



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Great Slave)

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(Tu Nedhe)

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(Frame Lake)

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(Weledeh)

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(Hay River South)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, February 16, 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 1:36 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Point of order, Mr. Miltenberger. What is your point of order?

Point of Order

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order under Rule 23(h) and 23(k). I waited until today to present my point of order because I wanted to view unedited Hansard from Monday, February 15th, 2010. During his reply to the opening address on Monday, February 15th, 2010, Mr. Bromley said, and I quote from page 30 of the unedited Hansard for that day: "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."

Mr. Bromley went on to say, and I quote from page 31 of unedited Hansard: "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."

Mr. Bromley also said, and I quote also from page 31 of the unedited Hansard: "This government has formally rejected a JRP recommendation on greenhouse gas targets and Regular Members have to read about it in a public registry."

Mr. Speaker, these comments make allegations against the government and apply hidden motives with respect to the Joint Review Panel. In fact, the GNWT has not rejected recommendation 8-6 from the JRP, but rather has called for additional information to be prepared and considered with respect to anticipated greenhouse gas emissions. The information presented to the House by Mr. Bromley is egregiously incorrect and does little more than create confusion amongst the public and disorder in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will allow a few comments on this point of order. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I actually stand guilty as charged.

---Laughter

That was a grievous error and, in fact, it reflects the main principal of my argument which was with consultation. These sorts of errors can be avoided but, better than that, we can put forward much better information.

I had today a set of questions I intended to ask. In that, I was going to make the comment that, in fact, I had read that wrong. The letter did say rejected but, upon closer examination, it said the proponents had rejected that recommendation. I have some other difficulty with what we did recommend, but I stand guilty as charged. That was incorrect information. I intended to correct it myself today in the House. So I leave that to your decision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the point of order. Hearing no other comments on the point of order, I will... The honourable Member of Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a Member who's been here quite some time, I think that Mr. Miltenberger has taken the opportunity to raise a point of order to, in fact, correct the record on a certain matter and I'm not sure that that actually constituted, in my experience, in my opinion, a point of order. I suppose if each one of us stood up on a point of order every time somebody said something in this House that was not correct, we'd be standing up a lot.

I appreciate the fact that Mr. Bromley did err in his assumption or his assertion on this particular matter and has withdrawn his comment, but just in terms of the process of this House, I'm not sure that the Minister would not have been better off to have delivered a Minister's statement perhaps in response to correct the record and I think that's what this was about; correcting the record. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the point of order. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under Mr. Miltenberger's point of order, he stood here and he used Rule 23(h) and 23(k). As we've heard some discussion on this point of order, things are said at times in this House, whether it's in the heat of the moment that things are said and upon reflection, as Member Bromley has done, has accepted that he provided information in a form that has caused this point of order.

Mr. Speaker, the issue is -- and I believe Member Groenewegen has touched on this a bit -- at times things are said in this House and if we all decided to use points of order, we would consume the time of this Assembly. Well, in fact, I think at times points order need to be used because there's been too many cases where information that is not necessarily complete gets put out there and as we find out, the people of the Territories and the media pick it up and run with that part of the information. So we need to, as Members, be aware of what we say in this House. Yes, we have the opportunity and we are protected here, but it also affects so much more of the business we do as government and how we represent the situations and the positions that are put out there. So I look forward to hearing your ruling on this. Thank you.

Speaker's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the point of order. Colleagues, it is my understanding in the debates in this House, there is nothing against the rules of the House to being wrong in information you are talking about. It's also another forum in a point or forum to correct the record. So I am going to rule on this that there is no point of order. The Members are allowed to talk. Information that is given in this House is not always accurate, but I don't think it's a point of order. Thank you, colleagues.

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 72-16(4): JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the unique process we are a part of in the review of the JRP report.

As an administrative decision-maker under the MVRMA, as Minister of ENR I have a unique role to play in the decision-making process. As such, I am

part of a process which includes other federal responsible Ministers. Mr. Speaker, as a result of this relationship, I cannot act alone. I have a duty to exercise my functions in accordance with the principles of administrative fairness required of me as a responsible Minister under the MVRMA and I must work with my federal colleagues. As a responsible Minister, I am bound to protect the integrity of the decision-making process as well as ensure that government is not fettered in its ability to make a decision.

Mr. Speaker, responsible Ministers will ensure that our obligation to consult will be met. The MVRMA requires responsible Ministers to accept, reject or modify recommendations of the JRP. At this stage, the responsible Ministers of our respective governments must review each recommendation. This process includes the comments from the proponents and interveners to the JRP/NEB processes and a review of the evidence presented. Although we have started the review process, no final determinations have been made on the recommendations as we are still collecting evidence.

Mr. Speaker, recently questions have arisen about how we as a government plan to involve Regular Members in this process. I would like to assure this House that we do, in fact, intend to continue to brief Members and seek their input as we move forward. We must, however, do so in a manner that respects the unique process and the integrity of the MVRMA and the principles of administrative law. At this time, legal counsel for both the Department of Justice and the Legislative Assembly are actively engaged in exploring possibilities to achieve this.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify for the record the GNWT's submission to the NEB with respect to the JRP recommendations which stated: "The proponent submits that the NEB should reject recommendation 8-6 from the JRP which relates to the establishment of the greenhouse gas emissions target or a series of targets in connection with the MGP facilities. The GNWT believes that it is desirable for the proponent to provide a clear prediction of the anticipated GHG emissions associated with MGP facilities over time including both emission targets and trajectories and the details of any approaches that they proposed to adopt to mitigate GHG emissions." This information will be important to NEB and other agencies to assist in understanding the implications of the MGP on GHG emissions in the NWT as a whole and to evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce those emissions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT RESPONSE TO JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following on the statement of the Minister of ENR, this is rather interesting. If I thought my job was depressing last week, yesterday set things up for this week to be even worse. I was aghast to discover yesterday morning that the GNWT had submitted a response to the National Energy Board regarding the recommendations in the Joint Review Panel report. I am not trying to suggest that GNWT should not respond to the JRP recommendations. No, absolutely, we should respond. But if it is the government who's responding, Regular Members must be included in the development of any response. I am very glad to hear the Minister say that we will be.

I acknowledge that the time frame to prepare a response was short. I acknowledge that it can be difficult to schedule meetings between Cabinet and Regular Members, but really, Mr. Speaker, if this Assembly operates as a consensus government as we keep professing to do, why wouldn't Regular Members be advised or consulted on a response as vital as this one to the JRP recommendations?

On top of that, as a member of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, I know that that committee had expressly advised both the Minister of ITI and the Minister of ENR that the Social Programs committee wanted to have input into any GNWT response to the recommendations in the JRP report.

As I mentioned in my statement yesterday, I tend to think the best of people, so in regards to a GNWT response, I fully expected that I, as a Social Programs committee member, would be consulted. At the very least, I presumed that we would be advised of any response. Now, not only has a response gone to the NEB without any Regular Member input, but the Minister of ITI kind of forgot to advise the Standing Committee on Social Programs of his actions.

Even if the content of the response had no bearing on the Social Programs committee responsibilities, the Minister had an obligation to copy the committee on his letter to the EDI committee chair. By doing so, he would have shown respect to his colleagues. But we seem to have reverted to the situation we endured about a year ago, a Cabinet who does what they please, when they please, seemingly without regard for the accepted practices of consensus government and without respect for the 11 Members on this side of the House.

We, the Members of this Assembly, are in this job together, Mr. Speaker, no matter which side of the

House we sit on. The Cabinet's strategic document is titled Northerners Working Together. So let's try that novel idea, Mr. Speaker, the idea of working together with respect...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Bisaro, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

MS. BISARO: So let's try that novel idea, Mr. Speaker, the idea of working together with respect and consideration for others. We can accomplish a whole lot more together than we can if we antagonize each other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON THE NEEDS OF SAHTU CONSTITUENTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people in the Northwest Territories want to know that their government is there for them. People want to know when they are asked to put their names next to the ballots as we ran as MLAs, to be there for them stepping up to the plate and be the voice in this House. People want to be consulted in a meaningful way and know that we are there for them, Mr. Speaker. They want to know that we will bring down the cost of living in the North. Mr. Speaker, the people want to know the traditional way of life will be honoured and that we can exercise that right to live our culture.

Mr. Speaker, the people want to know that we will not be shocked about the megaprojects such as the Deh Cho Bridge saga and that this government will abide by its policy to err on the side of caution when going forward.

People want to know that we need to concentrate and be very clear about the emergency measures that our health care system needs in our small communities. We have a right to good, cultural health care. People want to know that more transparency will happen within this GNWT and there will be no more miscommunication or misinformation about the way things are handled.

The people want to know that the rich North can be a place to live, visit, and invest in and that we can live up to this phase by cleaning up our own backyard. Give the power back to the people.

The people want to know that when we are done in this Legislative Assembly, we did what we said we were going to get done and that we will leave this place in a good way. People want to know when they can drive down the Mackenzie Valley Highway all year. People want to know we can pay the same price here in Yellowknife and anywhere else in our

small communities. People want to know we set the power rates in a fair and just manner. People want to know that when they elect us as leaders, that we are leaders and want to listen to our people. People are waiting for us.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY FOR STUDENTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a constituent who is a student attending full-time studies at the Grande Prairie Regional College in Grande Prairie, Alberta. My constituent had a medical specialist appointment booked in Edmonton. She had gone through the appropriate channels for this appointment. She had been seen by a doctor in Hay River, referred to Yellowknife, and in turn received a referral to a specialist in Edmonton. When booking her medical travel for her appointment in Edmonton, she was informed that she could not access assistance from where she was attending school because medical travel must originate within the Northwest Territories. She was told that she would need to return to her home community of Hay River, fly from there to Edmonton, return to Hay River, and then go back to Grande Prairie. The inconvenience of this process was too difficult for my constituent to manage and, therefore, she had no alternative but to cancel her appointment with the specialist in Edmonton. My constituent's medical condition warrants being seen by a specialist and it would be unhealthy and possibly even risky for her to wait until a school break in the summer to return to Hay River to go to Edmonton for an appointment.

Northern students residing outside of the Northwest Territories on a temporary leave of absence to attend college or university are still northern residents. They retain their residency status and they have valid health care coverage. I am uncertain as to why the government would not accommodate someone in this situation, especially in the case of my constituent, considering that the cost of travel between Grande Prairie and Edmonton is less than it would be from Hay River to Edmonton and would in fact be saving the government money.

I am requesting a review of this policy to enable students to tend to their medical needs while going to school, whether inside or outside of the NWT. My constituent would like to rebook her appointment and be seen by the specialist in Edmonton and I would also appreciate if the Minister could provide options available to my constituent for accessing medical treatment as soon as possible.

This is not the first or only case that we have had like this. I understand that it may get complicated in

instances where we have students that are perhaps not as close to the medical facility they're being referred to, but somehow, some way we have to apply some discretionary common sense to these types of decisions and policies.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DISPOSITION OF OPPORTUNITIES FUND

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about the disposition of the Opportunities Fund, a fund Members will recall was used to give out a \$34 million loan just over a year ago to Discovery Air. In talking about the decision to lend that money I don't want to relive that whole debate today, but Discovery Air did make some commitments to this government that I believe need to be followed up on.

First, they were to relocate their head office from London, Ontario, to Yellowknife, which I understand is in the works. How come it took over a year for that to happen? Does the move include the CEO, the president, the CFO, and COO?

Discovery Air was also to move and operate a training school in Yellowknife and I was wondering if the government knows whether or not this will in fact happen.

What opening up the Opportunities Fund to allow a loan like the one made to Discovery Air did was raise expectations from other companies across the Northwest Territories that we would look at lending out of the balance of that fund. As chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, I've fielded many inquiries about the fund from across the Northwest Territories. Our committee has waited almost over a year for the government to put some workable options in front of committee so we could utilize these funds for others. Mr. Speaker, we got nothing meaningful to work with in the past year. Not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, I received a letter stating that now Finance Canada has instructed the Government of the Northwest Territories to look at the Opportunities Fund money as debt on our balance sheet. And we all know how close to the edge this government is, given the current disposition of the Deh Cho Bridge Project.

Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to know today is whether or not the decision to lend the \$34 million from the Opportunities Fund in any way precipitated the federal government changing their opinion on how we state that money in our accounting. Mr. Speaker, I will have other questions pertaining to the Opportunities Fund at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INCOME SUPPORT
PRODUCTIVE CHOICE PROGRAM

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on my recent trip home this past weekend constituents of Tuktoyaktuk have asked me about the Income Support Program and productive choices options in the community. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has been very strict and narrow in their interpretation of what constitutes productive choices in the community. For example, many clients, some who are on medication or are elders, have to physically go out into the community and actively seek productive choice options. Mr. Speaker, that's very limited in the community of Tuk with a limited number of qualified local organizations.

Mr. Speaker, many concerns deal mainly with issues with what has not been explained by case workers to their clients. I understand if a client does not ask for a certain type of assistance, Mr. Speaker, the officer must make the client aware of the offer of assistance to the client. I'm aware of the people getting evicted in my community and having no food in their fridges. Mr. Speaker, that begs the question whether the clients know how to ask for an Income Support Program and what the real options might be. For example, in a remote community, clients don't know if they can appeal the case workers' decision and that the case worker must assist them with that appeal process. That's not happening.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to re-examine ways for the Income Support Program that might be improved to better serve those who most need assistance in the communities. Thank you. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CLEANUP OF CONTAMINATED MINE SITE
NEAR LUTSELK'E

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke of the need for environment officers in Tu Nedhe. Today, along that same line, I would like to talk about the Stark Lake cleanup near Lutselk'e. Mr. Speaker, I have raised the issue before and with little progress on this, I need to again raise awareness of this important environmental issue.

Mr. Speaker, the community, particularly the elders of the community, have been asking for something to be done ever since the mine closed in the late 1950s. It is unacceptable the way the land was left. Mr. Speaker, according to the community, the mine was a uranium mine that started in 1952 and then closed within a few years leaving behind a large tailings pile that was highly radioactive. The people hardly go near that area.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue for the community and a very serious issue for the environment. Something needs to be done as soon as possible. According to the community, since the mine closed residents have found fish that were deformed, some fish had unusually high amounts of parasites that may be fish coming from that area. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a primary source of food for the residents. Again, I cannot stress enough that this is a very serious matter and needs immediate attention.

Mr. Speaker, the government has a great opportunity to address a serious environmental concern and provide some employment opportunities for the community. I have stood up in the House and spoken about limited economic and employment opportunities in Lutselk'e, and it's no secret there a number of exploration projects underway in the regulatory process or at the discussion stage with the local aboriginal government. This translates into a need for environmental workers and responsible stewardship of the land. This is a traditional territory of the people of Lutselk'e. They know the land. We would be in the best position to work with the government to clean up this site.

Mr. Speaker, the Stark Lake cleanup project is a very serious environmental concern. This government needs to start working through the process of cleaning it up as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REDUCING DEPOSIT HOLDBACK FOR
RECYCLING MILK CONTAINERS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to congratulate the people of the Northwest Territories on their major success in taking up the challenge of recycling. Yesterday, the Minister of ENR added seven new beverage container types to the list of containers that can be recycled. Responsible citizens can now return 20 types of drink containers for return of deposits. In three short years, the number of communities with recycling depots has risen to 32 and over 100 million containers or 81 percent of drink containers sold are being returned for deposit.

We can see the benefits everywhere. Not only has beverage container recycling brought four out of five containers back for responsible disposal or recycling, the major nuisance of litter from spent drink containers has almost disappeared from our streets. Volunteer groups have found a new source of income to reward their initiative. I predict that the community cleanups that are coming this spring will be the last time we see major numbers of littered plastic bags included in the cleanup.

Perhaps the most important aspect of all this is that children are learning from early on that resources are precious and that every act can either be an act of respect for the environment and a contribution to the common good or an addition to the burden placed on the environment. By putting any revenues back into the recovery, what was once a major source of waste, we are building a capacity across the Territory to expand these efforts on other forms of waste.

Through recycling programs with the margin of return we have spurred development of local businesses and facilities needed to begin recovering more and different types of waste. Through government support, communities can look farther afield at controlling the handling of additional waste materials like cardboard and paper, tires, lead acid batteries, electronics and fuel drums. Nothing happens overnight, but we are taking firmer control of this challenge every day and disposing of the wasteful psychology that fuels the disposable society.

On the subject of the recent expansion of our drink container deposits, I would like one improvement. Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't be taxing essential nutrition like milk. While I support the waste reduction aspect, I will suggest that we should roll back the 10 cents spread between the deposit paid and the deposit refunded on milk containers. Congratulations to all on a great success story and our determination for greater achievements. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PAYDAY LOANS AND THE NEED FOR TERRITORIAL REGULATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about Payday Loans and the need for territorial regulations. Mr. Speaker, it is in the middle of the month. What does a person have to do if they are short of cash? Well, in Canada, there is a \$2 billion industry out there to help. They are eager, Mr. Speaker. This conventional short-term lending isn't available by the big banks so a person has to go to one of those short-term lending agencies often referred to Payday Loans. Now remember this, Mr. Speaker, convenience does

come at a price. It is a short-term loan and you have to promise to pay it back by your next pay cheque.

According to the Canadian Payday Loan Association, the average loan is about \$280 on a 10-day borrowing cycle. But how does the loan work? Well, you have to have a job. You have to have an active bank account, permanent residence, and in some cases you need a current phone bill and a blank cheque of some form so they can make sure they can go get the money. Remember, there is no credit check for this type of service. So you sign the loan agreement and you leave your information and in the short term, you are ready to go.

Now, the loan agreement will ensure that you understand all the terms and conditions. The terms and conditions usually include things like the fees and it also includes the issue of built-in fees. So, Mr. Speaker, some of the things you need to pay are up front prices, the first time charge, service fees, service charges, repayment options and, of course, they stress what happens if you are late.

Mr. Speaker, the law says you can't be charged more than 60 percent. In Yellowknife, I called around. Apparently their interest fee is 29 percent. But, Mr. Speaker, we can't forget about those fees because they are built into the price. There is administration, processing, convenience, verification, brokers, collectors, early repayment, late repayment, initial, one-time rollover fees. The fees go on and on.

In Yellowknife if you go to one of the lending agencies to borrow \$200 you have to pay \$180 back within two weeks. That's an interest rate of over 2,000 percent. If you went to another lending agency and borrowed \$500 you have to pay \$136 on top of that. In other words, your final payout is \$636, which is roughly 711 percent.

With time running out I'll say this: something needs to be done. This government needs to make sure its citizens are protected before something goes off the rail. Why wait for a problem and then act? We can act now.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR PROGRAMS AND TRAINING IN THE NWT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, [English translation not provided.]

Today I would like to speak about the interpreter/translator training in aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories. Last year the Standing Committee on Government Operations visited many communities as part of the review of the Official Languages Act. In every

community, people expressed concern about the lack of interpreters and translators. They were concerned as often there was no one to help people who were fluent only in their aboriginal language. Sometimes, for instance, there was no one to translate for an elder when he had to speak to a doctor or nurse, or for an elder who needs to give evidence in court.

For years the Standing Committee on Government Operations has recommended that the GNWT implement training and certification of interpreters. There have been training activities completed by the Yamozha Kue Society, however, the certification process for aboriginal interpreters/translators has not been established. In order to develop a certificate program, experts in the language are needed to assist with development and evaluation of testing materials. Unfortunately it can be very hard to find qualified evaluators.

We heard from Nunavut the importance of culture, of singing, for instance, as a means to preserve language. One's native language holds culture within it. It holds a way of looking at the world and it holds a traditional technology of living on the land. I trust that Education, Culture and Employment will take seriously the important task of preserving and revitalizing our aboriginal languages and the significant role that interpreters and translators can play in this task.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMPLETION OF COMMUNITY ENERGY PLANS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Community governments must complete the Community Energy Plan by March 31, 2010. The Gas Tax Agreement requires that all community governments complete an integrated community sustainable plan by the same date. Community energy plans are one component that has been considered. All communities in the Northwest Territories must comply with this arrangement.

March 31, 2010, is only a month and a half away. As the information that has been provided by the Minister indicates that only 10 communities have completed this plan out of 33, yet some 23 communities remain to have their work completed by March 31st. Hopefully we can complete some 13 communities by the end of February and hope that the last remaining one-third of those communities will be completed by the end of March. I think the question has to be asked what happens to those communities that do not complete their energy plan with respect to sustainable plans by March 31st and what is the penalty those communities will have to pay.

As we already know, a lot of our communities are having difficulties by running deficits, having challenges on capacity issues, and not having the resource people to assist them to complete this work. I feel that we have to ensure that we do everything we can to avoid this situation where communities will be penalized for not complying with the gas tax arrangements that we have with the federal government.

At the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs questions on the situation of what happens to communities that don't comply.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to introduce in our gallery Ms. Rose McConville, office manager of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations from our Ottawa office. Welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Indeed, welcome to the Chamber today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 334-16(4): AVAILABILITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FUND

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was about a year ago or just over a year ago when I stood up in this House a number of times asking the government questions about the Opportunities Fund and how it was that they came to make a decision to lend \$34 million out of that fund. What that did was to raise expectations from around the Territory for other businesses that wanted to get access to some of these dollars for their own pursuits.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance, I've got a number of questions for him today, but I'd like to ask the Minister why we haven't made any decisions on the availability of the balance of that fund for other businesses across the Territory.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we made the Discovery Air loan there was considerable angst and agitation by some Members on the other side of the House.

There was great concern about what was done. A freeze was put on the fund until it could be sorted out as how to go forward with the remaining money. We agreed to do that. We waited five or six months for a response from the committee. They said to come back and give us some options and we'll tell you what we think. In the meantime, even though this was shared in confidence with committee, the Member has pointed out that we're having some discussions now with the Auditor General in terms of how the Opportunities Fund will be accounted for in our books.

MR. RAMSAY: I don't want the Minister to be quick to criticize my committee for sitting on this for five months. It's been a year and these guys have not come up with a plan on the balance of that fund. I'd like to ask the Minister if the decision to lend the \$34 million last year changed the way the federal government looks at the fund, now wanting us to book that whole entire fund as debt. I'd like to ask that question.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Just for the record, it wasn't the Auditor General, it was Finance Canada that came back to us about how we treat and account for that money. I don't believe that the Discovery Air loan had any bearing on how we were told we have to account for the money. I understand in Yukon it's accounted for differently as well. I don't believe the Discovery Air loan, which in fact is generating enough revenue so this fund does not lose money, had a bearing on this current issue with Finance Canada.

MR. RAMSAY: I'd like to ask the Minister what the government's plans are in the immediate future for the remainder of that Opportunities Fund. If we're not making any money from the Opportunities Fund and we're actually paying an administration fee of 7 percent, what are we doing here? Why don't we just give the money back if it's going to be booked against our debt?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member's suggestion is a serious consideration.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When might the Regular Members finally find out from this government what it intends to do with the remainder of that Opportunities Fund?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I haven't yet used in this session in due course and the fullness of time, however, I will say that we are in discussions with Finance Canada. Finance Canada has indicated to us that they have this on their agenda, but they are now very preoccupied pulling their own budget together. So we are in ongoing discussions with Finance Canada about the resolution to this particular issue. As soon as we

have anything to report, we will be coming back to committee. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 335-16(4):
GNWT RESPONSE TO
JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, as I presume, the lead Minister on the Joint Review Panel. At least six of the Joint Review Panel recommendations to the NEB would require the proponents to demonstrate GNWT approval for various plans like incineration of wastes, wildlife plans and so on, plans strategies or assessments. The February 11th response to the NEB consult to modify process, in that the GNWT notes that it may be more appropriate to require the proponents to consult dot, dot, dot, instead of obtaining their approval. So the GNWT seems to be asking or shaking their shoulders from the responsibility or accepting the authority to require approval of those plans. Why would the GNWT make a recommendation renouncing an authority for GNWT approval seen by the JRP as necessary? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I was trying to follow where the Member was referring to in this particular letter, and I'm unable to follow it. The thing that sticks in my mind was the dot, dot, dot. I have the report here. I was trying to listen to what he was saying and find it in the report. So I'm unable to clearly respond to that unless I can be pointed to where it is in this document which, while it's before all the Members, is not really before this House. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that. That's a fair response. It's A.(2), on page 2 of the letter. I'm happy to see the Minister has it in front of him. Basically, there's the point A.(2) and then the immediate sentence below that rejects the opportunity for GNWT to take on the authority that this mechanism is providing us. Why would we do that? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we're in the process of pulling in a final response. A lot of what is in this letter, I'm assuming once again... I look at my A.(2) and I don't know if we're actually looking at the same document, which is the trouble, I suppose, with documents that aren't before this House. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I certainly agree there that this would have been much easier to do during a

committee process, much more straightforward, and I think my views on that are clear. So let me move on to another question, if I may.

The Joint Review Panel makes many recommendations aimed at the GNWT. To meet these environmental, social and economic recommendations would require a lot of money. Without knowing what new funds are available, it will be impossible for GNWT to tell the JRP how it can respond to these recommendations. Has the lead Minister opened negotiations with the federal government to obtain these new dollars? And I am assuming we're well along in estimating how many dollars we will need to fulfill some of these recommendations. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my Minister's statement, this process is only partway through. We have not come to any final conclusions or recommendations. We have to be very careful how we do that because we're one of the responsible Ministers. We know that before the start of the JRP process there was \$500 million that was talked about as a socio-economic impact fund that would be shared by affected regions up and down the valley. In conjunction with the fact that we already spend 65 cents of every dollar on social programs, that there would be some opportunity for integrating and coordinating our responses and resources, but at this point we are not anywhere near nor am I in a position to speak to the specifics of this report, because we're not there yet. When we're finally ready to move, I'm one of a number of responsible Ministers and I have to be very careful of our legal considerations so that no one can stand up in the Leg. that they have a reasonable apprehension of bias that we went into this with foregone conclusions. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rather than go on with this charade and have the Minister call this card all the time, I'd like to maybe ask if the Minister will speak frankly to the Members in committee and bring us into the process. I think we would have some contribution to be made to the guidance, to our legal counsel, and part of that would be recognizing Regular Members as part of this consensus government. But maybe I'll just ask the Minister if we can get that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member makes a good suggestion. In fact, as we speak, we are pulling together an offer for a joint briefing between myself, as the Minister responsible for the JRP, and Minister McLeod for the National Energy Board process to do a full and thorough briefing to committee. We'll bring in all the folks we need, all our skilled people, lawyers and such and have the

discussion about this process, which has a multitude of moving parts and lots of considerations that have to be accommodated. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 336-16(4):
CLEANUP OF CONTAMINATED MINE SITE
NEAR LUTSELK'E

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I spoke about the Stark Lake cleanup problem near Lutselk'e. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious environmental issue and I'm talking about some radioactive contamination. I have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister commit to directing his environmental staff to meet as soon as possible with the community of Lutselk'e on this issue? 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. I would share this information with the Member that the site in question is 22 kilometres east of Lutselk'e on Krys Point and Stark Lake. In the 1950s some advanced exploration was undertaken on site, which included blasting of a tunnel into the hillside in order to obtain samples for an assay. No milling or ore processing took place. The site was abandoned and the tunnel remained open. In the early 1990s, personnel from GNWT mine safety inspected abandoned mine sites around the NWT for safety concerns. The tunnel at Stark Lake was inspected and determined to be a possible concern and blasted closed. The site is located on Crown land and, therefore, the responsibility of the federal government. Indian and Northern Affairs has the site identified on their contaminated site inventory although it is not known if there are any contamination concerns on site. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I do recognize that the majority of the responsibility for cleanup on land and water within the Northwest Territories lies with the federal government. However, I do feel this government has some responsibility. Mr. Speaker, this is an immediate concern and, hopefully, we can get some immediate solutions. I also would be interested in some long-term solutions. Does the Minister have some sort of cleanup strategy for all of the contaminated sites in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: INAC undertook site reconnaissance in 2009 and identified the tunnel and adjacent blast rock pile remains of a cabin and tent frames and an old beached wooden barge. INAC plans to undertake a

combined phase 1 and 2 environmental site assessment in the summer of 2010. Mr. Speaker, ENR will commit to obtaining the results of the site assessment and share them with the MLA for Tu Nedhe. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: I thank the Minister for those responses. Will the Minister commit to working with the federal government and the communities of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e to develop some sort of a strategy to clean up the sites within Tu Nedhe?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, we'll work with the Member and the communities, and as the environmental assessments phase 1 and 2 are done and we get a sense of what the federal government is finding we'll be in a position to collectively ensure that we work together to make the right decisions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Stark Lake seems to be the immediate concern to the people around Lutselk'e, will the Minister commit to getting something done with the federal government and getting something done this summer in as far as actual onsite cleanup.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The environmental assessments by the federal government are planned for this summer. I think that it's a critical first step to make sure we know what's there and what may require cleaning up and how. We'll be keeping an eye on this and keeping the Member informed. Once we have that information we'll be in an informed position to make the right decisions going forward.

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

QUESTION 337-16(4):

MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY FOR STUDENTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It has to do with our medical travel. We have a very comprehensive Medical Travel Policy in the Northwest Territories and I would suggest that most of the time it works really, really well. Occasionally, though, we bring to the floor of this House some anomaly, some glitches where there are problems.

The policy is well-known that if somebody requires medical travel it has to originate within the Northwest Territories. However, this does not address the situation that I described today in my Member's statement where we have a student that's already halfway towards the facility where they need to receive medical attention from the specialist.

Now, the Minister could solve this with a one-off kind of answer about this particular instance, but I would like to ask the Minister if she would be willing to have her department look at the whole issue of medical travel for students attending post-secondary education and how we might come up with a policy framework that allows for some discretionary type approval for situations like this.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member brought this matter to my attention about 11:00 this morning. My staff and her staff are looking at the specific situation, but I do agree with the Member that we need to make sure that the students who are away and considered NWT residents in any other way should be able to take advantage of their medical travel. So I am reviewing the policy; not the policy, I have to first find out what is going on with this. I'm sure within the policy we can make this happen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: There are no doubt, I mean, the Medical Travel Policy is, no doubt, a very expensive policy and very expensive exercise of the Department of Health and Social Services because we do live in the North and we are remote from some of the very specialized services that are required by our constituents. It's a very large ticket item. It's very expensive. Sometimes things are done which might actually seemingly waste money, but the opportunity to save money is here before us.

I'd like to ask the Minister if there is anyone within the organization who looks after medical travel or medical insurance issues who she could see her way clear to give the kind of authority to, that could deal with things like this so that they don't end up having to reach her desk here in the Legislative Assembly.

HON. SANDY LEE: Without having reviewed the specific situation I'm not able to say right now whether or not this is a deficiency in the policy or it's a case of someone just not using the full breadth of the policy. I do need to look at this first.

Right now we do not have an appeal mechanism under the medical policy. That's the second part of the question. The review that we're doing of the policy will contemplate that and the changes that we're suggesting in other policy that we can't talk about yet, we are looking at that as a part of the larger review of the medical policy. In this situation I'm hesitant to say that it's either misapplication of the policy or the lack of the policy or anything until we find out exactly what happened, because in my two and a half years here I've not had any case like this. It could be that this might be an anomaly. I need to get some more facts.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: We have a lot of students from the North who do attend post-secondary facilities in Alberta. It seems to almost be a destination of choice. I don't have any statistics to bear that out. Where a constituent or resident can prove a cost savings to the government, the cost to get from Grande Prairie to Edmonton to see a specialist is a lot less than getting from Hay River to Edmonton. Where it is an absolute, undeniable, proven case of where it would cost less to waive the policy about it having to originate in the Northwest Territories, would this not be something that the Minister could simply and quickly and expeditiously put into place?

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, I would be interested in looking at that I will get back to the Member quickly.

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

QUESTION 338-16(4):

GAS TAX AGREEMENT AND COMPLETION OF
COMMUNITY ENERGY PLANS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. They are in regard to the agreement we have on the gas tax. In the agreement it stipulates that by March 31st the communities have to complete their community energy plans and their integrated community sustainability plans. Yet, from the information that I have, only 10 communities have completed their plans, leaving 23 communities to complete the work before March 31st. It's only a month and a half away.

In the information that's been provided it states that some communities are in the process of a meeting with council at the middle of March. This is pretty close to the deadline. In other cases they are still in the process of discussions with a consultant.

I'd like to ask the Minister what happens to those communities that do not complete their commitments under the Gas Tax Agreement and what is the penalty for not completing those reports by March 31st.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are 10 that are completed, 13 bringing them to their councils for approval in February, and the balance -- I believe it's 13 and 10, I may have the numbers backwards -- will have them to their councils for approval in March. We anticipate that all communities will meet the deadline. In the event that they don't, their funds will be held back until they have their plans completed and approved.

MR. KRUTKO: As we all know, some communities are having difficulties with deficits or lack of core staff to ensure they have capacity to do the work to complete these reviews. I'd like to ask the Minister what other resources are there for communities that do not have the capacity in SAOs or people in the communities who can actually physically do the work. Is the government willing to put more resources into those communities so that we can try to meet the deadline of March 31st?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: MACA held five regional workshops to help community governments with their plans. They brought in SAOs, two elected officials from each community to take part in the workshops. As well, some of the communities have gone to the private sector to help with their sustainability plans. We will continue to track those communities that may be a little behind, but we still anticipate that all communities are going to be completed by the March 31st deadline.

MR. KRUTKO: Could the Minister give us the statistics on the community energy plans and what communities have completed their community energy plans and which ones haven't? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, well, obviously, there are 10 of them that have completed all four. There are four components to the community sustainability plan and all of the 10 completed have obviously done all of them. I don't have the exact numbers with me. I'll get the numbers and I'll provide them to the Member. But if the 13 that are going to council for approval in February, then we would assume that they have their energy plans done. Then there are 10 that are going to their councils for approval in March. As for exact numbers as to how many have been completed to date, I will get that information and I'll pass it on to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe this is the perfect opportunity for this government to really put some capital infrastructure in the communities, especially for the smaller communities where they have higher energy costs and higher operating costs. I believe there's \$40 million for basically looking at the green funds that we have in place. So I'd just like to ask the Minister exactly is this government going to also be looking at alternative means of energy in communities, more importantly, in regard to the capital dollars we have elsewhere to assist these communities where we realize that they have high energy costs and that basically the communities are unsustainable under the existing systems that they are using.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with the communities in identifying their energy needs and where they can make

improvements so when the community decides what infrastructure that they're going to build, then they'll be able to incorporate a lot of the ideas. That's why the Arctic Energy Alliance is playing a part in working with some of the communities in coming up with their community energy plans. So this would go a long way, and I've spoken to one community in particular that had some concerns about some of the energy costs and how they were doing some new work and they were going to incorporate some of the recommendations made in the energy plans. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 339-16(4):
PAYDAY LOANS AND NEED FOR
GNWT REGULATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today I talked about payday loans and the fact that I believe the territorial consumer is being left at risk. I think that's time for this government to take an active interest in this file and rather than wait for an accident to happen, we should take control of it through sound, reasonable regulations.

Mr. Speaker, seven out of 10 of the provinces in this Dominion of Canada have ensured that low rates exist for people who have to go to Payday Loans, and they've ensured that the protection of the citizens is certainly a priority.

Mr. Speaker, the last point I want to make is the federal government says, through the Criminal Code, that you cannot charge more than 60 percent on these types of loans, but the fact is even though they hide it with a cheap introduction loan, the maximum of 60 percent does not take into account the fees that are often charged with this. So I'm going to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, who's also the Minister responsible for consumer affairs, is he willing to take a look at prescribing regulations here in the Northwest Territories that protect consumers and don't put them at risk because of these high interest fees that are charged with the payday loans? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, MACA is working with our federal/provincial/territorial counterparts to look at issues regarding the consumer credit card market, and we're looking at ways that we can improve our efforts to protect consumers. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, in information that's been sent to me it says basically it's at the

discretion of the lending agency. So I'm really curious what MACA is doing as they watch this evolve. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we haven't had any concerns brought to our attention yet by the consumers, but we do have a consumer affairs person that monitors a lot of the goings-on out there. If this continues to be a practice or something that consumers need information on or just need reassurance that they are protected, then it's something that, as a government, we have to do. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a firm role here for government to backstop the public to make sure that regulations and oversight exist before something goes off the rails. Mr. Speaker, it's clear that these types of loans are given to people with low income or, certainly, to middle income Canadians and puts them in financial risk. Why is the Minister waiting for complaints in order to act rather than doing something? Mr. Speaker, the opportunity exists here. Would the Minister act and look into regulations and develop them in a fair way as seven other provinces have in this country?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, we'll look into it. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the Minister. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister elaborate a little further, such as does he anticipate that he'll look into this right away or is it one of those little things that will hang there and say someday we'll take a look at it; we're not against it, but maybe we'll be for it? So could the Minister, sort of, elaborate a little further on his answer? Because my expectations are reasonable but certainly are there now. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we'll look into it right away. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 340-16(4):
INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR PROGRAMS
AND TRAINING IN THE NWT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement with regard to the Interpreter/Translator Program. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment what is the existing programming that we do have available for residents out there currently. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have a program in place through the Yamozha Kue Society through the Dene Cultural Institute. We deliver a module pilot training program. There have been different training programs in Yellowknife, Lutselk'e and other communities as well. It's based on the modules. So, Mr. Speaker, once those six training modules are delivered... And a certificate of achievement is also awarded to those individuals. Once the six modules are completed, it's going to be delivered in all language communities. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm glad to hear that there will be an expansion of that program throughout the North. Is that something that's planned for the upcoming fiscal year 2010-2011? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, this is an ongoing initiative that's been in the works for several years now and we will continue to work on improving in this area so that we can deliver a wide range of interpretation and also translation training programs into the regions. We're reaching out to the communities. But, Mr. Speaker, with the upcoming language symposium that's scheduled for the end of March, this will be one of the topics of discussion at that forum. We want to get input from the language experts to give us direction on this particular piece of work. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Will this program be expanded after March 31st to other communities? I know that the language symposium will give us lots of direction and lots of good ideas as we'll have the experts from throughout Canada, but I'd like to know if our Interpreter/Translator Program will be expanded to invite other members of the public to join it. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the modules that I'm talking about is we gave further funding in August 2009 to provide the Yamozha Kue Society to complete the development and product of the training modules for the community-based interpreter and the translator training modules that will be delivered as a pilot project.

Mr. Speaker, we need to reach out to the five regions that we have and it will take gradual steps, but this is an ongoing pilot project that we're continuing to promote. Again, at the language symposium the experts around the table will give us more feedback on this particular program. Mahsi.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will this Interpreter/Translator Program get to the level where the people attending it can be certified trainers in the regions and communities? Even I'm looking towards having something with Aurora College as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, that will be part of the long-term goal that we have where we did have a successful college Interpreter Training Program in the past and also that is the area that we are also looking at as well. In the meantime, we are delivering the training modules in the region. We will continue to work in that area and also improving in what we have on hand. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 341-16(4):
CLIENT SERVICE OFFICERS
IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement was on ECE and the community of Tuktoyaktuk. Mr. Speaker, I try to go home every weekend when we are down here sitting. Every time I go home, I get phone calls from different people in the community saying their first call is always ECE. I've been having this problem for the last 18 months. I'm really getting discouraged here.

Mr. Speaker, case workers are sometimes on duty travel and the replacements are often flying in and flying out on a daily basis to fill the regional budget. Are the regional budgets large enough to handle this travel? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We feel that we need to meet the needs of all clientele in the Northwest Territories. We do provide budgets and funding to each department and also to the respective regions. There has been an increase in the travel budget as it has been highlighted in previous budgets and also this year as well. We continue to go out to isolated communities. It does cost us extra. Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have a budget for that. Mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, the department for those who most need the program do not really know what their options are. Mr. Speaker, how would the department inform the community clients of their options? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we have client service officers that get together every now and then to highlight the key changes or program that is on hand. If there are any new initiatives that the community should be aware of through any client service officer and, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly take this into consideration with respect to the Member's riding. If there is not enough information being shared, then we need to do that and other communities as well. Mr. Speaker, we will do what we can to provide more

choices and the program delivery into the communities. Mahsi.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, there is enough work in the community of Tuktoyaktuk for at least two case workers. Every month there is a line-up of people trying to get to see the ECE worker to get help to provide food for their kids, and not only that, to pay some of their bills. Mr. Speaker, when can the department respond to at least having two case workers in the community of Tuktoyaktuk? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we do what we can with what we have in resources in the regions, whether it be the Tuktoyaktuk client service officers and we do have regional representatives as well that go to the communities. Some communities may feel that the caseload is also increasing. Those are areas that we are looking at as ECE department where we can add resources if we need to based on the clientele, the caseload. Those are areas that we are looking at, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister to get a hold of client services in regards to not only Nunakput but all over, the workers that are working in the communities to start helping the people that are asking for help in regards to productive choices. We have 65-year-old people having to go out and shovel. That is not right. Mr. Speaker, this government, is there a different list of productive choices between a place like Yellowknife than Tuktoyaktuk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, productive choices is throughout the Northwest Territories. It is the same for clientele. The Member has alluded to an elder shovelling. There is an exemption for aged individuals that it is not required to do these kinds of chores unless they participate to do so. Mr. Speaker, I can certainly provide the list of exemptions and also the productive choices that have been highlighted is the list that we follow within the choices that have been offered. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 342-16(4):
GNWT RESPONSE TO
JOINT REVIEW PANEL REPORT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I addressed the response to the JRP recommendations that was filed by the GNWT to the NEB. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, who is responsible for the NEB portion of this. It was Minister McLeod who advised the chair of the Economic Development and Infrastructure committee that the response was

filed. Since the Minister was the recipient of a letter from the Social Programs committee, the same kind of a letter that went to the Minister of EDI. I would like to know from Minister McLeod why the chair of the Social Programs committee was not advised of the filing of the response in the same manner that he advised the chair of EDI. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess for a couple of reasons. One is we normally work with the Standing Committee of Economic Development. Secondly, we weren't aware that the Standing Committee on Operations wanted input into the response to NEB. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I am a little nonplussed, I guess, by the Minister's response that he would choose to ignore the request of a standing committee. I want to quote from the letter that was sent to the Hon. Robert R. McLeod sometime in January. The date is not evident here, but from the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and the chair said, "committee members are very interested in the recommendations made in the JRP report on the Mackenzie Gas Project and want both the opportunity to provide input in the development of a response and an opportunity to review the response before it is final."

I guess from that I would like to reiterate to the Minister and ask the Minister why, in the light of that letter, would he ignore that request and not advise the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have the letter right here. It is from the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. There is no reference to the NEB in that letter. I assume that the Standing Committee on Social Programs is only interested in the Joint Review Panel recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I guess I have to then ask the Minister of ITI how he can say that that response that was filed with the NEB did not reference the recommendations from the Joint Review Panel. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am just going by the letter that I received from the Standing Committee on Social Programs. As my colleague the Minister of ENR indicated, we are quite prepared to do a joint briefing with the different committees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the offer from both Ministers to have a

briefing. I think it is something that absolutely is necessary. It will certainly forestall the lack of feeling that we are being left out over here on this side of the House.

I wonder if I could ask the Minister how the response was filed without any input from Regular Members. What was the rationale for that? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess there were a number of reasons. First and foremost is we were working under very tight timelines and if we didn't file by February 11th we would have forgone the opportunity to appear before the different panel hearings. We didn't want to be like the federal government where three federal departments that are intervening did not respond because they don't support the pipeline. So as a responsible government, it was incumbent upon us.

We have to recognize that through NEB we are very limited in scope as to what we can respond on. We're talking about the technical aspects with regard to construction of the pipeline and toll rates and development of the anchor fields. We can't introduce any new material, so it's quite restrictive. Also, it is still unclear as to how information would be handled because of the fact that there are three Members that are interveners and there is the Clerk and the legal lawyers working on what kind of process we can establish. That hasn't been finalized as of yet.

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

QUESTION 343-16(4):

REVIEW OF RENT SCALE IN THE NWT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. Over the last number of months and years, actually years, I received a number of complaints and inquiries from constituents who have secured employment recently and already live in social housing units, or from constituents who have jobs and only recently managed to get a social housing unit. Many are single people just starting out, single parents or families with young children. The problem is that as soon as they get a job or those who have jobs move into social housing, they are assessed the maximum rent that the program follows.

My question is to the Minister of Housing. When we impose the rent increases for people living in social housing who manage to get a job, it may be counterproductive encouraging people to be self-reliant. Can the Minister tell this Assembly when he'll release the rental review report and get some good discussions from Members on this side on how we're going to deal with this issue?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are planning on undertaking a review of the rent scale. I've pointed that out before. We are looking to come to committee with the results. We are planning on having it ready for review by the end of this fiscal year.

MR. YAKELEYA: I look forward to the review of the rent scale report by the end of this fiscal year. Will the Minister then look at if the discussion should come well within the committees and have some good discussions to look at this problem? Will he come forward with bringing it to Cabinet to implement what recommendations we have that will support families and single parents in small communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: First of all I have to clarify. I said fiscal year, but it was the upcoming fiscal year and not the end of this particular fiscal year. So the 2010-2011 fiscal year. I apologize for that.

It is a concern that we have heard far and wide, is the rent people are being charged once they've gained employment. We always want to make sure that if we're housing people, we try and work out the Homeownership Program so a lot of these people can graduate into the Homeownership Program. Housing tries very hard to make sure all the tenants are adequately housed and, with the review of the rent scale, we're looking to make some improvements and listen to what we've been hearing from the Members in the Legislative Assembly.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you for the clarification of the fiscal years. In saying that, that is quite a length of time between now and the years that the Minister quoted. I guess this is an issue that will be out there a bit. How do we deal with this issue? Because I think this issue is pressing. How do we look at issues that we can support families today who want to be productive people in their communities, yet at the same time this issue here of assessing the maximum rent when they're still over their heads for them being contributors to the people in their communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We try very hard to make sure that all the people are adequately housed. There are 19 tenants across the Northwest Territories out of 2,400 public housing units that are paying maximum rent. That's a good number. These are the folks we tried to design the Homeownership Program for so that they could graduate from public housing into home ownership. We're making every attempt to make sure that we work with these people, because we hear the argument that sometimes the rent is too high and

it's a detriment to getting a job. We don't want to be able to hear those arguments anymore.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I wouldn't mind having a list of these 19 people who are paying the maximum rent, because I've been hearing that as soon as they get a job in my riding, that the rent goes right up. It discourages people from working and to be in social housing. I know they want to be in these units and hopefully they can apply and be successful in these applications. I have a hard time in this. I'm here to say this is something that seems like it's not taken very seriously by the departments here.

I'd like to know how we look at this issue. Can I get a list of the 19 tenants?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm not going to be able to provide the Member with the names of these 19 tenants. I can provide some of the regions that they're in, but as far as names go with the information and everything, we have to be careful. We have to understand that maximum rent in the communities could be as high as \$2,300, but that doesn't mean that somebody who has a job is going to pay the \$2,300. It's based on the income that they're making. I will commit to the Member that I'll get him some information and sit down with him.

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

QUESTION 344-16(4):

SHELTER FOR HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of ITI with regard to my Member's statement yesterday and looking at the possibility of supporting the people in Haiti by providing them shelter. As I noted yesterday in my Member's statement, there are over 160 tents in the canvas shop in Fort McPherson in inventory. This government committed \$50,000 to Haiti, but I think the demand right now is shelter. As we can see from the pictures on television, these people are simply using tarps and tying them together for shelter. I think the latest statistics state that there's over a million people without shelter.

I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI if he has had any discussions with External Affairs or the federal government or the Canadian Military on the possibility of taking these tents to Haiti to get them to the people who need them.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I think that's a great idea and we are always looking for a market for our products. I think that would be an excellent way to promote the tents and the products of the Northwest Territories. The main thing is it's operating as a business, so we would have to find the money to pay for the tents. I think we would perhaps do that through a supp of some sort if we get the necessary support.

MR. KRUTKO: There's been hundreds of millions of dollars raised through charity by people across Canada for which the federal government, I believe, matched \$50 million. There is a lot of money in the system. My understanding is that only something like 35 percent of the money has actually made its way to Haiti. There's some 65 percent still sitting and that hasn't been expended. I think that's the area we should be focusing on. So I'd like to ask the Minister, or even through this government, have we seriously made the offer to the country of Haiti through the Government of Canada or External Affairs for the Canadian Military to find a way to get these tents from Fort McPherson to Haiti, and at the end of the day, who's going to pay for it? That's another matter, but I think the key situation here is let's get those tents to the people who need it. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess the hardest part would be the logistics of getting 160 tents from Fort McPherson to Haiti. Right off the top of my head, I would expect we could probably do it on a backhaul from Inuvik or one of the trucks that are going back. I know that one of the local airlines, First Air, has provided a couple of their Hercs free of charge to assist in Haiti, so that's one avenue. I guess another avenue is to get the military to fly it out of Inuvik. Those are some of the logistics that we would have to look at, Mr. Speaker.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd like to thank the Minister for that, because I think that's the type of thinking and type of support we're going to need from either non-governmental organizations, the private sector and do our part to get these tents to the people in Haiti. My issue is, we have to find a way of getting them there. I'd just like to ask the Minister, have you spoken to anyone in regard to the Prime Minister's office or someone in Ottawa to see exactly how they can work with ourselves, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, to find a way to get these tents to the people in Haiti.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: No, I have not had the opportunity to convey this information to anyone as of yet, but, certainly, I think it would be a good idea. I know these tents; people can live in the middle of winter under these tents, so it would certainly be helpful in Haiti. But this is something that we can get a hold of the responsible parties to try to make it happen.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government spent \$50,000 and donated to Haiti. Again, we could have probably purchased 50 tents which could have gone to Haiti already. But again, it's up to us as government to find a way. I know that the Minister mentioned that they are possibly looking at a possible supp, but, again, I think that there are a lot of NGOs that have basically raised money across the country. So I'd like to suggest making contacts with those organizations, put them on notice that these tents are there and find a way that we can work with them to get them to the people of Haiti. I'd like to get a commitment from the Minister that he gets someone within his department to start getting the phones going so that we can make these contacts and get these tents to the people in Haiti.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if it would be somebody within my department, but I think that from within the government we can certainly look at the opportunities. Also, my understanding is the Prime Minister of Canada is in Haiti right now, so perhaps that would be another avenue whereby we get the Prime Minister to make an announcement and maybe they'll pay for all the tents as well. I think there are a number of different ways we can approach this and I think that we'll start looking at it right away. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 345-16(4):
EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES REVIEW

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my oral questions and Member's statement I was talking about the two schools in Yellowknife Centre, one would be J.H. Sissons and the other would be Mildred Hall. In my questions to the Minister I was trying to raise the fact that with these schools there are several areas of renovations that need to be tackled and certainly addressed. The Minister, in his response, said that there was an educational review currently underway. I spoke to some of the officials over at YK No. 1 and they're not aware of this educational review that's going on at this time. They have not been approached by anyone at this time, and of course, their concern, as well, being is the fact that they own their buildings at this time.

So, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister able to update this House as to what is actually happening with this educational review and will they be contacting the

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 here to discuss their educational needs? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, my department met with YK No. 1 on November 26, 2009, to provide an overview of the updates on the Yellowknife Education District No. 1 facilities. So there has been a meeting and now, based out of that, there has been a request, not necessarily from them but the three school boards that we deal with, on a request for an educational overview for the Yellowknife riding.

So, Mr. Speaker, based on that, there is a review of the 10-year education facility plan that's currently underway. It's based on looking at the impact of the enrolment data from the past four years and possible future direction on space planning. So that review should be completed by spring 2010. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, in discussing this matter with the chair of the YK No. 1 board, they seem to feel strongly that no one has approached them from the educational review as far as their facilities are concerned. Mr. Speaker, in essence, I'm not trying to create a problem here. I just want to make sure that the educational review facility team actually does get in contact with the YK No. 1 board and does a full, fair and honest assessment of those two facilities I highlighted. Will that happen? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, there has been a meeting already in November 2009, and, yes, we can come back to the YK No. 1 school board again to give them an update of what's happening and why we're doing an educational review. So, Mr. Speaker, there is a consult underway reviewing the schools across the Yellowknife area. It's in the works, but I would commit to the Member that there can be a discussion from our department again, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The time for question has expired; however, I will allow the Member a supplementary question. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister keeps pointing that they talked to them, and that's right. I mean, YK No. 1 talks to the deputy minister of Education all the time. And as a matter of fact, I bet they talk about schools and educational programs and infrastructure all the time. So, Mr. Speaker, that's a fair observation, but we're really coming down to the nuts and bolts of this, which is the consult and the report and the plan. So ultimately, I want to make sure that they get in contact with the YK No. 1 school board. That's all I'm asking. That's all that

needs to be done, and I want to make sure it's done in a timely way that that information can be fairly brought into the equation and consideration when we're looking at updates. Would the Minister make sure that this consultant who's doing this review engages the YK No. 1 board in a timely way so that their schools are considered fairly? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is part of the consultation. That's why we hire a consultant to have an overall review with the school boards in Yellowknife. I'm not sure if I'm getting a clear message to the Member that we're in the process of reviewing the schools in the Yellowknife area and, certainly, the consultant will be in touch with the school boards to identify what's required, what's needed. That's why it's called a school review. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure the Minister is getting my point. The fact is, he's saying that there's a review going on and I've got a school board that says they haven't heard from the reviewer. So that's the only issue at hand here, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that I need to be assured, this House needs to be assured, there needs to be a clear message from the Minister of Education that the consultant will be instructed to make sure that they consult with YK No. 1 in a timely way to make sure their schools that are in desperate need of renovations are considered in this evaluation. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, again, the consultant will gather all the facts from the school boards, so I'm sure there will be a consultation happening with the school board. Mr. Speaker, Yellowknife education facility is under review and it will be completed in the spring of 2010 and, yes, there is consultation happening with the school boards. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 74-16(4):
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION 2009-2011 CORPORATE PLAN

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document titled Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission 2009-2011 Corporate Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 75-16(4):
LETTER FROM LAWSON LUNDELL TO
NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD ON MACKENZIE
GAS PROJECT HEARING ORDER GH-1-2004,
GNWT RESPONSE TO THE
RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE JRP REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 76-16(4):
LETTER FROM BROMLEY TO NEB
REQUESTING TERMINATION OF HIS
INTERVENER STATUS IN THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT
HEARING GH-1-2004

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a letter from Lawson Lundell to the National Energy Board dated February 11, 2010, titled Mackenzie Gas Project Hearing Order GH-1-2004 Government of the Northwest Territories Response to the Recommendations in the JRP Report.

I also wish to table my letter to the acting secretary of the National Energy Board requesting termination of intervener status for myself. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 14-16(4):
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND
APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, February 18, 2010, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the appointments to standing committees of the following Members be revoked: Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Member for Hay River South, to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure; Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Member for Hay River South, to the Standing Committee on Government Operations; Mr. David Krutko, Member for Mackenzie Delta, to the Standing Committee on Social Programs; Mr.

Jackie Jacobson, Member for Nunakput, as an alternate Member to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MOTION 15-16(4):

EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO FEBRUARY 22, 2010

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, February 18, 2010, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 18, 2010, it shall be adjourned until Monday, February 22, 2010; and further, that any time prior to February 22, 2010, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies. I inadvertently missed a portion of this, so I am going to read it in again.

MOTION 14-16(4):

REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENTS AND
APPOINTMENTS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

I give notice that on Thursday, February 18, 2010, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that the appointments to standing committees of the following Members be revoked: Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Member for Hay River South, from the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure; Mr. Jackie Jacobson, Member for Nunakput, from the Standing Committee on Government Operations; and Mr. David Krutko, Member for Mackenzie Delta, from the Standing Committee on Government Operations; and further, that the following Members be appointed to standing committees: Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure and the Standing Committee on Government Operations; Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, Member for Hay River South, to the Standing Committee on Government Operations; Mr. David Krutko, Member for Mackenzie Delta, to the Standing Committee on Social Programs; and Mr. Jackie Jacobson, Member for Nunakput, as an

alternate member to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: 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. By the authority given 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**

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) and Minister's Statement 47-16(4), 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 consider the Department of Environment and Natural Resources budget along with, if possible and time permitting, moving onto the Department of Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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 Environment and Natural Resources.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We agreed to continue with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. At this time, I'd like to ask the Minister of Environment if he has any opening comments. Minister of Environment, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have opening comments. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to speak to the 2010-2011 Main Estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The plan proposes total operational expenses of \$65.7 million for the

upcoming year. This is an 8 percent increase over last year.

As Members are aware, the mandate of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is to promote and support the sustainable use and development of natural resources and to protect, conserve and enhance the NWT environment for the social and economic benefit of all NWT residents.

A range of activities are proposed to uphold this mandate and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few key investments planned for the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Chair, during 2010-2011, ENR, working in collaboration with federal and aboriginal governments, will spend \$821,000 to finalize the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy and develop a plan to implement its actions. In addition, \$200,000 will be targeted towards the development of a system for tracking the health of NWT aquatic ecosystems and an extra \$115,000 to develop tools aimed at helping NWT communities protect their water supply sources.

The department will also continue working with the Department of Executive on the development of a land use framework. Implementation of the framework will require comprehensive geomatics, management and information support systems to provide access to complete, timely and accurate information. Support will also continue for the NWT Protected Areas Strategy. Combined, these initiatives are budgeted at almost \$500,000.

Climate change remains a serious concern for the NWT and we are continuing to take action in this area. As a government, we have committed to an investment of \$60 million over four years focussed on energy conservation and alternative energy sources. In 2010-11, ENR will focus its attention in the areas of biomass, solar hot water heating systems and wind energy for a total of \$1.5 million.

The GNWT's Greenhouse Gas Strategy will require renewal in 2011. Work on this initiative will begin in 2010, including consultation with the public, industry and other interested sectors.

This budget adds \$100,000 to bring 2010-2011 funding for the Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Plan to \$350,000. This investment will fund further work on the geophysical permafrost survey so a plan can be developed to help affected communities.

The government will expand and build upon the successes seen in the Waste Reduction and Recovery Programs. During the coming year, the government will not only evaluate the current list of recycling efforts, which include the 25-cent Bag Fee Program, milk containers added to the Beverage Container Program and the second year of the paper and cardboard recycling initiative, but will

also investigate the feasibility of establishing an e-waste recycling program for the NWT.

Mr. Chair, the NWT Species at Risk Act came into force February 1, 2010. This important piece of legislation will help us identify species at risk, protect habitats and put in place processes to help species recover. This legislation was developed through a collaborative drafting process which saw land claim organizations working hand in hand with GNWT staff.

Building on this successful work, the GNWT will now begin implementing the new act and using this collaborative drafting model to help create a much needed and modernized NWT Wildlife Act. These activities will be undertaken through an additional investment of almost \$800,000 in 2010-2011.

In response to the continued decline of barren-ground caribou, the GNWT plans to continue its work with neighbouring jurisdictions and land claim groups on acquiring additional survey data on both the Bluenose-East and Ahik herds. In addition, a calf survival survey will be undertaken on all herds, including the Bathurst, during the coming spring. This work will be undertaken through a continued investment of \$500,000 in the coming year.

Mr. Chair, traditional knowledge continues to play an important role in ENR's mandate. During the coming year, \$300,000 will be spent on the Traditional Knowledge Implementation Strategy. This will help us work with our aboriginal partners and further our efforts in incorporating traditional knowledge in our decision-making.

As Members are aware, a large part of the department's budget is spent on the prevention, detection, monitoring and suppression of wildfires in the Northwest Territories. This work is undertaken through the department's Forest Fire Management Policy. During 2010-2011, the department will finalize its review of this policy and update the definition of "values at risk." Mahsi cho.

That concludes my opening comments for the department's 2010-2011 Main Estimates. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before committee and I would be happy to answer any questions that Members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing any witnesses. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

For the record, Mr. Miltenberger, could you introduce your witnesses, please?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me are Gary Bohnet, deputy minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and Ms. Nancy Magrum, director of finance, shared services for ENR and ITI.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments regarding the Department of Environment and Natural Resources? Does committee agree to go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. Turn to page 13-7, department summary. Can I get some direction to defer that page to after consideration of the rest of the detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 13-8, Environment and Natural Resources, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-9, Environment and Natural Resources, information item, revenue summary. Questions? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know Members have been interested in supporting the department's negotiations with the federal government to increase rates for fishing licences. I believe the department was planning to act on that. I'm wondering where things are at on that one.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have initiated correspondence and put in the request to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to look at their fishing permits. At the same time we're also looking at our own hunting permits and looking at bringing those up as well.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm just wondering when we might expect an update on that and when we expect to have things concluded.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy minister.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll be bringing in the new rates July 1st of this year for the hunting licence fees and the increase in vendors' fees.

MR. BROMLEY: Is something happening on the fishing licences end? I think we were actually not that interested in upping the rates on the hunting licences. Just for clarification, are rates going up on our hunting licences and where are we at on fishing licences?

MR. BOHNET: Yes, we'll be increasing the hunting licence fees also here in the Territories on July 1st. In regard to the fishing licence, it takes some federal regulation changes and we've been in contact with DFO and they are presently working with us. We hope to have something in place for the next fiscal year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley. Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How big of an increase on the hunting licence?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Yes, thank you. We're basically looking at doubling the hunting licence fees.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Just for clarification, I believe the question was how much. Do you have the actual amounts?

MR. BOHNET: Mr. Chairman, I do not have the actual amounts with me. We can get them for you.

MR. JACOBSON: I would appreciate that if he could get that back to all Members what it would cost our constituents for the new hunting licences.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll get that information and share it with committee members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering what additional services we're providing to our hunters with the doubled fees. Obviously this is kind of a tough time to be doubling fees when our main wildlife are down in numbers.

I know there has been a recognized need for a long time now to start implementing a hunters training course and perhaps it is something that should be developed and introduced as mandatory for a certain age group to start ensuring that we have... It's a more complex world out there these days. There's not the same connection with our fathers and traditional harvesters of the past. ... (inaudible) ... the way they were. I think there is a bigger role now for the department. I am wondering what the thinking is on that, what additional services we're contemplating with the doubled licence fee. When was the last time we adjusted licence fees? Perhaps it is time. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, last year we were asked to come back with a plan to bring up our fees. So we are working on that. We will be glad to share that plan with the committee, with the Members. Part of the focus that we have talked about in that the farmers invested a significant amount of time and effort as a whole area of conservation education and hunting education so that we can work with parents,

traditional knowledge, elders, to make sure that people have the proper respect both for the land and the animals that they are harvesting. I will let the deputy minister speak a bit more to that and possibly give an idea when the last time hunting licences were increased.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Deputy minister.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is noted over the past several years that the hunting and fishing licence fees in the Northwest Territories were by far the lowest in Canada, in fact, unusually low compared to any jurisdiction in North America. That is something we were asked to investigate and bring back a fee raise for consideration. Part and parcel of the thing is we are looking at administering a public education...(inaudible)...and specifically hunter education program that could be brought into place after we finish designing it knowing that the fees for these particular items, licence fees and all that go back into general revenue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bohnet. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate those comments. Of course, the reason we have those fees is because there is a high cost of living in the North and I am sure it is not a surprise when people hear that it is not just aboriginal people that can rely on wild game for their main protein source. I think the intent was to keep that accessible. That is just a comment, Mr. Chairman. I will throw that out for consideration when we think about raising licence fees. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We are on page 13-9, Environment and Natural Resources, revenue summary, information item. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are moving on to page 13-10, again, information item, Environment and Natural Resources, active position summary. Are there any questions? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just on the increase of active positions from 187 to 194. Could the Minister elaborate a little bit on the increase?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I have a list of all of the new positions in the regions in headquarters. I would be happy to share those and seasonal positions. I could read them for the record if you like or I can just agree to share it with the committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister, for providing that information. We could

circulate it. Mr. Yakeleya, do you have any other questions?

MR. YAKELEYA: No, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we are on page 13-10, active position summary, information item. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are moving on to page 13-13, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$14.366 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk to the issue here, the first one being the land and water management, more specific to the water management with the transboundary agreements that are being discussed with the governments and other governments here and the amount of I call it in our language, poison, this fluid coming down the south part of this Territory in the Slave River into the Slave Lake and down the Mackenzie River. I think I want to ask if there are any types of strong monitoring and provisions in place that we could monitor the effects of the chemicals coming down. I want to ask the Minister in terms of how we are dealing with this issue here.

We may not see too much of the issue here, but the people down the Mackenzie Valley here, the region I represent, rely a lot on this river here. We are very concerned, especially when I heard on the radio, CBC, that Fort Good Hope had a fish study. It looks pretty scary, the water and the fish and that. I think this should be deemed as an emergency measure in terms of putting in some strong mechanisms and tell the B.C. government to put their garbage somewhere else, not down the Mackenzie River. What is this in terms of giving strength to this Minister here, the government here, to put a strong mechanism in place to say you are no longer allowed to dump your garbage in the Mackenzie River? There are people out here that survive on this as we survive on caribou. This is something that is very important to us. If there is no good water, how are we going to live?

We have to follow what our elders are talking about this water here. That is one question I want to ask the Minister. This is really important to me and my people, good water even down to the Beaufort Sea. Our people's lives are depending on this. I'm fed up with the Alberta government, B.C. government dumping their garbage in our system here. What can we do in terms of protest or put a good strong stance to this Alberta tar sands and other stuff that say divert your rear somewhere else. I don't want them to stick a handle on this issue because poison is poison, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, this is a very important issue which is why collectively we agreed to spend the money we have and the time and resources. We are very close to the final phases of signing off our draft Water Strategy which will no longer be draft. It will be our policy base and then we also have money in the budget to look at implementing throughout the whole Mackenzie River basin.

The issue of adequate monitoring is a very significant issue, not only the amount of monitoring but are we monitoring for the right things. Dr. Schindler just completed a fairly extensive downstream assessment of water and aquatic ecosystems below and flowing north into the Slave and raised significant red flags. Our challenge now is to work with the territorial government, the federal government, and other interested parties. There are universities, there are NGOs that are interested in putting money into proper monitoring, increasing our capacity and we want to look at doing that.

We also have money in the budget to initiate our negotiation process now that we completed our Water Strategy, come up with the next plan which is to be able to move to the table with Alberta and B.C. and Saskatchewan to look at negotiating a bilateral agreement as a requirement of the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Agreement.

We also recognize, as well, that there is a growing number of issues in the Peel watershed. While we have a bilateral agreement there, it is somewhat dated and we are going to be looking at that to see if it is as effective, as we think it should be given all that we now know about water and the interest and concern about water.

Those are some of the plans for the future. We also have money in the budget within communities as well to continue to work through MACA and Public Works as well as ENR to make sure that, from the tap to the headwaters, we have the safest water possible. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, I am from the old school of learning in terms of the traditional law that is being spoken to us by people in the communities, the elders. You start to see reports back that what I did in Fort Good Hope in terms of the fish and the affects of the chemicals coming into the water here, I do look forward to seeing when we have a final document in terms of the transboundary agreements with the provinces. It still doesn't answer my question in terms of the debris that is coming down into the Athabasca into the Slave into the Great Slave Lake which will eventually flow into the Mackenzie River which would flow right out to the Beaufort Sea. What are we going to do in terms of strong monitoring effect, studies that we have in the water?

We are going to have no people in the Mackenzie here. The Minister is giving a good outline as to

what possibly could happen. However, I want something that is solid, concrete and would say, yes, this is what we are going to do. We are going to affect the quality of our water. Take water out of the Mackenzie now. In one year or two years down the road, it will be the same quality of water. You won't see the increase of chemicals that are being infected into the Mackenzie River water. That is what I am looking for.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, two things to be more specific, within the Northwest Territories there is an extensive amount of water monitoring done but it is fragmented across very many departments and different levels of government. One of the plans is within the Territory to come up with a comprehensive water monitoring strategy that will identify all the resources, how do we better link them and identify the gaps of what needs to be better monitored. The other critical piece is going to be the negotiations on the bilateral agreement with Alberta and B.C. where we are going to be coming to the table with the questions, those types of questions about water quality and making sure that the right type of testing is done. It is not just a matter of checking to see how much Javex you need in your water anymore. We are now looking at exotic chemicals, naphthenic acids, aromatic polycyclic, aromatic carbons, things floating down from the sky, so things that we never contemplated, could hardly even spell a couple of years ago. It now rolls off our tongue because we are concerned about them. Those are the things we are looking at trying to work with Alberta in our bilateral. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, the other issue I want to look at is with the land use planning in terms of the draft and the Sahtu is going through their process of the land use plans and they are looking forward to seeing a finalized and signed document so that oil companies and oil and gas companies, mining companies and other potential developers could have a plan we can all follow. People in the region are looking forward to it. How soon can we see a land use plan from the Sahtu region being finished? Do any other regions also have land use plans that are looking forward to being completed? When can we have a document that is the completed land use plan for the Northwest Territories?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, the intent of the government's land use framework is to help us as a government get our thinking clear when we go to the tables with the regions and the aboriginal governments so that we can be a constructive proactive partner at the table. That document and that work is coming to the stage where I think we are almost ready to see the draft. We are working with Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Deh Cho, as we speak, the Inuvialuit, on their land use plans. Maybe the deputy minister could speak to

where we are with the Sahtu land use plans. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy minister.

MR. BOHNET: Mr. Chairman, we have been working with the Sahtu and the other regions that are working on land use planning. Our understanding is that we are several months away from having a final Sahtu land use plan. Part of it is because of the incorporation of the Great Bear plan around for Deline and with the broader Sahtu land use plan. As soon as we bring some of that together, we are going to be looking forward to seeing a completion of the Sahtu land use plan, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are on page 13-13, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, activity summary, \$14.366 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are moving on to page 13-14, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, corporate management, grants and contributions, contributions, total grants, \$175,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: On the question of the interim resource management systems program agreement, we don't show that we are going to have resources. Is this due to the limited funding of this or just the agreement ran out here? I say it because the description shows the importance of aboriginal communities on settled land claim areas and participating in land and resource management process affecting their surrounding land use areas. I know that we have been dealing with the caribou issue here. This is kind of an important issue. I don't see any funding towards this. I just want to ask the Minister for an explanation as to why we are not throwing any dollars to this item here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, that money will be reflected in the revised estimates once the agreements are signed. At this point, they haven't been signed but the funding will be reflected. There is money there. We are just with the federal government. We are just concluding that process.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. I will try this again. Contributions, total grants, \$175,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$175,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are moving on to page 13-15. Information item, corporate management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-17. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question here is on the energy efficiency technologies and alternative energy sources. I believe we have a number of rebate programs that enable consumers to get some help replacing less energy efficient appliances with better efficiency items. I am wondering what the uptake is on that program, if those dollars that are available in those programs are fully subscribed from year to year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not all of the programs have seen the uptake they have in previous years. It has slowly been declining but the example, the EEIP, Energy Efficient Incentive Program, 763 rebates for a total of \$262,000 and \$137,000 for residential heating or hot water rebates. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chairman, if there are areas that our uptake is declining, is there a formula or a mechanism in place to ensure that those funds get put into an area where there is more interest in or perhaps a new area that we haven't assisted on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are monitoring it to make sure that we look at the gaps for where there's a need. If there's a declining need, we're going to move the funds to where they're most needed.

MR. BROMLEY: I wonder if the Minister could provide us with a sheet updating us if there is a trend that's evident now what that trend is looking like. If there are things that have been added to the things that we're subsidizing through the rebate program recently, it would be good to see that. Something that lets us know what the uptake is and the trend. That would be great. Maybe I'll wait for a response on that before moving on here.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We'll provide that list of all the subsidy programs to committee.

MR. BROMLEY: It will be good to see the pattern of updates there. On the biomass side of things, I believe that's in this section. I believe the department is developing a Biomass Strategy. I have questions about that. Where are we at with our capacity for implementing such a strategy and is that something that's appropriately talked about in this division? I'll just start with that.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I would take your direction, but this is the area where biomass would be covered. We're looking at tabling in this House, I believe Thursday, the Biomass Strategy. We have a range of capacity for implementation. Public Works, when we do their department, will

show that the renovations and retrofits they have done have been very successful. We're still working with communities to conclude the community energy plans and the other thing we have to make a decision on this year is the whole issue of picking a technology to go into communities. We're interested in biomass for heat, eventually biomass for electricity. We're looking at expanded projects up north where we can do a better job, improved job on waste recovery. Those projects we now are far enough along that we have to make some decisions on actually doing it and not just planning about it.

MR. BROMLEY: The Minister touched on some of my other questions. Really it's land access that's recognized to be a real issue here. Perhaps the strategy will deal with that again. My understanding is that will take the involvement of other departments as well, and maybe the participation of aboriginal governments. While I'm at it, the sustainable harvest levels, I think we had a lot of research to be done through our forestry group and perhaps we can touch on that when we get there. Any comments on those things would be appreciated.

Just in terms of implementation capacity for the Biomass Strategy, I'm wondering if we've assessed whether we have the people in place to ensure rapid and effective progress on that strategy. What does it take to get pellet manufacturing in place and so on? Whatever the strategy calls for.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This year we intend to do very specific things. For example, the Arctic Energy Alliance is going to be going into the communities to set up workshops for training and certification programs for wood burning appliance installers and inspectors, as well as looking at how to facilitate the delivery and supply of wood pellets to remote communities. We're going to work with the forest management division to conduct woodlot planning and inventory activities to assist once again with the firewood and wood pellet production business development.

We want to work with communities once again, through the environment division, to prepare business plans for electrical power and heat distribution cogeneration systems biomass supply. I think we've put almost a million dollars into this area to try to move forward on this.

The capacity issue is twofold. There is the capacity issue of the government to get the planning in place and get the support in place, but the other capacity issue is communities. Once you have more detailed and thorough discussions about biomass, the recognition that it's going to require a significant commitment if you're going to move to biomass. For example, in Jean Marie River the chief was telling us the difficulty of, the enthusiasm, some people have moved. Those that were keen aren't

necessarily around. The concern is to commit to that type of change of infrastructure also requires a significant community commitment. And there are capacity issues there as well. So those are two areas we have to work on as we move forward.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's remarks. The Minister did list quite a number of important steps that are going to be required. I know there are more that he's aware of. That is an issue. I think the potential for big gains here in community energy systems is huge, but it's going to take quite a bit of education and support to enjoy the realization of those opportunities. Obviously a cross-departmental approach again with ITI and other departments. I'm glad the Minister is thinking about that I look forward to perhaps a briefing on the Biomass Strategy and next steps there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): More of a comment. We're on page 13-17. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, the one issue... Actually, there are two. The one I want to talk to the Minister about is the contaminated hazardous sites and solid hazardous waste management. I did send a note over to the Minister a couple days ago about the issue of old vehicles in our communities and if there's a possibility of this department looking at a plan for how to get rid of these old vehicles. I know they have some type of machine that can eat up these old vehicles and put them into scrap metal and take them out on barges. I know this was an issue with the community of Deline. They asked if I would ask the Minister, as this is an issue that they want to look at as something that this government could do in terms of sharing. One community would have this and then it would go to the next community and so forth. I want to ask the Minister on his efforts to look at recyclables, such as the things he has done before which are really good, if this is something he might look at on a larger scale for the smaller communities. I'm not sure what the cost would be to have this type of operation. However, these landfill sites are pretty well full of other vehicles that have been there since the '50s and '60s. Is that something he would consider to move forward on this initiative of a clean environment in our communities and in the North?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That particular area for recycling is on our list but we've been fully and thoroughly occupied with the whole issue of getting ready for the level on single-use retail bags, getting ready to implement and institute the recycling of milk containers. We've got, as I've indicated in my remarks, some work underway trying to come up with innovative ways community by community on dealing with the massive amounts of cardboard and paper that are probably the single biggest

substance going into landfills. We're also trying to come to grips with a way to do the e-waste so that we can look at the very many computers and TVs and all the other accoutrements of computers and computer use in today's technology. Coming after that, we're also interested in the 45 gallon drums scattered in the thousands across the Northwest Territories, as well as vehicles. So it's a question of resources and capacity, but it's definitely on our list to get to and we're working our way down. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister has listed off some very impressive initiatives that I fully support going forward. Would he consider maybe if, say for example, a community or a corporation wanted to deal with the vehicles issues. Would he look at a proposal where the community can work on arrangements to bring in some machine like this? Because, you know, we're limited funds and he's got a whole lot of good issues that he's going to be tackling, and if these vehicles would be... If this type of a situation is on the list, I don't know if there's enough time in the life of this government to implement such a project. This is something that I'd be interested to hear, to see if it's something that this government here would be looking at in terms of strengthening partnerships in the community and cleaning up garbage in our communities.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Should a community or interested party come forward with a proposal that would propose to be able to remedy this particular situation in a way that is going to be affordable, of course we'd be happy to look at that, keeping in mind our own limited resources and our capacity that we're now focusing on these other key areas. But we'd be prepared to look at that. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I certainly appreciate the Minister's openness in terms of a community willing to possibly put forward a proposal should they still have an interest in it. I would like to thank the Minister on that.

One issue I wanted to talk about within the time frame I have is the climate change. I asked the community of Colville Lake, especially when I met with the elders in Colville Lake -- there was about 12 of them that I met with -- and one of the important things that the elders in Colville Lake talked to me about was the climate, the weather and the changing of the weather. They were very concerned about the fast changes of our weather. They're having a hard time, sometimes, even to read the weather. They said the animals were having a hard time, because they notice the weather is changing on them pretty fast. So they were quite concerned.

I want to know if the Minister is looking at any type of traditional knowledge in terms of meeting with elders. I'd like to propose that the Sahtu elders get

together to talk about climate change and the weather and the impacts on the land and the water and the air.

As has been told to me by one resident in Colville Lake, when the elders speak up and they want to talk about an issue, then you need to pay real close attention, because that's something that's a concern for them. It's only when the elders speak on this issue that we should act on it.

I know this government has done some good work on climate change. They have done some work on some initiatives. I wanted to ask about gathering some of the elders in my region to sit down and look at this issue in terms of from a traditional, users-of-the-land approach and very simple on what the elders are saying about climate change. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, the Department of ENR, of course, is very interested, as the government is as a whole, and our Traditional Knowledge Strategy, we've got money in the budget for implementation. We know we have money in the budget to deal with issues related to climate change, mitigation and adaptation. There are concerns about caribou. There are concerns about what's happening to the water. There are concerns about what's happening to the land. We've got money identified, for example, for studies on permafrost that can help us make better informed decisions in the appropriate, affected communities. So under that particular area there would be an opportunity to make sure that we engage the advice and the wisdom of the elders. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I do want to let the Minister know we do appreciate the support he's given in the past to some of the elders on other issues in terms of traditional knowledge. They have come forward and I'm not too sure how to take this in terms of engaging the elders on traditional knowledge. So I'm asking more specifically in terms of the Sahtu elders such as the ones in Colville, Fort Good Hope and Deline, they have expressed clearly to me, as in Tulita also, that they want to get together. These are the elders that have used the land and they know about the land and they want to talk about the climate change. They want to talk about this important issue to them. It means a lot if we can somehow have a gathering for them to sit and have a discussion amongst themselves in terms of this issue here. The Minister is saying that there's money that's identified. I'm not too sure if I'm reading it right in terms of engaging them. I'm asking now to be more specific to my region that I represent to have elders come together, sit for three or four days, and talk about climate change.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This is an issue, of course, across the whole Northwest Territories. We have some resources. We would

like to work at the regional level with our folks as well as the aboriginal governments, possibly the federal government and other possible interested NGOs, but I think if we collaborate we can come up with ways to take full advantage of the traditional knowledge and allow for the type of forum that would give us that input, but it's going to take that kind of collaborative approach. I don't think there's any one organization that has the full resources to do this everywhere that there's an interest, but collaboratively we could probably do something in each region. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just want to follow up from the biomass initiative and some geothermal initiatives from my riding. Of course, I've written to the Minister's office in trying to move those forward, particularly the Jean Marie initiative. But I think the Minister's...(inaudible)...may have slowed down there a bit, but it's something that I think our government should, of course, continue to support. We're looking for, I think, because of the technology that's there and the capital program, I think some of the ideas out there, of course, are looking for pilot dollars. I noticed that on this page there, Mr. Chair, that we do fund other agencies and as well as, I think, initiatives like this where we may even need some federal financing from their department. So is there a coordinated effort or is that something that a particular community or business venture... Is it up to them to kind of find the different pots of money? Or else is there a coordinated function in ENR that can assist communities and/or businesses as they work through the process of establishing pilot projects? Because I think that's something that we're going to have to at least try to be helpful with, Mr. Chair. If the Minister can speak on that. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We work with the proponents. We, being the initiators and the pushers on this particular initiative, will also go to other governments, like the federal government. The challenge for us and community governments, as the Member knows, is we've been talking about it, we have an interested community but we are almost in a state of paralysis by analysis as we try to decide on the technology. Is there the perfect technology out there and if it is not, should we wait?

We have had the discussion but we have to, in year two, make some decisions with communities. We are doing good work with the territorial government retrofitting its own buildings, but in terms of actually doing the projects on a community basis, we have to make that determination and commit to the process and commit to the resources and at the

same time look for other funding that may be available depending on the magnitude and complexity of what is required. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I think the key thing is that we just have to keep working with the communities and the different business groups. They are looking for these technologies and it is all about... I think we have to get to the stage of actually picking a project and actually piloting it. I know that some of the costs of some of the technologies can be overwhelming, but there are some projects that can be done on a smaller scale, probably with, I don't know, mini units, Mr. Chairman.

In terms of biomass or in terms of geothermal or some of the other technologies out there, I think it can be done on a smaller scale just to see that it is achievable and doable. For example, in making wood pellets, the units don't have to be very big, but I think that if there is a smaller unit out there and we are able to bring that in and prove and demonstrate that... Yes, the technology has changed, perhaps we can use other products besides only sawdust. I think that we should actually try it. I don't think that we would be losing anything if we are trying our best to find and test the different technologies that are out there.

Of course, with biomass and wood pellet making, I think they have always said woodchips are the best, but at the same time, if there is no sawmill, maybe there is an industry in bringing in a chipper and selectively logging 50 percent dry wood or whatever it takes. I think that we should keep an open mind. We should not be limited. There has got to be a certain amount of stock of sawdust and or woodchips there, Mr. Chairman. I would encourage the department to keep an open mind. Let's look at all the projects out there and let's strive to see if we can actually develop a pilot project this coming year. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We agree with the Member that we want to find even a smaller scale project. In a small community, if we could hook up two or three big buildings to a biomass heater like they have done at the jail here or like they have done in some of the other government facilities, but for the community.

The other broader issue for creating an industry is tied to that whole issue of sustainable forests around communities and access to land so that you can in fact manage the forests, do your fire protection but have a close by source of wood, be it for woodchips, firewood or pellets. We are looking at some of the portable technology that is out there that may be applicable both in the southern part of the Territory as well as farther north up into the Inuvik region. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to comment, especially on the potential that we have with our forest sector in the Northwest Territories. I think that it is a potential that we have never really developed in any sense of the word and the economic potential it has for job creation and job opportunities. More importantly, we need to use the resources around us, especially around our communities where we do have timber stands and forest stands. I think we also have to realize that we don't want to cut down all the key forest stands. If anything, we should be using the by-products by way of willows. We are looking at what they call wood that is basically dead wood and harvest those types of species so that we don't find ourselves in the situation where we are cutting all the good potential timber stands. We have to look at the other products that are around our communities and I think that we have to start considering potentials.

I know that we might not be able to look at the potential of having the wood pellet factory in the Northwest Territories, but I think we do have potential with woodchips and the technology that is out there now and having the equipment brought into our communities or have a community development corporation or through our renewable resource councils or individuals, consider that type of investment and look at the potential that we have in regards to biomass and heating our public facilities regardless of if it is a school or hamlet garage or fire hall or whatnot as a secondary heat system.

I think that we have to realize that the systems we are looking at are compatible with the systems we have already where you are going to have to have a secondary heat system anyway. I think that we should seriously consider looking at pilot projects like has been mentioned. I think that we should maybe consider looking at pilot projects in the immediate future in the different regions so that we could consider some means of getting this process going because I think that it is like anything else; education is key.

I think we also have to realize that we have been using wood products from the North thousands of years for heat and I think that people already can adapt to it and I think that we also have to realize that there are communities... I'll use the community of Old Crow in the Yukon in which they built a brand new school and they heated it by a wood boiler. They harvest their trees and basically use that as the heat source for their school. I think that is something that we have to look at for where we have the potential timber stands, but, again, we have to look at more than just biomass. I think we have to look at the economics of it and the benefits that it has for small communities for job creation and I think, if anything, if we can even generate 10 jobs in a community that will go a long way to the

sustainability of our isolated communities. I think for me and also for the sake of the environment, where we have a win/win situation and weed ourselves off of the dependency of fossil fuels.

I would just like to question the Minister, considering there are forest inventories that have been done in certain regions, I know the Gwich'in Settlement Region have completed their forest inventory. They are working with the department to take it to the second step. So I would like to ask the Minister if he is seriously considering looking at pilot projects for those regions that are willing to take this on and consider looking at biomass as an alternate means of heating public facilities.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This Legislature made a very significant commitment, political commitment, to structure an infrastructure to change how we generate energy, how we distribute, how we use it, and to reduce our carbon footprint and get off diesel fuel. What we have to do with biomass, there is a number of steps and we are on the way to doing some of that. We have to build the market, which is get the biomass infrastructure into the communities that use it. Then we have to look at managing the forests as a secondary step. Right now we import a lot of the wood pellets. There is some firewood burning, but it is usually on a residential level just for block firewood. We have to then look at the possibility of managing the forests and then getting the infrastructure in place; the secondary value-added industry to look at providing the biomass product for the market that we are going to build up with our own government infrastructure and residential infrastructure.

In the Inuvik area, we are looking, as we speak, at how do we take advantage, for example of the fast growing willows and not, as the Member said, knock down prime wood. Though I would point out that across the country there is a recognition in the forest industry that the whole area of biomass is going to be probably their salvation as they experience significant decline in their other products that are available for the market. In the North we don't have that concern, but we do have a concern about managing the forests and we're committed to that whole process. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: One thing that I haven't really noted from this department is the area of residual heat and I think we have to realize that there is that potential. I know that Fort McPherson has taken that on. They have a joint venture between the Gwich'in Development Corporation and the NWT Power Corporation, which that project has been working for several years now and in which, again, other communities are looking at that as a potential area and I don't really see anything in your budget

here for that. I think that we have to realize that where a building is close enough to a power plant that has the ability to move the heat from the power plant to say the fire hall or a garage which is next door, I think that type of stuff has to be considered where we can take advantage of such facilities like diesel plants to generate that heat, but, more importantly, expand systems so that we are able to build on systems that are already in place.

Like I mentioned, the residual heat system in Fort McPherson, which is connected to the canvas shop, the water treatment plant, the school, the swimming pool. Again, I think we have to expand that to other facilities in the community. Also, if you're looking at a capacity issue, I think that's perfect for biomass and using it as the secondary system to reheat the system so that you're not using diesel fuel to recharge the system and if you're using wood that's probably more environmentally sound.

So I'd just like to ask why haven't you considered residual heat in the confines of some of the initiatives you're looking at here. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: In fact, through the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee there is funds in the budget for energy conservation and expansion of residual heat and its work through ITI and NTPC. There's some feasibility work that was done last year, but it is one of our considerations in all the planning that's done. It's just not under the purview directly of ENR, but there are plans and funding and such that are through ITI and NTPC.

MR. KRUTKO: I believe probably the most fundamental foundations for moving on this initiative is going to have government policies, a directive that directs departments to make the change. Like with anything else, anything new, a lot of people are used to simply burning diesel fuel. You put it in the tank, you turn it on and you call the fuel truck next time you need it filled up, but just get people around the idea that we're going to wean ourselves off of diesel fuel or fossil fuels and start looking at these new initiatives. So I'd just like to ask the Minister, is the government going to be coming forward with different types of policy frameworks so that departments have to consider these initiatives going forward and that we don't do business as we always have.

I think, like anything else, you know, in Europe it took them basically 30 years to get to where they are today and at one time they were at 98 or 95 percent dependence on fossil fuel where now they're down to 3 to 5 percent. I think that we have to look at a policy directive from government to the government departments that they have to take this on full stop and make a political statement that we are serious, that we are moving. So I'd just like to ask the Minister, will there be any policy framework

decisions coming forward on making this switchover.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I would suggest that the \$60 million this Legislature and the business plans that have been approved and the direction that has been taken by the department is a clear reflection of the political decision by this Legislature. Public Works and Services has a very ambitious plan to continue the retrofits. We are looking at concluding all, as the Minister of MACA indicated, the community energy plans. We're committed to working with communities to make the transition. As well, we have significant funds in the budget to encourage homeowners to convert to more energy efficient appliances or wood pellet stoves or other methods of heat that are not related to diesel. So we're going to be on this and we are all across all the government departments, as well as with communities and I think there's a recognition territory-wide that we're on the start of a fundamental shift here as a Territory. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions relative to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. I'd, first of all, like to talk about greenhouse gas emission targets. I know that the business plan talks about that we want to be 10 percent below 2001 levels by 2011. That target is fairly modest I guess I would say. I'd like to know from the Minister if there has been any consideration or if there's going to be any consideration in this next fiscal year to increase the intensity of that reduction. Will we be able to set more stringent targets, I guess, for ourselves? Has that been discussed and if that's the case, if that's not the case... Well, I'll just leave it at that. I'll ask that question first. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated in my comments, there is a plan to renew the Greenhouse Gas Strategy for the Northwest Territories. We want to do it by 2011. So in 2010 we are going to come up with a revamped process of how we do that. It's going to be outward looking as opposed to just within governments and it's going to probably take a much more critical, a more comprehensive look than was taken last time looking just at government operations. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. I'm sorry; I missed that in your remarks. I must have been snoozing. I guess I would like to know if the Minister could elaborate a bit. You're talking about this plan being a little more expansive. Are you looking to pull in communities, to have communities as part of sort of the overall greenhouse gas emission targets, and/or are you looking to involve

individual residents so that they can adapt their activities to try and lower our greenhouse gas emissions? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The world has evolved significantly in its awareness of climate change and greenhouse gases and the need to be as proactive as possible. The process that we are envisioning is going to be a broad one that's going to involve, of course, government, but community governments, individuals, industry. The world and the country are moving towards cap and trade systems. Many jurisdictions have already put caps and cap and trade systems in place, put a price on carbon. That discussion is now going to take place in the Northwest Territories to see where we can get agreement to end up, recognizing once again a significant change both in the world and in people's understanding of what needs to be done. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Just a last question on this area. The work is going to be done you said in 2010, you're hoping to have it done by 2011. Are you talking the beginning of 2011 or middle or end of the year? Can you give us a rough idea as to the time frame for the work to set these targets and set up this plan? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: It would be our hope at this juncture in early days of planning and scheduling that by spring 2011 that we would hopefully have a product on the table that would set the standard for the Northwest Territories when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions.

MS. BISARO: Thank you to the Minister for that. I'd like to as well, when we reviewed the business plans there was a discussion about developing an NWT Climate Change Adaptation Plan and I don't believe I saw any date in there. I think that that work was being undertaken in this current fiscal year. I'd like to ask the Minister if we are developing an NWT Climate Change Adaptation Plan and, if so, is it done or when might it be done.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: In fact, there is an initial document that does exist. We have money in the budget identified to do further work to flesh it out in more detail and do some of the actual work. One of the areas I think we're looking at working on in this area is the whole area of permafrost. There is work underway. There is a document already on the table that we took to a meeting I went to with the Premier at the Western Premiers' Meetings. It's going to be fleshed out and enhanced as we go on and do a lot of the work that we've laid out here in our business plan.

MS. BISARO: Thanks for that information. Just to follow up, I wasn't quite sure what you were referencing as going to be happening in this next fiscal year. I note that there's some money in grants and contributions for communities and regional governments. So you're talking about fleshing out

the plan and expanding it. Is that work only going to be done by the GNWT or is there some money available for the communities to do some of this work as well?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: At this juncture it's the government pulling together all its work on its adaptation plan. At the same time we are doing a lot of work. For example, there's money in the budget to do further work on permafrost, which is a direct area of study that's going to require adaptation as changes in permafrost occur across the land. The government is going to finish pulling together its plan and at the same time we're continuing specific areas of work as we look at actual adaptation to situations, circumstances, and realities on the ground.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. I guess having asked about these two things individually I'd like to now ask the Minister how they relate to each other. Will these two projects operate or be developed in isolation of each other? I would hope not, but could he give me sort of a description, I guess, of how we're going to set our greenhouse gas targets and also develop an NWT Climate Adaptation Plan and not do them together? Or will they be done together?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Of course the Greenhouse Gas Strategy is on the path to mitigation. It's helping us be more responsible to cut our carbon footprint reliance on fossil fuels and help set up a system that if it's done right could provide funding for the very many things we're going to have to do related to adaptation to climate change as the land and waters and forests and ecosystems around us change. We've already spent millions on piles, we got shore erosion in some of our communities in the Beaufort-Delta and Aklavik areas. We have enormous amounts of money spent on repairing roads, even around this Legislature. The two are definitely linked. They're looking at the same problem, different aspects.

MS. BISARO: Just one last question to do with the numbers on page 13-17. The climate change, in the program delivery details it lists climate change as \$6.8 million give or take. In grants and contributions is some \$5 million, which seemed to basically refer to climate change. I just wonder if the Minister could advise if that's correct. Most of that \$6.8 million for climate change, is it going to be... Sorry. Is the \$5 million in grants and contributions identified under that climate change figure of \$6.8 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Miltenberger. Sorry. Ms. Magrum.

MS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is. The majority of that increase, that million, is for the Biomass Strategy, which is under climate change.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Magrum. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next on my list I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a couple areas I'd like to follow up on. Maybe first I'll follow up on a question raised by Mr. Yakeleya that I do support. It is about removing the old cars and derelict cars or vehicles, whatever the case may be, from the communities along certainly the Mackenzie where they're accessible. I view it a little bit different in this particular case, but it's the same problem. Is it possible that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources could foresee potential out there that they could organize something that could draw the cars down to, for example, Hay River? What I'm thinking is through the barge system on the backhauls that to help clean up some of these communities, does that possibility exist, that as an empty barge moves down the Mackenzie they could coordinate with community governments, bands, whatnot, about having them taken from their dump sites, dropped on the barge, and brought into, for example, Hay River. It's a lot easier to coordinate getting a car crusher into Hay River than the logistics of shipping it up the river and coordinating it that way. Does the department see themselves in a position that perhaps they could play a role if someone was willing to help coordinate that?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated to Mr. Yakeleya, should somebody come forward with a proposal, we'd of course look at that. But for the foreseeable future, we are fully engaged. As I indicated, we just instituted the bag levy, the milk. We've done some serious work and are going to do some more work on sorting out the cardboard and wastepaper. We're looking at e-waste. As I've indicated to the Member, tied to the vehicles we have all the drums. The other big one is, of course, tires. It's an issue of capacity and time. We're working our way down that list. If somebody was to bring us a proposal that we could see made some sense and was affordable and we could somehow support, we would give it serious consideration.

MR. HAWKINS: I could swear that the Minister was reading off my list of questions because I wanted to go through that. He did mention tires and that's another issue that I've raised a number of times, about getting a tire shredder organized and perhaps we could partner with the Yukon government whether we drive it up the Mackenzie Highway throughout the winter and drop it off in communities and leave it there in a centralized place over a couple-year period or, for example, as I mentioned earlier perhaps even barge these things down in a collective manner. I mean,

basically this becomes just a useless landfill if it sits in a community. These things could be recycled. The potential for the old cars to head to the smelting plants to provide old steel turned into new steel for new cars. That type of potential exists. I'm just curious.

As far as e-waste and paper, right now, as I understand it, we really don't have a recycling program for paper that works very well, if there is one up and running. Most people think in the government that if you recycle paper you go to these little metal bins that are white and have a nice little shield on them, but actually all that does is it gets shredded and sent to the dump and then put in the compactor and goes in the ground. A lot of people believe that they get recycled, but it does not. I'm just curious how the government plans to propose to address things like paper and e-waste, if the Minister could clarify. My apologies if he has to repeat it, but I didn't hear it earlier.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: When it comes to wastepaper and cardboard we have identified some funds. We have gone out to communities and businesses, organizations, and we're looking at opportunities either for recycling, true recycling, not just compacting and putting into a landfill, converting to biomass, converting to pellets. There's a number of other options that are out there.

With e-waste, as we look at our own recycling, I know just from personal experience having taken some loads down, you can go down to Edmonton, Alberta. They have a very sophisticated e-waste recycling plant, I know, in Edmonton, and they will take all the computers and all your keyboards and all the other accoutrements of this technology and recycle it. So we have to look at is it better to have a shipping arrangement with Alberta or create our own. At this point, that final decision hasn't been made, but we know we don't intend to reinvent the wheel here. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I was glad to hear the Minister mention some barrel recovery. I've often said that we should put a bit of a head tax on those types of things such as if someone brings back these empty barrels that have been dumped all over the land. As an example, we give \$50 per one that returns, and that's only an example. I don't know if that's feasible or if that's too low either. I don't know. I've asked for this concept to be thought through, because I think this could provide an excellent opportunity to get some of these things in. You know, when people are coming home off the land, they can throw in one of these derelict barrels and all of a sudden it's paying for some of their gas on the way home.

As far as waste oil in the communities and perhaps even batteries, does the department have any plans to address some of those? In the past I've

suggested, for example, that the government invest a bit of money into a waste oil burner to become the opportunity where people can drop these things off, and we could be heating a government garage of some sort or that type of thing. Because a lot of these waste oil burners can burn normal oil, in other words, clean oil, as well as the waste oil. So, as I understand it, I mean, you don't have a lot of opportunities, whether you're living in Tulita or you're living in Fort Simpson or you're living wherever, I mean, ultimately, when you change the oil in your vehicles, I mean, where are these things going? And they're just going into some barrel or in some container and sits somewhere. I mean, it's very unfeasible to have a program to go collect what would be seen as very few litres, but yet, the opportunity could be that we could pick it up through this process. Does the Minister have any insight on that?

The last point I have, because I suspect he'll use all the remaining time on the clock, is as far as e-waste and paper and, perhaps, tires, is there any seed money in this particular budget and if there is, how much seed money is available for a contractor to come forward and present these ideas if they have a logistical proposal that could meet the needs such as cleaning these things up? You know, whether they're batteries in the communities, whether they're e-waste or tires, paper, et cetera. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I've gone through the list of the things we're working on as we work our way down. We do have some funds available and a program in place to get feedback on wastepaper and cardboard. We are doing some preliminary work on the e-waste. The area of tires, barrels, vehicles, waste oil are there for another day in that we're stretched to capacity trying to do all the very many things plus all the things we're already doing with the full recycling that we have on the go. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Is there a dollar amount attached to any program here that could help start or seed an opportunity? Is there a particular budget line item that could reflect that opportunity if people were to come forward in the private industry and say they'd be willing to take on some of these challenges? Is the Minister able to highlight that? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have the Environment Fund that out of the money that we get from recycling and any profits goes in to fund itself to allow us to engage in other activities. That fund is fairly well subscribed to, but that's where we took some of the money, for example, to do the work on the wastepaper and cardboard. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Where does that fund sit at financially right now? Have proposals come out of this type of initiative and how much are we talking

about could be available for someone who wanted to present a proposal to start one of these types of projects? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Ms. Magrum.

MS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The balance at the end of 2009 for the Environment Fund was \$1.7 million. Portions of that are reserved for replacement of equipment and for unredeemed containers. So the unrestricted balance is \$748,000. I believe during this session that the statement for the Environment Fund for 2009 is being tabled. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 13-17, environment, operations expenditure summary, \$9.345 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 13-18, grants and contributions, environment, activity summary, contributions, \$5.004 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, environment, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 13-21, forest management, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my first question on this relates to our earlier discussion of biomass and the need for sustainable harvest plans and knowledge. I'm wondering where the department is at on that and is there any areas of the NWT, any at all, where we have developed an estimate of the sustainable harvest rate for the forest. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The majority of work has been done in the South Slave and over into the Deh Cho. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I've been asking for this for a couple of years now. We've been developing a Biomass Strategy. Obviously, that's going nowhere unless we know what the sustainable harvest rate is for our forests. Again, I'm wondering if we've determined yet what the sustainable harvest is for any forest, any area of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We can provide the committee the up-to-date summary of the work that's been done to date. The focus, as we've been discussing here today as we look at biomass, is going to be around communities and sustainable harvest and managed forests, so a lot of the work that's been done is starting to shift as

we look at working with communities to put in pilot projects. That determination almost on a community-by-community basis. But I'll ask the deputy if he has any further information. If not, we will commit to provide a detailed update to committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we've put in and have been successful in obtaining some resources from some of the federal government's coffers to expand the work on the first forest inventories. That work is being completed and we should be able to provide a report to committee in the near future. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: That's good news, but, as the Minister said, I think we're looking at very specific areas around communities and I don't think we want to wait until we've done a forest inventory for the Northwest Territories. We want to know, you know, within a reasonable time limit of communities, what is the sustainable harvest rate for that forest. I would appreciate it if the Minister could provide an update, assuming it's available, and demonstrate progress on that file because, again, we can have all the strategies we want, but if we don't have the research information and the know-how on the ground, we're not going anywhere.

I appreciate more information on the South Slave. We have had other harvests going on there specific to the timber industry and so on and recovery from fires, but this is a different sort of thing. It needs to be really focussed on communities where Jean Marie and I imagine there has been some work done in that area, but I think our expensive communities that are positioned within the forest are opportunities. That is where I am hoping to see some good progress here so that as these other things get lined up, we can really get something going on the ground. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I will let the deputy... He found some more information in his briefing book.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: The community forest inventories, the assessments have been completed for a number of the communities: Whati, Aklavik, Tulita, Yellowknife, the area near Behchoko. The areas have been done and through the Gwich'in Forest Management Plan that we are working with the Gwich'in, some of the work is continuing. Also there has been a lot of work not only done in the South Slave but also has been initiated in the Deh Cho region, those large forested areas there. They are ongoing at the present time, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that more specific information. That sounds good. We have to start there. Again, I have to admit, I'm never clear whether an inventory is the same as sustainable harvest assessment. Hopefully that is incorporated or enabled by that and we can actually get to that program. That is what community business or a community government is going to need to initiate a program. I am trying to stay as focused as possible there but, again, I appreciate that information.

I would also like to ask about the mushroom harvest as we know near Behchoko last year. It is probably greater than \$1 million worth of morel mushrooms were harvested there. We visited about this in other forums that the department was going to establish whether they had the authority to manage fungi or whether they could develop partnerships with aboriginal groups or governments to develop a management policy. Obviously we have learned that it is possible to overharvest, apparently, abundant resources. I think that is true in the case of fungi as well, surprisingly, but this is a very valuable resource. I think it represents a real opportunity in those years when they are there. I am wondering what the progress and state of things on that is and if we have a little bit of funding identified for establishing that baseline. Thank you.

MR. BOHNET: That particular issue, fungi doesn't come under the NWT Forest Management Act because what we have is we initiated and we actually did all the background work. We have been initiating discussions with the federal government to see some changes made to both that issue regarding mushrooms and the other one is incidental timber to both come under our jurisdiction so we could actually manage those resources. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is good to hear. I wonder if it doesn't come under forestry in other jurisdictions, it comes under forest management. It is recognized as a wild crafting activity, I believe they call it in forest. I am wondering where that will be lodged. But more specifically, what is the time frame like? We could be facing another situation like this obviously next summer, this coming summer or shortly thereafter if there are big fire seasons. Thank you.

MR. BOHNET: Mr. Chairman, we have finished all the internal work and have initiated discussions with the federal government here at the regional level. We are having another meeting next week. We hope to have the path forward. We indicated there is some urgency to this issue, so we are encouraging the federal government to make this and do this as fast as they possibly can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to talk about the forest management, just something that came up with the discussions I went to at the Explorer Hotel with the people that were invited to the Dene Nation's open house panel on the caribou. Something that I found interesting was about the forest fires in the particular area that there was a ban on hunting caribou. Something I found interesting was the caribou. One of the factors is that caribou weren't coming to the area because of the forest fires. They are not going to come around when there's... Maybe it was Mr. Lafferty... Sorry, it was one of the presenters that was talking about salad bars and salad dressings and not coming to that area as the caribou were staying away. Is that something that we should be concerned about in terms of the forest management of this department in terms of allowing certain pieces of our land to be burnt up?

I know the logic behind in terms of revegetation and reforestation and stuff like that, but it was also affecting our hunters, our trappers that harvest in these traditional areas and now they are going to move to other areas that they are not quite familiar with. Sometimes you have to look at those initiatives.

I want to ask the Minister in terms of this policy that this department has in terms of forest management, in terms of fighting these forest fires. Is this something that we should be concerned about and maybe review? Are there facts within the department saying that the policy is in line and we should continue with this practice here as opposed to what possibly the communities are saying about allowing forest fires to be burnt? Uncontrolled fires they call it. It is something I am very curious about. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated earlier, we are currently redoing our Forest Management Plan and specifically the values at risk that currently are critical to that plan and, at this juncture, it doesn't include as a value at risk the habitat protection for species like caribou, for example, so that we could plan for if we are going to consider looking more where the burns are, are there corridors where they can travel, where there is enough food and those types of things. It is an issue that has been around for quite a while. We haven't reviewed the values at risk now for many years. We are looking at that very important policy. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, dare I say that this policy here will be coming shortly for the community in terms of the value at risk preparing for the upcoming season here in terms of having a

look at this. Mr. Chairman, one time in my life I did fight fires for four seasons with the old federal government program and, when the GNWT took over for them, I was still a firefighter. I know that when there were fires that were initiated by either lightning or man-made, we were out there to put it out right away. Slowly we moved away from that. I am happy to hear that the Minister is looking at this important issue here. The question is, are we going to have some discussion prior to the upcoming forest season that will start in May?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of points I would make here is the program review is started but there is an extensive consultation process that we are going through where our review... We are going into all the communities up and down the valley, talk to people in the communities, harvesters, elders and that about those important values before we finalize a strategy or a draft strategy and bring it before this house.

The second point I would make is just in regards to the issue the Member raised regarding the caribou habitat. What we'll be doing there is in a number of areas where we've talked to people in some of these important areas that have not burned over the last 30 or 40 years. We've asked our folks that these particular areas and paths where caribou come that aren't burnt, to immediately begin protecting them this year. We did last year also. So we're on top of that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Deputy Minister, in terms of the process that you outlined about consultation with the communities. I look forward to when you come into the regions and having some discussions with the communities that I represent in terms of forest management and the issues that you bring forward on this issue here. I certainly look forward to implementing your strong traditional knowledge policy in terms of having the information, because a couple times I heard during this presentation citing of scientific information and we haven't yet really satisfied me in terms of some strong traditional knowledge leading to discussions like this. So I just wanted to say I look forward to that discussion coming to the Sahtu on what we have to talk about here and I hope its meaningful consultation with our people.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): More of a comment than a question. We're on page 13-21, forest management, operations expenditures, \$27.726 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 13-22, activity summary, forest management, grants and contributions, grants, \$100,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister regarding the fire damage compensation.

Have we lapsed funding on this policy? Have we compensated fairly the people who either lost their ability to trap in a certain area or around their cabins or have we used all this money up? Are there any leftovers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The '08-09 are based on actual. We're currently not concluded this year yet, so we'll know and we've got another figure to start at \$100,000. We won't know the actuals for some time for the coming year either, but I don't think we've concluded the final accounting for this year, but I'll ask the deputy minister to maybe clarify that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we know we have at least one or two more requests coming in for that particular program and it will actually be reflected in the actual. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Would it be possible to, and I don't see it here, so would it be possible to ask the Minister if he could kindly distribute this policy in terms of how you go about assessing the fire damage and what things are possible, what things may be contentious so that this can be communicated to our harvesters in my regions regarding this policy here. It's a good policy, Mr. Chair. The one issue I do have and I haven't talked yet with the Minister so it's unfair to have a response from him. However, there was a fellow in my community that has asked for compensation when the fire was done, I think five or six years ago. I don't have all the facts right now, but he wanted to know if there were any forms of compensation that he would have been eligible for. So this is an unfair question right now for the Minister because I haven't given him all the details or information and I could be at risk here to say I want an answer, however, I want to deal with him on that issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will provide the program criteria to committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: The other question I have, Mr. Chair, is on the contribution. We have actuals of \$46,000, but we haven't budgeted anything this year. Are we expecting some dollars on that or what is this contribution various to support natural resources and the environmental issues?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Magrum.

MS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In '08-09 we had \$46,000 various contributions that are based on specific requests that come during that particular year and I would expect that in '09-10 and in '10-11 we will have similar contributions under contributions various. They just don't fit in the specific other program areas that we have listed. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Yes, just on that there, in this specific request that's a pretty broad, general definition, so is there an example that you can give in terms of specific requests that come in for funding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Sure. An example would be for the Katlodeeche First Nation in Hay River. Basically they do a fire plan, do some planning. As far as community protection, it's for pots of money to assist the community to take certain special initiatives among themselves with assistance from ENR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A small amount of dollars, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we're on page 13-22, grants and contributions, forest management, activity summary, grants, \$100,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Contributions, total contributions, \$30,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$130,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information item, forest management, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 13-25, wildlife, activity summary, operations expenditure summary, \$14.323 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: The issue here that's before us and we have dealt with this in a number of areas, I wanted to ask about the Bathurst caribou regarding initiatives in terms of monitoring this herd in this specific area and the ban of this herd in this area. I wanted to ask the Minister about the monitoring efforts. I heard on the radio that there are wildlife officers out there, community members are out there working for ENR. I guess myself in looking at this issue, the question is how is it that we had over 100,000 caribou and then four years later we have only tens of thousands of caribou? Is there any idea? If you look at the numbers and that, where did the caribou go? I'm having a hard time

understanding the decline being so drastic. What happened?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we've indicated right from the start, there's a whole number of factors that have affected the Bathurst herd. It exists in the most heavily populated part of the Territory. There are extensive road networks now where there never used to be. There are hunting pressures. There is resource development. There are climate change issues. These have all combined to affect things like the general health of the animals, the calf survival rate, the birthrate of calves and how many do survive. There are predation impacts as well. When you combine them all together and when they're already on a downward trend dating back to the 1980s, those factors continue to have a greater and greater impact. For example, when you're down to 30,000 animals and you're taking normally 7,000 to 10,000 animals out of the herd a year, that hunting pressure alone over the course of three years would pretty well put an end to the herd. There's a whole number of factors. It's very complex but those are some of the factors.

MR. YAKELEYA: Fair enough. Certainly with the impact of the ice roads and roads that go to the mines, they have up to 12,000 loads per year. If you do the calculations that are six minutes apart going right through prime caribou land. You have three megaprojects such as the diamond mines where there's development and work that they're doing there to extract the diamonds out for their own purposes. Then you have the hunting issues with 11 outfitters that have the commercial hunt there. Just on hunting itself being open to other residents around the North Slave region, that's quite an impact on the herd. Then you also claim that 7,000 to 10,000 heads per year if we allow it to happen.

I'm trying to think now in terms of the issue of aboriginal people. I don't know if they take 7,000 to 10,000 caribou a year. I'm not sure that's something that I can accept right now. I think the major impacts that haven't been talked about are the roads and mining development and the outfitters. However, it's really hard for me to look at this for bringing this down heavy on the aboriginal people. It's their way of life. It's not their livelihood. They don't have caribou to sell it for commercial purposes. It's their way of life. I'm having a hard time accepting the rationale for this issue here. Has the Minister worked out with the Yellowknives Dene or come to some type of agreement as he's talked about in the House a couple days ago to work closely with them to see how to resolve this issue?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I would just like to point out a fact that as these discussions go on it becomes more important every day. In this

part of the Northwest Territories there is no harvest management plan for the Bathurst herd or the Ahiak or the Bluenose-East as it comes down into the Tlicho territory. The critical one is the Bathurst herd. We wouldn't be having this discussion in the Sahtu, Gwich'in, or Inuvialuit regions because they have agreements, they have co-management boards, and they've got processes. What's clearly evident here and is incumbent upon us once we get through this hunting season and before next hunting season is to have that type of agreement. In regard to this current circumstance and the discussions with the Yellowknives, we had conversations today with National Chief Bill Erasmus and we've agreed to a process to get some people in a room to hopefully resolve this current circumstance, if all goes well, by this week or next week.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister is correct that there is no management plan in this area for caribou. Whether it's the Bathurst or Ahiak, there's just no plan at all for caribou. Except we're waiting for the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board to come forward and make a decision. I've seen the joint proposal. I think it's a really good joint proposal. I think it's something that's really workable. However, in saying that, I still have difficulty defining the Bluenose-East, West, Bathurst, Ahiak caribou. I know the difference in Woodland caribou in the Mackenzie Mountains because they're pretty big. Has the department done any DNA testing to know which caribou is which to identify the herds? I'm having a hard time with the elders saying that caribou is caribou. How do we start labelling the different caribou?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The herd definition is done through where the animals, the females go to calve. There has been DNA work on the herds and there are differences, apparently. But they aggregate to calve in the same areas and there are calving grounds established, usually up along the Arctic Coast. In the collared animals that they do have, they show very great fidelity to going back to the same areas. As we have our work and methodology reviewed by the Alberta Research Council, the science in the circumpolar world that deals with caribou has some fairly standard methodology when it comes to defining herds that way.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 13-25, wildlife, operations expenditure summary, \$14.323 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-26, activity summary, wildlife, grants and contributions, contributions, \$338,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-27, activity summary, information item, wildlife, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-28, information item, lease commitments – infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-29, information item, Environment Fund. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering, as I mentioned earlier today, if the Minister has any perspectives on removing the holdback -- I don't have the terminology -- but the holdback on the deposits for the milk containers or a part thereof. Is that something the department has looked at? I realize it would be a small bite into the revolving Environment Fund, but I think a net gain if we're helping in the cost of living end of things to get milk to the kids' table without additional cost. Retaining the deposit but giving a full deposit when it's redeemed. Obviously there would still be some that would not be claimed so that there would still be a net gain to the fund. It would just be slightly more modest.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of Environment.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're prepared to consider that. We're trying to get this up and running. One of the considerations we're looking at is possibly offsetting the, as the Member suggested, but possibly raising the fee on pop cans, for example, which are sugar and water, as a way to subsidize that particular, subsidize the milk containers, so that we are prepared to look at that. Right now, we are just trying to get it all up and running, but in the very near future we are prepared to consider how we could do that. That is one of the specific ways we are looking rather than just lose or take it out of the Environment Fund. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good to hear. Do we know what proportion the milk containers are expected to be of the beverage containers that are collected annually? Have we looked at that yet? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We don't have that detail of information, but we can provide that to the committee, our estimates. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Information Item, Environmental Fund, page 13-29. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Moving on to page 13-30, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Continued on page 13-31, work performed on behalf of others, continued, Information Item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Page 13-32, work performed on behalf of others, continued, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Moving on to page 13-33, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Moving on to page 13-34, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bromley

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see the Tundra Science Camp there and that is a program that has been good. I am wondering if that is considered part of the implementation of the science project. I guess not as there is no funding for this year, but in relation to that, where is our implementation of the science, the new science agenda budgeted, just for my edification? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Deputy Minister Bohnet.

MR. BOHNET: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The two new positions have been identified to implement the new science agenda and those positions will be filled as soon as the budget has been passed.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that information. I am just wondering what division is that in. It must have been in an earlier one, an administrative division of some kind.

MR. BOHNET: Yes, they are both in the environment section, the environment budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 13-34, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Page 13-35, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay now we can return to Page 13-7, department summary. Environment and Natural Resources, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$65.760 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that we have concluded the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): So with that, I would like to thank the Minister and thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you like to escort the witnesses out?

As we agreed, the next department we will be considering will be the Department of Transportation, so I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do have some opening comments.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be here today to present for your consideration the Department of Transportation's proposed main estimates for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. For the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the department is requesting a total budget of \$104 million, including amortization, which is a 7 percent increase from the current year's budget of \$97 million. Excluding amortization, the increase is 3.5 percent.

This budget proposes increases of \$4.6 million to cover forced growth and \$1.8 million for strategic initiatives. It also includes two major structural changes to the department's operations expenditures in the areas of amortization and utility and building maintenance budgets. This year the department has, on the advice of the Auditor General's office, adjusted the way it accounts for the amortization of assets. This change realizes a 5 percent or \$5 million increase to the department's budget for amortization of capital assets. The budget before you also highlights the consolidation and transfer of utility and maintenance budgets to Public Works and Services including two maintenance positions at Yellowknife Airport. Overall, this change transfers \$4.3 million from the Department of Transportation to Public Works and Services.

One important forced growth item is a new regulatory environmental analyst position. In recent years, the department has become subject to a much stricter regulatory environment which is taking more and more time to respond to and manage. Having an additional position that is dedicated to these efforts will help the department meet the various licensing, permitting and reporting obligations that NWT and federal regulators require. Observing these requirements will also minimize potential environmental liabilities and related litigation risks.

While we will continue to invest in the day-to-day routine of operating and maintaining the transportation system throughout the Territory, I would like to highlight for committee a number of strategic initiatives we plan to implement. These strategic initiatives will allow the department to

develop and deliver a number of projects that have a direct and positive impact on the lives of Northerners. Over time, Mr. Chairman, these initiatives will create lasting benefits and deliver on the needs of the people.

One area of significant focus for the department is the Reducing the Cost of Living Strategic Initiative. For next year, Mr. Chairman, the department is proposing an additional \$250,000 to continue the seasonal construction of the Wekweeti winter road, and \$150,000 to accelerate the Fort Simpson region ice bridge construction. Along with these new initiatives, the department continues to undertake a large number of capital projects including relocating airports in Trout Lake and Colville Lake and runway extensions in Fort Good Hope, Tulita and Fort McPherson. We will also be busy continuing the reconstruction, widening and surfacing of highways all across the NWT and improving winter roads to Trout Lake, Deline and Colville Lake. These capital investments were approved as part of the 2010-2011 acquisition plan last October.

Mr. Chairman, the department has also proposed funding under the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative, including \$500,000 in funding for the commercial transportation and Licence Plate Program. This will focus the department's highway traffic officers on enforcement activities. It will also fund the launch of a new licence plate for the Territory. It is expected that the cost of this initiative will be fully offset via user fees. We are also proposing an additional \$677,000 for the Community Access Program. This is an important expansion of the Community Access Roads Program and with this increase in funding we will be able to broaden the number and scope of community access projects and we can expand the scope of the program to consider contributions for local boating facilities and winter gravel access roads.

Next year, Mr. Chairman, the department will continue our progress on the Mackenzie Valley Highway to Tuktoyaktuk. Last month, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the department announced \$7 million in federal funding to complete project description reports – PDRs -- for the highway from Wrigley to the Dempster. This work should take the next two years to complete. A project description report for the northern most section of the highway from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk has been underway for a number of months and will be completed soon. These PDRs represent the next step forward in the development of an all-season highway. They will allow the government to make a submission to regulators to start the environmental assessment for this project. Finding the significant resources to construct the highway will still remain as a challenge and we will continue

to present the need for the road to the federal government when we have the opportunity.

While we continue to pursue an all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway, the department has continued to improve the winter road. Work to date includes the completion of many grade improvements and construction of 34 of the 40 bridges along the road. We will continue with the construction of the Blackwater Bridge, which is currently underway and will undertake grade improvements. These projects help to extend and maintain the operating season by removing the dependency on ice bridges. This year the department will also be installing a number of road signs between Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope to make the road safer and to better inform travellers.

Under the Maximizing Opportunities Strategic Initiative, the department will partner with P3 Canada to study the feasibility of the construction of a seasonal overload road in the Slave Geological Province. Mr. Chairman, this project, if built, could stabilize resupply operations into the Slave Province and related costs and operational difficulties. This road could also create increased economic opportunities in the mineral resource sector.

Mr. Chairman, very briefly, these are the highlights of the Department of Transportation's proposed main estimates for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. There are many other positive and exciting projects and initiatives that the department expects to accomplish. I am confident that the proposed budget will provide for the continued safe and reliable operation of the NWT transportation system. I would now be happy to answer any questions, Mr. Chairman. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Minister. With that, we will take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are proceeding with the Department of Transportation. We have had opening comments and would like to ask the Minister if he wishes to bring in witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the House.

If I could ask the Minister to introduce your witnesses, please.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me, on my right, Mr. Russell Neudorf, who is deputy minister of Transportation. I also have, on my left, Daniel Auger, the assistant deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Committee, we're on general comments for the Department of Transportation. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just reviewing the Minister's opening remarks I noted he didn't mention anything about the Aklavik community access road to the gravel source and yet there was a motion passed in this House regarding that community and the community of Tuk access road to their gravel sources through the community infrastructure funding. It seems like we're no farther ahead than we were two years ago. This department's going full out on other projects, so I would just like to ask the Minister, when motions are passed in this House how seriously do you take them? What is this government doing to work with communities on these type of community initiatives?

I know the community of Aklavik is frustrated with the Department of Transportation with not getting the attention they were hoping to get and not getting the resources they require. I think that we had a perfect opportunity to work with the community in light of the situation they find themselves. The community is without any real gravel source this year, because the majority of the gravel in the community had to be used for the water treatment plant. The community is out almost \$100,000 for gravel they don't have and now to replenish their gravel source they have to do something shortly. For them to continue on their project under Building Canada and complete their drainage work that they've been working on since last summer, they don't have the materials to conclude it because of not having a gravel haul this year. Those little things that communities depend on are big things for them.

It seems like this department has the focus of the big picture while forgetting about the little guys in the smaller communities. I think this government has to realize that they are not just there for megaprojects whether it's the Deh Cho Bridge or the Mackenzie Highway. They are still responsible for community infrastructure and ensuring that the community has access to gravel and the ability to improve on airports and the ability to ensure they have infrastructure that this department is responsible for.

The other issue is on an issue I have raised in this House many times on a program we had a number of years ago on main street chipsealing. The Department of Transportation played a key role having the expertise in the House working with MACA. I think we identified nine communities to look at developing main street chipsealing for non-tax-based communities. I think we were only able to accomplish only four of the nine.

A lot of good work was done there and we do have to continue to work with those communities and the

Department of Transportation. I think the Department of Transportation has to share their expertise with those communities that do not have that in-house expertise. They should share that knowledge and information with the communities and assist them whenever possible, whether it's dealing with main street chipsealing or shoreline erosion or drainage issues and infrastructure challenges we're facing in our smaller communities where Public Works has a presence and a role to play. Sometimes we spend too much time playing with the big boys and forget about the little people in the communities. I believe that this department has to come back down to earth and get involved with the communities and work with them to deal with the infrastructure challenges they're facing.

I also wanted to elaborate on the area of other federal infrastructure funding. I have been working with the community of Fort McPherson on the Dempster Highway. We have been looking at a means of a pilot project on resurfacing the Dempster Highway. I think the government has to make that decision sometime in the next number of years. We're doing the widening; we should be almost complete the widening from the border to Tsiigehtchic hopefully within the next three or four years. Then again, you have to deal with the issue of surface. Whether it's looking at different options like chipsealing to hardtop to pavement or whatever. We have to start looking at that issue.

Dealing with climate change and global warming we have to realize that our highways are an asset. We have to put a lot of money into them and we have to protect that asset going forward. I think it's important that this government look at some of the options and alternatives. If that means looking at pilot projects to try out different products, I know there's a company here in Yellowknife that calls themselves Easy Street and they have a product that they've been testing on the different roads. I believe they laid a stretch down around Behchoko on Highway No. 3. I think working with communities if there's a possibility of joining forces on some of these paving projects, that we have to look at that going forward. I think it's important that we look at that aspect of things.

I have raised the issue of the possibility of a bridge across the Peel River. I've done some work on it with people in the private sector. I have had support with the Hamlet of Fort McPherson and the Gwich'in Tribal Council to look at some way of acquiring that project. Again the department's too busy dealing with the Deh Cho Bridge and they're forgetting about other opportunities or potential bridges throughout the Northwest Territories. I think this government has to realistically look at that part of our infrastructure and the possibility of replacing the ferry operations with bridges in other parts of our infrastructure, whether it's the Dempster Highway or the Mackenzie Highway or the Liard

Highway. We have to be considering that as an alternative. Also the replacement of culverts with bridges, especially the large culverts that will have to be replaced at some point.

I'll leave it at that and wait to see what the Minister's responses are in some of those areas. I do have some issues with the department and how they deal with small communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much, Mr. Krutko. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy with the Transportation budget. I had hoped that, like Mr. Krutko, there would be more money put into community access roads or the Community Access Program I suppose it is. I see that as a program for the small communities even off the highway to be able to access certain areas they need to access. I know it was used to access gravel supplies and so on and so forth. I'm not 100 percent sure about that, but I understand that from just what I've learned over the last couple of years. I think this Community Access Program should really be targeted to communities that want access to certain areas.

I know that in the communities that I represent this program being coupled with, I think, other programs like maybe programs through ITI for parks programs with this program and maybe even private industry, a couple of very specific projects that I want to see come out of this Community Access Program is the first one being the Austin Lake Road in Lutselk'e. I want to ask the Minister about that during detail, I suppose, on what the plans are for Austin Lake Road. Essentially, Austin Lake is, I believe, about 40 kilometres outside of Lutselk'e. But on the halfway mark, approximately, there's the Snowdrift River where the intention is to put the mini-hydro. So my assumption, again, there is that mini-hydro road, there will be a road from Lutselk'e to the mini-hydro for access purposes so that should be built through that budget. Beyond that to Austin Lake where I think that a lot of people use the lake, they have cabins and so on on the lake, it provides access to that whole area in the east of Lutselk'e that the people there wish to access a lot easier than they're currently accessing the road. People have trailers, boats, they could pull their boats over there in an hour or so, I think, versus what is quite a long haul by boat to Austin Lake. So I'm interested in seeing this department working with the mini-hydro project and also other areas such as the Mine Training Society, as an example, or any other industry-types that want to train people or just assist with building some access for the community to there.

Another one is in Fort Resolution that I've mentioned in the House before, a proposal to try to access a place called Big Eddie outside of Fort Resolution by road. So far, half of the road... It's

about nine miles, apparently, and four miles of that road was built using a training program put on by Aurora College, Thebacha Campus anyway, out of Fort Smith. They had run that program over there where people trained and actually built half of that road. The people in the community felt it was important and would be a real benefit to the community during certain seasons if they're able to access this area called Big Eddie. I had proposed that ITI, who was attempting to build a road around Mission Island, was to move their attention away from Mission Island and over to Big Eddie and it would be very beneficial to the community if the park was built over in that area. I went around the community and talked to... It was first proposed to me by a couple of fellows that I was meeting with and then I went to the community. As I went from house to house and started asking people what they thought about being able to drive to Big Eddie, having a possibility to overnight down there by the river during breakup and stuff like that, and people were pretty excited about it. I don't believe it's a lack of funding but just the will to coordinate this with all of the parties that would benefit from this. Arctic College could continue their training on that road. ITI could move their park, have a park that's more acceptable to more people in Fort Resolution and also use this department, DOT, using the community access road to be able to access an area for the people. Apparently, during some parts of the year that's one area where people go there to fish a certain type of fish that's common in the bay and other parts of the year, and then during freeze-up, breakup, in those areas this access to this area is beneficial for a little traditional harvesting as well. I believe that's the same too, a little bit of by-product of building this park would be giving the Lutselk'e people access to some traditional harvesting in and around Austin Lake.

Those are two projects that I, like I said, would like to follow up with the Minister and discuss. I think it will, like I said, take some coordination with probably Education and ITI through the college and even, I think, some of the, like I had indicated, the Mine Training Society and some of the diamond industry is interested in assisting there. I think they would pitch some money in and all together be able to provide some access to areas for both of those communities that I think would be very valuable to the communities.

Other than that, I'm pleased with what I see before me. I've gone through the budget. I think the department's going in the right direction for sure for Tu Nedhe and near Fort Resolution putting some chipseal on the road and so on. I like some of the ideas of looking at some of the new products like Easy Street, but I see that more as a MACA and a municipality issue because of the speeds in which I think this stuff holds up, under a certain amount of speeds. I don't really know, but I just know that

chipseal is going to be more economical for the highway. I don't know about the community. I think that's something we'd look at and something that maybe Transportation would have some knowledge in that could work with the municipality to provide them some technical specs on this product or something. But, like I said, my main focus for this department is community access road and I know that although the budget has tripled and we had asked that through the Rural and Remote Communities committee, we had asked that money be put into this project, and I see there's a direct injection here of over \$600,000 added to this and tripled the budget. So my assumption, I guess, is that's something that we will do again next year and maybe move a little closer to achieving some of the stuff that us MLAs want to see insofar as communities gaining access to certain areas around the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Committee, we're on general comments. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As we deliberate the Department of Transportation that's before us, I'm really pleased that we're able to work together as a House, committee and the Cabinet, in moving some of the big ticket items forward, most particularly, the Trout Lake expansion of the airport, the relocation of the airport. That's a huge ticket item. It was the subject of much debate earlier on in our term, but we were able to work together and see the need of it for safety and the travelling public and the community. I'd really like to say that I'm sure that working hard together we can move forward and concentrate and come to solutions on some of the big ticket items. Most particularly, of course, the source of our new debate is the Deh Cho Bridge. I really think that we're at a stage that we do have to continue to move forward and find some resolution about it.

A lot of my colleagues are asking for an explanation or else a timeline of events right from the cradle of the project. I think they are deserving of those answers. I would like to see us work towards that. At the same time, it will take up a lot of resources from the department, because we do have some hard work ahead of us in order to meet the completion date of 2011. I can say now that I am not going to be opposed to it. However, I think that hard questions have to be answered. I am sure that the Minister and the department are up to the task in giving us those answers.

Throughout my constituency visits, the discussions of our highway systems throughout the Nahendeh riding is always high on the agenda, first, of course, providing local employment and local businesses and access to the contracts that are associated with the maintenance and the reconstruction of our highways and, of course, also for sending a

community ventures that wish to work towards that but also working towards, and I have been saying it for a couple of years now. I know that money will be tight but I still think that leaving a legacy of improved highway system for this Assembly can be a goal and still should be a goal up to and including the chipsealing as much of our highways as we can. I know that, hopefully, we have done as much as we can in the Yellowknife area and if we can concentrate on chipsealing in other areas, it has always been a criticism of my constituents.

I am very pleased to see that, of course, from the Providence junction towards Fort Simpson we will be doing up to 70 to 75 kilometres of chipseal. I do not want to see that impeded in any way. It is a huge thing. I have been telling my constituents and the department has been telling my constituents, as well, that is something that is going to work. I would like to see that work and begin as early as we can as well as some of the other reconstruction projects in the Deh Cho riding and, most particularly, the Fort Liard section from the B.C. border towards Fort Liard. I think there is something like, I forget, 12 to 16 kilometres that hasn't been reconstructed yet. I certainly would like to see that out of the gate early as well.

Overall, it has been great things in the budget from our riding. The completion of the Nahanni Butte access road and I certainly know the constituents there as well are quite excited. They know they see its completion that they can drive to the river in a shorter passageway pretty much all season. I look forward to that. Jean Marie has always been looking for improvement of their road. I know it is classified as seasonal, but I sure would like to see that section completed; that it is an all-season road there. The department strategy, I am sure we can work towards that in the long term.

With that, I am not too sure about the efforts under the marine operations. I think the community of Nahanni Butte has always been seeking more assistance with their docking area and upgrading it. It is certainly something that I would support and look to it as we get to that line item in the budget, Mr. Chairman. With that, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next on my list I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few opening comments on the Department of Transportation. I guess I just want to start off by saying this whole thing with the Deh Cho Bridge, Mr. Minister, is not something that is easy for us to be talking about, easy for myself to be talking about. I have the utmost respect for the Minister and the department. However, we are in this situation. I would expect if the Minister or any of his Cabinet colleagues were on this side of the House and the project was in the status that it's in, I would expect them to be asking the exact same questions

I am asking. It is with all due respect that I ask these questions. There are no ulterior motives or hidden motives on my part in asking questions that I think the public wants to hear and wants to find out exactly I think why we even signed up for the bridge in the first place. A concession agreement was signed. Again, I think I will never fully understand why the previous government signed that concession agreement. I think that is where all our troubles flow from. If we can go back in time and have a sober second opinion or thought, I would see us not signing that and getting everything in order before we proceeded into a project where, by the looks of things, we really are struggling with it right now. I want to assure the Minister and his staff that it is my intention, Mr. Chairman, to work with everybody in this House to try to find solutions to the problems that we are facing and to try to get this project built and finished in the budget that the Minister is proposing now. That should be our goal.

I want to let the Minister and his officials know that is my goal to try to do that. The accountability, the responsibility, those are things that, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and a duly elected Member, the public oftentimes calls on us to hold people to account. That is why we are here. It is never a real easy thing, Mr. Chairman, trying to hold your colleagues to account. We all become friends in here. It is a difficult task, Mr. Chairman, but I am going to keep trying to ask the questions.

Again, I'm not happy that the second half of that project didn't go out to tender. I know I had some discussions with a number of people on that. Again, that is probably something that I might not ever understand when we go to the market place. There are companies that were looking to provide the government and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation numbers on completion of the superstructure and they were never given a chance to provide those numbers, Mr. Chairman. That, to me, is a travesty. I think the government has never really laid out for Members what the holdup to that happening was.

Again, maybe there are reasons. Maybe the government should put those reasons on the table so Regular Members can see what those reasons are and maybe we will buy into the reasoning and the rationale behind it. The one thing I can buy is the timing and the fact that it is going to cost us money and interest. I can buy that, but judging by when ATCON was let go and the March 1st date, I think there was enough time, Mr. Chairman, to go into the market place and get a price on that superstructure.

It was interesting, too. I don't think I heard the Minister talk about the bridge in his opening comments or I didn't see that in there. So that was an omission that I don't know if it was done on purpose or if that was meant to happen or what, but

it is something, at the end of the day, we are spending -- the argument is out there -- \$182 to \$200 million, somewhere in there on a piece of infrastructure and I think, at the end of the day, we are going to have a bridge across that river. It is a process that has allowed us to get there that is troublesome and hopefully along the line we will learn some lessons and how not to get into partnerships with folks who really don't have the expertise or the equity necessary to deliver on what the stated intended purpose is. That was the case here.

Members know I have had concerns about that from the word go. It has reached a point now, Mr. Chairman, I don't know what else I can say aside from the fact that I do want to see that bridge get built. I am going to support the Minister in all of his efforts to try to get that done the best way possible.

With that, again, I wanted to thank the Minister and, again, I know I've thanked them in the past, but I want to thank the department for their role in the Building Canada Fund and working with the federal government and the City of Yellowknife on finally getting the bypass road into Kam Lake Industrial Park. I may have some questions for the Minister as we go through the detail, Mr. Chairman, but again, I want to thank him for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on my list is Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm happy with the department's recommendations or budget highlights for this year for Nunakput. DOT, the Department of Transportation, represents 8 percent of our total budget. This budget includes \$17 million in airport infrastructure improvements and \$64 million on funding for highways all across the Northwest Territories, which is good and we really need that. The Nunakput region is receiving much needed infrastructure and investment. Some of the highlights I would like to include are both terminal buildings in Paulatuk and Sachs, \$1 million apiece, which we really needed and we're very thankful for. The infrastructure is so depleted and past its years of good service, but when this summer comes around we look forward to opening those buildings up in the communities.

Also for my home community of Tuktoyaktuk is the \$1.4 million airport terminal building, which is going to be good. The '10-11 budget includes the \$667,000 for the road projects in rural and remote communities. To date, thank you to my colleagues here, we started hauling gravel for access road 177 two days ago so that puts about 100 people to work in my home community of Tuktoyaktuk and the surrounding communities.

The federal government and the GNWT have invested \$55 million to construct winter roads and the Tuk access road as well as gathering information to build the all-weather road between

Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik. I want to thank the federal and territorial government for finding that \$1 million for the PDR from the feds.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway is a major infrastructure project on the horizon. The estimated cost is \$1.8 billion to extend the highway from Wrigley to Tuk. Mr. Speaker, is the GNWT developing any further budget projections beyond the project description? In reports, the federal government has provided a portion of the funding for the project.

The department is investing \$150,000 to expand the Drive Alive Campaign, which I'm really happy to see. It will put services, transportation, safety campaigns under the single program, you know, transportation safety concerns across the Northwest Territories, particularly among our young people that have their licences. Mr. Speaker, how are the resources for the Drive Alive Program allocated and the second question I have there is what is being done in the Nunakput communities under that program?

I'd just like to thank the Minister and his staff for the hard work he's done for me over this past year and working with my communities that I represent. I look forward to the page-by-page. It's a good day today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): And good day to you, Mr. Jacobson. Next we have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to echo my comments. I always find the Department of Transportation quite responsive to many of my concerns, so I should put that on record. Although, the Minister always seems to give me a hard time, the staff's efforts seem to make up for that. Thank you.

---Laughter

AN HON. MEMBER: Ohhh.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, points of order are the next item on the agenda.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister highlighted some interesting things in his opening comments and I just wanted to sort of acknowledge them. I'd like to hear a little more under the Transportation Licence Plate Program to find out when exactly that launch is predicted. A couple of years ago I suggested that we use our tourism catch phrase on our licence plate and I'm not sure what's evolved from that other than the fact that the Licence Plate Program would start off with some new ones and I'm just curious if we've gone with a bit of a tourism catch line or a look and feel instead of saying "Explore Canada's Arctic," because, as I said at the time over three years ago, that the Northwest Territories doesn't really represent Canada's Arctic anymore. Even though we do have some Arctic, that isn't our

primary focus. We have much more to our Territory than that.

Mr. Chairman, as Mr. Jacobson said, it's nice to see the road to Tuktoyaktuk really get moving with a gravel source process. I know I've supported that initiative since I've been here and we're here almost seven years later and we're really hearing that that's finally moving forward.

I just want to speak in favour, as the Minister has highlighted, I want to speak in favour of the work that's being done to date in partnership with Indian and Northern Affairs on the Mackenzie Valley Highway that will help sort of identify logistics and understand the problem as people prepare to say what work needs to be done, whether it's technical aspects, environmental aspects or whatnot. I just want to emphasize my support for that project because I think in the long run that will continue to be an asset to our Canadian infrastructure, not just territorial, but Canadian infrastructure. I've often thought that that highway, of course, does a lot of things. It opens up a tourism corridor, it opens up a corridor between communities, which unite families. It also helps with the cost of living. So I think it would be a good day for our Territory to finally fulfill Diefenbaker's dream of the road to resources, because industry tells me that they're looking for ways to help make their projects cost effective and certainly transportation always factors into these problems, followed by the cost of energy. But the road is a significant component of this situation.

Just on the same note, the roadwork toward the Slave Geological Province, I'm not too convinced at this moment that that's going to be the end all and be all for the existing diamond mines. I think the problem is it's going to come into usefulness during the end of their sort of life, but what I think it will do, though, speaking of the whole industry, is it will help the industry again find new ways to do business, it will open up new corridors for development when it comes to resources. So by and large, though, I think that will help continue to provide an anchor to our economy for new ways of drawing new industry to our North. So that road certainly will be a significant development and will change the way we do business as well.

Lastly, I'm not trying to use a lot of time here, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to place a chord or two in the area of the bridge. I know it's gotten a lot of flack over the last few days and my position right now at this time, until I'm convinced one way or the other, is comfortably in a position of we need to get this project completed. I think, as I've said time and time again, legacy infrastructure is always plagued with problems whether its cost or technical issues, people are for it, people are against it. Regardless, once the project is done, once the first couple cars go across that piece of infrastructure, I think people will be going across it thinking why didn't we do this

before, what took us so long. I mean, as most infrastructure projects go, it's not unusual for them to have price adjustments. Although this will have a full accounting over time, I have no doubt that there's going to be some people looking back to say what happened here or how could we do projects differently and, most certainly, how can we do projects better. This will be another example of building Canada and that's my point of view on this particular project. It's an essential project to the continued building of our North.

I'll say, with some disappointment, that the federal government has never come forward to assist this government with this type of cost. If we were a province and we had a truckload of MPs or a whack of senators or those types of things, you know, I mean, they'd be at our doorstep saying how can we help with this type of infrastructure. It's a shame that we only have one senator and certainly it's a shame we only have one MP. Of course, at this time, our MP doesn't even represent the party that's in power at this time. So the likelihood of getting an investment on this project is obviously none.

I really wish we were in a different situation today to have the support of our federal government on this particular project. I hope once it's done everyone is able to look forward and say it certainly had a rough ride as such but it will become a legacy project for the North because, as I've emphasized a few times, people build infrastructure of this kind with real vision. They dare to dream and they certainly take the leap that is sometimes required. I'm not going to sit here and complain about it. We've got a lot of positive things we can do and I look forward to hopefully continuing on that type of tone. That's all I have to say in my opening remarks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. General comments. I guess I'd like to call first on the Minister to respond to general comments.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank all the Members for providing us their comments and input and raising issues that are of concern to them.

First of all I want to respond to the comment made that this department is too busy with the Deh Cho Bridge to pay attention to other areas. That's not correct. We have one full-time position and another half-time position that are dedicated to working on the issues around the Deh Cho Bridge. We have other staff that also have responsibilities, such as Deputy Minister Russell Neudorf and other staff that do it on an interim basis.

Last year we had a capital budget of \$125 million and we certainly focused on delivering all the projects to the best of our abilities. We had many other initiatives, including working on the PDR and working with the communities on the Mackenzie Valley winter road. I'm proud to say that we've

moved that initiative the furthest that any government in the life of the NWT has been that able to.

We have also probably been criticized for initiatives such as roads to gravel sources that are outside our mandate. We opened that door when we started working with communities in partnership, first of all with the community of Tuktoyaktuk. We felt this was a good jumping off point to bring attention to the Mackenzie Valley Highway system. It certainly has worked. We invested money through the Building Canada Fund and it has garnered attention from the federal government. They have come forward, first of all, with money for the PDR from Inuvik to Tuk and now for the whole Mackenzie Valley Road. We are still working with communities on that front. We have worked with Aklavik on their desire to see some studies done. We've put a couple hundred thousand dollars towards the community study. That's done. We have also helped them put together a proposal, draft correspondence through several meetings, and the MLA for Mackenzie Delta was at some of them. Now we have a package that's ready for submission to the federal government. They have reviewed it and I believe that's going out for submission through the Community Access Fund program that we're hoping we'll have positive responses to. I also have to mention that we took the liberty to talk to some of the federal Ministers about the community's desire to construct a road to a gravel source. So I think we've done a lot of work in that area. We're not mandated to work on gravel sources.

We're also not mandated to do main street chipsealing as the Member has mentioned. We had historically worked with communities through MACA, who had provided the funding for us to do the application to a number of communities. That money has now been cut off. We don't have a replacement budget for it. We certainly still have the expertise and we do provide it to the communities that request it. We'd like to continue to offer that and try to move forward. There's a number of communities that have utilized our department and our staff that have expertise in this area to do some of that work.

We are also quite keen on looking at what other applications are out there for highways in the NWT for dust suppressant or for providing a solid base or protective base such as chipseal or other types of applications. We have, as some people have mentioned here, taken the opportunity to enter into an agreement with a company called Easy Street, to do some testing and experimenting with their product. We are right now using a lot of chipseal in most of the areas. It has a limited life of anywhere from three to seven years. We'd like to go to something that would last longer and we're trying to find that. We're also trying to balance it with

something that's affordable. We feel that maybe Easy Street might be the product. We have tested some on the road towards Dettah and we are also testing some on Highway No. 3. We are hoping this will be a product that we'll be able to utilize in other areas. We've made a commitment to look at doing something on the Dempster, I think it was during the last budget go around, and we're planning to do that. We want to do analysis, we want to do the study of what the economics of providing chipseal are and what the economics of providing Easy Street are and what would work in that area under those conditions.

We've also tried to do a number of things with the Peel River Bridge. The Member has done a lot of work in this area. He has provided some unsolicited proposals or information to us about what other people have estimated it would take to put a bridge in that area. Our studies show that it's around \$60 million. We had agreed that we would look at bringing it forward through the capital process. We haven't been able to do that. But as we package up our new Highway Strategy update, we will certainly be sure to consider including that.

There's also been comment about the community access budget now being increased to \$1 million. We're quite happy to see that. It had been at that level for several years historically, but over time budget reductions forced us to reduce the program to around \$300,000. A lot of communities like to utilize that fund. I have to voice my appreciation to the Rural and Remote committee that had a lot of discussion and pointed out that this was an important program for communities to use, so we have, at the direction and recommendations from those committees, increased the budget to \$1 million and I have also expanded the criteria to include marine and allow the communities to come forward and apply to do other types of projects. If there is a desire, they could also use it on gravel roads.

MLA Beaulieu indicated that he is interested in seeing the Austin Lake project go ahead and we think it's a good project. We have not seen an application yet for any funding requests. We have had some indications that the community administration, I believe the SAO, is coming to town to discuss some options to move this forward. They also have had interest demonstrated by one of the mines, Diavik, and also the Mine Training Society. I have also had the opportunity to talk to them about how they could be involved. There is a lot of interest in it and it needs to be packaged up and put together.

I'm very happy to hear from MLA Menicoche that he feels we need to work together and get things done. We're quite happy to include in our budget a Trout Lake airport and the money that we got through Building Canada to do that, because it was an area

that needed investment and we didn't have the capital to do it. We also agree with him that we are needing to put together a chrono of events. We have some of it drafted already. As we move forward, and I had committed in the House that we would need to compile expenditures or break down expenditures to date. That amount of expenditures on the Deh Cho Bridge is up to \$75 million.

We also are looking at doing some of the final work on the Nahanni Butte access. In the next month or so we're going to see some resurfacing done by a company from Fort Liard. I think the community will be very pleased about that. We also now have the ability to talk to them or at least discuss the possibility of looking at some form of a docking for their requirements.

The Member also raised the concern about the Jean Marie Road not being an all-season. I have to correct him. That road is listed as an all-season road. Of course, it needs some upgrading and it needs a lot of investment, and we certainly agree with that.

Mr. Ramsay indicated that talking about the Deh Cho Bridge is not easy. I certainly would agree with him. Mr. Chairman, it's always a concern when we have a project that we are negotiating on, it's been my policy to provide all the information up front to the Members, but when that information starts coming out to the public, it's really concerning, and also when we have Members using that information to create a negative environment, that we have to still negotiate deals on, it becomes even more challenging. We agree, of course, that the public need to know, but we also need to be able to all act reasonably when we talk about information that's going to jeopardize some of our negotiations. We hear the feedback. People are not deaf. They hear what we are talking about here. I'm quite happy, you know, that we've heard concerns, but it's difficult for us to relive history and try to explain over and over again why certain things happened the way they did. We made our best judgment in moving forward and, unfortunately, it's resulted in a number of challenges that we've had to make changes in order to keep this project going.

There is a budget shortfall and the Member also indicated why it was not mentioned in my opening comments. Well, it's not in this budget, Mr. Chairman. There's no mention of the Deh Cho Bridge. We're not coming forward for any money under these main estimates. It is in the supp that has not even been tabled yet, so it's kind of premature to expect us to start talking about the budget needs that are already covered in a different budget. We could talk about the reason for tendering the way we did or not tendering the way we did, and I think we've had some of that discussion. I'm not sure if we're ever going to satisfy the Member regarding that. I know that the

Member has voiced his concern about the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the fact that he didn't like us partnering with them, but I'm of a different opinion. We still agree partnering is important. We still would like to see what we can do with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. We have other partnerships. We have a partnership with the City of Yellowknife. I think that's working well. It has its budget shortfalls, the same percentage amount that the Deh Cho Bridge has. We have partnerships with the federal government. We have partnerships with the communities of Tuk and Inuvik, and we're working with the community of Aklavik on a partnership-type of arrangement to make submissions. So I still think partners are important if we're going to do a lot of this work that needs to be done in the Northwest Territories.

Also, with the PDR, as I indicated earlier, I'm quite happy and quite proud that we're able to secure some dollars to get that done. The voice of the communities was getting very loud and we needed to do something to move that forward. Now we have the ability to move that forward without having to absorb all the costs ourselves as a government.

We are, in response to Mr. Jacobson's question about Drive Alive, we have a number of initiatives that we are focusing on to include as part of this program.

Of course, I disagree with Mr. Hawkins' point that I don't respond to his needs. I try very hard to be accommodating for Mr. Hawkins. He has raised a number of issues. He's raised the point that he made suggestions for the new driver's licence. I would have to find that somewhere in Hansard that he made the suggestion. Mr. Chairman, he's also been quite adamant on the cell phone distracted driving legislation that he feels needs to be brought forward. I have committed to meet with committee. There has been one motion already that was defeated. I need to bring the information that we have compiled forward to committee for their discussion and to see if we can bring it forward. I think if we are serious about having distracted driving legislation, that we can move that forward fairly quickly. We've done quite a bit of work in the last while to this area and I need to have that discussion and we have requested, I believe, some time with committee.

On the subject of the Slave Geological Province, this is one of the few projects that can fit under the P3 program or there's a possibility. We need to do more work on this area. Right now, we're looking at a study only and we need to do this in order to see if we have a business case.

Mr. Hawkins also raised the issue of the Deh Cho Bridge. I guess a final comment on that is there's been lots of work done in this area and I can't change history on the Deh Cho Bridge. But we did make a number of changes. We've changed the

contractor. We've changed the design. We changed the project management. It's raised a lot of concern and understandably so, but those things needed to be done. It's still my position to try to move it forward and get the project done in a timely manner to meet some of the time frames that we've set out for ourselves. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister McLeod. That concludes the general comments. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Moving to detail. We will defer page 11-7, the department summary, Transportation, operations expenditure summary. Does committee agree that we defer?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 11-8, information item, transportation, infrastructure investment summary. Questions? Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the infrastructure investment strategy, I'm just wondering, given the troubles we've had with some partners, you know, and I never have said that we shouldn't partner with or look for partners where it makes sense. I think if you look at the federal government, the City of Yellowknife, the Municipality of Tuk and some others, I mean, we've got some good cases where we've gone into partnerships with people who have brought something to the table. Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Department of Transportation has learned anything on the partnership they had with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and whether or not they've developed any kind of policy or, you know, going forward, a policy on what they would take as far as partners, take on partners, what that would be? Have they got any, I guess, way to gauge how good a partner is before they take them on? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, as we move forward and develop partnerships and sign MOUs with different aboriginal governments, different companies and different communities, we continually learn best practices. This is no different from the Deh Cho Bridge. The Deh Cho Bridge is a P3 project that had no policy, as has been mentioned before. It has since been drafted through Finance, I believe, and I'm sure as we take stock upon completion of this project, we will look at where we could have done better and learn from that. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Again, I just wanted to state again for the record, I am not opposed to the partnerships and I don't want the Minister to think that I am opposed. However, I think the department needs to

learn something. This partnership that we got into with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, they never had the required equity. They still don't have the required equity. It's cost us as a government nothing but headaches and money, Mr. Chairman. Again, we have to be very careful when it comes to getting into partnerships with folks who don't have the equity and can't deliver on the project at the end of the day. I just wanted to state that for the record, but I am not opposed to partnerships where they make sense. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I didn't hear a question there. We'll move on to Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much there, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I seem to have come up with a tie there. Let's try that again.

---Defeated

Committee, we're dealing with detail of the Department of Transportation. We're on page 11-8, information item, Transportation, infrastructure investment summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 11-9, information item, Transportation, revenue summary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Could the Minister tell me with regard to recoveries, research and development, Building Canada Plan, \$264,000, could you give me a breakdown on that? What research is it being spent on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Underneath the Build Canada Plan, it's a total of \$185 million for the GNWT. We've allocated 1 percent of that funding over seven years, so the annual contribution underneath the Build Canada Plan is \$264,000. It is generally earmarked for research and development related to climate change. We have a number of different projects that have been done underneath that already, including Aklavik gravel access road study, including some engineering assessments, vulnerability assessments on Highway No. 3, and we will continue to develop additional research, additional programs, as we move forward with the details. There is much happening in the area of infrastructure and climate change impact, so the funding here is not formally earmarked for any specific project yet, but as we continue to gather information, we will determine what the best plan is for the funding. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: It wasn't clear from the deputy minister. Did you state that this money is a seven-

year fund? Is the research money for seven years or is it based on three years?

MR. NEUDORF: This is the annual allocation of funding that's over a seven-year period. So it's a total of \$1.85 million for research and development. The annual allocation in 2010-2011 is \$264,000.

MR. KRUTKO: Have you ever considered using some of this funding to complete the work that was done back in the 14th Assembly for main street chipseal for nine communities? If you're talking about permafrost, infrastructure in communities, this is a perfect opportunity to complete that work that was done back then, enhance the work and have it ready so the communities can take the working information, submit it to Building Canada or using some of their gas tax money to implement some of that work. Is that something that can be contemplated for using this money going forward since you mentioned there is \$1.8 million in the fund?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko, I believe this is on revenue rather than expenditures. I wonder if your question might be appropriate when we get to expenditures. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chair, I am just following up on a question that was responded to by the deputy minister identifying that this money is for seven years. It's a total of \$1.8 million going forward and this is the allocation for this year. So there are other dollars going forward. My question is: going forward, can we look at some projects such as main street chipseal. It's with regard to the comments by the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I'll give the Minister or deputy minister a chance to respond to that and then we'll continue under the appropriate section. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This money is in place at \$264,000 until the year 2016-2017. In response to the Member's question about whether or not we could use this money to do studies on chipseal or dust suppressants in the communities, the type of analysis that he's referring to has already been done through MACA. They have all the dust suppressant testing for what would work best in the communities. We also, I guess, are doing something in the neighbourhood by testing the new products that are coming out such as Easy Street and we may consider using some of this money to see if that's something that would work. However, the actual testing in most of the communities across the Territories has been done by MACA, I believe.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chair, as I stated earlier, there were nine communities identified and I believe they only completed four. Yet, there are still five communities that haven't been completed with

regard to that main street chipseal program. I know there was some work done, but it's not all done yet. It's not completed, so that's why I'm suggesting if we can use some of this money to complete that work and, more importantly, for those communities that realize we are dealing with permafrost and with research and development and trying to improve dust control for communities.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The reason the program was not continued was MACA decided no longer to fund it. They had other use for their dollars. I think they put it directly into the communities.

In response to the Member's question whether we can actually put the application for dust suppressant through this program, the answer would be no. It's not for actual construction. It's for research and development.

MR. KRUTKO: Another suggestion is maybe we could do some research and development into putting bridges across the river such as the Peel River and possibly the Mackenzie up around Tsiigehtchic. That's another research and development project you can do to complete that work. All you have to do is some geotech work in regards to identifying the different types of soils and find a base for the crossings. If anything, you're looking at probably a couple of hundred thousand dollars. Geotech work, give you the baseline and start looking at the possibility of developing that. Again, one of the biggest challenges you are going to face is permafrost in those areas. Is it a possibility to use this money going forward considering it's a \$1.8 million research fund over the next couple of years?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we have not considered using this pot of money to do the geotech work that the Member is referring to. That work has already been done. It has been done for some time, so we wouldn't propose to do it again unless there was something relative to the issue of climate change and its impacts.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd like to rise and report progress.

---Defeated

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Committee, we are on page 11-9, Transportation, information item, revenue summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 11-10, Transportation, information item. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Just a question regarding the bypass road for Yellowknife. I note that there's another \$1.5 million. I don't know what the total fund is, but is that still the arrangement of 50 percent funding where 50 percent will be paid by the City of Yellowknife and 50 percent by Building Canada or is this over and above that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I believe you're back on page 11-9. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Member's correct; it's a 50-50 cost share.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Once again, committee, page 11-9, Transportation, information item. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: What's the total cost of the project now compared to the original estimate?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: A little bit of a concern. Some of this information is in the supp. The project budget is now \$7.6 million for the bypass road in Yellowknife.

MR. KRUTKO: What was the estimated cost compared to what it is now?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The budget was estimated to be \$7 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time is up. Committee, we're on page 11-9, Transportation, information item, revenue summary. Questions? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd like to deal with a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): What's your motion, Mr. Krutko?

MR. KRUTKO: I move that we report progress.

---Defeated

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 11-10, Transportation, information item, active position summary. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the maintenance of national parks line, I'd like to know what the \$95,000 is for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Krutko, did you wish to go back?

MR. KRUTKO: I didn't think we left.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Yes. We're on page 11-10. What page would you like to go back to?

MR. KRUTKO: Page 11-9.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Does committee agree to go back to page 11-9?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Go ahead, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to highways, maintenance national parks, the \$95,000, what's that for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the \$95,000 is for maintenance.

MR. KRUTKO: What national park?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The \$95,000 is for O and M in the Wood Buffalo National Park, which is recoverable.

MR. KRUTKO: How long is the funding for?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: It should be obvious. It's a one-year budget, so it's one year.

MR. KRUTKO: So what do you do next year?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Our budgets are brought forward every year for review and passed by this House. So we'll do the same thing next year, as the Member is aware.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I remind Members to direct the question through the chair. Mr. Krutko, anything further?

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to NAV Canada Occupancy Agreement, the \$550,000, what's that for and how long is the agreement for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, these are recovery of costs incurred by NAV Canada for their share of electrical, heating, janitorial, water, and ATB maintenance.

MR. KRUTKO: The other question was how long is the agreement for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you for that reminder, Mr. Krutko. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a one-year budget, so it's for one year.

MR. KRUTKO: I notice it's an increase from last year. Do we get an increase every year going forward with respect to that fund?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The Member's correct; there is an increase as a result of increased utility costs. That's reflected in here.

MR. KRUTKO: With regard to the \$12.7 million for deferred contributions, what are the deferred contributions for or from?

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is the amortized value of the contributions that we've received from the federal government over the years for our infrastructure.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the deputy minister illustrate what type of projects we're talking about that we get this money for from the federal government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, these were the revenues that we received from Canada, all the dollars that we got through Building Canada and other sources through the federal government that have to be amortized and recognized as revenue over the useful life of the asset.

MR. KRUTKO: Does this also include the airport infrastructure such as the new garage that's being built? Is it that type of infrastructure?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: It reflects all the investments that the federal government made on the capital projects.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister get a list of all the contributions and advise the Members?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Nothing further? We're on page 11-9. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I will now rise and report progress. Mr. McLeod, please thank your witnesses and dismiss them. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the House.

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 Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Wednesday, February 17, 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, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 17th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:02 p.m.