fiscal year, MACA was provided with funding to establish a permanent, stable budget for multisport games events and the 2010-2011 budget reflects funding of \$650,000 for this purpose. This funding will be provided annually to the Sport and Recreation Council to support Team NWT participation at the Arctic Winter Games, the North American Indigenous Games, the Canada Games and the Western Canada Games.

MACA's 2010-2011 budget reflects the deletion of one-time funding approved in 2009-2010 of just over \$1 million related to the 2010 Olympics. The majority of this funding is being used to support targeted youth initiatives such as the Youth Ambassadors Program and the Inuit and Dene

Games Demonstrations Program. Other funding was also made available to support sport volunteers under the Skilled Sports Volunteers Program and for the Olympic Torch Relay. The participants involved in these programs are very excited about their role and involvement with the 2010 Olympics and I know we are all looking forward to following their progress at the upcoming games.

A one-time funding increase of \$150,000 provided to the Arctic Energy Alliance in 2009-2010 has also been removed from MACA's budget. Total funding of \$300,000 is being provided to the alliance this fiscal year for additional resources to hire additional staff to assist community governments with the completion of their community energy plans by March 31, 2010. The Gas Tax Agreement requires that all community governments complete an integrated community sustainability plan by this date and a community energy plan is one component. All community governments are anticipated to have their integrated community sustainability plans complete by the deadline.

The role of the alliance in community energy planning will shift in 2010-2011 to continue to help community governments update and implement their plans and MACA will provide funding of \$150,000 to the alliance to assist with this process.

The 2010-2011 budget includes funding for ongoing activities, including the multi-departmental Drinking Water Quality Framework and the Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue Services Program. The Drinking Water Quality Framework is delivered in partnership with Public Works and Services, Environment and Natural Resources and Health and Social Services. MACA provides training to water treatment plant operators, helps communities obtain water licences, and provides technical support, advice and assistance. The Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue Services Program is delivered in cooperation with the Department of Health and Social Services. This funding assists eligible community governments with training, minor capital upgrades and enhancements and equipment.

The Maximizing Opportunities Initiative provides funding for the regulatory oversight and coordination related to the Mackenzie Gas Project. MACA's budget includes funding of \$408,000, unchanged from the 2009-2010 budget, to provide for three term staff to undertake review of new land use permits, plan reviews and other regulatory applications. There is also an ongoing need for the continued coordination of pipeline readiness activities in the department and other departments and with community governments. In 2009-2010, MACA deleted funding for two of the three positions from its budget and MACA will not proceed with

hiring for all positions until there is greater certainty around the next steps with the project.

MACA's budget includes forced growth funding of approximately \$3.6 million or 7.3 percent for community governments to support their operations and maintenance activities, to deliver their water and sewer programs, to provide for grants-in-lieu of property taxes, and rebates to seniors and disabled persons for property taxation rebates.

There is also a funding increase for the Property Taxation Grant Program which provides a grant to most non-tax-based community governments equivalent to the actual amount of property taxes paid to the Government of the Northwest Territories by community residents.

In addition to reflecting forced growth requirements, the 2010-2011 funding increase for community government operations and maintenance funding also reflects additional funding for Fort Resolution as a result of its change in legislative status from a settlement to a hamlet. This change in status occurred in January 2010 and MACA continues to work with the hamlet on this transition. MACA's budget also includes a funding increase for Colville Lake due to its previously projected change in legislative status. MACA will be returning early in the 2010-2011 fiscal year to remove this funding from the budget, to reflect a subsequent decision by the community government to change its status to a designated band authority rather than a charter community.

MACA's budget reflects increased compensation and benefits, as a result of the recently settled Collective Agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Union of Northern Workers. There are also minor funding adjustments to reflect TSC chargeback costs and the consolidation of maintenance budgets in the Department of Public Works and Services.

The Building Canada Plan is providing for \$45.5 million for community public infrastructure priorities and \$140 million for transportation priorities. Originally envisioned as a seven-year program, the Government of Canada recently accelerated the program to two years for those communities who wanted and were able to deliver their projects earlier than planned. MACA administers the program on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, and there is a funding increase of \$238,000 in MACA's budget for this purpose. This funding is fully offset by the receipt of revenue from the Government of Canada under the Building Canada Plan.

MACA continues to work on initiatives to respond to community government requests for greater control and autonomy. MACA undertakes initiatives to assist in this process through our partnerships with the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT. This

continued collaborative approach ensures programs and services are relevant, practical and useful to community governments.

While many community governments have embraced their new role, others are struggling with the transition related to greater authority. Community capacity remains an ongoing challenge for some community governments.

Funding of \$1 million to improve community capacity was transferred to MACA from the Department of Human Resources earlier this fiscal year and this funding is reflected in MACA's 2010-2011 budget. MACA, the Department of Human Resources, the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT are currently working on piloting or implementing a series of programs and services to address challenges in the area of governance, as well as with the recruitment and retention challenges faced by community governments regarding senior administrative staff.

As I previously stated, community capacity is an ongoing issue. Initiatives to build capacity need to be long-term in nature, with results not necessarily apparent for several months or years.

Programs that support community capacity need to be sustainable, long term and adequately resourced. Pilot projects to improve community capacity are being implemented and we will continue to seek the advice of community governments, Members of the Legislative Assembly and other relevant stakeholders as we proceed with the initiative. This concludes my opening remarks and I look forward to discussing MACA's 2010-2011 budget with Members in further detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. With that, I'd like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister McLeod, if you could introduce your witnesses.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am joined today by Mr. Mike Aumond to my right, the deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs; and Laura Gareau, director of corporate affairs with MACA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister McLeod. General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe that MACA still has a very important role to play, especially helping

communities. As he noted in his opening comments, there are communities struggling out there with regard to taking on their own rules and responsibilities as community governments. He identified the area of capacity and that's one of the biggest challenges we face in some of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's crucial that this government has to not only identify those areas, but demonstrate how they are working with communities to improve that situation, especially in light of the Building Canada funds and the area that he noted and also having the capacity to take advantage of these programs. One of the reasons that a lot of communities weren't able to take advantage of the Building Canada funds or infrastructure funding is it was identified that most communities could not or did not have the matching funds to carry out those programs and also identified those communities were running deficits and weren't able to basically come forward with their own funds to take advantage of these programs. I, for one, feel that MACA, regardless if they gave the money to the communities or not, has an obligation to ensure that communities not only have capacity but have the information that they need to make good decisions. For years, MACA has been compiling information, regardless if it's shoreline erosion, main street chipseal and programs that MACA has solely been responsible for who has a lot of that information in our communities.

I would just like to illustrate, the last government put out some \$30 million into communities to basically allow communities to identify their own priorities and have a decision-making process on identifying their priorities. A lot of these communities had public meetings. A lot of communities went through their capital planning process to identify the priorities of the communities, regardless if it's with youth groups, elders groups or basically having public meetings in their communities in which a lot of communities identified their needs at that process. But I find it kind of odd that a lot of these communities, those priorities are still out there. But in regard to the Building Canada Fund, those weren't even dusted off or brought forward for communities to consider since they've already taken the time to consolidate their priorities with their communities and, more importantly, identify those areas of contention.

Mr. Chair, I believe another area that this government has to be responsible for is the area of dealing with core infrastructure challenges we face in our communities. I'm talking water treatment services, regardless under the Canadian Health Act, and also in light of the area of liabilities from the Government of the Northwest Territories when it comes to safe drinking water. Again, with the situation that happened in Walkerton, I think that

with the new water treatment plants that are coming on is that there is a threat that basically someone has to be not only seen as overseeing the guidelines that we have in regard to safe drinking water but, more importantly, ensuring that we are following national standards. I think that because of the challenges that we face, especially in a lot of our smaller communities, and I know that there has been a decision to expand the role of Public Works in some of those communities where we don't have that capacity, but I think that those types of things have to be carried out.

The other area that I have to talk about is the area that I've talked about until I'm blue in the face, is dust control. Dust control is a real problem we have in our communities. Yet I hear the Minister comment, well, sorry, we gave the money to the communities; it's up to the communities to basically decide how they want to take on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, you're talking about dust control in excess of somewhere between \$700,000 and a million dollars. A lot of these smaller communities, regardless if they have gas tax and whatnot, are only getting \$80,000, \$90,000 in gas tax. They cannot take on these initiatives and programs. How many communities were really able to have the capacity, have the ability to come up with their plans, come up with the strategy to do what was required of them to basically access those program dollars?

Again, I think it's crucial that we, as government, have to ensure that whenever federal dollars are out there, regardless if it's \$45 million, where was that \$45 million spent and who took advantage of the program and who didn't.

I think we can't just look at the pro side of this. We have to look at the negative side in regard to who was not able to because of the challenges they faced because they don't have capacity or they're running deficits or they weren't incorporated as a community. Things like that, that we have to be able to find ways of facilitating and providing those communities with that opportunity just like any other community.

The way I see this capital project, it seems the communities that have taken advantage of it were the larger communities in the Northwest Territories. The majority of the smaller communities, like the communities I represent, looked at projects that they needed which they felt were essential for them to be able to carry out their responsibilities, regardless if it's a solid waste site in Aklavik or Fort McPherson or basically drainage issues in regard to Aklavik because of the flooding that takes place every other year.

I know I've raised the issue before in this House in regard to shoreline erosion and whatnot in Aklavik and also realizing that the community of... I believe this question was raised to the Minister in the Inuvik

Beaufort leaders' meeting, is looking at a youth centre for Tsiigehtchic. What does Tsiigehtchic have to do to get a youth centre in that community? I believe the Minister made a commitment at that time to look into that. But, again, there was a request from the community of Tsiigehtchic in regard to how we can provide that funding. I know the Minister mentioned quite a few communities that do receive the funding for youth centres, but, again, Tsiigehtchic is not one of them.

Mr. Chair, also in regard to the overall issue on capacity, I know you put a lot of money into the Arctic Energy Alliance, but yet some communities have taken it on themselves to hire their own consultants to do their own work, but yet we're hiring an NGO in regard to providing a service on behalf of the government but other communities are having to do that research or basically identifying those reviews. So I'd just like to ask the Minister a question in regard to the area of the whole responsibility that communities have in regard to ensuring that they are able to sustain their gas tax but completing their community energy plans. In regard to that aspect, I'd like to ask the Minister in regard to community sustainability plans. How many communities have completed those plans and, more importantly, are they going to make the time frame of March 31, 2010? With that, Mr. Chair, I'll leave it at that and I look forward to the Minister's comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much, Mr. Krutko. Next I'd like to call on Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I listened to the opening remarks of the Minister regarding healthy, educated people. It just brings back the students I have in Sachs Harbour that were failing, but it's totally opposite of what I'm dealing with here.

MACA represents a total of 7 percent off the total budget, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to see the \$400,000 of additional settlement maintainer positions in Ulukhaktok and Sachs Harbour. Those create jobs and I'm really thankful. In the long run it's going to help this government in regard to cost savings for the generators and just the upkeep of our buildings in the communities that this government has.

And another \$400,000 in our region for youth sporting events, which is good to see. We have a tournament coming up in, I think, Fort McPherson for all the Beaufort-Delta kids in outlying communities that I represent. The kids are getting all excited for that, which is good. We need to invest in our youth to open their eyes and not just stay in their home communities. We all live in isolated communities so something like that goes a long way. I think once they get back home, that's when the Internet kicks in and they keep in touch with that. But that's a good thing to see, the regional events. A question I have: Have any

activities been identified for the Nunakput region? That's the one question I will have on the sporting events.

The \$1 million to improve the community capacity, very important to have effective, locally trained community government staff. If you don't have a good SAO, it makes it harder on the community and the council on a go-forward basis in regard to trying to implement any kind of local government strategy such as gas tax and all those things that the community and the council has to deal with. Has the department started working with communities to identify what courses will be offered in the Nunakput region? That's another question I've got for the SAOs or whoever's going to need the training.

The \$650,000 to fund Team NWT participation in multisport games, Mr. Chairman, has the department looked at any other increases to participation from the Nunakput region? I won't get into it, but I was really disappointed a couple of weeks ago when our selection was made for amateur hockey. I thought there were three or four young boys that should have been chosen to go to the game prior to the team being picked. I didn't think it was fair. That is where my thoughts are going to where aboriginal sports are concerned. I think we really should be taking a look at that and how we can increase the funding for the Aboriginal Sport Circle and how much is the funding the Aboriginal Sport Circle is going to receive this year. What role will the Aboriginal Sport Circle have in this year's Arctic Winter Games and the future of the Arctic Winter Games? Those are a couple of questions that I have.

The funding, the \$450,000 for regional youth officer positions in the North Slave, Sahtu, South Slave, what is going to be done in Nunakput communities? The youth officer positions should be right across the Territory. The south, sometimes I push a little bit in regards to the South Slave and everything. You have all the swimming pools, all the facilities that can do stuff with the kids. We have to go out into the communities and we don't have swimming pools in the communities I represent. Half of them don't have arenas. It makes the recreation part really tough when your indoor sports all the time in regards to taking kids out... Something like those positions should be utilized in Nunakput and out of Inuvik. More than likely I will hear that it is going to be from Inuvik. Everything is out of Inuvik. It is always a satellite run and that has got to change.

Between Municipal and Community Affairs and Health and Social Services to enhance emergency services, resources needed in remote communities to help plan to respond to emergencies. Out of that \$350,000, will any of that investment reach Nunakput? We have fire departments in communities that I represent that don't have proper

bunker gear, proper breathing apparatuses, proper equipment that works to try to provide a service to the people and try to protect.

In Sachs Harbour, I said last week, I have a fire truck in cold storage right now. Has anything been done to date? We have to get this stuff sorted out. It is on our hands. This government is liable for that. If something goes wrong, it is going to be myself feeling that I failed in regards to holding government accountable to get the stuff that is needed for the community. Mr. Chairman, Nunakput region needs well-trained firefighters again and small communities need assistance in purchasing and maintaining appropriate equipment. That has to be done not only in Nunakput but across the Northwest Territories in our small, isolated communities. Fire marshals should be going into every community and giving an assessment as to what is needed in the fire departments there, as well as communities that do not have RCMP detachments, I am very fortunate I have all RCMP in my communities, but still we have bylaw officers.

I think that another approach MACA should be looking at is having two bylaw officers to be paired off with each other for safety purposes in the field of bylaw for the community.

I would really like to leave on a high note here and I would like to thank the Minister for coming into the community of Paulatuk with me to open up my new youth centre, which is really being utilized in the community. I just have to make sure what funding will be there for the youth centres in Nunakput. So I would like to again thank the Minister and I will be looking forward to going on to the page by page. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to see the extra money put into youth expenditures. I think if you go through the business plan, it's almost \$2.5 million spent towards the youth. I think that's a big improvement from what was there two years ago. I know that there has also been some infrastructure dollars put into youth centres across the Territory. So this is in addition to that, to the operations of these and maybe some youth workers, as outlined in the Minister's opening remarks.

Still on the topic of actually having youth workers at the community level, I've made many youth statements in the Legislative Assembly to talk about the long-term benefits of working with our youth. I think the government, as a whole, as an overall strategy needs to look at dealing with a lot of social issues and social costs across the Territories, where we are seeing a third and possibly a fourth generation of people now in social housing. I recognize that's going to continue and we have

many generations of people on income support, because I feel that a lot of that starts with opportunities for youth. I think that this government has to put additional money in addition to what's in the budget here into youth and look at it as a strategy to address these social issues in many of our small communities on a long-term basis. I think an investment now would be a good investment for the future of the Northwest Territories.

I don't think the government is far away as a department. I don't think it's that far from putting the pieces in place to achieve what's needed to support the youth additionally. I believe the youth are probably getting more support now from the GNWT than they've had ever in past governments. You know, we're seeing youth centres built, opening up, youth centres being designed in the various communities and my feeling is that the government is three-quarters on the way to really putting money into youth and investing in the future. I think that the returns are tremendous. I think if the government continues to support the youth, continues to support the education of the youth, I think we'll start to see results. We'll start to see the benefits start to flow back to the government by reducing the amount of usage on social programs that are needed to support families whether it be social housing or actual income support.

I think the government is around \$1 million away from actually having some youth workers in the communities. I think that a lot of the communities actually have people in place. I guess as long as the government doesn't become too rigid in their policies of hiring local people, they could end up pricing themselves out of range. But I'm sure there are many in the communities who are local recreation people working with some communities that have youth workers. I think the government should support youth workers whether they be a youth worker that can deal with groups of communities geographically close to each other or communities that are big enough and have enough youth in the community to support one individual youth worker in the community. That's been kind of like a goal of mine since I've started as MLA, to try to get more money into the area of youth, whether it be workers' programming or youth infrastructure. I think government's heading in the right direction. I think there's a little ways more to go. I don't think we should be satisfied with what we've done. I think that if the government strategically places money in this area, as I've indicated many times, there will be long-term benefits.

In another area I'm interested in working with the department is in the transfer of infrastructure. Really looking in the area of capital costs as the New Deal is rolled out and communities are taking responsibility for their own capital needs and there's been capital dollars allocated to communities in the contribution. I think that some communities,

because they have less people in smaller communities like the communities I represent, they don't have the capital dollars to purchase any major capital. It's like they're able to maybe replace equipment that they have, possibly replace buildings or upgrade buildings and so on. I think it will be a strain on their capital to be able to get all their equipment and buildings up to standard. I'd like to see this government take a look at the conditions of buildings and ensure energy efficiency. I think that's for the benefit of everyone, including the government and the environment and everything, to have energy efficient buildings and equipment that's running properly. There's an environmental payback on that as well. I think that at the point when the government does transfer it, I'm at least almost at that stage where, I shouldn't say me, but the communities in the Tu Nedhe are almost at the stage where they will start taking over the buildings and equipment and so on. I think the government should be aware that this equipment is old, this building is old, and so on, and have that thorough discussion with the community to ensure that what they're turning over are things that are going to be usable for the long term and it's going to benefit the communities and allow the communities to work for their people in an efficient way.

Aside from that, I think I look forward to going through the details of the Main Estimates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to give a quick response to the Minister's comments and a bit of reflection on where I'll be coming from with my more specific questions.

I'd like to start with the 6 percent increase. That's quite high. I see we had a target of 3.6 and that's going to vary from department to department, but I see this as a substantial increase for this department. We are committed to 3 percent increase hereafter. This is a good opportunity to start being more responsible with our dollars. We're losing flexibility as we approach our borrowing limit here. Again, I don't see a compelling reason for this increase in the department.

Having said that, I want to express some support for the expenditures in the youth programs. That, I think, again, might have been up for discussion had I been playing more of a role in how funds got dedicated in terms of balancing things with the departmental increase. I generally do support the increased support to youth programs. I notice they're approaching a couple of million dollars here on top of existing, so these are new dollars.

In particular, I want to single out the increase for the Healthy Choices Framework. I think we have said we're about prevention. I really do harp on that because I think it's key to giving ourselves more

potential in the future, more flexibility. Because this Healthy Choices framework is an interdepartmental initiative, as the Minister noted, between MACA and Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment. It's these sorts of cross-departmental integrated initiatives that I think can give us good returns. I'm just noticing that will primarily go to after school pilot programming for primarily increased physical activity promoting physical activity in our youth. I'd like to see that even more finely directed into outdoor activities, things that can bring some of the other benefits we want. More familiarity with our land, perhaps giving the elders a role in helping inform how that physical activity could mesh with those goals.

I also want to commend the Minister this year for bringing forward the multisport games budget in the budget instead of as a supp later. I suppose the one question I have for the games is: what proportion of these dollars gets spent on travel? I'm particularly interested in travel out of the NWT and so on. I think it is time to look at, for example, the Arctic Winter Games and decide how we can get more benefits out of it for our communities and for our youth. That's a general comment there.

The additional funding and some of the retracted funding for Arctic Energy Alliance, I'm in line with those in supporting those. I think particular focus on helping communities with their community energy plans is obviously needed. We have not achieved our targets there by far. My understanding is we have not at all made much progress in that direction. There have been a few. Perhaps I'm just out of date on this. The Minister's indication that those plans and their incorporation or integration into the community sustainability plans will be complete by the deadline, as the end of this fiscal year seems pretty optimistic to me, but I'd be happy to hear that we're going to achieve those.

I think also on the community energy plans, and this is something I have said before, it's an opportunity to introduce some rigour, some targets. I think the days of just blindly providing money to partners without requiring that and some critical thinking are over. Again, I stress how fine the line is between us and our borrowing limit and the vulnerabilities we have there. So, again, I see there is some money for updating those community energy plans already. We'll have to start introducing some real targets in what we expect our communities to achieve so we really do get some value from those dollars. I know there's lots of happy consultants out there these days helping with these.

I'd like to move on just to the Community Capacity Building, which the Minister has heard me speak on before and I think all of us have recognized the need for building our community capacity and the challenges there. So I want to give a nod to, again,

across departmental work there involving Human Resources, NWT Association of Communities, Local Government Administrators and so on, and I'm hoping that those pilot project preps are already started. I think it would be great to see them get going and see some evaluation as well on those so we can find out what works, and that's not an easy proposition I know. So I appreciate the extra focus there. I think it is recognized within this department.

I've mentioned, in review of earlier departments, the need for a good sustainable community administrator programs and one of four community capacity challenges is for good administrators that have the various skills there. I know there's a program within MACA, within their governance programs, but I think there's a real role for Aurora College and I'd love to see this department give the Minister of ECE a bit of a boot in the butt to get those programs on the ground and enjoy the benefits that they could bring. There are new ways of doing things and we need to be proactive and take advantage of those.

Last, support for increased enforcement of our trespass policy, our policies as they get more refined and developed, and I don't see an increase in funding for recreational land use plans and I think that is an area where I would support a bit of an increased budget. Perhaps it's buried in there and I haven't spotted it, but one thing I hear is that people simply don't get their land use inspected as they used to and that's an important opportunity to interact with our public. Certainly we've lacked success in putting recreational land use plans together and on the ground in a way that takes care of some of the issues that we end up dealing with on a more emergency basis, but I know the department is taking some good steps in this direction. I would have been happy to see a bit more funding in the enforcement end of things. I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya and Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few opening comments on MACA. I guess a few good things to say. I've been impressed with the amount of money that's going towards youth officer positions and also to the youth. I know Mr. Beaulieu has done a great deal in championing the cause for youth.

The one thing I just want to throw out there, this Youth Development Strategy, I wouldn't want to see the department, you know, as important as youth is, every community is created differently, obviously, and I don't know if you're going to get the desired effect by going to a Youth Development Strategy. I think the money could be better spent going directly into communities where it would have an impact instead of into some consultant's pocket. So that

would be my suggestion there, is talk to the communities and if you've got some extra money that you would be throwing at this Youth Development Strategy, I think, like I said, the money could be better spent directly on going towards community-funded programs, the things that are already working in the communities I think. We don't need to reinvent the wheel on that. I think there have been lots of studies done and things of that nature. So I'd like to see that happen, but again, kudos to the department for finally taking a serious look at the youth and getting some money there. So that's good.

On the support for capacity building at the community level, I think the department also has to be commended for the work that they've done there. I know it's early days in trying to get this set up and it's going to take some time to try to see the fruits of your labour, but you have to start somewhere and I think it's a good initiative and I think LGANT has to be given all the necessary tools and help that they can in partnership with MACA and I know HR was involved in that too. but we have to do everything we can to try to find some homegrown talent in the communities, you know, to take over senior level positions inside the communities, because people are just coming in there and only staying for a short period of time and leaving and I think we really do need a made in the North solution for that. I think it's something that's attainable if you give people the training that's necessary for them to take over and be successful. I think they will be in time, but again, that is going to take some time.

Another area that I've been pleasantly impressed with is the management of the Department of MACA and especially the Building Canada Plan, the rollout of that money. It's been very well done. There's been some concern about the back and forth between Regular Members and lists and things like that, but I think for the most part, you know, when you take that plan and it was supposed to be for seven years and it accelerated into a two-year program, I think you guys have to be given some credit for doing that and doing a very good job, in my mind.

So I think I may have some comments, Mr. Chairman, as we go through the detail of the budget, but I think for the most part MACA seems to be doing some pretty good things and juggling a bunch of different areas. So I think the management, again, of that department seems to be pretty sound and I thank the Minister for that, and the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on the list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a few comments in regard to the MACA budget in general and the Minister's opening remarks. I want to echo

Mr. Bromley's comment right off the top about the increase, the 6 percent increase in budget from last year's main estimates. I say this quite often, our budgets constantly go up, we never seem to get any new revenue and we, at some point, are going to find ourselves very deep in a hole. I expect that a lot of this increase is probably the result or maybe some of it may be the result of the negotiated contracts that were finalized over these last few months, but I think we need to be really careful about how much extra money we throw into our budgets from year to year.

Like Mr. Ramsay, I'm pleased with much of the work that the department is doing. I think they're managing to sort of focus in on a number of things. Communities should be and I think it is the main focus of the department and that's a good thing, and youth is also another one, but I am a little concerned. I appreciate the extra money that's going into youth. I think it's money well spent, but I am concerned about what seems to be a lack of coordination of the various pots of money that exists for youth. I mentioned this within the confines of another department; we seem to have little bits of money here and there or large bits of money here and there and I really wonder how well they are coordinated. The Justice department, for instance, has just initiated a Not Us! campaign, which is aimed at youth; well, other residents as well, but particularly at youth, and is that being done in conjunction with MACA and all the activities that MACA is undertaking with youth? I just have a general concern there and I will have some specific questions when we get to that section of the budget. I am, like Mr. Ramsay, somewhat concerned about this Youth Development Strategy. I just wonder why we need it, for one thing. Is it going to be a strategy that is going to target all departments within the government? Is it going to involve everything that we are doing in all departments relative to youth? That is the only way where I could see that it would be of benefit, in my mind, unless I don't understand what this is intended to do.

I am extremely pleased to see that we are piloting programs for after school physical activity. I think that is great. It is certainly something that we need to do to get kids back outdoors and/or just active. Hopefully that is something that will work. I am also very happy to see that we now have funding for multisport games as it is a staple in the budget. It is an ongoing item for funding. The only concern I have is that I don't believe that it is going to address all multisport games. I believe seniors are still left out in the cold. That is a bit of a problem, from my perspective. I think we need to do, and I believe it was mentioned in the business plan that there was going to be an evaluation with the Sport and Rec Council of our approach to multisport games both within and out of the Territories. I will have some

questions when we get to that section about where we are at with that kind of an evaluation. Was there one done? What are the results?

I also think -- and this echoes Mr. Bromley's comment, I believe -- that we need to do an evaluation of our participation in the Arctic Winter Games. I think it is very costly. I think the partners in the Arctic Winter Games, the government partners, need to take a bigger interest, I guess, in sort of the size of the games. We need to provide more direction to the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, because the games continually get bigger, which is simply an expense that is passed down on to the various jurisdictions which take part in the games. I think there ought to be some avenue for governments to have some input to the international committee and try to bring that particular program back under a bit of control.

I am interested in the Ground Ambulance and Highway Rescue Program. I have asked about that before. I note in the Minister's remarks he talks about it being delivered in cooperation with the Department of Health and Social Services. That is good, but I am still concerned that communities which answer the call for ground ambulance services outside of their community boundaries may not be getting paid for the services that they are providing outside of their community boundaries. I will have some questions when we get to that section.

The increase of funding to community governments is absolutely something that I am glad to see. I know, during business plans, there was discussion about a review of the funding formula for communities that was either going to be undertaken or was in the works. I would like to know whether or not this increase in funding is the result of the funding formula review. I would be interested in the results of that review in general.

The Community Capacity Program or the program with HR and MACA to develop community capacity is something which I have spoken to before. I fully support this expense. It is well known that our communities cannot operate if they don't have adequate staff. It is very difficult to get community government staff, particularly in small communities. I am really pleased to see this program is up and running. I hope to see that after 12 months of this, we will see some very positive results. I will have other specific questions when we get to various sections of the budget, but that is it for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next on the list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have comments for the Minister and his opening comments. Most of the communities, when we go out to communities, always have some issues. I think we are involving community governments

where community governments want to have more control. I think this government and this department is doing that in terms of involving more authority to the community governments. One of the unique things about the community governments is that they have band governments also. You get into that issue of authority and jurisdiction. Some communities have band governments. Some of them have MACA governments and then there are land...(inaudible)...governments. I think this department is doing a good job in terms of how we work together. I continue to support them in terms of putting together some good policies, some good legislation in terms of how you increase the authority. I think the funding itself, I think it says in here a percentage of, I think it is \$71.1 million going to grants and contributions to communities. That is a really good amount going straight to the government. Certainly other government departments should take heed of this arrangement. I don't think we will get across right away.

Mr. Chairman, the real issue I want to talk about is the presentation by the Minister. He is going to look at new regional officer positions. I want to say that I applaud that initiative to get that into the business plans, get the funding and start looking at putting this program in place.

In the Sahtu region, 45 percent of our population is 25 years and younger. We desperately need this position. I really wanted to say I hope we could really do some good work with this new position here. We have a high population of young people. We want to do a lot of good things. I look forward to this position being staffed and up and ready once we get everything in place here.

I want to say the youth centres that the Minister talked about here are welcome in my communities. The one issue that I want to talk to the Minister about is in Deline they built a youth centre that came from community contributions from an old trailer. I am not too sure what kind of funding came from MACA to support them. I watched them bring an old trailer in. They made the gravel. They made the time, effort and it was all done by community initiatives. I think that when we do funding for youth centres, make sure it is fair across the board. One community gets one. Everyone should have an access to get funding. I want to raise that because the people in Deline were looking at youth centres, but they didn't wait until the government came. They just went and dragged the old building down and got the gravel for it and they got skilled tradespeople to hook up the plumbing and electrical and painting and that. Now it is being widely used by the community. It is something that all youth centres should be treated equally across the North.

I am interested in the after school program. The Minister indicated 18 pilot projects. I wouldn't mind a copy of that, a list of all of them. At least I have it.

I just haven't researched it in the communities. I also look forward to seeing the completion of the communities' energy plan and see where they are. I think the Minister already gave us a copy of that paper, so I have to look again. It is amazing here. However, I look at how closely these energy plans will get done.

The other one I want to talk about is the Highway Rescue Services Program. I know there is some ground ambulance assistance to some of the communities around all-weather roads, but my communities are all on winter roads. I am not too sure if we settled this issue on who is responsible in terms of if there is an accident on the road, if someone from the community goes out because that is what they do, that is just the right thing to do, or is it coordinated through Health, RCMP or outside municipal boundaries? I'm not too sure if that's been settled. I know the Town of Norman Wells wanted to look at the ground ambulance rescue, but we weren't in that discussion yet. Now it's coming out. Even the Town of Norman Wells wants to know if they should get a ground ambulance. They don't know. They were quite concerned about that. I'll be looking forward to some discussion on that.

I want to tell the Minister that when his staff did some work on the Mackenzie Gas Project community profiles and all the assessments, they did a really good job. They put together some good information for us on my communities that are going to be affected by the right-of-way of the pipeline. Excellent work. I think that work should continue. Continue working with our community members on the potential impacts to the community. I think that this department did a really good job on that.

The decision that the government is going to look at Colville Lake becoming a First Nation government, I was talking to the band manager and they're pretty excited. I look forward to this government looking at increasing government authority and how to work with Colville Lake, start the funding arrangements and improving their staffing skills. Like any other community, it took quite a lot of efforts on both sides to get to where they are today.

The last point I wanted to raise is one of the goals of the department says to support communities in their efforts to provide a safe, healthy, and vibrant environment for their residents. I underline "safe" and "healthy" for the amount of dust we have in our communities. I wanted to let the Minister know that we hope he's heard enough to work it in the budget to chipseal the communities. It's been a longstanding issue. When you give the communities the authority to choose their projects, and certainly there's not enough money for all the projects they have, even our water treatment plants. We're not able to maintain that. The filters

are from the States, the machines are from overseas. It's just really difficult to have our own in for the water treatment plant. I'm not even sure if we're up to code in terms of the Drinking Water Quality Framework. That's a lot of work there. Things like that, when you give something to the community, things that they lack for so long, they're going to go through some difficult processes as to what do they do and what do they get. So I think the dust control could be an issue that should be considered going back to the government or the government helping the communities get a good dust control or paving program. Especially for the people. I've gone into the communities, sat down to have tea with them, and there certainly is a lot of dust in the house. People complain about that. Especially the older people who have difficulties. They have to always change their filters. It costs a lot. They always talk about doing something about the dust. So you have difficulties with their own local governments and our own territorial government on who should do it. It goes back and forth. I hope we can work on something like that.

I have more questions to the Minister as we go to the details.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next on my list is Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to raise a few issues, as I travelled around my constituency. A couple of my communities still have capacity problems. They still have problems managing the money that's delivered to the communities. I think certainly part of their issues is that a lot of the planning is specialized stuff. It requires engineers for buildings. Particularly in the community of Wrigley where they're telling me that they have the money but planning is specialized. They have to talk to engineers and pay all that additional cost. It's kind of not fair to the community if you really think about it. That's some of the issues that they're looking at in particular with capacity issues.

As well, assistance in the community when they lack a finance officer. I think what's important for me is for the department to know that right away and get a handle on how the community is spending money. We're still responsible for the money that we give them and if we don't act quickly, then the future of the community, it just hurts them. I think we do have a responsibility to continue to assist communities in that way.

With respect to us concentrating on youth funding, certainly I concur with my colleagues. I think we're heading in the right direction with that. Just out of a particular interest, in the Minister's opening statement he's talking about a pilot program to promote physical activity for purchasing much-needed sports equipment. I'm not too sure which communities are on the list for these pilot programs,

but I do want to mention that I did get a recent letter from the community of Wrigley asking for volleyballs and basketballs. I'm not too sure why the community doesn't have those right now. But if I can put in a plug for the community of Wrigley, I think that community should be assessed in terms of those needs. I don't know if the Minister can make a note there and follow up with me on that. I certainly would like to support that community if indeed there is a lack of equipment and it means there's a lack of activities happening not only for the youth but also for the community.

As well, some of the smaller communities were able to get some of the community capacity funds and access some of the stimulus programming and I'm pleased about that. But I think that more can be done for the communities. I'm for also providing as much resources as we can. I don't know about this fiscal year, but certainly we should try something the following fiscal year. If we can call that a pilot project, let's do that, because there's some products out there that can be viewed as a cheaper alternative. It will help with the dust in the communities.

In terms of the community public infrastructure I know that the community of Fort Liard has spent a lot of its previous resources on the community youth centre and they do need assistance with getting theirs up and running. I know that we're providing some resources. I'm supportive of our youth centre programming dollars that are there. I'm also supportive if and when communities are eligible for special projects, such as in other ridings of building a new youth centre, that we should do it. But all available efforts must be used to assess, of course, the best way that they can do it. I'm in favour of some communities getting their special projects, but at the same time we should try to allow opportunities for other communities and other regions to access that type of funding. We're well aware that we cannot do all communities at the same time. The government's always pressed for funds, but at the same time a fair share of resources should go to all communities in the region. With that, Mr. Chairman, mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Any more general comments? Is everybody agreed that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, I will give the Minister the opportunity to respond to general comments. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a wide range of concerns raised, but I think for the most part, all of the Members had the same concerns. I am going to go down the list here and try to speak to as many of them as I can. We will obviously have an

opportunity when we get into detail to ask individual questions on each individual area.

We do appreciate some of the good comments we have been hearing as far as some of the work that MACA is doing, some of the investment in youth. Obviously, it is a priority with this department and with the government. We are starting to see a lot more money allocated in the youth areas in the last few years. We would be willing to provide a list of communities that are receiving monies under the pilot program. We can do that, so I think that just about every community in the Territories is covered to a certain extent, so they will all benefit from this money.

One of the things that we keep hearing is -- and I think Mr. Krutko started it and then just about every Member spoke to it -- was about the capacity in the communities and that is obviously an issue and is one we are taking steps with LGANT and NWTAC to deal with and we are looking to see some positive results. This is a program that is just starting to roll out, so I think that within a year or two we will see more homegrown SAOs, more homegrown administrators, so we are looking for some positive results of that.

As far as allocating the money goes to the communities, we allocate the bulk of our money on a base plus, which is fair to communities. They will all get a base and then they will get plus based on population, so it works out well for them and the communities are receiving a lot of money. Just in the experience that I have had just since I took over the portfolio, the communities are really pleased with them having the ability and the authority to make these decisions as to what is good for them. It kind of takes it out of our hands a bit as an Assembly and it goes into the hands of the community, but that is the way it should be because we are here at the pleasure of the residents out there. There is still some capacity challenges, we will admit that, but for the most part I think that this has been a positive experience for the communities.

We talk about youth centres and you have some communities identifying that as a priority in their community. Mr. Jacobson mentioned it before when we visited the youth centre in Paulatuk. That was done strictly by Paulatuk, for Paulatuk, and they take a lot of pride in that. I think we are going to see more like that. We have some communities identifying some of the dollars that they are getting through some of the federal programs geared towards youth centres and they are trying to match some of the funding or put some of their own infrastructure money into it, which is a good thing. We hear lots of concerns with dust control. It is a concern that we share, but the communities now have it within, and they are starting to realize that if dust control is a priority in their community, then

they can allocate some of their infrastructure money towards that and we are starting to see more and more of that. We keep in close contact with the community, we see some of the programs that they are planning on, we work with them on their infrastructure plans, so we have an idea what they identify as priorities and we are starting to see a few more of the communities identifying dust control as a priority and starting to make an investment in that regard.

I think Mr. Yakeleya asked a question or somebody asked a question about where these positions are going. It might have been Mr. Jacobson that was asking. I think that as we go into detail, you will start to see where some of these positions are going into.

We appreciate the comments on stable funding for the multisport games. Obviously, there are still some questions that are going to be asked as far as that goes. Someone spoke about the opportunities for youth, and we obviously can't solve all the social problems in the NWT as a department but we can work with the communities and the communities allocate resources to build infrastructure that the youth can take advantage of. I think we are starting to see more and more that. I see in my travels around, that the communities are really putting a high priority on programming for their youth.

We have a lot of things going on for the youth throughout the department and I think it was Ms. Bisaro was speaking that she was concerned with the coordination of all the money. I will be doing a Minister's statement on it in a couple of days, but there is a new website that has been launched. It is called proud2bNWT. This is actually an excellent resource for any youth that is out there looking to find youth money government wide. I think it is geared more toward MACA but it has... We have had some really good feedback. I have spoken to some teachers and students that took it upon themselves one day to check it out while they were in the classroom. We have had some really good feedback on that, so hopefully this will be a new tool that they can use out there, just to go onto this website; it is "proud2bNWT." I see Ms. Bisaro writing. This was just launched I think about a month ago and this is one that is already getting some good positive comments back.

This is another tool that we can provide to the youth and people that work with the youth. We have youth ambassadors, I think, and we are posting some photos on there. They are putting on blogs of their experiences in Vancouver, so this is one that we are looking forward to.

The increase, there were a couple of Members that had some concerns with the 6 percent increase but we can tell you right now that the bulk of that money went to the community governments. We have heard from the community governments that

they are having issues with O and M. Their costs are getting higher, so we have taken steps to address that and that is the reason for part of the increase and most of the money is going to the community governments. I am sure we will have more questions as we get into more detail. I have tried to touch broadly across this.

The energy sustainability plans, the integrated community, there was... I think Mr. Krutko had asked some questions about who had done what and we do know that the bulk of the communities have completed most of their plans, a lot of the communities are just in the... Okay, we have 10 communities completed, we have 13 communities that are just waiting council approval and then we have 10 that council will approve in March, so we are quite confident that as of March 31st, all communities will have their plans in. We are looking forward to that and we will obviously update Members of the committee as to the progress of that.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that I have basically covered the main points that were raised and I don't want to take up too much of the time, but I am sure that as we get into details, Members will have questions on each individual department within MACA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is there a chance we can get a copy of that information in regards to the number of communities that have energy plans and whatnot and we can circulate that to the Members? Mr. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can provide that to the Members. I've also, I think, made a commitment to provide a list of some of the communities that were getting the pilot project money. So we'll provide those two pieces of information to Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'd just like to ask the House if they want to go into detail.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. We can move to page 6-7, department summary. With that, we'll defer until we have considered detail. So if we can move to the following page. Does committee agree to defer?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, page 6-8, Municipal and Community Affairs, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-9, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, revenue summary. Any questions? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: One question I have is on the lottery licence. The majority of the funding going into these sports field in terms of the funds that we raise through the lottery licence and the dollars that the majority go to support multisport across the North.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; all that money goes towards supporting sport in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 6-9, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on. Mr. Miltenberger, did you have a question? Moving on to page 6-10, Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, active position summary. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm just going to make the presumption that the increase of positions is this three officer youth positions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That's correct, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-13, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, operations expenditure summary, directorate, \$4.244 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-14, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, grants and contributions, directorate, grants, \$168,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you. There are occasionally advantages to being a woman, perhaps.

AN HON. MEMBER: Ladies first.

MS. BISARO: I wanted to ask a question with regard to this community government funding. The budget indicates funds are allocated in accordance with the extraordinary funding policy. What projects, what is this particular extraordinary funding policy say is applicable under this contribution? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this funding is provided to community governments when two factors are in place. One, the community government is unable to provide for unanticipated expenditures from within its budget without a significant negative impact on community government operations and, two, where the community government can demonstrate that it could not have fiscally planned for the unanticipated event. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Yakeleya, you had a question on that page?

MR. YAKELEYA: With the funding to the Arctic Energy Alliance, I know that this program is very popular in my region. With this funding here, is the Arctic Energy Alliance going to be going into the regions to start training people to do some of the regional work rather than headquarters coming in all the time and being booked and just don't have enough time and people saying they don't stay around long enough to do... There are lots of houses in the community that want to take advantage of this program. Is that something that this is going to be looked at by the government and the Arctic Energy Alliance?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, out of this \$390,000, I think \$50,000 is for the Arctic Energy Alliance, but we also have an additional \$150,000 that we still contribute to the Arctic Energy Alliance to do their work required. We're starting to see, I think they're trying to put some people in the regions now. I know for a fact that there might be one in Inuvik and they did some work for the NWT Housing Corporation. So they're very much still funded by MACA and by the different partners and they're just continuing to carry on their work.

MR. YAKELEYA: Now, is this Arctic Energy Alliance, are they looking to maybe move out of Inuvik and come into the Sahtu region even though sometimes the Inuvik region does include some of the communities in the Sahtu in terms of their authority? Is that something that the Minister is going to look at in terms of asking the Arctic Energy Alliance to start to probably regionalize their offices? Get out of Yellowknife and go into the communities.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, they are in Inuvik right now, but they do have plans to get into Norman Wells and Fort Simpson so they can have a presence in some of the larger regional centres. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, grants and contributions, directorate, grants, \$168,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Contributions, \$390,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$558,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to the next page, Municipal and Community Affairs, active position, directorate, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-17, Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, can I ask the Minister in terms of, you know, you look at community rescue services on the winter road in the Sahtu for the time that we have the winter road, for three to four months, the issue is the search and rescue or the emergency community emergency management planning. Has the department considered using the Canadian Rangers in terms of emergency rescue or emergency measures in terms of road rescue or calling on some that are similar to the ambulance type of service? Members were talking about they have these Rangers here, that they can certainly be called up and be part of the emergency response team on the highways in between the communities. That might be something that they can work on, Have the material right now... I don't really know if there's any type of equipment that could be considered as emergency rescue supplies in our communities. I don't know. Have we taken stock of what we have for use in emergency on our winter roads?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The use of the Rangers, I mean, is not something that has been considered for when you just go on the road, because they're usually on the land rescue type service or search and rescue. This ambulance money, I mean, we have \$200,000 budgeted and it goes to the seven communities that try to provide an ambulance service. The uptake on it, we don't have all communities because there's a huge liability factor to it, and so I think communities are looking to try to get their capacity upgraded before they think they can take on or feel that they can take on the ground ambulance because it's a huge liability. I think some communities just want to stay away from that until they have the proper training and proper equipment. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I certainly agree with the Minister in terms of his explanation to the ground ambulance services. I bring this up because one of the Rangers in one of my ridings said, you know, why don't we utilize the Rangers, get them the training, get some equipment, if there's an accident on the winter road they can call one or two or three or four Rangers together, a quick call, small communities, with the proper supplies and equipment. It wouldn't take very much and they could go and help our communities.

So I'm not too sure if this could be answered tonight, but have some consideration because the Rangers said they're willing to do it in my communities and to be part of the plan there too. You know, that could be part of their exercise in the communities.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We'll take that as advice that we can pass on. There's a working group that's put together and we're always interested in listening to different ideas. So we just have to make sure that this is one that will benefit the people that are out on the ice road and make sure that the training is proper. But we'll take this on advice and we'll pass it on to the appropriate working group. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Yakeleya. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know a lot of our residents are concerned about rescue services on our highways and so on. My understanding is that there is an advisory committee that the department leads, co-leads with Health and Social Services and it includes representation from Transportation and Finance, community governments and so on. I'm wondering what the status of that committee's work is. Apparently the goal is to produce legislative funding governments and policy framework for these services that are currently being delivered by community governments. So where are we at and are we putting some dollars into that and where is that in this budget? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister, Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; there is a working group that's comprised of a few departments, Health and Social Services primarily from the GNWT, along with MACA and community governments. It's sort of a two-pronged approach.

Health and Social Services is really looking at it from the aspect of ground ambulance and I think there's some good work going on there and that they may be in a position to advance some legislation early in 2010. MACA primarily is working on a funding framework, as well as a specific policy framework with respect to highway rescue.

We have money in the budget this fiscal year for that, as well as next. Probably we look to have at some time in April, May, June to have a policy framework in place that would give us the basis to sort of engage community governments and come at this in a more systemic disciplined way, understanding that community governments don't all have the same capacity to deal with issues nor the inclination to do it at the same time. But certainly we hope to be able to have a policy framework that will at least articulate the minimum standards and service, should they decide to get in to play that game, what they might be. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Just for my clarity here, what's the difference between highway rescue and ambulance service? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: Ambulance service is when you actually have a real ambulance that will go out and I guess address those people who are in distress. Highway rescue, in addition to the ground ambulance, is a service that would go and address the situation like with the Jaws of Life or something like that to help rescue somebody who is stuck in a vehicle as opposed to providing medical treatment, which would come in the form of an ambulance. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for the comments from the deputy minister. I think that addressed some of the legislative and policy framework work that's being done by that advisory committee. Funding is the other one. I'm wondering where they're at with regard to funding. Will they be coming up with some recommendations? I understand the intent is to conclude that work within the coming fiscal year, if I've got that right. How much money are we putting into this? Is the department putting into this committee work? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: MACA, for its part of the working group, has \$200,000 and that's to provide communities to actually provide the ground ambulance service, highway rescue service. The money that we're putting into the committee is sweat equity from the department. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate those responses. I see that in the budget. I guess I'm looking forward to seeing what recommendations this committee comes out with, especially in a way of funding to deal with the shortfalls here. Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: I agree with the Member. We're looking forward to the work coming out and seeing what's possible and what communities are willing and able to undertake here and see what kind of a service that we can provide with that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley. Okay, we're on page 6-17, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, operations expenditure summary, public safety. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, just on the last comment from the deputy minister, some of the communities that don't feel that they will be able to access some of this \$200,000 for the ground service and ambulance, does that leave an option for some of the communities who are on the winter road system that could use some of the money for winter road ground services, such as the community of Norman Wells who is asking about this here? The Town of Norman Wells is asking about this, so they're trying to find a way to look at this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually the short answer is not at this time, but it's something that we will have to do some research on, but not at this time they won't be able to access some of the funding that is currently not being accessed by some of the other communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to recognize the clock. I'll rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report from the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates 2010-2011, and would like to report progress. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to item 20 on the Order Paper, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. SPEAKER: We will return to consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act; Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011; Minister's Statement 47-16(4), Transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy; Committee Report 5-16(4), Report on the Review of the 2008-2009 Human Rights

Commission Annual Report, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

By the power give to me as Speaker by Motion 12-16(4), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters (Reversion)

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I call the Committee of the Whole to order. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Bill 4, Bill 7, Tabled Document 62-16(4), Minister's Statement 47-16(4) and Committee Report 5-16(4). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee wishes to continue consideration of MACA main estimates and possibly ENR.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that we'll take a short break and get back with MACA.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. McLeod, if I can have you introduce your witnesses once again.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me on my right, Mr. Michael Aumond, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Also with us is Ms. Laura Gareau. She is director of corporate affairs with MACA. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Committee, we are on page 6-17. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to public safety, one of the issues that has come out especially with our small communities and most of the volunteer firefighters and also the communities have to deal with river safety in regards to search and rescue and people that have drowned and having the equipment or being equipped to carry out that response when the community by way of the fire department or whatnot. I would like to ask the Minister is that something that the department has been looking at and how we can either expand the capacity of either the fire department or the volunteer firefighters or look at the whole area of river safety and also dealing with search and rescue?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we are always interested in helping the communities build up the capacity. We have seen in a lot of the communities where the volunteer firemen or the

rangers or just residents in general are usually the ones out in the river looking or searching. If there is an opportunity there for us to enhance their training, give them some training, that is something that we will be looking at over the next while and just working with the communities to identify ways that they can be better trained to do the search and rescue. If it includes a partner on water rescue, then it is usually something that communities take upon themselves to do. We will do our part in ensuring that if there opportunities for training, we make it available to the volunteer fire department. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, one of the other issues from the fire department is making sure that we have the equipment or have the fire department equipped to deal with such types of rescues and, more importantly, search and rescue and also river rescues. I am just wondering. Has the government looked at the possibility of looking at supplying or finding ways that the volunteer firefighters in the communities can be equipped to look more than just responding to fires but also being a response to search and rescue?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we have seen in some communities, they will take it upon themselves to...the fire equipment they usually have. If there are opportunities for, and if funding permits, then it is something that I think we need to have a look at, because they do a wide range of operations within the volunteer fire department and search and rescue. Search and rescue on the water is one of them. There is an opportunity there for the assistant fire marshal to work with them in identifying things that they might need.

I think the biggest part of it here is the training and work with the communities. I think you will find the communities are very receptive to any assistance that they might be able to get. It is something that we would be willing to work with communities and I know for a fact that the assistant fire marshal is talking to the communities. He is keen on getting some proper training for them. We will take that into consideration too. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: The other issue that has been raised is in regards to the incident that happened here in Yellowknife where we lost two firefighters to a fire here, but I think in the communities also it is a concern. In most of the cases, people are volunteers. They do put their lives at risk when they respond to a fire in regards to trying to put out the fire. Again, ensuring that they are getting the training and also making them aware of the hazards of fighting fires.

Again, I think that we as government have to do more to support our volunteer fire departments, especially in a lot of our communities where we have fire chiefs that have 20 or 25 years of commitment that they have made as a fire chief to

our communities. Also, the people that volunteer to work with the other people in our communities, we have to do more, not only provide the equipment but provide them the training and ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge of how to react to fire but, more importantly, giving them the tools to basically be able to fight a fire safely and not put their lives at risk. I think that, for me, is probably one of the most important aspects that we hopefully can learn from the incident that happened here in Yellowknife and also deliver that in all of our communities in the Northwest Territories.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, training firefighters to fight fires is a huge priority. I think you will see as we go further into the document that there is \$150,000 identified through the School Community Government to assist with training firefighters. We have an assistant fire marshal in the regions that will work with communities to ensure that they are trained to fight fires. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: I just have a question on two capital items. The \$200,000 grants and contributions and under other expenses, could you give me a breakdown of where those dollars are being expended?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are on 6-17, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): That is correct, Minister. I believe we are under, Mr. Krutko's, program delivery details at the bottom.

MR. KRUTKO: Public safety.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): That is correct. Public safety. Have you got that, Minister? We are under program delivery details, community government, grants and contributions, \$200,000. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I apologize for that, Mr. Chairman. I thought we were on a different page. The \$200,000 is the money that is identified for communities that provide ground ambulance services. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister give me a list of those communities? The other question was under other expenses, \$190,000. Could he again tell me where the \$190,000 is going to be expended and which communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the one under other expenses is the O and M for the staff and, to the Member's second question, there are seven communities that are identified and some of the larger communities: Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence. As I stated earlier, some of them haven't applied for the money because of the liability and they are working on community

capacity before they feel they are able to apply for this money. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, just a question under other expenses. You mentioned \$190,000...(inaudible)...

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That is for the fire marshal's office and other emergency management functions of this division. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Committee, we are on page 6-17. Activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, operations expenditure summary, \$1.112 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): We are moving on to page 6-18, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, grants and contributions, \$200,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-19, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, public safety, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-21, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.854 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question here with regards to the review of the operations and maintenance funding for communities, which I understand was being done sometime in this fiscal year. Could I get some information from the Minister as to whether or not that review has been done and what the results were, maybe in a nutshell? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is that on this page or is that on regional operations? I know there is infrastructure on this page. I see operations and maintenance on regional operations. Perhaps it is here too. Minister, would you comment?

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That budget that the Member is referring to is in regional operations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Deputy Minister Aumond. We will cover that when we get to regional operations. Is there anything else, Ms. Bisaro?

MS. BISARO: No, thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, we are on page 6-21, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.854 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Page 6-22, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, grants and contributions, \$200,000. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Specific to the management of drinking water in the NWT, what role does Municipal and Community Affairs partner with the City of Yellowknife specific to that, and is there a dollar amount attached to that support or is it just community money? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The money is primarily made available for circuit rider and some course development. We also provide money... We have a small pot of funding of \$50,000 that we make available for communities when they're applying for their water licences, but there's no support specifically earmarked in specific communities. We provide the support specifically around the circuit rider for operations and maintenance of water treatment plants where that support is required. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Is that a draw down by community for... I'm just trying to understand the process there. Maybe if the deputy minister could explain how someone can access that, as well as if he said training. I wasn't sure. If you could elaborate on that. Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: Primarily, the circuit rider training is available for... The School of Community Government and the community operations division provide training to those communities who have new water treatment plants and require the training and assistance with maintaining those water treatment plants. The purpose of the circuit rider is to make sure that we have a certified operator who can provide training to those communities who don't yet have certified operators in the operations and maintenance of their plants. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Just to understand this a little further, why wouldn't it be listed under the School of Community Government, then, if it's primarily focused under their tenureship through new water treatment plants? If I understood that. Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: It's sort of a partnership approach. The money that we have in community operations is available for a circuit rider for course development water licence funding, as I mentioned before, and also some technical support as well. In addition to that, we do work with our partners in Public Works and Services in looking at some remote monitoring and testing out new treatment technologies that might be available when we're putting in new plants. The training aspect of it is from the School of Community Government in addition to what you will find provided by community operations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Committee, once again, we're on page 6-22, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, grants and contributions, contributions, \$200,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Page 6-23. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I just have a question on community operations. I want to just throw a general question out there. Has this department ever considered decentralizing your department and putting more of a focus on a community-based effort by way of a regional operation? It seems like all your positions are at headquarters but I don't see anything in the regions. But if you're talking about community operations, if anything, you should be closer to the communities. So I'd just like to know, has that ever been considered by way of restructuring this department so that you're more community based but, more importantly, closer to the communities either at the regional centres versus at headquarters.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The ones that we have in headquarters are usually support to the regional operation folks. So the bulk of our positions and the bulk of our work is done in the region and these folks here are just support to the regions. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chair, the reason I raise the question is because I've been working on projects in my riding, regardless if it's looking at shoreline erosion for Aklavik or main street chipseal for Fort McPherson or some sort of youth centre for Aklavik or even an outdoor skating rink, but it seems like that corporate knowledge is no longer at the regional level. I mean, either through retirement and whatnot. But yet a lot of this information is still compiled at headquarters. I think that you have to find a way to improve the relationship between communities and not say, well, sorry, we gave you the money, that's the end of it; we'll wipe our hands of you and walk away. For me, you still have a fundamental role to play because you have the corporate knowledge that those communities need so that they have the information so when they consider things such as shoreline erosion, which the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs was responsible for the last time they did any major work on shoreline erosion for Aklavik, that information is still at headquarters.

The same thing in regard to the main street chipseal program for Fort McPherson. Again, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs along with the Department of Transportation did a study in nine communities. Again, that corporate

knowledge is at headquarters. I think we have to find a way of getting that information and getting the resources and the people that have that knowledge or basically have that information. It's easy to access from the community level and not have to call headquarters or talk to somebody at the regional office who does not know what you're talking about or has never had the experience or has the knowledge of what happened in the past. I think it's important and that's something that has to be considered by headquarters and, more importantly, these positions cannot just simply stay at headquarters. There has to be that process of ensuring that you have dialogue with the communities, with regions and, more importantly, help them build that capacity and, more importantly, have that information so that when they do develop a proposal or whatnot, that the information is there that a lot of money has been spent already so that we don't have to redo all that research and development all over again. So again, I think the department has to re-look at these positions and, more importantly, find a way to get them closer to communities, especially down to the regional level.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, we still continue to work closely with the communities. The people at the regional office are usually their first point of contact and they should be able to provide them with all the information they get. I know in some cases copies of particular reports were provided to the regional office, to the communities, but there's still the first point of contact and they're working closely with the communities. If they need more information as to what went on in the past, then they'd normally contact community operations in headquarters and they'd be able to provide them with that information. The regional offices are usually the first point of contact and they're working quite closely with the communities in any... If a community needs assistance, then they would usually call the regional office and they'd do all they can to provide the assistance to the community. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. We're on page 6-23, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, community operations, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-25. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although my issue I'm going to raise probably fits perfectly on 24, but certainly fits well on 6-25 as well. Ultimately, I just want to continue to exercise my personal opposition to the School of Community Government being under MACA. I have no issue with the School of Community Government. If anything, I wish to assure them that I do believe in the work that they provide. But the issue I take, and

I try to take it every year and maybe someday, somewhere, someone will see my point, which is the alignment of where it should be.

I believe strongly that the School of Community Government actually belongs under Aurora College. I believe that we have a, for lack of better words, in my view it's sort of like our training centre of excellence and I think Aurora College does a good job and I think that synergies could be built if the School of Community Government was rolled into that college. I think that a lot of people could benefit from taking School of Community Government courses through them, through the satellite offices of the colleges throughout the North. Not to say you can't do that here, but, I mean, I think you can build on all the programs that are developed through the college and I feel very strongly about that and I would move a motion, but I'd probably be the only one who would vote for it. So I'm not going to waste the House's time on that particular issue.

Ultimately, like I say, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the work they do. I know it's good work and I hope the people don't think it's a criticism of the work that they do, because it certainly isn't. But, like I say, this year, as I've said in many, many, many other years that I think it's just not aligned properly and the synergies I believe strongly could go a long ways if it was tucked neatly into the Aurora College portfolio. So that's all I'd like to say at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Just a comment. Committee, we're on page 6-25, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, School of Community Government, operations expenditure summary, \$2.950 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-26, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, School of Community Government, grants and contributions, contributions, \$760,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-27, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, School of Community Government, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-29, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, lands administration, operations expenditure summary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had a question here with regard to the review of the

Property Assessment and Taxation Act. When we discussed business plans I believe there was some information about that, that a comprehensive review was coming at some point in time and that we were doing discreet amendments much closer, I guess, in time. Anyway, if I could get an update on when the minor amendments or discreet amendments are coming forward and when a full review of PATA is coming forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd have to follow up with the Member and get some of the information because I'm not quite familiar with this. I know it's not on the radar right now, but I will follow up with the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is really on access to land, Commissioner's land for other purposes, including agricultural and access to biomass. I'm wondering what the department is doing. There seems to be developing interest, certainly standing interest for agriculture and developing interest for biomass. I believe MACA is working possibly with other governments and I'm wondering what the status of things are, when we can expect to see some improved access for those renewable resources. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If its Commissioner's land within a municipal boundary, then it will be just a matter of them rezoning it for agricultural. Commissioner's land outside of municipal boundaries we really haven't been asked by anyone about accessing, but the opportunity is always there. I mean, if its Commissioner's land and they go through the proper process, then the opportunity is there. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Just for my clarity here, is there a standard distance that municipal land extends from highways and has the department classified Commissioner's land outside of municipalities in terms of its agricultural potential? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: No, we haven't.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. Is there a formula for Commissioner's land along highways? Is there a setback that is Commissioner's land where we have a territorial highway or any guidance there? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I don't have that information handy, but I will commit to the Member that I'll check with our lands administration. I'll also check with Transportation as far as a setback goes. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Just getting back to my original question, I'm not feeling like I have an answer yet. What is the department doing to improve access for agricultural and biomass harvesting activities? A couple of activities are increasing in importance for us.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We're not denying anyone access to Commissioner's land. We just haven't, as I stated before, had much of an appetite from the public to do it. I'm sure that as we go forward with biomass, be it wood and agriculture, I'm sure if the demand is there, then we will have to take steps to address it because we could see this becoming quite an issue in the future. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: It's certainly an issue for agricultural land and I believe the lead might be ITI, which might be why you haven't heard about it, but it speaks to the stovepipes that we're continually dealing with. So I guess I just ask the Minister to look into that and see if there's an opportunity to help out our public who are interested in accessing more agricultural land and I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will assure the Member that we'll do some research and see what we can find out and then I'll get back to the Member with some of our findings. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On land administration I just have a question for the Minister. Is this the budget after the majority of the land, like the taxing and leasing of land, has been transferred to municipalities like hamlets, towns, cities, villages, whatever?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: MACA still continues to do the bulk of it. It hasn't been transferred. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'm wondering if that's the intention to transfer this administration to the municipalities/

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: It is our intention in the future to transfer the responsibility of administration of lands to the communities, within community boundaries.

MR. BEAULIEU: Can the Minister tell me if once a municipality, whether they be a band government or just become incorporated or an actual settlement that has become a hamlet, which is the case in both of the communities I represent, is there the option of setting the land administration and the taxing or the leasing of land aside and still continue with the rest of the agreement of transfer?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The community would just have to enact the proper bylaws and then they would have authority to set the writs.

MR. BEAULIEU: I guess I'm wondering the opposite. If the communities would have an option to leave this exactly where it is, under the control of MACA, and transfer the rest of the community transfer process, just setting aside this issue for now, parking it for now until the communities are more comfortable to take over land administration.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The communities can take everything else on, they're not obligated to take the lands.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the taxation portion I have a question for the Minister. Does Municipal and Community Affairs charge back to the communities or in some fashion for managing the taxation of individual communities? In this particular case, obviously, I'm not referring to the City of Yellowknife but other municipalities, especially in tax-based municipalities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department manages and is responsible for the assessment portion. The taxation portion resides with the Department of Finance. But MACA will undertake the assessment services for all communities including the tax-based municipalities, and we do not charge them for that.

MR. HAWKINS: For tax-based municipalities, roughly what would that allocation be for the cost? Well, let's put them all together, I guess, to get a sense of tax-based municipalities that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs does not charge back.

MR. AUMOND: Again, the department provides assessment services. The taxation part and the collection of the taxes is with Finance. We don't charge any community for the assessments that we provide.

MR. HAWKINS: I keep saying taxes; I mean the assessment process. My apologies for that. The deputy minister is answering the question correctly, because I'm saying it incorrectly. What is the cost that Municipal and Community Affairs is foregoing when it comes to the assessment of these properties for tax-based municipalities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have those numbers right now as to what it costs us to do those assessments, but we can attempt to gather that information and I will pass it on to the Member.

MR. HAWKINS: Obviously, the Minister doesn't have the information here today, as he said, but would he be able to have it broken out by

community when he assesses the tax-based municipalities? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We'll break it out by communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up once again with my earlier questions, particularly this time with the biomass harvesting opportunities we have. I have before me that says ENR, ITI, and MACA will work to address issues related to land access and land claims that might impact development of biomass in the NWT. To me that casual sounding statement is quite important to our public. It really gets at cost of living, some of our issues on climate change, and some local economic development, especially in those communities that really, really need it. It goes towards the perspective of whether we're going to talk about solutions or get them on the ground. So again, I haven't been comfortable with the responses that they're not aware of interest here.

This is supposed to be a cross-departmental initiative on these things: agriculture and biomass access. If the Minister recalls anything that they are doing on these, I'd like to hear about it and, again, I'd like to hear commitment. I don't know where this would be in the budget other than on this page somewhere that we're going to put some effort into actually dealing with these things, because they are relevant to the cost of living, as I say, and some of our broader goals of local economic development and environmental goals.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member makes some good points. This is something we'll have to look at in the future. I did make a commitment to the Member that I'll gather some information. I'll work with my colleagues at ENR and ITI and see about coming up with a plan. This is something that we will have to give some serious consideration to in the future. A lot of the harvesting out there just concerns Commissioner's land. There's a lot of harvesting out there on private claimed land. There's a lot of harvesting out there on federal land. I did commit to the Member that I will work with my colleagues at ITI and ENR.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that commitment. I think these aren't issues that we should sit back on and let them come to us. I think the Minister is there. I look forward to his comments. These are obviously issues that we should move proactively on and take it to the people, anticipating that there will be increased interest, although we know there is interest already. I appreciate that commitment and I'll look forward to finding out ways that I can help.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): More of a comment. Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, lands administration, operations expenditure summary, \$2.568 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Municipal and Community Affairs, information item, active positions, lands administration. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 6-33, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, sport, recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, \$5.617 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions here with regard to multisport games. Somewhere, I believe it was in business plans, we were advised that there was -- and I'm not exactly sure who -- the department was looking at sort of a long-term plan for multisport games. I wonder if I could get some kind of an answer to that. I'm not sure exactly what was referenced, but if the Minister could advise whether or not there is any kind of a plan that is going to be in the works with regard to evaluation of multisport games and the whole Sport and Rec Council issue as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, the Multisport Games Review, some of the recommendations that were made we're following up on. The review is completed. The department's completed its review of the input received on the multisport games and has agreed with the NWT Sport and Recreation Council to move towards developing a long-term strategy to stabilize the delivery of NWT participation in the games. So there were some recommendations that were made that we are following up on and are hoping to share our findings with committee and get some input back from them.

MS. BISARO: So in terms of the Sport and Recreation Council, is there any consideration to looking at the structure of the various organizations that deal with multisport games and/or just sort of games in general, even regional games and so on? There are a number of sporting organizations that exist that come under the umbrella of the Sport and Recreation Council. Is there any intention to look at how those organizations work together, don't work together, whether or not the Sport and Recreation Council setup should be changed, et cetera?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Sport and Recreation Council is set up. They receive the funding. Some of the other groups within their organizations, the Aboriginal Sport Circle, for example, would manage the North American Indigenous Games, and they might reach an agreement with Sport North to manage the Arctic

Winter Games and Canada Games. So these groups are all working together quite well under the umbrella of the Sport and Recreation Council.

MS. BISARO: I'm sorry; maybe I wasn't clear to the Minister. I was actually referencing the organization of SRC and the various groups that fall underneath it outside of games. I know that the games actually work reasonably well. At one point I had understood there was going to be an evaluation of the SRC and how well it was working and the groups within it and so on. Is that on the radar anywhere?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Not that I'm aware of. I don't recall an evaluation of the SRC. It's a fairly new organization. However, I suppose if there's a feeling amongst Members that this is something that needs to be considered, then we'd have to have a look at that. But the short answer is no.

MS. BISARO: I know it is a new organization and in my mind that's an opportune time to do a review or evaluation. I guess I would suggest that the Minister contact SRC and ask whether or not they are considering looking at themselves or if they want an outside evaluator. I think it would be a good time for them to look at how things are working for themselves.

I have one other question with regard to games and funding for games. This goes back to a number of months ago when there was a request from NWT seniors for some funding for multisport games. As we go forward into future fiscal years, is there any plan on the part of the department to increase multisport games funding? I know it's set at about \$650,000, but every other expense keeps going up so one can expect that the cost to involve ourselves in multisport games is also going to increase? I'd like to ask the Minister two things: Is there a plan to increase the funding for multisport games year by year as we go forward, or even every second year, and is there any intention on the part of the department to assist seniors who wish to go to a multisport, nation-wide games?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: In response to the Member's first question, this is a new line item that we're proposing to put in this year's budget. I suppose further down the road if we're finding that this not a sufficient amount, then it's something that we'd have to bring before this forum to seek an increase. At this moment we're quite comfortable with the \$650,000 and it's something that we'd have to have a look at one or two years down the road.

As far as the Seniors Games, we do like to try and support seniors, but our main priority is with the youth. We'd like to work with seniors, but we'd look more at a regional type model. That would give more seniors an opportunity from the regions to take part in some of the events that could be planned in the regions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question on the program delivery details under youth, \$1.058 million for youth development initiatives and first contact with youth issues, I was wondering if the Minister could advise specifically what type of projects were charged to this budget line.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry about that. The \$1.058 million under youth, that's for the salary and O and M of the staff in the Youth Secretariat within the youth division, as well as grants and contributions to support youth activities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Just for the record, that was Laura Gareau, director of corporate affairs. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't know there was staff at the Youth Secretariat. That was to support the staff and what else? I didn't hear the very last thing that the director indicated.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Gareau, can you elaborate on your response?

MS. GAREAU: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there is a manger of youth programs that's included in the Youth secretariat. So there is a salary for that staff person. Also operations and maintenance funding and, as well, that figure includes the grants and contributions allocated to youth programs. That includes the youth contributions and the youth core grants and contributions. It also includes the salary and O and M for the three new regional youth officer positions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BEAULIEU: But there is youth core money in addition to that in sport and recreation. Am I correct?

MS. GAREAU: Yes, there is youth contribution and youth core funding both in the sport, rec and youth division and there is additional grant and contribution programs in regional operations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BEAULIEU: That's good. I am satisfied with what I'm hearing. I didn't know that there is additional... This puts the youth budget over \$3.5 million overall. That's good. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 6-33, Municipal and Community Affairs, sport, recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, \$5.617 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-24, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity

summary, sport, recreation and youth, grants and contributions, grants, \$100,000. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I'm jumping ahead of you, but underneath the grants under recreation contributions to the Council of Sport and Recreation Partners, I note that stayed at the same level funding for at least two years; well, three years pretty much. I don't have any further back than that, but I wonder if the Minister could advise whether or not if this organization is looking at any kind of cost of living increase for this organization. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I believe your question comes under contribution, so can we... Mr. Bromley, do you have a question under grants?

MR. BROMLEY: I do.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Under grants?

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, page 6-34. Grants, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Maybe I will allow Mr. Bromley to ask a question under grants and then, Ms. Bisaro, you can ask your question under contributions. Is that okay, Ms. Bisaro?

MS. BISARO: Yes, no problem.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Under grants, no problem. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: I lied, Mr. Chair. Mine is under contributions.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay, if we can conclude grants. Grants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister, you can answer Ms. Bisaro's question.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, this has been a stable source of funding for a few years. We have not really had any indication from any of the sport and rec partners that they are underfunded. I am sure if they felt they were underfunded and came forward with requests, then we would have to have a look at it, but at this point they seem to be... I shouldn't be speaking for them, but until you hear from them, you assume they are quite satisfied with the funds that they're getting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That leads me right into a question with regard to Sport North who has indicated over the years that they're not being adequately funded to manage the trials and transfer, whatever, the whole dealing with athletes in and around Arctic Winter Games; regional trials, territorial trials and then taking the kids to the games. So I would like to ask the Minister has he not ever heard that Sport North has difficulties in funding those trials? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: With this we multisport game funding of \$650,000 that will flow to Sport North through the Sport and Recreation Council. We are confident this will address a lot of their concerns about the lack of funding. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I will take the Minister at his word. I have another question with regard to the youth contributions that are on this page. There are three items: youth contributions, youth centres, youth corps. There are another two or three items that are also about three or four pages further on in another section. I mentioned in my comments, I'm a little concerned that we've got pots of money for youth in various and sundry places and I'm a little concerned that we have situations where the right hand may not know what the left hand is doing. So I'd like to get a little comment from the Minister as to why we need to have funding for youth in various and sundry places. Why can't we combine it? I think there might be an opportunity to provide, in some instances, more funding to one organization because it can be combined into one pot and better distributed. So I would appreciate a comment in that regard. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I kind of figured this question would be coming up. It's a good question because it does seem like there is youth money all over the place here. But we have different criteria for each of these different pots of money and I suppose if we put it all into one pot and whoever comes forward with their applications for or puts together the best applications and they might be getting more than their share. As I said before, as I was doing my comments to the opening remarks, we are confident with the new website that's being launched, that would answer a lot of these questions. It would be a good map to access some of the different pots of funding within this particular department and across government. We try to keep them separate because these are pots of money that are specifically for youth purpose and the criteria might be a bit different. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks for the explanation. I guess we have to agree to disagree. I'm not so sure that telling people to go to a website to find out what funding is available is the best way to make sure that the money gets where we want it to go.

I would like to ask the Minister why we have funding for youth corps in two different places in this particular budget. It's on page 6-34 for \$825,000, and it's again on page 6-39 for \$500,000. The descriptions are exactly the same. What's the difference between these two? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: One of the youth corps pots is for territorial-wide initiatives. The other youth corps funding goes to the regions for regional activities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Next on the list is Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A quick question. On the volunteer contribution, I'm wondering if those are fully taken up every year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the uptake on this particular contribution has been quite slow, but we're working at trying to get it out there and get it utilized to all the money that's available. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm just wondering what the process is. Obviously, this is something that MLAs should be able to help out with and I would think we'd be willing conduits to help get the application information out there to our constituents and organizations, community organizations. I'm just wondering what is the process that organizations should know about.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, they can apply to the regional offices or to headquarters. What I can do, and I can commit to the Members, is that I'll put a bit of package together and I'll give it to all Members, because, as Mr. Bromley said, you can be conduits to the folks out there that may not know that this initiative exists. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that commitment. I wonder if the Minister has had a chance to look into it to see if it's something onerous about the application. Maybe, rather than a question, I'll just ask him to commit to making sure it's not an overly difficult process that's stymieing people. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I don't think it's a question of it being an onerous process. I think a good reason that the uptake is not as high as it should be is because probably the information is not out there that this is available. That's why I'll commit to the Members that I'll get them some information and they can pass that on to their volunteer groups. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Under contributions, \$3.265 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$3.365 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, sport, recreation and youth, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 6-37, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, operations expenditure summary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try the question that I put quite some time ago. The review of the operations and maintenance funding model

for community governments, I gather that that has been done. I wondered if I could get some indication of what that review found and what implications it had for this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I'll have Mr. Aumond respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy minister.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The review of the O and M formula did not take place this fiscal year, so the formula applied again in 2010-11. The intention is to undertake the review with our partners at the NWTAC and LGANT in the 2010-11 fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wondered, then, on what basis was the increase to community government funding based. The increase that's in this budget, I presume? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: The forced growth was based on the existing formula, the existing policy that we used to provide O and M funding to community governments. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Sorry; maybe it's the late hour, but I'm a little obtuse. What forced growth? I mean, is there a percentage for that or is it based on forced growth with the GNWT? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: It's a formula base that takes into account factors such as the cost of utilities, population growth and so on and so forth. It's set down in policy and as those factors change, the costing of those factors change and the formula that provides the O and M money that goes to communities changes as well. The same would apply to water and sewer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Next, I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With respect to regional operations, I don't really see the line item here or if it's in here at all, but I'd be remiss if I didn't mention summer student positions in the different regions. Actually, I don't see it so it's probably... I'm not too sure how it operates in the budget or is it an HR function to provide internships and summer student positions? Maybe the Minister can answer that. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of MACA.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the regional offices will usually determine how many summer students that they might need and then they would just fund it themselves. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I just wanted to indicate to the Minister that, I think, previously we were using 1.5

summer students, but I think what worked well for my particular riding was the number two, so I just wanted to indicate that once again. Thank you very much.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We were glad that we were able to have the two positions in the Member's riding. If the regional office determines that that's what they could use again, then I'm sure that's what they'll be doing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just looking at the cost of operations and maintenance and capital investment planning and so forth in this division, many of the things are energy related, ultimately, and I know Arctic Energy Alliance, in their attempts to assist with community energy plans, have hit a bump in the road when they try to collect fuel consumption information. I know this is collected routinely by MACA annually from service providers and from community governments, and I believe the plan was that they were to provide this information to the Arctic Energy Alliance to assist with the community energy planning. I'd just like to get some sort of confirmation that that, indeed, has happened and is in the process. I know that this was a sticky point for the Arctic Energy Alliance. Their mandate was to assist these communities developing their community energy plans. They received funding from MACA to help with that and so on and yet they were stymied with the lack of information. So I'm just wondering if we're there and if that's been looked after by the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know specifically whether they requested the information from MACA or not, but if they did there's no reason why we wouldn't provide it to them and I do know that maybe the Member was referring to information that they were maybe looking from another department with respect to fuel consumption in the communities, but anything the Arctic Energy Alliance would request of MACA we would provide to them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Just again, you mentioned you had that document with a list of communities that have done the study. Is there a chance you could give that to the Clerk so we can maybe circulate it? I think we're talking about the same thing here. So that information might be helpful to the Members. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, that's fine. I'll follow up with the Minister and provide him with the backup I have and he can set things straight in my mind and hopefully things have been resolved. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we're on page 6-37, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, \$71.943 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we're now on 6-38? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice that additional funding for grants eligible to community governments assisting with the insurance and mobile equipment operations has decreased. Of course insurance costs decreasing is welcome news. I certainly hope that's the answer that explains what the dip is in what looks like, I'll just call it \$150,000, maybe close to \$200,000 difference there in the negative. So could the Minister provide some information as to what's changed in that circumstance? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Director of corporate affairs, Ms. Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Additional funding is provided to the eight designated band communities in the Northwest Territories and as well as settlement corporations. Fort Resolution and Colville Lake recently have changed their legislative status, or at least Colville was projected to. So both Fort Resolution and Colville Lake receive funding out of this additional funding pot and we have taken that funding and deleted it out of the additional funding pot and moved it to community government O and M funding. That's where they'll receive that funding. So those communities will still receive that funding, it's just shifted funding source. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you for that answer. If I could just be 100 percent clear then, then when you take the two items into consideration, community government funding and of course the additional funding, I mean, is there a net difference? Thank you.

MS. GAREAU: In Colville Lake, from the additional funding pot, Colville Lake will be receiving a transfer of \$196,000 from that budget and the community of Fort Resolution will be receiving a transfer of \$27,000 from that budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you for that detail. Specifically to those types of grants and contributions, is there any net difference? I just want to make sure that because they've changed their status, that's one particular issue that's obviously shown up here, but will they lose any funding or will it have eroded either now in column B moved from column A? So I just want to make sure. Thank you.

MS. GAREAU: No, they will not be receiving any funding decrease. In fact, both the communities will

be receiving a funding increase because of their change in legislative status. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Gareau, and thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Committee, we're on page 6-38. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I just have a question in regard to the senior citizens and disabled persons property tax. Is there a possibility of being able to change the criteria? Right now you get your assessment in the mail, you have to go to the municipal office, you have to fill out an application every year to get the rebate. Is there any way that you can simplify the process where basically once you reach a certain age, 60 or 65, that you come in every three years or every five years? Most of these people, we know exactly what their status is there. Most of them are senior citizens. We know what their pensions are. We know what their income is, but it seems like having to do the same thing over and over, is that something that can be looked at in regard to revising some of these programs and making them more user friendly so you can come in once you reach a certain age, based on your income, which we already pretty well know, that you don't have to go in every year? You'd say go in every three years or every five years or something. Has that ever been contemplated for that program?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the reasons that they're asked to come in all the time is just to re-establish that they're still the owners of the property. But I'll commit to the Member that we'll find ways to work with them, so we can simplify the process where they're not going to have to be coming in all the time. If there's something that we can work out, then we'll try and accommodate them to make it a lot easier. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd just like to thank the Minister for that, but again, I think that working with the Seniors' Society and also working with those other organizations... I think that if we can find a way of simplifying the process, making it less stressful on the individuals, because a lot of times the elders do get confused. They get this bill in the mail and they get all rattled because they've got a bill. For them, in some cases, some of them actually pay their bill without realizing you don't have to.

Myself, personally, I have had several seniors come to me and show me their bill and I've told them, well, come with me and I'll walk them to the hamlet office and sit down with the people at the hamlet office to help them get the application. Most of them, unless they ask, don't really understand that you actually are eligible for these programs.

So, again, if there's a way that there's an automatic process that once you reach a certain age you

automatically go into the system and the system, once you sign in, basically, you will be able to receive this program and, like I say, have ongoing ways of ensuring that the issues that you talk about with property ownership and whatnot... But again, in most cases unless they actually sell their property and, in most cases, these elders have their own homes, they've lived there all their lives and yet they're continued to have to go through this. So, again, I'd just like to request that we do simplify the process and take it forward to find ways of working it out with the local communities.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'll commit to the Member that we'll see what we can do to simplify the process for the seniors. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: I just had a question under the contributions, water and sewer service funding. Is that to do with dual systems like water delivery and utilidor systems or is that only for people on water delivery? Is there a formula that you use based on these types of systems?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: This is for both and it's based on standard guidelines that we use and as you can see the funding has increased this year to the communities for their water and sewer funding. Some of it would be because of the communities... Well, the rising prices of everything is basically what it comes down to.

MR. KRUTKO: The reason I asked the question is in McPherson we do have to deliver water some 20 kilometres from the water source. You have different treatment systems. You have water delivery systems. You have a utilidor system. I think what we're finding is that you have an aging piece of infrastructure and at some point you're going to have to either replace it, upgrade it, or get rid of it. I'm talking about the utilidor system and the growing community. I think the hamlet has taken it on their own to take over some of those responsibilities because they are struggling to manage the money they do have for that program. There are those other cost drivers that you don't have control of. Right now, especially with the cold temperatures we had this winter, the utilidor froze up at 53 below. The municipality does not have the equipment to thaw out.

Mr. Chairman, could I have some order in the House, please?

I think that seriously the government has to realize when you devolve this piece of infrastructure to a community, at some point when they have to replace that infrastructure, I think what we found, especially with the utilidor system, is it's a very costly piece of infrastructure. If you're going to have to replace it or upgrade it, you're going to have to find other funds than what's already here in the budget. I know there's a capital item for unforeseen costs associated with the programs and there used to be the emergency funds, so I'm just wondering if

when you figure out this calculation, if you also look at the possibility of having to upgrade or replace these systems.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: When we do the water and sewer increase in funding, a lot of things are taken into consideration. A couple things that the Member exactly spoke of is the distance between his community and Deep Water Lake and all that's taken into consideration. The capital portion of it is not taken into consideration.

MR. KRUTKO: It looks like the Minister was just trying to get another couple of words in there before he got cut off. I thought he had some good news.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister, would you like to speak a little more?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Well, I was going to add the two or three words: thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Indeed, you are welcome. Committee, we're on page 6-38, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, grants and contributions, community government, grants and contributions, grants, \$51.585 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Contributions, \$13.188 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Total community government grants and contributions. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question with regard to... We're on page 6-38 still, I presume? Thank you. I have a question with regard to the contributions for water and sewer services funding. Could I ask the Minister to advise whether or not all NWT communities receive some of this water and sewer services funding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All communities but Yellowknife.

MS. BISARO: Could I have an explanation as to why not, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. McLeod. Ms. Gareau.

MS. GAREAU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister alluded to earlier, the methodology used to calculate funding is based on a standard cost allocation formula. Under that formula, there's a certain portion of revenue that communities are anticipated to be charging residents to cover the costs of water and sewer operations. The City of Yellowknife, because of its large population, is deemed under the formula to be able to be

charging enough revenue that it does not need a funding supplement from MACA.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Gareau. Anything further, Ms. Bisaro?

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Only to say that it doesn't seem very fair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Comment there. Committee, we're on page 6-38, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, regional operations, total community government grants and contributions, \$64.773 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed..

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-39, activity summary, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, grants and contributions, other grants and contributions, grants, \$80,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Contributions, \$1.125 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Total other grants and contributions, \$1.205 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Total grants and contributions, \$65.978 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-40, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-42, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-43, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, work performed on behalf of others, continued. Questions? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our pages only go to 6-40.

MS. BISARO: I got 44.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Well, for Pete's sake. Where's our quality assurance? I believe our Clerk will assist. Thank you for bringing that to our attention, Mr. Beaulieu. What was your last page number?

MR. BEAULIEU: Page 6-40.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Committee, we will start with page 6-42, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 6-43... Order, please. Committee, order! Page 6-43, information item, Municipal and Community Affairs, work performed on behalf of others, continued. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Returning now to page 6-7 for consideration of the department summary. Municipal and Community Affairs, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$91.288 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that that concludes the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I will now rise and report progress. First I'd like to dismiss the witnesses. Thank you to the witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Bromley?

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 62-16(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2010-2011, and would like to report progress. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Tuesday, February 16, 2010, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 2, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2009-2010
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Summary Conviction Procedures Act
 - Tabled Document 62-16(4), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2010-2011
 - Minister's Statement 47-16(4), Transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy
 - Committee Report 5-16(4), Report on the Review of the 2008-2009 Human Rights Commission Report
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 16th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:08 p.m.