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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 22, 2010****Members Present**

Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, 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. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 79-16(4):
MINISTERS ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jackson Lafferty will be absent from the House today to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Labour Ministers meeting in Ottawa.

I also wish to advise Members that the Honourable Bob McLeod will be absent from the House today to attend events related to the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NWT HC HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

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

Mr. Speaker, between 2004 and 2009 the housing needs have grown from 16 percent to 19 percent across NWT. Mr. Speaker, that should not happen. My estimates are that the NWT Housing Corporation has in excess of \$100 million per year to address social housing needs across the Northwest Territories.

In addition to that, CMHC's affordable housing money, the NWT Housing Corporation, in my estimate, spent around \$900 million to address social housing needs between 2004 and 2009.

Mr. Speaker, how does a corporation that is designed to address social housing need to spend that much money and lose ground? I can tell you how, Mr. Speaker: no strategy, no focus and simply not knowing the real needs of the small communities.

Mr. Speaker, from 2004 to 2009 the core need in Yellowknife remained constant at 9 percent and since 46 percent of the households are in Yellowknife, that means the actual core need in the other communities is actually 28 percent.

Mr. Speaker, when you remove the regional centres and Yellowknife, the needs in the smaller communities are at 42 percent. Mr. Speaker, that shows the NWT Housing Corporation is not focussed in the right areas and does not have a strategy that combats the core need issue for housing. That, after spending 800 to 900 million dollars in that time period.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation needs a strategy to address core need issues for housing in smaller communities. The NWT Housing Corporation has to develop programs and policies that actually work to take people out of core need. Mr. Speaker, this type of miserable failure should not be ignored by this government. I have made many suggestions on how things could be improved. Very few of my ideas were taken seriously. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRADITIONAL HAND GAMES
TOURNAMENT IN DELINE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past few days I was in Deline and I was witness to the hand games that were played there, Mr. Speaker. This is the first annual traditional hand games that the Deline First Nation have hosted. There were 37 teams from the Yukon, Alberta and Northwest Territories in total.

Mr. Speaker, there were just over 260 to 280 hand game players. There's about 40 hours of singing and drumming. The traditional hand games brought out a lot of excitement from the people in the tournament. People played all hours of the night.

I want to say that on behalf of the Sahtu region I want to congratulate the winner from the community of Wrigley who won the hand game tournament. Meander River came in second. To put on this type of event requires a lot of volunteers from the community of Deline, to the First Nations, to the land corporation, to all the volunteers that came out and cooked and looked after the people who came out to visit.

The hand games were a truly successful event. You could just see the culture come alive when the young kids come and play with the hand games. They educate themselves to learn about their culture and way of life, working as a team. They are being educated on how to play the game in a good manner.

The hand games are a lifelong tradition of the people of the Sahtu region. Certainly when they played, a lot of people came out to witness it. It was a fun-filled weekend and I want to say to the people of Deline and the organizers how much I appreciated being there to witness a part of our culture I'm certainly proud of.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACTS TO FORMER SENIOR STAFF

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to follow up on a return to written question asked by my colleague from Weledeh, Mr. Bob Bromley, on October 26, 2009. I have some very deep concerns about this government's relentless pursuit of sole-sourcing contracts.

I would welcome former employees, senior managers, and deputy ministers to bid on contracts with the Government of the Northwest Territories. My difficulty is when contracts are handed over to former senior staff on what would appear to be a silver platter.

Is there not something wrong with a deputy minister who is relieved of their duties and months later handed a sole-sourced contract by the very government that let them go? Who are they hired by? Oh, that's right, other deputy ministers. Isn't that convenient? Where does the direction come from? Other DMs or is it a political direction to hire these former deputy ministers?

There are a number of communications and consulting firms here in the Northwest Territories. Why would we sole-source contracts to former senior staff without going to, at the very least, an RFP or tender?

The public asks us as political leaders to govern in a fashion that is fair, open, and transparent. We are the protectors of the public purse here in this Territory. With all of the latitude given to this current

cabinet to sole-source contracts to former staff, it is apparent that this Cabinet just does not care about what the public thinks or what I or other Regular Members think about their addiction to sole-sourcing contracts to former senior staff. Why is this happening when the work should rightfully go to RFP? If the government listens, they might actually get a more thoughtful and better product at the end of the day.

I have some very grave concerns over the contract to coordinate the Northwest Territories cultural participation at the Vancouver Olympics. Why was this contract sole-sourced and for how much? I will have questions at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some researchers from famous American universities and large management consulting firms were interested in why public sector projects sometimes fail. They studied 75 major initiatives since World War II and found that three major problems are caused with well-meaning endeavours and it caused them to fail time and time again.

The first problem is known as design free. The project looked great in theory, but when everyone supported it and it moved forward, it certainly was unworkable in the real world.

The second problem was overconfidence. No one took the possibility of failure seriously. The budget was unrealistic, the timelines were impossible, and there certainly was no backup plan.

The third problem was complacency. This is when the government does something poorly simply because that's all it knows. It seems to me that the Deh Cho Bridge in some fashion has plugged into these plagues in one various way or the other.

Mr. Speaker, for facts here, the legislation was passed to build the bridge back in the 14th Assembly. It was hailed at that time as a great leap forward on this particular project. Then, Mr. Handley and his Cabinet in the 15th Legislative Assembly went alone and entered into a Concession Agreement at the last hours of their government as it ticked away, and, of course, the express overwhelming confidence of this project, which in essence isn't really on record for the fact that it's tied the hands of this government.

Now, we all know about the glitches of the Concession Agreement along with the zero support from Ottawa, which I would define is truly the real scandal. Where is Ottawa's help on this project?

Mr. Speaker, we know that the Minister of Transportation in our 16th Assembly is working hard to help through this project with the cost overruns, and is now, through our time-tested process, as usual, is calling upon Members to ask us for \$15 million more in supplementary funding. Mr. Speaker, I will agree that in no way a 9 percent increase to this project should be viewed as a scandal in any way. It should not be painted in that fact, because most of our public projects have bigger bumps that they've ridden through. But, Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho Bridge Project has been fraught with challenges from the beginning. I wonder if it ever got off on the right foot.

Mr. Speaker, our choice is clear right now. We must find a way to complete this project, the challenge before us. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Transportation about what have we learned to make sure this project does not fall off the rails again, and certainly what is being done to get money from Ottawa to help us support this project that needs to be built as infrastructure in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BRENDAN GREEN'S OLYMPIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One more time I'm going to stand up in the House and I'm going to speak to the accomplishments of Brendan Green, and this in the context of a day on Friday, February 26th, when Brendan will compete at the Olympics in the Men's Biathlon Relay Competition.

Mr. Speaker, in honouring this and sending our best wishes to Brendan for this competition, people in Hay River in the schools, in the businesses and in many other places will be wearing something green on Friday. So, Mr. Speaker, although we are not allowed to have props in the Legislature, I would like today to also challenge my colleagues here in the Legislature as a show of support for our young Olympian from Hay River to possibly look through your wardrobe and if you could find something green to wear on Friday, I think that would be a tremendous show of support for Brendan, and we wish him all the best.

Just getting to the Olympics, Mr. Speaker, of course, is a tremendous achievement. I know there's been a little bit of disappointment in some of the Canadians on the part of owning the podium, but, you know, we are still hopeful for Brendan and the Biathlon Team. But whatever they do, we will still remain very proud and supportive of his achievements to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH COST OF LIVING IN THE NWT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People are drawing a lot of attention lately to the cost of living. Frustration has spawned a Facebook page, public meetings, and you can't see the news without hearing the words "high cost of living." I want to recognize this initiative and respond to it.

The cost of living being too high means living pay cheque to pay cheque, never getting ahead of the bills, holding multiple jobs, and no savings for emergencies or the future. Fifty percent of small community households have an annual income of less than \$30,000 and much of their housing is in poor or uninhabitable condition. Even people with greater incomes in lower cost communities are struggling with the high costs of today.

There are two important government responses that can significantly address the high cost of living. First, get rid of poverty. If acted upon, the House call for poverty reduction by integrating services such as child care, education and literacy training, community and individual healing will go a long way in helping both the working poor and easing abject poverty. With success, people will have greater ability to pay bills and get ahead, they will pay more taxes and start more businesses, and they will need less government support, all of which are important contributions to lowering the cost of living.

The second responsibility we have is to address one of the biggest pressures people are pointing to as the cause of their inability to meet their costs: energy bills. Energy costs are part of essentially every aspect of our lives. Fortunately, there are ways that we can provide cheaper energy that will also provide more employment and business opportunities and real environmental benefits. Rather than pursue these in a meaningful way however, government does endless reviews and opaque shifting of costs that ultimately benefits nobody.

In the coming days I will speak in depth to these shortcomings and missed opportunities for friendlier energy and how our energy supply system must be fundamentally revised to achieve meaningful advances in our fight against the high cost of living. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to welcome anyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Questions

QUESTION 359-16(4):

DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Member's statement, I believe that the Deh Cho Bridge process has had many challenges. Mr. Speaker, I also want to clearly say that I don't think a 9 percent increase on this project is a scandal, by any measure. Mr. Speaker, what I think is the true scandal of this project is where is Ottawa's help on this potential project. I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation, when was the last time Ottawa was asked for money to help support this project? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my information tells me that the last time a request was put into the federal government was in the life of the last government. It was brought initially forward to the Transportation people and I think the issue was then moved to the Finance department. In the government we have not sought to renew that request. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know why hasn't a financial contribution to this project been pursued at our ministerial or Premier level to the federal government, again, to support the cost of this project. Why hasn't anything been pursued since? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the indications that we had from the federal government was that either this project to have to move forward as a P3, because the project had started already prior to the P3 program becoming active and having the board set up, we didn't qualify. We had been also asked to be considering using the Building Canada funding for the bridge if we thought that his was a high enough priority. At the time it was decided that there were many other projects that could utilize the Building Canada funds, therefore, that's where we would invest, as the bridge project already had financing arranged. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, my clear evidence of this House, many Members asked many questions repeatedly. Not just once. Not just twice. Not over one year. Not over five years; maybe even longer than that. Mr. Speaker, the point being is that many Members continue to challenge that mighty mountain by raising an issue up and saying we're not going to give up. So has the government given up on Ottawa, and if they haven't given up on Ottawa, when can we expect another letter asking for financial support for this particular project? Because I can guarantee you that there is no

infrastructure project across Canada of this nature that would be left in the dark by Ottawa's support. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, right now we don't have any current plans to be formulating a request to Ottawa. We don't see a program that would allow us to have any dollars invested from the federal government. However, having said that, I don't think that it would stop any informal discussions with the federal Ministers to see if there are any potential avenues for them to invest. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've explained that I believe this is where one of our serious problems lies. Would the Minister commit to this House to work with the Premier to make sure we get a letter off to Ottawa, whether it be the Prime Minister, one of the infrastructure Ministers, whether it's the Finance Minister? Personally, I don't really care who. The fact is we need to make sure we get a letter to one, if not all of them, explaining how important this project is to this Territory. Would the Minister make sure, loud and clear in this House, that he'll commit that a letter of this nature will get done right away? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I certainly can commit to working with the Premier to see what options there are and what involvement the federal government could be requested to assist us with in this situation.

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

QUESTION 360-16(3):

NWTHC HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke of the core need of the NWT Housing Corporation. I have questions for the Minister.

I realize that in five years, 2004 to 2009, this government has had at least six Ministers. I'm just making that point to see if the government is trying to maybe stay with one Minister to try to get things resolved.

I'd like to ask the Minister, in his year of being Minister of NWT Housing Corporation, if he has determined why the Housing Needs Survey has grown in the last five to six years.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many reasons that the core need would rise. It's not just a matter of putting the product on the ground. The affordability is a

contributing factor; suitability of housing and adequacy. We've taken steps to address the core need. With the money that's been invested by the federal government and matched by this government, we're quite confident that within a year or two we'll have addressed or made a serious dent in the core needs in the communities.

MR. BEAULIEU: The Minister speaks of the money that's going to be coming to the corporation over the next couple of years or so. Has the Minister looked at what exactly would be needed to lower core need? Has he taken a good comprehensive look at what is needed to lower core need?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have a pretty good idea that we know what it will take to address core need. That's why the corporation, using the money that is due to run out next year -- the federal infrastructure money is due to run out in 2010-2011 -- we're taking steps to channel a lot of that money into the communities with the highest core need so we'd be able to address a lot of the issues, whether it be major M and I projects, which is one of the contributing factors to the high number of core need, talking about the adequacy. We're taking steps to address that and there's a huge investment being made in repair projects across the Northwest Territories.

MR. BEAULIEU: The Minister speaks of a strategy and knowing what it takes to lower core need. Does the Minister actually have a strategy to address core needs in the small communities, to address the communities that have the highest core need? Has the corporation developed an actual strategy to address that issue?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The strategy that we have to address core need is to make an investment in the communities with the highest core need. We're quite confident that will address a lot of the issues as far as core need goes. We have about a year and a half left of the federal money they have invested plus what we've contributed. Since 2004-2005 we've actually invested about \$224 million into trying to address this and the money has gone to a lot of the communities that are in highest need. That is our strategy for the next couple of years, is to take what we've learned from the Community Needs Survey and allocate money based on the numbers that we receive.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that response. Will the Minister do a complete review of the NWT Housing Corporation's programs and policies with means of lowering core need and developing programs that can be delivered effectively in the small communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We're always looking at ways that we can bring the core need numbers down and the investment that we are making, whether it be in the public housing stock or through the Homeownership Programs. It's an ongoing process. We're always looking for ways that we can improve the delivery of our programs with the investment that we have. We're quite confident that when we meet again next year for the budget session that some of our numbers should go down. The communities that need the most investment to bring their core need down will be getting the most investment. We're quite confident that we'll see a decline in the core need numbers. We also have to understand that affordability is a contributing factor to the core need numbers too. If the economy picks up, I think that plus the investment we're making we'll see the core needs start to come down.

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

QUESTION 361-16(4):
HIGH COST OF LIVING IN THE NWT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier and they're about the high cost of living today.

The group of citizens in Yellowknife, and perhaps across the Territories, are working through electronic means as well as individually and together have had a lot of press and a lot of profile. I certainly appreciate their initiative in discussing this and trying to come up with solutions.

I'm wondering what the government is doing to recognize this initiative and meet with this group of people. Have we met with them, made contact with them, and offered our perspectives and willingness to work with them?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although we've heard something of discussion out there about a group who has gone on-line to raise concerns about the high cost of energy there has been no request made to Members of this Cabinet nor, as is my understanding, to Regular Members as well.

MR. BROMLEY: I hope we don't have to wait until somebody asks us to do something when we see a need out there. Obviously there's been considerable press, as I've mentioned: radio coverage, newspaper coverage, electronic coverage. I was asking what initiative we have taken to step out and meet these people halfway. Perhaps the response I got means that we haven't done that and I would ask if the Premier would be willing to get our government to actually do that, to recognize the citizen effort here and offer to meet with them.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The record will show that we're not waiting for a request to do anything about this. In fact, previous governments have been dealing with the issue of the high cost of living in our communities in quite a number of ways. You can look at almost every department within the Northwest Territories where we are taking initiatives to try to help with the cost of living. Whether that is a fuel subsidy for seniors, property tax issues for seniors or income support basket for residents, our housing program helps deal with that. This government itself is looking at alternative energies and investing the dollars to look at alternative energies to help stabilize our costs or even reduce them. We're taking quite a number of initiatives as a government to help with the cost of living issues in our communities. When it comes to the one group alone, no, we haven't gone out to them. There are many groups out there we meet with on an ongoing basis to deal with the core need or high cost of living issues.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that response from the Premier. I'm wondering what this government is doing to actually reduce the cost of living beyond buying out a reduction in the cost of living and putting it onto the back of our taxpayers indirectly, sort of hiding those costs in a way. Not that I don't appreciate those programs; we need them as part of our strategy. But what are we doing to actually reduce the costs of services to our people and the cost of living directly?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: This government has made huge investments in looking at alternative energies, that being some of the biggest cost drivers. When we looked at the overall impacts, two factors come to the forefront around the cost of living and that is transportation and energy costs. So we're looking at expanding, for example, hydroelectricity to smaller hydro potential initiatives in our communities. So we're pursuing that. We're looking at wind energy. We're looking at a number of other factors; biomass. But those are yet to come and have the potential to reduce the cost of living or stabilize it in our communities. The other area is, for example, on our winter roads or ice crossings, when we try to speed the acceleration to build up the ice crossings so that the trucks can get across and deliver goods to our communities

All of these, Mr. Speaker, require an infusion of cash to help makes things happen across the Territories and that still costs us. Many governments across this country look at subsidies for individuals to help offset. Even in Manitoba where there's hydroelectricity, everybody pays the same cost, but we know that the cost of delivering service in remote communities is offset by those who live in the larger centres just because of the population base. So aside from what we're doing, the energy review that's happened, we're working on our response and working with Members to

come forward on that to help stabilize the cost of living and energy in our more remote communities. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I appreciate the comments from the Premier. He named a lot of good programs that I'm hoping actually get on the ground and start to reduce our costs. But the phrase that caught my attention is yet to come. We've been talking about a lot of things. We've been planning a lot of things. Let's just pick hydro, for example, I think eight, nine, 10 years we've been planning small hydro, small hydro, Mr. Speaker, in Lutselk'e and Whati. Yet, here we are spending more money and time thinking about it. When will people actually see these things on the ground in a way that starts reducing our costs? I recognize there are front-end costs to that, but we can't keep studying these things to death, Mr. Speaker. When will it happen on the ground? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: At times it can be frustrating in trying to move things along, but in our style of working with our community governments and aboriginal leadership we have to work through a process. Hopefully, on the Lutselk'e project, for example, the mini-hydro there, we began to move that ahead at a faster pace. Whati is another area where we're working on run-of-the-river technology. Some of the decisions that have to be made though are should we be looking at a bigger expansion or leave it to the community size when it comes to the hydro pieces. Biomass, when we look at replacement of diesel generators is the time to look at a natural conversion of those things so that we're not having to duplicate the efforts or come up with additional cash when things are as they are. The yet-to-come benefits are the ones where those hydro projects are in or, for example, our runway expansions and our ice road technology improves. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 362-16(4):
SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACTS TO
FORMER SENIOR STAFF

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I've got some questions today and suppose I'll ask them of the Premier. In getting back to my Member's statement, I wanted to talk about sole-sourcing contracts to former deputy ministers. I'd like to begin by asking the Premier if there is any political direction given from his Cabinet when it comes to sole-sourcing contracts to former deputy ministers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a number of contracting methods as the Government of the Northwest Territories -- sole-sourcing is one of them, negotiated contracts, RFP, public tender -- and we use all of those in a range of accessing services, whether it was with past employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We don't give a specific direction and each department has these ways of seeking whether it's a sole-source or a tender process. But departments have that initiative that they can use. When they come forward to request exemption is when we would deal with it. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: One of the things that I want to talk about is the process here today on how it's possible that former deputy ministers get sole-source contracts with this government, and it goes back to the reply to a written question asked by my colleague, Mr. Bromley on a contract with BDK Applied Management Services for consultation and communication services provided to the Department of Finance. I'm just wondering, Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk about process, what process is followed that allows contracts to be sole-sourced to former deputy ministers. What process is this Cabinet and government following when it comes to handing out contracts like that? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the process for seeking or sole-sourcing, again, depending on the initiatives that are there and, again, all of the requirements to fit into either sole-source or negotiated contracts all have limits that would apply before there's direct involvement from a deputy minister level or coming to the Cabinet or FMB table. So there are a number of processes that would be involved, whether it is specifically an initiative from a department and a Minister right on through the whole system. So we have processes in place and those are used as we seek to get the work done of government. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, some of this work performed by BDK Applied Management Services for consultation and communications services is, in fact, for our participation in Vancouver at the 2010 Games. I'd like to ask the Premier -- we have known about our participation at Vancouver 2010 for a long period of time, and again, getting back to the process -- why didn't this go to RFP or why didn't it go to tender? Why was that sole-sourced, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the work at the Olympics was one where it's pan-territorial, so any initiative under that would have worked through the system of deputies that we had in place, and, again, involved the other territories. So I'll get all the information on that.

By the way, just coming back from the NWT Day, it was a huge success, so our program delivered in Vancouver is getting the attention of the world as the Olympics goes on. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, know the work that's been done down in Vancouver with Northern House and our participation there has been good. I'm not talking about that, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about a process that's allowed a former deputy minister to get a sole-source contract with this government. By the sounds of it, the Premier is saying that he's got this working group of deputy ministers that review former deputy ministers. I think, Mr. Speaker, there's something wrong with that. Will the Premier commit to having a look at the policy when it comes to sole-sourcing contracts to former deputy ministers and senior staff? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Let's be clear, though, the Olympics side of it, I don't believe there's a tie between what the Member has raised as a sole-source contract and the actual Olympic program that's in place. For deputy ministers and senior staff of the Government of the Northwest Territories, past, that is, we can definitely sit down at some point and set some time up to go through the policies of this government. We're using what's been in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 363-16(4):
CHANGES TO MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the prevailing issues that keep coming across my desk, whether I'm getting a phone call, a letter or an e-mail, Mr. Speaker, is medical travel. That, as well, seems to be fraught with challenges. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what is she doing to lead some type of initiative that clears this up. Because medical travel seems to be a challenging issue and it appears, clearly, that it's complicated as well. So what initiatives are being done to examine medical travel and make sure it's clearly laid out for the public what they qualify for and don't qualify for? Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rules are quite clear about what our residents are eligible for. If they are getting medical or doctor services, they get medical travel associated with that, and there are some extended health benefits

where they will be entitled to medical travel. So without more specific information, I'm not sure if I know what the Member is referring to. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, the Minister I believe last week, in response to one of my questions, said medical travel is under review. I'm just wondering what is specifically "under review." We've even got a letter that had been sent not that long ago to our offices that said it's being reviewed. So what type of review process is medical travel under at this time, and is the Medical Travel Policy posted for all who wish to see it on either a website or some type of government access? Thank you.

MS. LEE: Absolutely, there is detailed information on the Department of Health and Social Services' website on the Medical Travel Policy and what the public needs to know about what it does. The same with the extended health benefits or any other programs and services that the department provides.

The review we are undertaking doesn't have to do with who qualifies for medical travel or not because that part is clear. What we want to do is to make sure that our system is working the way it was meant to be, that everyone who is eligible for service get them in a way that is smooth, and that our practitioners are keeping in close touch with the files so that there's seamless service delivery to our residents, that there is proper follow-up and checkup, and that when referrals are made that they are looked into. So we're working to make sure that our system runs efficiently. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd like to know what type of appeal process is involved in medical travel. In other words, if you're denied housing, there's a housing appeal; if you're denied some other type, maybe educational subsidy or income support subsidy, there's an appeal process. What type of appeal process is involved with medical travel other than having to run it up the flagpole to the Minister's office every single time?

MS. LEE: Under the current system there is no appeal process for medical travel. The way the system is set up is that the health insurance office looks at the policy, looks at the guidelines and they apply the policy accordingly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really glad to hear we have the policy office, because I suspect they never make a mistake so that's why we have no appeal process. It's sad to say that we don't live in a perfect world, so I guess my question would be to the Minister, then, is what's stopping us from setting up an appeal process if a person is denied medical travel so we don't have to drag it to the Assembly floor time after time after time again and we can deal with it

probably in a peer review process, especially when a lot of things are denied when they have medical letters supported by doctors' signatures that say that they need something done? Mr. Speaker, what's stopping the Minister from setting up an appeal process? Thank you.

MS. LEE: I think we should be mindful of the fact that we serve about 40,000 people in the Territories and by and large the service delivery goes smoothly. I do appreciate that I get a number of files across my desk and the MLAs get them as well. But if you compare that, a few dozen a year to 40,000-plus people that we serve, and the satisfaction reports that we've been getting, I think the service is satisfactory that way.

Now, people are always not going to like being told that they can't take medical travel for this and that, and it might not have anything to do with the fact of whether it's right or not. It's just the fact of being told you can't do it. But according to the policy, in fact, they might not be eligible for that service because it's not something that we cover under the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 364-16(4):
SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACTS TO
FORMER SENIOR STAFF

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just had a few more questions that I wanted to ask pertaining to former deputy ministers being hired by sole-source contract by this government. I'm just wondering if the Premier could let me know if there's a cooling off period for former DMs and senior staff before they are sole-sourced by this government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there is a cooling off period for DMs. I'll have to check on the senior management file. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering, again getting back to... Again, this is about process, Mr. Speaker. The sole-source contract to BDK, I'm just wondering whether that cooling off period was respected and I want to ask the Premier, was there any discussion at the Cabinet table about the sole-source contract to this company. Was there any political involvement in the hiring through sole-source of this company?

MR. ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, when departments fall within the policy that is in place, there is no purpose for it to come to Cabinet except, for example, negotiated contracts and, again, depending on the dollar value of that. Let's be clear so we don't muddy the waters when it comes to the Olympics. There was an RFP, is my understanding,

for that Olympic process that went out there again in conjunction with our partner territories. But when it comes to department initiatives, if they fit within the policy and the approval limits, then that's just normal course of business that's out there. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I wanted to follow up on that and I just wanted to get some clarity here so that I'm sure how this works and the public is sure how it works. Who ultimately makes the call on hiring a former deputy minister through a sole-source contract? Is it the other deputy minister, their former colleague, or is it the Minister of the department that makes that call, Mr. Speaker? I just wanted to be clear on that question. Thank you.

MR. ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the approval process is laid out. There are some dollar figures. So a contract could be let at a community or regional level and it could be let to a past employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories if they're a year, two years, five years, ten years. As the record shows, and public accounts and our contracts document shows that there's been those, an example of those, used by governments throughout different Assemblies on that initiative. Again, it depends on the dollar value. You could have directors issuing a contract all the way up to deputy ministers as well as up to Minister's approval. So there are different steps. Again, without getting into details, this is the best we can do in providing you information. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Premier for that response, but I didn't really get an answer that was satisfactory. Does the Minister of the various departments that's giving out the contract, do they get involved in the decision to sole-source a contract to a former deputy minister? I think that's a very straightforward question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, on a normal course of business, when a deputy minister wants to inform the Minister of different contracts being issued that might cause some concern, they raise it to that level. So, yes, the Minister's office can get involved in issuing a contract as the process allows for. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 365-16(4):
SOLE-SOURCE CONTRACTS
TO FORMER SENIOR STAFF

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier as well. I want to follow up on the questions I asked over the last number of months on sole-source contracting. Obviously it

was quite a concern and we had some really good examples. I happened to be dealing with Ministers; now we're dealing with deputy ministers and high-level bureaucrats. What steps has the Premier taken since we've raised these issues and the obvious concern of both the Members of the House and the public? What steps has the Premier taken to tighten up and review, perhaps review and tighten up, the contracting procedures? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had no one from the public contact me or my office specifically; the issue has come from the Assembly here. We continue to use the policies that are in place. Any change in policy, we have a process where we go back to Members of the Assembly. If there's a request by committee to look at that, we'll take a look at that, as I responded earlier in an earlier question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: I would say the request has been quite plain and already on the Premier's plate for some time now, probably through committee too. So I'd like specifics. That there is no concern out there is clearly not correct, if the Premier reads the newspaper and so on. I'm hoping he will tell us what he plans to do, if he actually has not done anything yet, to review and tighten up this process for sole-source contracting.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We could create policy on the fly here if that's what Members like. There's a process for dealing with policy and there's also the Financial Administration Act that's in place that stipulated levels of authority for contracting. There's a Financial Administration Manual that is a part of the process. That work is actually ongoing from the Department of Finance looking at the Financial Administration Act and the FAM, as we call it, or Financial Administration Manual. That's being looked at overall in the government how we contract. For the actual policies themselves, there are issues and questions that have been raised by Members but I can't recall and I'd have to go back to the paperwork to see if there's an actual letter saying a requested revision of those policies. But right now, the Financial Administration Act itself is undergoing work, as along with that is the Financial Administration Manual.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the comments from the Premier there. What would the Premier say is the best process for Members to take here to get that review and revision happening, recognizing that of course there is a Financial Administration Act and a process described, but then there's the actual implementation of it in a way that does not favour those with previous relationships with the government or whatever.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Let's be clear that again, with a Territory our size and the delivery of

programs as complex as they are, we go out there at times for public tender, RFPs, RFQs, sole-sourced contracts as is the example being used today. We try to deliver the programs and services that we're expected to deliver. It is a challenging environment. We go through a number of phases and processes of ensuring that we can get the work done and even though people who have worked for the Government of the Northwest Territories in the past, they still need to earn a living if they are to remain in the Northwest Territories. So whether it's with our government or an aboriginal government, we should recognize that. When it comes to the actual process to use and where we go, well, everything that we do as a government will flow out of the Financial Administration Act. So that would be the first big ticket item that we would look at and how we work and how we let contracts. From there our policies are formed. So I would say that avenue of the Financial Administration Act, then the manual, and then our policies. When it comes to the interpretation of those, well, that's a day-by-day task and as Members are holding us to account on that even in today's session.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the proof is in the pudding. The public is very upset about the sole-sourced contracting that's going on. There are generally many examples, and we've brought them to the Premier before and we'll bring them to him again, of work that could be done by many that's sole sourced. Last session, I believe, I raised a number of specific issues. For example, letting go identical contracts for the exact same work and the exact same time frame and letting them out on sole-sourced basis. What's more specific than that? I'd like to ask, will the Premier be doing some sort of assessment to see what the additional cost of all this sole sourcing is and likely lower quality work than if it had been put out on a competitive basis?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I know the Member is very adept at looking at how we do things as a government and his professional expertise in areas, but he seems to cover quite an area from climate change expertise right down to now contracting, and if in fact the work that we get is quality work or not. We can debate that quality here and we do that. The issues of the work we do as a government, the nature of that work that needs to get done and the timing of that all comes into place when we make decisions. In fact, again, the Member says that the public is outraged at this or very concerned about that. Between an editorial and a number of questions in here, that's one thing we need to deal with. Yes, we do look into those and provide information on that. But let's be clear that at times the best experts are the ones who have experience in how we deliver programs and

services. At times the best expertise would be those where the Minister or department feel confident in the work that needs to be done and the speed it needs to be done so we can get things happening with ourselves, with the federal government, with aboriginal governments and so on. So there are times when we do use that process of sole-source contracting.

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

QUESTION 366-16(4):
THIRD-PARTY HEALTH INSURANCE
FOR INDIVIDUALS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From time to time this particular issue comes up and it's a question about third-party insurance providers. The question really comes up in the context of whether or not the GNWT accesses that opportunity to help stave off some of the costs that are incurred at Stanton Hospital. Where this specifically arises is if somebody arrives at Stanton and one of the questions quite often asked was, were you hurt at work. So in other words, WCB starts to pick up some of these costs. Of course, then it doesn't fall on the typical shoulders of our public purse because we have a WCB process that will help with those charges.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what other third-party costs we reach out to help cover some of our costs of health care.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think third-party insurance is something that we will be discussing more and more over the next number of weeks as we do public discussion on the supplementary health benefits. We have done a user profile analysis and we have learned that third-party insurance, when we are talking about third-party insurance we're not talking about the insurance program that government could enter into but third-party insurance that every individual has access to. Third-party insurance could be WCB, but it could also be employer insurance. If you work for the government or major companies, many of the employers offer insurance as part of their package. There are some private businesses and individuals who choose to take third-party insurance for whatever reason. The information we've learned from our research in this area, is that for the NWT residents there are only about 40 percent of people who take advantage of third-party insurance or have third-party insurance, whereas in other provinces we think that it would be up to 70 percent or 80 percent of people at least who would have access or choose to take that, because they would

need to do that because the government programs are not as generous.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the answer from the Minister. When I say this it is not directed at the Minister, it's the problem. I want to say this can't be actually taken lightly. People have to be well aware that we could actually be saving a lot of money out of the public purse if we considered this opportunity and in many cases a reality. Is there a policy within the Department of Health and Social Services that when somebody arrives at Stanton or any other health centres, one of the first questions in their information forms that they fill out is do you have third-party insurance that could cover these costs that work with the public health process that we would normally pick up? In essence, I want to ask if we're asking the people who show up if they have third-party insurance.

HON. SANDY LEE: I think the Member may be moving ahead of himself there. I guess we could always ask the individuals, but I think we should also recognize that it's not entirely the individual's fault in the way we have such a low rate of people having third-party insurance. We have a system where the government pays for core health care services, which is the case all across Canada and we're not going to change that. But we have historically covered for all of the extended health benefits that an insurance company would do in southern jurisdictions. So there have been no incentives for residents to seek third-party insurance. It's a shame, really, because those options are available and if the people needed to do it, I'm sure they would look into it more. But we have just built in this incentive and we need to have that conversation with the public.

MR. HAWKINS: Actually, I've been trying to whittle down to the exact area I'm getting to and I think we've now reached the point. I definitely believe heart of hearts that the public system is truly the backstop of what needs to be out there, and by no means am I suggesting that the public system should erode. What I've really been trying to whittle down to is this particular point: if somebody arrives at Stanton today and is in a car accident, we don't ask them if they have third-party insurance. Yet everybody driving a car, in that car, legally, of course, is supposed to have insurance. So in other words, those insurance companies are getting off the hook because the public system is so gracious to cover their costs. But every year people's insurance goes up and up and up on costs. So my problem really comes down to this: why does our territorial health policy not take into consideration these types of problems of saying, well, wait a minute, you're legally mandated to have third-party insurance in this particular case such as auto insurance. Why don't we tap into that first, because they're already paying for it?

HON. SANDY LEE: I'm not sure if the Member is asking me about requiring people to have auto insurance. I'm thinking that he's concentrating on the health insurance. No, we don't have a system right now where a person goes into...unless they don't have NWT health care, in which case we'd be interested in how they're going to pay for it out of their health insurance coverage or their own pocket. As we have the system now, we do not ask people whether they have third-party insurance, because they have never really had to because the GNWT covers for all of their health care if they are eligible under specific conditions or if they're seniors or if they're indigent. In fact, we top up those who have third-party insurance for the percentage that they're not covered with their insurance companies. We are looking to speak to the public about the necessity to consider having third-party coverage for those who can do it. For those who are not eligible because of their condition or because they can't afford it, then, of course, government will always be there as the safety net to those who need it the most.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect, I don't think the Minister sees what I'm trying to get at, which is the fact that I agree that the public system is there to top up, I agree that the public system is to back up the person as the backstop, and I definitely agree that the public system is the safety net provided to all our citizens. My fear is that we're leaving potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars or even up to millions of dollars over the course of a number of years that we're not tapping into the third-party insurance that is legally mandated. I'm not asking her to make sure that people who are driving cars have insurance. I'm telling you the cars that are supposed to be legally on the road are supposed to have insurance. That's the issue. So there's insurance covering them so if there's an accident that person already has insurance for those health-related services. Why aren't we tapping into that opportunity? That's the issue. That's what I'm trying to get at.

HON. SANDY LEE: I'll have to find out if our facilities ask in cases where the persons coming in are injured as a result of an accident and whether there might be health care coverage that they should be accessing first. They might be doing that already. I don't know exactly how it works on the ground. I will ask what questions the providers ask when people come in.

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

QUESTION 367-16(4):
YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN DENE
HAND GAME TOURNAMENTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to ask some questions to the Minister of youth. Over the weekend I had the pleasure of watching the hand games. At the hand games they had a lot of youth that were involved in the tournament. I want to ask the Minister of Youth on the involvement of youth more into the hand games, if there is some type of avenue that the communities can take to involve the youth almost on more of a territorial level youth hand games tournament with his staff working with the different organizations in the Sahtu communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Involving the youth in the hand games tournament would be something that I think we would encourage the communities to do and a lot of the elders. There are many programs out there that if the funding meets the criteria, then we'd be able to assist them. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The funding in terms of accessing funding, there are various programs that Sport North and other organizations have that sometimes it becomes very difficult in terms of accessing funding for the youth. I wonder if the Minister then could possibly look at maybe one of the organizations from the Sahtu communities looking at the funding and how we can get a youth hand game tournament in the region. Again, we could have about 40 teams participating.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: There are many different areas of youth funding available across the Northwest Territories. We get applications from a lot of groups that are interested in hosting different activities. Again, if it meets the criteria, we have funded a lot of youth programs in the past and this is something that working with the regions and working with the folks in the regions is something we are looking at doing again. If it fits all the criteria, then normally they would get funding, but there are many different pots out there, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 14-16(4):
COST OF PHYSICIAN AND REGISTERED
NURSE VISITS TO TSIIGEHTCHIC

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Krutko on February 1, 2010, regarding the

cost of physician and registered nurse visits to Tsiigehtchic.

There were eight physician visits to Tsiigehtchic between October 2008 and September 2009, typically 30 percent of these visits are made by specialists. Three visits by locum specialists cost \$3,750, five visits by general practitioners cost \$5,250, for an overall salary cost of \$9,000 for physician visits to Tsiigehtchic for the period in question. The hourly cost for general practitioner is between \$112 and \$149 and the hourly cost for specialist ranges between \$132 and \$176.

A nurse-in-charge made 20 visits to Tsiigehtchic between October 2008 and September 2009. The total cost of nurse visits for that period is between \$8,697 and \$11,457, depending on the number of hours in each visit. The hourly rate for a nurse-in-charge is between \$44.88 and \$50.93.

In addition to the visitors, a nurse resides in Tsiigehtchic during freeze-up and breakup. For the time frame in question, a nurse was resident from October 17 to December 5, 2008, and April 20 to June 9, 2009. Salary cost for this time frame is \$60,267.10. In addition to this, the nurse is provided with accommodations, which cost in total \$7,000 -- \$4,000 for freeze-up and \$3,000 for breakup. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 15-16(4):
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on February 1, 2010, regarding caribou management measures.

Consultation is a duty that obligates the GNWT to discuss, consider and, where appropriate, accommodate the concerns of aboriginal peoples when the GNWT undertakes actions that might adversely affect established and asserted aboriginal and treaty rights. Consultation is a process with the objective of ensuring that aboriginal and treaty rights are protected and that any negative impacts are avoided, minimized or mitigated. Consultation also assists with reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples and their respective claims, interests and ambitions. The GNWT has developed departmental process guidelines to assist us in taking a consistent and coordinated approach when discharging the GNWT's duty to consult. The following provides an overview of the process followed:

- The duty is triggered whenever the GNWT considers carrying out a government action that has the potential to affect an asserted or proven aboriginal or treaty right.
- The scope and scale of the duty varies on a case-by-case basis and is directly tied to the strength of the asserted or proven aboriginal or

treaty right being affected as well as the potential impact of the government action on this right(s).

- In other words, the duty to consult and potentially accommodate lies on a spectrum, with the requirements of the duty becoming more stringent with the strength of the right(s) being affected and the potential impact of the government action on the right(s).
- Consequently, the GNWT carries out the duty through subjective case-by-case analysis whenever its actions may infringe upon an asserted or proven aboriginal or treaty right.
- The GNWT engages those aboriginal governments and organizations that have the authority to represent particular groups of aboriginal peoples in order to satisfy its consultation and potential accommodation obligations.
- Aboriginal governments and organizations also have a reciprocal duty to engage in consultation efforts and cannot frustrate the consultation process by refusing to participate or by imposing unreasonable conditions. This duty does not provide an aboriginal government or organization with a veto over the proposed GNWT government action. Instead, the duty provides an opportunity for an aboriginal government or organization to express its concern(s) with a proposed GNWT government action, and provide the GNWT with an opportunity to reconcile the proposed GNWT government action with the expressed concern(s).

While the GNWT does not have a general, all-inclusive definition for consultation, there is a specific definition of consultation in each of the settled lands, resources and self-government agreements in the Northwest Territories. These definitions were developed at the negotiating table and represent the agreement of all parties to those agreements. Whenever the GNWT wishes to carry out a government action in settled areas, GNWT departments refer to these agreements and the specific instances in which they identify the need for consultation.

The GNWT commenced engagement and consultation on the implementation of recovery action for the Bathurst caribou herd shortly after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' June 2009 photographic survey showed that the herd was in rapid decline. These surveys were conducted with observers from affected aboriginal governments and organizations. Official counts were released on September 24, 2009, through a press release. At that time, the GNWT indicated that recovery actions would be required. A workshop in early October 2009 was held with

various groups to discuss options for herd recovery. The Tlicho Government and the GNWT used information from the workshops to complete a joint management proposal for submission to the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board (WRRB). The joint proposal was submitted to the WRRB in early November 2009. A subsequent press release by the WRRB indicated that these recovery options were significant enough to warrant a public hearing, which was initially scheduled for January 2010, although it has now been scheduled for late March 2010.

The following factors influenced the need for interim emergency measures:

- The rapid rate of decline from over 100,000 to 32,000 in three years.
- Model projections that at current harvest levels of 5,000 to 7,000 caribou the herd may no longer exist within five years.
- The majority of the harvest occurs in winter. The Bathurst caribou herd has the lowest proportion of bulls in the NWT, and at this low population level it is also critical to conserve cows.
- Receiving recommendations from the WRRB and implementing a decision would not occur until after this winter's harvest.

The interim emergency measures were developed to conserve the Bathurst herd and address hardships. The WRRB, Tlicho Government and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation were all informed at meetings in November and December 2009 about the proposed measures. ENR has been working with the Tlicho Government to implement the interim emergency measures. ENR continues to work with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation to address concerns.

With respect to the dates of caribou calving, it has been documented that annual variation in peak calving times can occur within herds. Late calving can occur in herds subject to poor environmental conditions, including situations in which females in poor condition conceive on later estrus cycles or go through an extended period of gestation. In 2009, the Bathurst caribou herd's peak calving period was between June 6th and 9th, suggesting that the Bathurst caribou herd's peak calving period is actually shifting back to earlier calving peaks. For instance, peak calving in 2005 was between June 14th and June 20th. Peak calving in 2003-2004 was between June 8th and 14th and peak calving in 1996 was between June 4th and 10th. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 16-16(4):
DETAILS ON CONTRACTS AWARDED TO
FORMER MINISTERS

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Bromley on February 2, 2010, regarding details on contracts awarded to former Ministers.

I can confirm the contractors were hired to provide advice regarding GNWT intergovernmental relations at the political level. Of prime concern was our relationship with the federal government. Early and good relations with Ottawa were deemed critical to our efforts on key NWT priorities with the federal government.

Outside contractors bring their own individual experiences and perspectives on these relations and their own unique advice to establish and improve them. It is standard practice for provincial and territorial governments to contract for assistance in this area.

The success of the contractor's efforts during their work period is evidenced by the good working relationships Ministers and their staff have with federal Ministers offices' and their staff. This has led to successful funding arrangements for major infrastructure investment in the NWT, and ongoing efforts to promote and advance our key priorities.

The work of the contractors was reported in regular meetings with the Premier and his staff. Details of the work performed by the contractors was outlined and the work was completed per the terms of the contracts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Reports of Committees
on the Review of Bills**

BILL 10:
EXEMPTIONS ACT

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 10, Exemptions Act, and the committee wishes to report that Bill 10 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 5:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
COMMISSIONER'S LAND ACT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act. The committee wishes to report that Bill 5 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 81-16(4):
GNWT RESPONSE TO CR 2-16(4):
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
ON CONTRACTING FOR
GOODS AND SERVICES IN THE NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled GNWT Response to Committee Report 2-16(4), Report of the Auditor General on Contracting for Goods and Services in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration of 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; Tabled Document 78-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation (Operations Expenditures) No. 3, 2009-2010; Tabled Document 80-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 4, 2009-2010; Minister's Statement 47-16(4), Transfer of the Public Housing Rental Subsidy; Committee Report 5-16(4), Report on the Review of the 2008-2009 Human Rights Commission Annual Report, with Mr. Bromley 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. Members, pursuant to our rules, I hereby appoint the Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay, to act as chair of Committee of the Whole for today as required.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have before us, committee, consideration of Bills 2, 4 and 7, Tabled Documents 62-16(4), 78-16(4), 80-16(4), Minister's Statement 47-16(4) and Committee Report 5-16(4). What is the wish of committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today the committee would like to consider the operations and maintenance budgets of these departments in this order, please: Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, the Department of Executive, the Legislative Assembly and, time permitting, the Department of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Alright. We'll start with Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we've agreed to start with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Minister, do you have opening comments?

Introduction

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 2010-2011 Main Estimates for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

The department, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, is responsible for representing the interests of all NWT residents at aboriginal rights tables, and through our intergovernmental relations with aboriginal, provincial, federal and territorial governments.

The core business of the department directly supports the 16th Legislative Assembly's goal of a strong and independent North built on partnerships. This is evidenced through the partnerships that have been formalized with northern governments and our collective efforts to work on areas of common interest, find solutions for community, regional and territorial issues and most recently work towards a common vision for political development of the NWT. The department also continues to focus on doing its part to building a solid foundation for intergovernmental relations by working effectively with its federal and aboriginal partners to finalize land, resources and self-government agreements in all regions of the NWT.

In total, the department's main estimates proposes total operating expenses of \$8.18 million for the coming year, which is an increase of 17 percent, or \$1.373 million, from last year's main estimates.

Political Development of the NWT

Mr. Chairman, a large portion of this increase is in support of advancing the 16th Legislative Assembly's priority of a common vision for the political development of the NWT. One-time funding of \$864,000 is included in this budget to support the work of the Northern Leaders' Forum on political development that has been established to oversee this work.

This funding will also be used to engage with NWT residents and other northern stakeholders in the development of a common vision. Through public consultations, this will provide opportunities to learn from the past as we seek to chart a course for the future of the NWT.

The Northern Leaders' Forum is comprised of leaders from the seven regional aboriginal governments, the president of the NWT Association of Communities, myself as Premier and two Members of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Krutko and Mr. Ramsay. Through the work of the forum we hope to provide a strong and clear common vision for the NWT that will enhance our collective ability to successfully advance key issues of importance for northern governments. Northern leaders are committed to working together and engaging with Northerners to help unify our northern voice.

Mr. Chairman, this budget also includes \$210,000 in investments from two of the key strategic initiatives for the coming year to help the government achieve its vision.

Maximizing Opportunities

As this government looks for ways to promote the NWT as a place to visit and live, the department proposes to invest \$80,000 through the Maximizing Opportunities strategic initiative to undertake the initial planning work in advance of the NWT hosting the 2011 Western Premiers' Conference. This work will include identifying potential host communities, securing venues, developing promotional material, soliciting volunteers and arranging for entertainment.

Hosting the annual Western Premiers' Conference provides us with an opportunity to showcase the natural beauty and pristine nature of our Territory, promote economic and tourism potential and provide a financial benefit to the NWT.

Managing This Land

Through the Managing This Land strategic initiative, a proposed \$130,000 investment is included to provide the project management for a comprehensive review of all GNWT negotiating

mandates that guide the GNWT's participation at all land, resources and self-government negotiations.

This project is being undertaken to ensure consistency with the context, complexities and circumstances of evolving and new negotiations in the NWT. The resulting new or revised mandates will be responsive to lessons learned from the precedence set by finalized agreements in the NWT and elsewhere in Canada, to changing case law regarding aboriginal rights, and to new, innovative and creative governance models proposed by aboriginal parties.

While much of the project will be technical in nature, it is essential that the work undertaken be guided by a politically endorsed vision of how the NWT should be governed and the future role of the GNWT in a post self-government environment. I look forward to continuing to work closely with members of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure over the coming months in developing the principles of a governance vision.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Chairman, I am confident that the proposed main estimates will enable the department to represent the interests of all NWT residents at 15 aboriginal rights tables and through our intergovernmental relations with aboriginal, provincial, federal and territorial governments.

That concludes my opening remarks. I am prepared to answer any questions committee members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Do you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, please, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Could I have the Minister introduce his witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, joining me at the table is the deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, Ms. Gabriela Sparling; and to my right is Mr. Richard Robertson, director of policy and planning. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. We'll start with general comments. Committee, open for general comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my comments are going to be specific to the

comments I heard from the Minister. Through the discussion of details, I will ask the Minister about some things I'd like to know in detail.

Regarding political development in the Northwest Territories, we have some issues that are pretty sensitive right now to the aboriginal governments in the North here. Here, we try to build a common front for political development to look at some bigger issues on the table regarding resource revenue sharing, devolution, the common vision for people in the Northwest Territories. How do we all get along? We've got some issues here that this government has rubbed up against some of the aboriginal groups, governments, in terms of rights, working together. The Minister has indicated that he has close to \$800,000 in the budget to develop some common front here. Within the time frame that we have and the state we are in with some of the aboriginal governments, I am curious and wondering about this department's strategy in terms of how do we get everybody onside to say we're in this together, we're going to work on this towards the end of this government here to sit down with Ottawa and hammer out some of these bigger issues here.

I think the one thing that we really need, and it's not there anymore, is the Aboriginal Summit. We kind of broke up the aboriginal governments here. We have a couple of the aboriginal who are on with the Aboriginal Summit, but some of the aboriginal governments are not with the Aboriginal Summit. It's a fragmented coalition or front and that really concerns me in terms of moving forward there, Mr. Chair.

Another one is the self-government funding, self-government requirements, you know, the costing out. Once you start negotiating these self-government agreements and we start to see the finalization of these agreements and costing out of these agreements here, it's going to take quite a considerable amount of effort by this government and the aboriginal governments to put down a final number on self-government agreements here.

Mr. Chair, the Minister did talk about, on page 3 of 3 on a revised mandate, a new negotiation of the Northwest Territories, the result, new or revised mandates will be responsive to the lessons learned and precedents set by the finalized agreements. I want to maybe ask some questions when it comes to this section in the details in terms of the revised mandate, in terms of our side being included in the loop of things, in terms of what is the revised mandate, where does it stem from and how it's going to be impacted in terms of the agreements that are going to be put in place in terms of self-government agreements.

Mr. Chair, this is a very important department for me. It has to deal with lots of aboriginal rights, treaty rights, Metis rights, so I really wanted to also

ask the Minister in terms of his draft frameworks, I think it's a draft framework on consultation. I know I have some information, what I got from the website there in terms of what the department is looking at in terms of consultation. It's something I look forward to having the Minister come forward with in terms of finalizing it, in terms of finalizing the consultation policy and the framework and see where we can go with that there.

So, Mr. Chair, those are my comments for the Minister. Again, as I said, this is a very important, for me, it's a very important document. This is a nation-to-nation building document for myself. We have aboriginal governments that believe strongly in their treaties, aboriginal governments believe strongly in the land claims settlements, aboriginal governments who are negotiating their own government through a self-government arrangement, yet we have the federal government sitting there waiting to see, you know, how are we going to work together in this small Northwest Territories. We've got aboriginal governments that own huge tracts of land, you know, even had the power on it.

I was in Deline over the weekend and people are talking about where did we let the one government have power on our land. There are agreements. When did those agreements come in place in terms of aboriginal and treaty rights? So they want to have that kind of discussion. Where did we sign over? So I guess that's part of the political development I see. Key areas that need to be answered, that need to be discussed and they need to be talked about. Maybe that's kind of the guidelines for consultation with the aboriginal government.

Metis rights is one that still bothers me today. It's a university entry program they have with the federal government that says aboriginal people can apply for that program. You ask the federal government and they say only Inuit and First Nations, but not Metis. We administer a program and it still bugs me today. I talked to Minister Strahl, Minister Prentice. The last government said they were going to look at it. They never looked at it. And Metis is still not included in there. That's a shame, you know. They said that they're breaking their own law that says aboriginal. In the definition of aboriginal it says Metis, Inuit and First Nations. What is the government here doing to help us to include Metis into that university entry program? This is what you guys should be fighting for us, fighting for the Metis people to be included in that program. I've got Metis members in my home region there that are saying this is discrimination. Yet, two federal Ministers said they were going to do something about it and to this day, six years later, there's still nothing done. This is totally ridiculous in this day and age. And that, Mr. Chair, that's only one program.

That's how I see our Premier, part of his role as a Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I could be wrong here, but that's what we're looking for from our leader here, is protecting, enhancing and strengthening our treaty and aboriginal rights. It's key here, this department, it's very key, especially today in terms of how we're going forward. We just talked about one issue here in the last couple weeks on the animal. You know, that's key, and I don't want to raise it again, but I think I will leave the rest of my comments for the detail, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Committee, we're in general comments. Does committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Yakeleya has covered a number of significant areas that we're involved with as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Our role is to be involved from the GNWT side to ensure that we promote the best practices as the Government of the Northwest Territories in a number of areas. The Member has touched on, as I said, a number of key ones.

Political development, as we go through, is one of those key pieces of how we go forward as the 16th Legislative Assembly, and working with our partners in the Northwest Territories. We've been holding a number of meetings now. We just recently held our seventh meeting, I believe, with regional leaders, and from there we had our second meeting on political development. As we'll be dealing with that budget item later, we can get into more detail. That political development is about building a common vision for the North and how we approach the federal government in a number of key areas where they still impact on delivery of services and programs here in the Northwest Territories.

So as we do that work, we do that work recognizing the aboriginal rights that have been established through treaties, through court decisions, through land claims agreements and, for example, through the self-government agreement that's been signed in the Northwest Territories with the Tlicho. All of those things come together to help us form our position that we could work together on, and that's recognizing each other's roles when it comes to program delivery services in the Northwest Territories.

The area of the Aboriginal Summit, well, the regional leaders' meeting, in a sense, is the evolved version of that. The Aboriginal Summit came together as an initiative in the last government. It may even have started in the 14th Assembly to do

some of its initial work. That, after a while, wasn't including all of the groups at the table. Whereas, the political development piece or the Northern Leaders' Forum, as we call it, includes everybody at the table, and the GNWT isn't the one setting all of the agenda. We, in fact, work together as leaders to put the agenda items on the table for discussion. Our next meeting, hopefully, is near the end of March, and we'll be talking about that political development piece and formulating for more certainty the future working arrangements of the Northern Leaders' Forum. I look forward to having that further discussion. I think that will bring us the furthest of any Government of the Northwest Territories in solidifying our relationships with aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories.

Further to that, the revised mandates, we'll be able to speak to it in a little more detail later on as well. But we're working with committee on that and, hopefully, we'll be able to sit down here soon. I believe we have some time set up to start that work in going through our mandates. Some of those mandates are quite old and, as talked about earlier, the common vision, developing that, the aboriginal rights established today, some of these mandates outdate the new agreements that are in place and the new interpretations that have happened from either agreements that have been put in place by aboriginal governments and public governments as well as the courts. So that work is meant to update that.

The consultation framework is something we've worked with the Assembly and committees. We gave them a document a while back on the consultation framework the process was undergoing. We then did training modules with departments and from going forward we will serve, along with the Department of Justice, as the tool that department can use when it comes to satisfying the requirement of consultation when it comes to dealing with aboriginal governments and organizations.

When it comes to the Metis, the Government of the Northwest Territories treats Metis as aboriginal groups. We recognize them in delivery of programs and services. We do not differentiate like the federal government does, and we will continue to advocate on that issue when it comes to the peoples in the Northwest Territories.

The Member talked about the sensitive area of the animals and rights legislation when it comes to conservation and so on. We continue to work with the groups up and down the valley, and that is a very complex issue. Much like water, much like land, animals are a very important part in the fabric of who we are as northern peoples, aboriginal peoples in the Northwest Territories. So we have to make sure we do the best we can in ensuring that our future generations can have what we've taken

for granted with what we have established as our rights. So we continue to work with that, but in a complex environment, for example, with the land claims that are in place, there are co-management bodies that have worked very, very well for us when it comes to dealing with conversation issues, harvesting rights, as well as legislation. The Species at Risk, for example, is an example of that, and the Wildlife Act that's being worked on is another example of a more collaborative working arrangement on developing legislation that this government will put in place.

It gets a little more complicated when you come to the areas where there are negotiations ongoing where some of the groups that are negotiating feel they don't want to sign off on some of the legislation we're working on because they feel it might prevent them from taking a more active role in their own direct negotiations. One of the things I say to our aboriginal partners in the North, no matter what happens, as we draw down that authority from the federal government and self-governments then get signed off and then implemented in the Northwest Territories. That will then pass, if it is just for the sake of discussion, Mr. Chairman, from the federal government to ourselves, as the GNWT, and then to the self-governments as those agreements are signed and then implementation goes into place. The one place we have more clarity is, in fact, with the Tlicho Government, for example. That is the self-government that has been signed off and enshrined in the federal legislation, as well as ours, and there is a working relationship established there. As they go towards implementing and drawing down their powers, we will continue to work with them on that side of it.

So it is a complex environment. When it comes to representing the interest of the peoples of the Northwest Territories in general and then more specifically on the rights issues that are established and being defined on a day-to-day basis as well.

So I look forward to having the discussion with Members as we go through this work. One other area that the Member discussed was self-government financing. That is an issue we feel is very serious. In fact, we took it upon ourselves to look at all the negotiation tables that are negotiating and what is being requested through those negotiations and we came up with a model. Now it's not the be-all/end-all but it is the basis of a starting point. We came up with cost estimates on that model and put it to what we deliver in today's environment. We've identified a gap of between 24 and 30 million dollars if we were to implement every self-government table across the Northwest Territories. We've raised that with the federal government. In fact, we've held bilateral meetings between aboriginal organizations and governments and ourselves to show them the work we've done, so they are well prepared and looking forward in

dealing with the federal government to have them recognize that as they sign these agreements, there's a need for additional resources to be able to implement these agreements and make sure that in signing those agreements, everybody fully understands those cost implications of doing that as well. We can get into that detail as we go further on into this budget process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does committee agree that we go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We're going to defer page 4-7, the department summary, operations expenditure summary. We'll start with page 4-8, department summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, infrastructure investment summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-9, department summary, information item, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, active position summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-11, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$2 million... Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: We're probably going to get a similar answer if I ask the question, but I have been asking it ever since I've been here. About the Metis core funding, I think it's averaged out. I think it's \$13,000, if I can recall. Every year this funding has not increased. That's one of the complaints I get from my region, is that the Metis get core funding. I know it's a nice thing to do for this government here. There really is no funding for them except some Metis are under a land claim settlement and they have other kind of funding. This one for the GNWT, I guess it's a nice gesture to recognize the Metis government and to support it through a core funding initiative. I think it's about \$14,000. I am not sure if this is ever going to increase or this is something that we maybe should discuss on another level. Regarding this funding, are the Metis going to get any more than what they received the last four or five years? I believe it's about \$13,000 per Metis local organization. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member. He is consistent on this issue. The Member is right; on an annual basis, core funding is provided to Metis organizations that are eligible for \$13,235 and the total amount we have set aside is in the neighbourhood of \$225,000.

What Metis organizations need to do is to qualify for that by having their registries in good standing. That's the only requirement we have. We've been working with the NWT Metis in this area. We've had discussions. It hasn't progressed at this point, but we've had discussions that they may be interested in taking over the actual delivery and allocation of those resources. What I said in that area is we would be willing to consider that if they were to have agreement with the Metis councils through the Northwest Territories to have that happen. Until that, we will be going through this programming as it is established.

Right now, this does not include an increase in that area and we would have to discuss that as we go forward. They are also eligible for special events funding to aboriginal organizations and that total amount is \$75,000. That is by application based for different events that we can provide funding for. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: This requires agreement in this House to increase the funding. I am not too sure if we even have an appetite for this by the Members. Of course, we have to find funding elsewhere and it's got to go through a whole process here to seek an increase for funding. I am not sure if there's an appetite, like I said, to increase the Metis funding for the locals here in terms of their operation. It is a good gesture by this government. No doubt about it. You know, for the Metis people for \$13,235. You know how much it costs now to operate an office? Even ourselves as MLAs, we get budgets here to operate our own office here. You are talking about a Metis Nation of people who are working hard to establish themselves here. There is different Metis funding and this is nice funding to have. I will let the Minister know that the Metis in the Sahtu that I represent certainly appreciate the funding. It's something that this government has done more than the federal government in terms of funding. I am not sure if we can entertain some kind of funding review of this.

As I said, Mr. Chair, I have been here for the past six years and this has always been the same, even with the increase of doing business in the North. I just wanted to know if there is any type of appetite to look at an increase of this part of the budget here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: This budget itself doesn't represent an increase for core funding. As it is, it's a small amount, the Member is correct, when it comes to operations in any community in the Northwest Territories. Again, this is an example of how we do things different as the federal government doesn't have any core funding for Metis, which they do for bands across this country.

I would be prepared, if Members of this Assembly want to take a serious look at this level for the next business planning cycle. If Members are interested

in this area, I would be prepared to sit down with Members to see if we can incorporate any possible changes as we go forward. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: From this side here, I certainly appreciate the Minister's willingness to look at this. There are certainly no guarantees in any type of reallocation or jiggling of the numbers here or even to increase it. So I do appreciate his openness to see if we can get some support to have a look at it and maybe come back in the coming year to see if we can do something with this.

I do want to talk to the Minister regarding the special event funding for aboriginal organizations. Is it okay for the Minister to provide us with a list of the type of organizations and funding we can have? I know some of the groups I have in the Sahtu want to have access to this funding. This is very popular funding because there's not much money here, but it's a good thing. More of a request of information from the Minister and then I'm done, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I will provide a note to Members about both the special events funding. It's \$75,000 a year; \$5,000 per application for each regional aboriginal government organization to help offset costs for holding special events such as general assemblies or special assemblies and celebrations that mark milestone anniversaries of settled agreements, for example.

Also part of that fund is \$1,000 in support to community-based aboriginal organizations and that's band councils, Metis locals, community corporations, Native Women's Association, to help celebrate National Aboriginal Day. We have a list of how that funding has been allocated in the past and we'll get that provided to Members. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm good for that page.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Questions on page 4-11?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Just one question on the special events funding to aboriginal organizations. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could advise me if this budget is fully taken at the end of the fiscal year each year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the funding is usually fully subscribed; in fact, oversubscribed. It is not a large amount. For example, with the Dene Nation, there is more than one assembly they've had and they've qualified a number of times for that. So we go up to what we can. If there is any possible funding we have in other areas of the department, sometimes we top it up. But that information will show, as it

goes around to Members, the previous years' allocations. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: One more comment on that page. I would also support to see core funding increased to Metis locals. I have one Metis local in Tu Nedhe, so they are always finding ways to get funding to do various initiatives in the community. They are fairly active and so on. That is something I would support as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I didn't hear a question there. Committee, we are on page 4-11, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$2.421 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-12, activity summary, corporate management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-13, information item, corporate management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-15, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, negotiations, operations expenditure summary, Mr. Yakeleya... Mr. Beaulieu, excuse me.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if this section of the department is responsible for the land use plans from the various self-government organizations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the negotiations section we would be involved, for example, when it comes to the negotiation time of it and what's being negotiated, but for actual land use framework plans, I believe it is within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that deals with that area specifically. Again, this area of negotiations, we'd be involved with at the negotiation process and then the further section on implementation, we would have some involvement on that side of it too. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'm wondering if the Minister could advise me if there's any involvement at all such as taking the position in how the land use plans are laid out from the various aboriginal organizations, like any position at all in the area of land use plans. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, in consultation with other departments, specifically in the one with land use frameworks, we would be in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to come up with a position that would be accepted by, for example, Cabinet. We would have to get a mandate to set the framework in place, and that mandate would be worked with other departments, then be accepted by Cabinet and go forward on that basis. That, for example, we discussed earlier, the mandate review that is happening and those are basis of our negotiation discussions. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, I'm curious about how come some of the land use plans have been moved forward and so on, I guess, from looking at what has developed in other negotiations, what would be upcoming, I guess, for Akaitcho, although I am not heavily or very minorly involved with the negotiations, Akaitcho. I've never sat in on any, but just talking to people and so on. There might be some pitfalls with the land use planning system or the land use planning process, because of the position the GNWT might take in the area of lands set aside for resource development or land set aside for protected area strategies and the various types of positions that the GNWT could take. So if we're talking about Protected Areas Strategy, the responsible Minister could be ENR. If we're talking about lands set aside for resource development, I'm not sure if that's an area that's set aside for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, or it that's the responsibility of the Minister of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, usually on the land use plans that are developed, they are developed and the principle is set up in, for example, a land claim agreement. Those are the ones we have examples of, and then, as they're signed, implementation then goes into developing the actual land use plan. But we've also had tables that are in negotiations now working on a land use plan at the same time or, in fact, have probably got the land use plan further ahead than actual negotiations of the main table, in a sense.

For, again, different aspects, as the Member highlighted and I responded earlier, as ENR helps with the land use framework itself and land use planning. For allocations, for example, when we set a target of a percentage that would be set aside for economic development purposes in the future, that would be an initiative that would be between the Executive and Aboriginal Affairs and other departments. We'd pull them together. So Executive would be the coordinating role in pulling information from all the departments to come up with what we think would be the best solution possible, taking into consideration demands for programs and services. If we were to actually take

down full authority, and knowing that there's a shortfall in the dollars that we have in today's environment, needing to come up with some new resources in the future. Economic potential for whether it is the GNWT who ends up delivering a program and service or the aboriginal self-government who delivers that service, they're going to need a revenue base to deliver that. That is what we take into consideration. For example, we use the MERA, and that's the Minerals, Energy... Oh, I'll have to get the proper terminology, but I think Members are familiar with the acronym of MERA, and that is to do an assessment of the mineral potential in the area and we would take that into our discussions of what we could work with and what the future may be for economic development in a particular region. So that helps us put that together.

All of that, though, as we discussed earlier, is in the mandate reviews we will be doing. We will be putting that forward. What we don't want to be doing... No matter what we do at the end of the day, we want to ensure that there are enough resources available for whether it is a public government delivery or a self-government delivery, that the revenues are in place to deliver services that the people expect to have as these agreements get implemented. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, I'm just asking, because of some caution in the future that I wouldn't want to see a land use plan that consists of when everybody put all three governments -- the federal government, the territorial government and aboriginal governments -- put in their land use plans and then the area that each of them wished to... It's not, I guess, essentially claimed for the various activities, whether it be resource development or parks or protection of the land or something that's set aside for future resource development, that adds up to 100 percent and not 140 percent and everybody's caught up in the fact that nobody wants to move off of their position and the land use plan doesn't advance. So maybe just a comment that I hope that doesn't occur when it's time to settle the plan in Akaitcho. That's just a comment, Mr. Chairman.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I would agree with the Member. That is one of the areas that is of concern to us when there are so many different levels of government at the table. That is why, for example, at the regional leaders' table we agreed to work on a land use framework process. That work is ongoing and, in fact, moving ahead, I would say, at a fairly good pace, considering the complexities across the Northwest Territories, and we continue to put that effort into it. Hopefully, before the life of this Assembly, we'll have something we can agree on together with aboriginal governments and ourselves. But that is the very reason why we need to have something like that in place, because in the past are too many examples where one agreement

is signed and then a different agreement is signed. It's a piecemeal approach and that leaves it for very confusing and frustrating time when it comes to actual implementation of some of these agreements. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Roland. The next on my list, I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the things that often comes up, in my view of some of this process, is there anything that could help accelerate some of the self-government agreements being developed and, certainly, implemented? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Well, a supply of unlimited resources would help. We know that's not a possibility in today's environment. Because it is such a challenging environment and the different interests at the table, at times, as it's negotiations, it's a tough process to come up with the right balance and from the different interests and different perspectives, at times, but we eventually get there. In fact, we've stepped it up, as we highlighted as we went through this process at the last main estimates review, of increasing our presence and getting the dollars. So we're at 15 tables now in trying to help with the negotiations process.

On the implementation side, again, that's another one where we have to... Part of the agreement is in place...have a clear plan on implementation. We could go through that section. That is the next section we can go through. If Members wanted more information, we can go through that at that point. But it is difficult because if we were to ask that same question of the federal government, you'll get one response. If you ask it to us, I'll give you a response. If you ask it to an aboriginal negotiator, they will tell you a different response, as well, because there's all different interests being looked at in trying to come up with the best balance. But I think the timing of some of these agreements, in fact, if we were to all follow the Acho Dene Koe in Liard, that has been the fastest moving table we've seen in the history of the Northwest Territories. But even that has its concerns of how we can go forward on that basis. Then the issue of within the Northwest Territories we have some groups that overlap each other that need to be taken into consideration, as well, when we talk about negotiation positions. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I guess my question next being is: has it ever been put to these organizations, each of the individual 15 tables, about would it be in their interest to consider accelerating negotiations and searching for principles that would work to accelerate it? Has that question been put to them? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, that direct question hasn't been put to the organizations, but through just the negotiation process there are different avenues taken at times when it's felt that negotiations have gone as far as they can and then it's time for the political masters to sit in a room and iron out the rest of the process and details. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: What stops the Premier, or in this role, the Minister, of putting those questions about finding a comparable path together to accelerate negotiations? Is there anything that stops the Minister from doing this? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: No. Maybe a little further to that, Mr. Chairman, that, in fact, when you look at our Northern Leaders' Forum, in trying to come up with a common vision of the Northwest Territories, that is one of those areas where we can come up on our own, working together and finding the principles we can agree on and move forward on and probably move things along a little further. But, again, each region is somewhat different, even when you're looking at the types of programs and service delivery that want to be drawn down. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister would be willing to engage the 15 tables to ask them if they have an appetite to find a way to accelerate the self-government agreement process. And furthermore, if he'd send one more letter to Canada in that regard, which would speak to the same issue? It, perhaps, would be in Canada's interest if we were in support of a process that was accelerated. So would the Minister be willing to find out if any of these tables would be interested in an accelerated process for self-government agreements? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I'll use the regional leaders' table to pose that type of a question if they want to take part in something like that, but we have to recognize, for example, that these negotiations start at a point, for example, a treaty that's in place that is defined by the federal government and in their instance, and then defined by the aboriginal group that is negotiating at a different level. At times, there is just not going to be an easy solution, because it is negotiating what that agreement actually is as a starting point and then where it's being pursued to in improving to a modern-day treaty, as we would call it. So, at times, that just takes hard work and much effort to get to those conclusions. We've got a number of Members here who could speak to that work as it's been done and they've been involved in it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, are there any steps that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs does to ensure that the negotiators aren't leading the process vis-à-vis they are keeping the process alive

as opposed to putting the challenge of bringing negotiations to a close? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: While there are definitely times when an aboriginal group or even the federal government may say that we're slowing the process down there are many occasions when we help move things along. For example, in helping writing the proposals and the frameworks as we go forward and one of those examples, again, in sharing information upfront is the self-government financing piece where we went to all of the groups to identify the model we put together and showed them that model and what that, as a basis, potentially meant for implementation and the cost of implementing these agreements. So that's an example of where we've worked together to try to help move things along and get a better understanding of what could be coming down the road. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Just on that financial note, has any work been done specifically to show that it's in everyone's best interest to fulfill negotiations on these types of agreements to kick off the financial process for self-government? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: If I understand the question correctly, the work we've done around self-government financing in fact has shown and has been endorsed by the negotiators at the table that are involved in that to help them as we prepare our way forward, and then we're working on trying to come up with a package of how we would advance this to the federal government. Ultimately, when it comes to the self-government financing, it is the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government. Although, for example, when an agreement is signed and it draws down a certain jurisdiction that we have as a GNWT, whether its transportation or housing or one of the programs we deliver, they would draw that down on the delivery based on today's expenditures, for example, and the program as it exists and once they take it over they could redesign, but that dollar value is the same. It does not enhance it, because we don't have that ability as a GNWT and that is sort of the work around the self-government financing piece, because the capacity issue is one that's being dealt with. We've agreed, for example, in earlier discussions around devolution and resource revenue sharing, that we would use some of those benefits of resource return from the investment on resource revenues to help with the capacity side as a GNWT, but that still falls short of what would actually be required. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HAWKINS: I would just see it as in everyone's interest if this question was posed to individuals. When I say "individuals," I mean individual tables, that is, but I would see this question to everyone's benefit if it is posed individually on their own timetable, that is if they would be interested in

advancing their own negotiations. As well as the fact that could the territorial government find a capacity to support this? I would be surprised that there would be very few people not willing to consider this as a viable direction. I would be very surprised if Canada felt this was stalling the process or ruining it. You know, I would believe strongly that there would be an opportunity and certainly an interest from their perspective that anything to accelerate these negotiations that could bring them to a closure would be in everyone's interest. In other words, we would have closure of agreements, as well as access to money, access to authority and access to self-determination. So, Mr. Chairman, from my perspective, and certainly one that's been encouraged to me by many people is the real question, is what's stopping an accelerated program considering that we have a number of agreements that we could agree and few outstanding issues we could deal with separately? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The self-government financing piece is an example of how we've worked together with the aboriginal governments and negotiators. We've worked with every table and given them the information around that self-government financing piece, but it is still a difficulty in getting it to a successful conclusion because the partner that would come to the table... Well, let's use the example since we're talking about aboriginal issues, bring to the potluck with a potlatch would require the federal government to bring their end of this bargain and that is still an area up for final conclusion, I guess we would say. We are very concerned about it and that's why we've worked with all of the negotiation tables to share this information with them.

The other one, as we work through, as I was speaking earlier about land use frameworks and a Water Strategy, knowing that those are near and very important to the people of the North, are areas where we're working with a common purpose. It still doesn't mean it's an easy process, but there's a common purpose in trying to bring these things to conclusion, because they affect so many and are very important culturally and economically as we go forward. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Just one question if I can see if I can get a satisfactory answer, then I'll be done. I wanted to ask the Minister about the negotiations. In the details he had talked about the Northwest Territories realizing the economic potential in the Northwest Territories. Does the Minister have an idea or assessment as to the economic potential in the North right down the whole valley? I know some organizations have put some numbers to it, you know, in the amount of millions or billions. Has this

department put some numbers to the potential for economic potential in the North? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The process we'd be involved in directly from there is getting the information from the appropriate departments, for example. That is, again, when we set up our percentages we would like to be open to development, we'd be working with ITI, for example, or with Environment and Natural Resources, as well, to look at the overall potential. We use things like the mirror process to look at what potential is in the area. We look at the oil and gas, the minerals, all of that to see what the potential may be. Now, it's very difficult to come up with a number because, again, market prices affect things. A couple of years ago or just over a year ago we wouldn't have, I don't think anybody in the Northwest Territories was prepared for \$140 for oil. Thankfully we're back down, but it's creeping up again. Or gold that was down to almost just over \$300 an ounce and now it's almost \$1,000 an ounce or hovering at that mark. Thinks really do change. When you do estimates, you do it as sort of the estimate is based on the time frame and what's there.

There is huge potential in the Northwest Territories when it comes to realizing economic potential in the Northwest Territories right from our natural resources when it comes to hydro potential, for example, that is a return on investment. It's a very high cost initially, but it pays dividends for lifetimes. When it comes to our wood products, for example, is another area that's available and I know, for example, when we talk about biomass strategies, could we develop that potential in the Northwest Territories to our non-renewable resources that are in the ground that can return investment again to the groups that would benefit from that. For example, some groups now, through their land claims, do benefit from that in a small way. They do get some resource royalties, a small portion, mind you, and we aim through our negotiation processes as we go forward overall government and there would be a part of that is, for example, on our discussions around resource development or devolution, resource revenue sharing as well. It's a multi-departmental effort to come up with all of the different aspects that are affected here. Again, working in partnership with the aboriginal groups and that is one of the areas we're having further discussions on with the regional leaders as well. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just about got it there. So I'll ask the Minister about realizing the economic potential. Is the Minister willing to share with the House in terms of some initial estimates or just as to what

he's talking about? Is that saved for the negotiations when you have negotiations with aboriginal governments or the federal government? It's an interesting subject, because just myself in the Sahtu region, there is economic potential for oil and gas, hydro potential, minerals, even the Mackenzie Valley Highway construction. They had an economic analysis done on that and it showed a good return on economics. I want to leave it at that. I will respect the negotiation process in terms of not showing our cards on the table. I will leave it at that, Mr. Chair.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: We work with departments on this where we do get information with potential estimates and we share that with groups involved and, again, there are different levels here. For example, where a land claim is established and a park is a part of that, we hope to have all the information on the table for the decision-makers to make a decision considering long-term benefits to that, whether it's establishment of a park or establishment of mineral potential that's there or oil and gas potential. We need to make sure we get that information to them and we would work with the Department of ITI, for example, and other departments that we can gather this information. What I'll do is request the departments to pull something together to give some indicators and see if we can share that with Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier. Committee, we are on page 4-15...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): ...activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, negotiations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.748 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Information item, page 4-16, negotiations, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-19, activity summary, implementation, operations expenditure summary, \$643,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just in my own region with regard to implementation in the Sahtu Land Claims Agreement, are we... I am hearing we are slow on implementation. I have heard it's a difficult implementation, from not only us but the federal government. Agreements have been in place for 15 years and we are finally starting to see some implementation here. Are we on par in terms of implementation specific chapters of the Sahtu Land Claims Agreement?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the implementation process is one where once an agreement is signed, then each party then establishes or puts their folks on the implementation committee. From the information I have, there are three meetings a year set out and those are usually established in the agreement initially; how often they would meet and so on. So there are three meetings per year and outstanding issues are addressed through that if there are issues that come forward. They could be specifically identified, for example, if the area of responsibility lies within the federal government. Then it is for them to implement or come up with a plan for implementation on that and again an agreement with the party bringing it back to their principals. From the information I have for the GNWT side, we have no outstanding issues on our implementation file that have been brought to the table, and that process is established in how they can get the issues to the table. What I have been informed in the Sahtu, there is no outstanding issues of implementation from the GNWT side.

MR. YAKELEYA: The issue I have with the implementation is with the... I guess you look at it in terms of once you settle your negotiations and start implementing, the lay of the land really changes in terms of how our government is going to be in terms of our working relationship. It's going to change quite considerably. Have we had some discussions in the House regarding the implementation, the potential benefits or potential things we need to be aware of in terms of implementing our self-government agreements?

Plus, this department is at a number of tables here negotiating self-government agreements. That's a huge impact. God forbid if you settled all of it yesterday. The things like what kind of government we're going to have. So I just wanted to raise that point. I am not sure if there's a question there, Mr. Chair, but our future certainly could change significantly of how we operate as a territorial government and how our working relationship is going to be with the aboriginal governments, especially with the number of self-government agreements that are happening across the table here.

Mr. Minister indicated what it costs for one...(inaudible)... That's a huge number there. That's a huge chunk out of our budget. I don't know even as MLAs if we'll have jobs here. Anyhow, I'm getting more philosophical. I want to ask the Premier in terms of his discussions and strategy work with his departmental staff.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I think the Member has hit on a matter that is important, very important, as we look forward. If every agreement was to be signed and implemented, what would the Government of the Northwest Territories be? Would

it be a relationship, for example, and this is much too simple of a way of doing it, but if it was a relationship like the federal government to the GNWT right now where there are a number of agreements in place that you have to meet the minimums on for delivery of a program or service and you get a transfer payment, delivery on the day-to-day basis will be by that regional government depending on the authority they actually draw down. That becomes the big issue, is to ensure that as we do this, we ensure that we can implement what we've agreed to in these agreements and the funding would be there. That is something that is very important for us as we go forward. What will we be? We will need to have that discussion. In a sense, that is why the intergovernmental relations piece is part of this department because we talk about negotiation and then there's implementation and if that implementation is fulfilled, then it becomes a government-to-government relationship and how we interact with each other and how we sign agreements together for delivery or programs and services. Will there be a reduced role for the Legislative Assembly and a Member from each riding? Well, that's yet to be determined, but that's important that we look at that, and that is one of the reasons why I believe the starting of the work we have within the Northern Leaders' Forum around political development, we need to have that debate amongst the people and leaders in the Northwest Territories. That's what that process is meant to do, is have that discussion, put it out there for a good, healthy discussion about what the future may hold for us. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The last question will be to the Minister regarding his department working with the federal government, Sahtu and Gwich'in on the land access information for companies and people coming into our region. Sometimes they are not aware of the agreement or not interested in looking at how we access our land and they should know. I think there is someone working in this department on land access pamphlets. I will ask the Premier if he can give me an update.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I think that falls in a number of categories. The area we would be involved with is probably in support of the end product of a devolution agreement. Who has those authorities? When do they make them? What kind of consultation do they do in making a decision? There would be areas where there are joint initiatives that we have some authority of and we would go to the appropriate department; for example, Environment and Natural Resources and some of those areas that they would be involved with. There would be some areas that ITI would be involved with, for example. Those specific issues we would be able to address with departments. I think that goes towards the bigger picture overall

about devolution and how decisions are made and how that decision is shared at the end of the day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We are on page 4-19, activity summary, implementation, operations expenditure summary, \$643,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-20, information item, implementation, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-23, activity summary, intergovernmental relations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.368 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask the Premier regarding the Northern Leaders' Forum Fund, \$304,000. I am trying to see where I read about it. However, I'll ask the Premier about that fund.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. I see some details on the next page, 4-24, but, Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Northern Leaders' Forum Fund is the money we support the regional leadership in attending the Northern Leaders' Meetings, as well as the work we are about to do under the political development area. So this is in helping them get to the table as well as establishing those community consultation meetings, and having a wrap-up to all of those meetings and, hopefully coming out with an agreed upon process for all governments in the Northwest Territories. It is an ambitious work that we have set out for ourselves in the next year, but I believe it is critically important.

Part of the discussion we had earlier was that we start to move on this side of it having a better understanding and a common vision of just what areas we'll all be responsible for, whether it is on the aboriginal government side or the public government side or even, to a degree, the federal government side. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier Roland. Once again, committee, we are on page 4-23, activity summary, intergovernmental relations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.368 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-24, activity summary, intergovernmental relations, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$654,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Page 4-25, information item, intergovernmental relations, active positions. Questions? Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I could have asked this question previously under the active position summary for the entire department, but I'll ask it under intergovernmental relations. In the past, the committee has brought up the fact that the department has been low in its number of aboriginal employees and senior management. I am just wondering if the Minister could update us on the strides the department has made, if any, in the area of aboriginal people in senior management within the department. Specifically, because we are on this page, Mr. Chairman, intergovernmental relations, most of the work this government does, although some of it is with the federal government and other provinces and territories, I would say predominantly that's dealing with aboriginal governments. Of the six employees shown on this page, how many are aboriginal? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of the department's human resource plan and affirmative action, more specifically, has been one that we've dealt with for some time, some initially would say, and challenged us to step up to the plate here and make some changes in the area of delivery. I must say that, or sometimes I would say, the concern about our aboriginal affairs status or percentage of employees is one that we've taken to heart. Although, I must say that our success has also been our challenge in the sense we've had some of our managers go through here and then get picked up by other departments and move on. One of the things we've been working on, along with the Department of Human Resources, is to come up with our human resource plan in the area of looking at our aboriginal content within the department. An example of what we've done in this last year is the associate director position where we've gone through and we put out for a position that aboriginal people could apply for. They had to be an affirmative action candidate and come into the department at an associate director position and get additional work in that area. We had very good success in that area. Of course, there are many more candidates that we would like to see pursue along these plans and, in fact, I think this example should be undertaken overall by the government through our Department of Human Resources and look at this area so we can have similar positions with our departments to move forward.

Specifically under this section of intergovernmental affairs, there are only six people in this section. One is an aboriginal P1 candidate; two are non-

aboriginal but long-time Northerners. So 50 percent of this section make up those stats. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I guess, if the committee will allow me to ask this question on this page, maybe if the Minister could just speak to the... I didn't hear him say it, but overall, the department, the senior management or the department, has there been any improvement there with the number of aboriginal employees in senior management inside of the department? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I would say there has been an improvement in the way we're doing our business when it comes to our human resource plan. Number one, we've put a plan together. We've worked on the associate director position. We've also done a number of internal transfer assignments so we could have managers in training, and how we structured our negotiations teams, as well, has been positive. But for more detail, I'll go to Mr. Robertson.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier. Mr. Robertson.

MR. ROBERTSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we've had the associate director position opened to P1 candidates only. That's on a two-year term position. In terms of our stats for affirmative action candidates in the department, for management employment we have increased by one. That's the associate director that's been added to the organizational structure. So we have one priority 1 candidate in a manager position, two managers are indigenous non-aboriginal employees and one resident woman in management. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Robertson. Thank you, committee. We're on page 4-25, information item, intergovernmental relations, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-26, information item. Lease commitments, infrastructure. Questions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-7, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 4-28, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Committee, I'll ask you to turn back to page 4-7 for the departmental summary. Department summary, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations,

operations expenditure summary, \$8.180 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Does committee agree that this concludes the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I would like to thank the witnesses and ask that they be excused. Call for the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses from the House, and thank the Minister.

The next on our list, committee, is, I believe, the Department of the Executive. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I will ask the Minister if he would like to provide us with opening comments.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I am pleased to present the 2010-11 Main Estimates for the Department of Executive. The goals for the Department of Executive are centred around our role in ensuring effective coordination of government activities, supporting informed decision-making related to policies and programming, and coordinating implementation of strategic initiatives that advance the priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

The overall proposed budget for the department is \$14.306 million for 2010-11, which is an increase of \$1.910 million or 15 percent from the 2009-10 revised estimates. The overall increase is largely due to \$1.828 million for strategic initiatives and \$542,000 in forced growth, offset by sunsets of \$460,000. The proposed budget includes a total of 68 active positions in 2010-11.

The largest single contributor to the increased departmental budget is the \$950,000 and eight positions that are proposed to be added in rural and remote communities to support the single window service centre pilot project. This investment is part of the overall investments proposed in the 2010-11 Main Estimates to strengthen service delivery in our smaller communities that were recommended by the Committee on the Sustainability of Rural and Remote Communities.

Residents of smaller NWT communities often do not have the same access to services as residents in larger communities and the single window service centres will create a focal point for residents in smaller communities to access programs. Staff will be available to help residents identify and access the programs they need, and wherever possible, in the aboriginal language of the community.

The 2010-11 Main Estimates reflect the key activities where the department plays a critical role

in leading or coordinating the development and implementation of strategic actions that advance the Assembly's priorities.

The executive operations branch includes the strategic planning unit, program review office, Bureau of Statistics, office of devolution, and the regional operations offices for the Department of Executive. In addition to the core business activities, there are a number of priority areas that will be advanced during 2010-11.

As part of the Managing this Land strategic initiative, the Department of Executive has coordinated the development of the land use framework for the GNWT. These main estimates include investments of \$468,000 to implementations associated with the land use framework. These resources will be primarily used to improve the GNWT's capacity to coordinate our role in land use and management activities and ensure consistency in advancing overall territorial land interests. We will also provide support to aid activities that strengthen Northerners working together on land management activities.

As was noted in the budget address, the Northwest Territories has experienced virtually no population growth over the past five years. As part of the Maximizing Opportunities strategic initiative, these main estimates include \$255,000 to support planning and implementation of an overall growth strategy. This work, needs to build on the national marketing campaign that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is undertaking.

Finally, an investment of \$155,000 is proposed as part of these main estimates to support the completion of an accurate census in early 2011. As we have seen in the past, the work the Bureau of Statistics did with communities in advance of the 2006 Census resulted in a much more accurate census count than in 2001 when there were significant problems. An accurate census count is particularly critical to our funding arrangement with the Government of Canada and this investment will help ensure problems of the past with the national census were not repeated.

The Cabinet support branch of the Department of Executive is responsible for ensuring systems are in place to support informed decision-making and successful implementation of Cabinet direction. The branch includes the Cabinet Secretariat, Legislation and House Planning, corporate communications and protocol, the women's advisory office, and supports the Commissioner's office.

Other key activities for the department that are reflected in these main estimates include the Ministers' office, which include the Premier's office and support to Ministers. Also reflected is the departmental director which includes the office of the secretary to Cabinet, who is responsible for providing overall leadership for the public service,

supporting Executive Council decision-making, and coordinating the development and implementation of overall government-wide direction. Finally, the department also provides operational support to the Public Utilities Board which is the independent regulatory agency responsible for energy regulation within the Northwest Territories.

That concludes my introductory remarks and I would be pleased to answer any questions that committee members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier Roland. Would you like to bring in witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. I'd like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses into the House.

If I could ask the Premier to please introduce his witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Mr. David Stewart, assistant deputy minister, executive operations; and to my right is Mr. Alan Cash, assistant deputy minister, secretary to Cabinet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier Roland. I will now open the floor to general comments, Department of Executive. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just curious if the Premier can provide some updates as to what work has been done to help get some of the positions that are typically staffed through Indian and Northern Affairs established here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The part of the Executive that would be involved in that is primarily the office of devolution, where we have identified areas where we feel that areas of responsibility should be transferred to the North. That work has been done and there was much discussion about potential positions, either transferring from the federal government just to GNWT throughout the Northwest Territories and further discussion about what decision-makers or staffing is in other parts of Canada that may, as well, be moved here. That area of devolution discussions slowed down to a very slow pace in the first two years of this government and we have since reinitiated our discussions in the sense of re-engagement with the federal government, and we've had a technical session with the aboriginal groups and governments across the Territory

ourselves, I believe in January, and, in fact, will be looking at our next meeting being held early in the new year to undergo a second round of discussions. That would include, as well, the federal government.

So we initiated. What we need to do, though, is at the regional leaders' table is to have a further discussion of just our positioning we would take as a northern group, and we're hoping that we will be able to have that discussion in our next meeting of regional leaders or the Northern Leaders' Forum at the end of March. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: How many positions have been identified through this process that should, in our government's view, rightly belong here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, I don't have that information handy with me, but we can get the previous work that was done in this area. Of course, if we were to progress down this path we would probably have to... I know we'd have to do an updated review of positions identified in the North. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister offering that? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I'll get the information we do have on file. I can't commit to doing the next piece until we actually know what direction we're going to take as northern leaders. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I'll certainly accept that.

The next phase is what work has been identified that's stopping the transfer of these types of employees to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I think that question is a very big question politically on future development of our Territory and the understanding and relationship we have with aboriginal governments, and that is why the Northern Leaders' Forum plays a critical role as how we go forward. The next piece of work we're going to engage in is the political development of the NWT with the regional leaders. I think that will go a long way in establishing the relationship forward and building the support for further discussions around devolution and, further to that, the resource revenue sharing piece.

Right now, it's been a combined package between devolution/resource revenue sharing, and that included the positions to transfer to the North and to the Government of the Northwest Territories initially. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm just trying to understand. Was it being explained that the northern leaders are impeding the process? I'm just trying to understand that. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: No, Mr. Chairman. The Northern Leaders' Forum or regional leaders are, in

fact, through this process going to help us work together to come with a common vision and understanding of how we can proceed forward.

Before that it was table-by-table or negotiation process by negotiation process. With those groups that have settled claims and self-government, they have a different role and a clear understanding of their way forward. The areas that are in negotiations we're concerned about. If they sided or did a devolution agreement, would that take away from what they were trying to negotiate? Again, between the actual self-government being the Tlicho Government as well as land claims which, again, is claims but they're negotiating self-government and those areas that are just negotiating -- not just -- but a comprehensive approach to land and self-government. So there are different interests on the table; it's very complex, and the Northern Leaders' Forum would help iron out some of those complexities as we look at how we would proceed forward. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, does the Premier have the support of these northern leaders for this type of transfer? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, in the past the devolution/resource sharing agreement was signed by the previous Government of the Northwest Territories and a number of the groups. We did not get official response on that agreement that was sent to Ottawa. Since then, this government has taken an approach where we're inclusive of all groups and we have agreed to work out a process for ourselves here in the Northwest Territories and that process is underway, as I explained earlier, under Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. I would say, again, there's competing interests at times of, again, the complexities as we recognize on different places where different aboriginal groups are at in their negotiations. But I feel the Northern Leaders' Forum will help us clear up that vision and agree on some principles that we can then decide to move forward on. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Again just speaking strictly to the area of transfer of positions, of course, does one particular group have a veto over anyone else? Is there any veto established in the context of the Government of the Northwest Territories working to proceed with the transfer of those types of positions established through the federal government; vis-à-vis mainly Indian and Northern Affairs positions to be transferred here to the Northwest Territories? Does any group have a veto through that process? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: It sounds like an easy question to ask, but it is a rather loaded one when you look at the complexities and the environment we work at here in the Northwest Territories. Previous Governments of the Northwest Territories

have worked with the federal government and Indian and Northern Affairs and Development Canada to come up with a position that... No one has a veto, but we fully recognize, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we need to work in partnership with our aboriginal groups in the North to come up with the best plan for ourselves. That is ourselves as the North. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Then by saying that we all have to work together, does that then not instill the reality that someone could obtain a veto or what is the process therein? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I just told the Member there is no veto in place but our way of working together is being inclusive, much like this Assembly, and work together on coming up with a common position. It doesn't mean we all have to agree on initiatives undertaken and so on, but there is no established veto for a group. But as we found out and history shows, things move much slower when there are opposing views put on the table. To the federal table, for example, on initiatives that may be undertaken, so the Northern Leaders' Forum is a way of coming up with a common position and approach to how we would try to bring authorities north and have aboriginal governments and territorial government playing a more positive, influential role as we move forward. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Just two last questions, recognizing the clock is ticking away. The first is: what progress on mutually agreeable ideas has come forward that can be moved on. The second issue, which is on a different subject but speaks to the principle of our government, is with Privy Council and an Order-in-Council that says our Premier is actually defined as a Government Leader. Has the Premier ever thought about taking on the initiative to ask them to make that adjustment to reflect the modern definition of who is in charge of our government? Now, I say this more on a symbolic term, it doesn't change the letterhead that perhaps comes out of the Minister's office, but yet it is more of a symbolic issue of recognition by Canada. So in other words, if they feel they are dealing with a Premier, although the courtesies may extend by the current Prime Minister, you are still defined technically by that Privy Council order which says you are a Government Leader, not a Premier.

Great strides have been made by previous leaders, such as Nellie Cournoyea, to shift that momentum in that direction, so I ask it from a purely symbolic point of view. What does that Premier think of that regard, about attitude towards these types of initiatives and, furthermore, as I said in my first question, what issues have come forward that have been mutually agreeable that we are able to act upon? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the second question first, being the title of the position of Premier versus Government Leader. It is a symbolic one, the most recent letter I received from the Prime Minister recognized the position as Premier and we say that is a significant move, just on that piece alone. Further to that, if we were to request a change, that would still require the NWT Act to be opened up and we think there is, as we go forward and talk about self-governments, talk about the changing relationship and the changing nature of the Northwest Territories, there will be a time when a number of amendments could be made going forward and that would be the more appropriate time to do it. On initiatives that have been jointly undertaken by regional leaders and ourselves as the Government of the Northwest Territories, two examples I gave out earlier are the Water Strategy and the Land Use Framework, that we have worked together on and continue to do that going forward. Thank you.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is more like general comments as opposed to what we are on, but I am curious to know, I guess, just to have the Minister indicate, or the Premier, whether or not the federal government is amenable to splitting devolution discussions from resource revenue sharing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be speculating, at this point, what I would say in this area of devolution and revenue sharing. Since it was an approach of this government with the aboriginal leadership in the past to combine those, that is the table that I think we would undertake the work to see if we should pursue one area, if it is devolution first for consideration, and I believe that is where we will be heading towards, at least a discussion on when we get together, let's look at a way forward, how we re-engage the federal government on this file. On that basis to see if we would in fact continue with the same pattern, that is devolution and resource revenue sharing, or look at going with the authority portion first and that would be devolution. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: I am not really clear whether or not we can split it from the response, but I assume that we can. Can one of these pieces, whether it be resource revenue sharing or devolution, be negotiated to completion without the other one being negotiated to a completion? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that can be done, if that is the will of the leaders in the Northwest Territories to pursue one part of this agreement. Again, it was by

design of our government, the past Government of the Northwest Territories and the regional leadership to come up with this combined approach, but I believe it can be separated if that is the will of the leadership in the Territory. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: This is along the same line and more as to maybe the next steps of questions from Mr. Hawkins. I am curious to know if the Minister is going to present to committee reworked numbers than what was there previously from other governments on the devolution and resource revenue pieces. I was wondering if the government or the Premier would look at what type of impacts, positive impacts that could be accrued at the regional and small community levels as well.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The work that we could present would be work that has been done leading up to the proposal of devolution and resource revenue sharing. We haven't done revised numbers since then, but that is the starting point for us and we could see if we want to go down that avenue. I would like to confirm that before we put what limited resources we have into updating numbers, is to make sure that we agree, as northern leaders, that, in fact, this path should be gone down and there would be support to bring one of these or both of these to a conclusion in our time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier Roland. Committee, we are on general comments, Department of Executive. Hearing no general comments, does committee agree that we have concluded general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree to go to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We will defer the operations expenditure summary, program summary on page 2-7. We will start on page 2-8, information item, Executive, infrastructure investment summary. Questions? Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just trying to understand where this Contracts Over \$5,000 Report for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2009... I am just wondering, there is an item in here Yellowknife liquor warehouse for \$7 million in the contract registry here. How come that doesn't show up in the actuals anywhere in this year's main estimates in the 2008-2009 actuals? It should have that amount in there and I am just wondering why it doesn't. I couldn't find it anyway. Maybe there is an explanation for it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Liquor Commission doesn't fall under the Executive, that falls under the Finance department and if it was to be accounted for it would be accounted for in that area, but probably under the Liquor Commission Revolving Fund is a possibility of that but not under Executive. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I want to thank the Minister for that. That's probably the case so I'll have some more questions as we go here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Committee, we're on page 2-8, I believe. Information item and infrastructure investment summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-9, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-10, information item, Executive, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Page 2-13, activity summary, Executive. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one more question and I don't know, I guess I could ask it on this page but... Well, actually, I'll wait until we get back to operations expenditure summary, Mr. Chairman. It fits better there so I'll wait.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. We are on operations expenditure summary, page 2-13, activity summary, directorate, \$839,000. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: I guess it relates to this, too, so I'll ask it. In that contract registry and reporting system it shows \$1.238 million under contracted services. Now, I know there's only a portion of it that shows up there, but under the operations expenditure listing for the department, that number is \$1.224 million. So we're about \$14,000 out, and I'm just wondering why the actuals that show up in the 2008-09 Main Estimates in this book don't correlate with the contract registry. It's out by about \$14,000, and I'm just wondering why that is.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the general operations and maintenance, under contracts, I'm trying to get further detail on that. We have contract services of \$902,000 where he's going back to 2008-09 actuals of \$1.224 million. I'd have to get that information. I'd have to get the details on the difference there of what's actuals versus what's in the contracts

registry department. The contracts registry area, the report is developed by ITI, I believe. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I don't need an explanation today, but I'm just wondering why that number wouldn't be almost exactly like the one that's in the contract amount under the Department of Executive for that year, 2008-09, and in the main estimates here under 2008-09, under actual. It's out, like I said, by about \$14,000, \$15,000. But I can get that information later. It's fine. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I understand the Minister will be getting back to you with that information.

Thank you, committee. Page 2-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, Department of Executive, \$839,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-14, activity summary, Executive, directorate, grants and contributions, grants, \$150,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Contributions, \$35,000. Total grants and contributions, \$185,000. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering, again, this isn't in this year's budget, but under the contract registry there are two items for food catering for NAWS II. One's for NAWS II and the other one is for NAWS II feast. That totals about \$70,000. I'm just wondering what event did we cater that cost \$70,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that's the work that we hosted the second National Aboriginal Women's Summit here in Yellowknife. We hosted about 300 aboriginal women from across Canada as the second part of that program and that was helping us offset our food costs, as well as the feast that was held for the group, I believe at the Yellowknife River. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I'm trying to do 300 into \$70,000 real quick. It seems like a very expensive undertaking, but is it the department's practice to book expenses like this under contracted services? I can see another department perhaps doing it, but I'm just wondering, it doesn't seem like the right fit under the Department of Executive, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Just for clarity, are we on page 2-14, grants and contributions.

MR. RAMSAY: I like to think so, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. I'll let the Premier respond.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the National Aboriginal Summit was because under the Executive we have the native women's and our women's groups and support through the Department of Executive. An agreement was entered into to host a second conference. The contract, as highlighted, would have been for the whole series of meals provided through that conference. It wasn't just one or two meals, but it wrapped up with a feast. So it was, I believe, in total would have been about three days for arrivals and then departures and supporting that conference. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Committee, once again, we're on page 2-14, activity summary, directorate, grants and contributions, grants, \$150,000; contributions, \$35,000; total grants and contributions, \$185,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-15, information item, Department of Executive, directorate, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-17, activity summary, Executive, Ministers' offices, operations expenditure summary, \$3.187 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering under -- and I am on 2-17 -- just looking for an explanation on the 2008-09 actuals are \$332,000 under contract services, and it's dropped substantially to \$158,000 in the 2010-11 mains. I'm just wondering, maybe -- I think that's probably a good thing -- but maybe just an explanation on why. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the area of the contract services, there are a number of contracts that carried over from the start of this government. We entered into a number of contracts to help us establish our links between ourselves and Ottawa, as well as provincial governments and some of the initiatives we were undertaking. What's happened there is those contracts have ended and not been renewed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Roland. Page 2-17, activity summary, Executive, Ministers' offices, operations expenditure summary, \$3.187 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-18, information item. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the Ministers' offices, I'm just wondering, on a breakdown percentage or a breakdown of the 17 positions, how many of those positions are aboriginal people of the 17? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sixty-one percent or 11 positions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Thank you, committee. Page 2-18, information item, Executive, Ministers' offices, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-21, activity summary, Department of Executive, executive operations, operations expenditure summary, \$6.793 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Agreed. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just wondering why travel has gone up so much under executive operations from what would appear to be \$183,000 in 2008-2009 to over \$400,000 in the 2010-2011 mains. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The increased travel results from an increased travel on the 2011 Census report, so we will be going to all the communities to help with doing that census as it happens in 2011. As well, because we are starting to step up on our devolution discussions again on re-engagement, we have increased travel there to about \$20,000, we're estimating, and then the rest of that will fall into the increase related to projects from the forest services in rural remote communities is another one of those reasons. That goes to my opening comments talking about recommendations made by rural and remote communities of the pilot projects of single window service centres. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I am just wondering what role the Government of the Northwest Territories has in the census support. The federal government is responsible, I believe, for census in the Northwest Territories and I am just wondering why we would be paying, I guess to hold their hand, when they go to the communities or make sure that they get accurate numbers, if it is accurate numbers, that is something that I can understand, because we want the numbers to be as accurate as possible. So who would be doing that? Are we going to hire somebody to do that or is it going to be... Actually, the best thing would be to have somebody in the community that knows the community instead of bringing somebody in from the outside for support.

If support can be found in the community, that is where it should be and cut down on travel costs. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, it is to ensure there is an accurate count. We had a huge problem in 2001 with that census. We stepped up and did a similar exercise in the 2006 Census and it greatly increased the accuracy, and we are going to ensure that remains the same. The process is the hiring of local people, but they need to come in and do the training, as well, then back to those communities and at times we might have to cover off some of those communities as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next on my list, we are on page 2-21, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ramsay asked the question for me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Very good. Committee, we are on page 2-21, activity summary, Department of Executive, executive operations, operations expenditure summary, \$6.793 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-22, activity summary, Department of Executive, executive operations, grants and contributions, contributions, \$390,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One question. Can I ask the Minister for a list of the NGOs that are being considered for the contribution funding to stabilize their operations? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will supply that list. Because of our timing this year in getting the program rolled out, this year's is a targeted list, but future years will be an application-based list to help with core funding of NGOs and the only reason it is done differently this year is because of the timing as we finally get this program rolled out. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under devolution negotiations, I am just wondering if the federal government is coming forward with an equal amount as the Government of the Northwest Territories amount of \$40,000. I am just wondering why we would not try to get more funding in that area in an effort to get more money out of the federal government to help with the devolution negotiations. I am not sure to what extent they would match our money, but if we could arrive at a deal with the aboriginal governments in the Territory on devolution and resource sharing, I think

we should be looking at increasing that number and trying to get it done. If we can get half the money from the federal government, I think that is a good thing. Maybe I will ask that question Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is an agreement to share these and an equal amount from the federal government. The reason it is as it is, is because we are just starting to re-engage, and if we do get to an agreement to fully engage on this, we would be coming forward with an offset, and if it were to kick in quicker than we think right now, we would come through, for example, a supplementary process and identify the matching dollars to the federal government. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I understand that if we budget it though at, say, \$100,000 for starters and got \$100,000 commitment from the federal government, that might be a better way to do it right up front instead of coming back through a supplementary appropriation. Then that gets the federal government to make a commitment to those dollars. Just another way to look at it, because if we go with a supplementary appropriation, the funding from the federal government, I am not sure when that might arrive, whether it is on the calendar year or the fiscal year or however they have that set up, Mr. Chairman, but this would commit them to it through this exercise. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: The issue is that if we come up with a number, we couldn't commit them to it, we would have to sit down and that is one of the areas why this hasn't been identified to a larger amount. It could go into the millions of dollars. In the past it has been one-third/two-thirds, in a sense. We had one-third, they had two-thirds, but this is an equal amount now. The reason it is smaller is because we are just, again, re-engaging and we would have to work out an agreement with the federal government as to how much could be done and then we would have to come back and account for it in the manner I just spoke of. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Thank you, committee, and we are... Sorry, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was the question I had on devolution negotiations, but I have another question on NGO stabilization, the \$350,000. I would be the first to say that we as a government should be lending as much support to NGOs across the Territory as we possibly can. We have to make sure that the NGOs have the capacity to manage their affairs effectively and to make sure they are run effectively, and I wouldn't want to see us just taking the \$350,000 and scattering it around. I think we have to come up

with a game plan. I think we need to find out which organizations need the help. We can't just spread it around like I said, because there are some NGOs that are in much more desperate need of government assistance and government help than some others that are more stable. I am just wondering what the game plan is on that \$350,000 and if the government is looking at even going a bit further with the financial support to NGOs down the road. Thank you.

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

PREMIER FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of the NGOs, one of the things we found out as we looked into this file is NGOs do get a fair bit of money from departments but it is tied to specific delivery items which didn't allow them to deal with the issue of office repairs that were needed to be done or areas of management costs and so on. This fund was identified to assist in areas that would help them, sort of, solidify that day-to-day carrying on of business, so the eligibility provisions we have identified for this fund would be, possibly include management, governance costs, those board costs, if they had boards, organization development costs and extraordinary general operation costs. As for identifying further monies, that would always have to be part of our next budget planning process, but in a tight fiscal environment it is difficult to make that commitment. But again, if it is the will of this Assembly that we would go with, if it were to say that that should be done. The only thing is, what other areas should we take it from to invest in unless we identify new sources of revenue to increase our expenditures. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I guess one of the areas of concern is the management NGOs and I'm just wondering if the government's given any consideration to the possibility of setting up an NGO management training course, which would give prospective managers of NGOs a rundown of government programs and services, how NGOs relate with the government and how they can effectively manage an organization. I think that's something like the capacity building we're doing for communities, Mr. Chairman. Has the government given any consideration to maybe the possibility of training some of these NGO managers? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, that is one of the areas that would find itself under the eligible criteria, organizational development costs, for example, in governance costs. So that would help in that management side of it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Mr. Ramsay? Thank you. Next I have on my list, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask about probably a brief strategy in terms of devolution

negotiations and the participation of the aboriginal organizations. I know there's got to be a point where you have to agree to the process and I wanted to ask the Premier who is on board and who is not on board as a government going forward to sit with the federal government to look at this big ticket item. It's a good start, but we've got to get going. So we've got to sort of get things on the go here and I guess I'm listening for a starting point on where we go from here.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I probably can give a much better answer after we have our March Northern Leaders' Forum where this item will come up for discussion and we try to find a common process going forward, but I'll get a note done for all Members to where it sits today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier. Thank you, committee. We're on page 2-22. Activity summary, executive operations, grants and contributions, contributions, \$390,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-23, information item, executive operations, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-25, activity summary, Department of Executive, Public Utilities Board, operations expenditure summary, \$433,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-26, information item, Public Utilities Board, active positions. Questions? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just the one employee that we have with the PUB and that's located in the South Slave?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's only one identified position with the Public Utilities Board and that is in Hay River.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

MR. YAKELEYA: No, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Committee, page 2-26, information item, Public Utilities Board, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-29, activity summary, Department of Executive, Cabinet support, operations expenditure summary, \$3.054 million. Committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-30, activity summary. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I just had a question under 2-29 again, sorry, if we could return there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Committee agree we return to page 2-29?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Page 2-29, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just, again, wondering -- and I believe I've asked this question before -- one of the other six budgets, the Women's Advisory, now I know it plays an important role in what we do here, but, again, I just have trouble understanding why we keep it under this area of the Department of Executive and why it wouldn't go to the department of let's say Health and Social Services or let's say ECE. It certainly doesn't belong under the Department of Executive. I think if you're going to give it the support and push that it needs, I think it's got to be under one of the social envelope departments and not under the Department of Executive. I'm not sure the history of why it ended up here in the first place. I could guess, but I won't guess right now. Maybe if the Minister could comment if the government's got any plans to take the Women's Advisory role out of the Department of Executive and put it where it belongs? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the determination of where it belongs would be one that would be an interesting debate because, for example, just using the NGO area of criteria when that debate came up in this Assembly, it was felt that it best be held in the Executive because of the weight of the level the Executive office could have on that in moving it forward because it covered a number of departments. The Women's Advisory, as well, covers quite a number of areas that they would be involved with whether it is to do with health services or education and training pieces that they've been involved with and flows through our department. We could be looking at, if that was the wish of the Assembly, moving it somewhere else, but I'd also say there would be groups out there who helped push this to today to get it put in where it's at because of its level. Where it's at they would probably not want to see it

removed or moved to another department, but that's up for discussion I would say. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier. So, committee, page 2-29, activity summary, Cabinet support, operations expenditure summary, \$3.054 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Page 2-30, activity summary, Cabinet support, grants and contributions, grants, \$219,000; contributions, \$592,000; total grants and contributions, \$811,000, agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 2-31, information item, Department of Executive, Cabinet support, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): And finally, page 2-32, information item, Department of Executive, lease commitments - infrastructure. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We'll return to page 2-7 for consideration of the department summary. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm sorry if I'm asleep at the wheel here. I just want to ask one question here to the Minister. In regard to the land use framework, have we... I know it's somewhere in the Department of Executive in terms of the land use framework and I'm trying to locate some information. Is that going to be forthcoming or do we already have it or have I just misplaced it? It's an important initiative by the Executive in terms of going forward. I want to ask if the Premier would have some good discussions with us or where can I get some information on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Premier Roland, perhaps you could identify where it is in the department.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department is the lead role in this land use framework being done and I believe we've secured time with committee to go over the land use framework and then I'll be going to regional leaders with that as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Premier Roland, and could you identify where it is in the budget? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is under the executive operations area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

MR. YAKELEYA: No, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We're on page 2-7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Operations expenditure summary, program summary, Department of Executive, \$14.306 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Does committee agree that this concludes the department of Executive?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Thank you, committee. We've concluded the Department of Executive. The next on our list, I believe, is the Legislative Assembly.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Committee, I'd like to call on Mr. Delorey for opening comments.

HON. PAUL DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2010-2011 operations budget for the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Chair, the Legislative Assembly is seeking appropriation authority in the amount of \$17.24 million.

Mr. Chairman, I want to provide a brief update on some of the initiatives I announced in this House last year. Our Paper Reduction Strategy includes initiatives such as posting tabled documents on the Legislative Assembly website as opposed to distributing paper copies. Posting electronically has allowed us to meet our 75 percent reduction target for tabled documents. The Legislative Assembly has also reduced committee paper usage by 50 percent and House paper usage by 30 percent. Altogether, the Legislative Assembly used 450,000 fewer sheets of paper in 2009 than we did in 2008. That's a 55 percent reduction in paper used. We are steadily moving toward our overall goal of an 80 percent reduction in Legislative Assembly use of paper.

Mr. Chair, I know that the decision to Drop the Pop and bottled water in the Legislative Assembly last year was challenging for some Members, but I think it has been an effective way for each of us to lead by example and play a small role in promoting good environmental stewardship and healthy personal choices.

Mr. Chairman, today crews began clearing the site at the north end of the Legislative Assembly in preparation for the installation of a wood pellet boiler. This initiative will result in a reduction of over 82,000 litres of diesel fuel usage a year and a cost

savings of \$37,600 annually. At current fuel prices, the wood pellet boiler will pay for itself in just over nine years.

Mr. Chair, this year's budget includes a \$50,000 increase to the grant provided to the NWT Human Rights Commission to provide assistance to unrepresented parties before the Human Rights Adjudication Panel. This assistance is viewed by both the commission and the adjudication panel as an effective way to streamline the adjudication process. In addition to providing assistance to unrepresented parties in a complex and often intimidating process, this new initiative should reduce the time and money required to see a complaint through to conclusion.

Mr. Chair, for the first time in the history of this Assembly, we have employees on our books that do not reside in Yellowknife. As Members know, the Board of Management last year decided to relocate the office of the Languages Commissioner from Yellowknife to Inuvik. I am pleased to report that this budget includes funding for office space and staff in Inuvik for our new Languages Commissioner.

Mr. Chair, our broadcast system continues to evolve. Earlier this year, Assembly staff successfully negotiated an agreement with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to bring all but two of our communities onto our broadcast network. Late last year I, along with the Speaker of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, appeared before the Canadian Radio and Television Commission to call for the designation of our Assembly proceedings as a "must carry" on direct-to-home or satellite television systems. Our presentation was well received by the commission and we are hopeful for a positive response that will significantly increase our broadcast coverage.

Mr. Chairman, this year's budget includes funding to continue the important work of the Standing Committee on Social Programs' review of the Child and Family Services Act. Since the get-go, the Social Programs committee has shown significant determination and drive on this important legislative review. In addition to the many hours already spent on this initiative, the committee will hold extensive public hearings throughout the Northwest Territories in April. I want to congratulate Chairman Beaulieu and his committee, their staff and the staff of the Department of Health and Social Services for their excellent work to date. I particularly want to draw attention to the work of the committee's research assistant, Ms. Robyn Stewart, who has demonstrated a remarkable ability to absorb the many aspects of this complicated file in a very compressed time frame. I am confident that this review will set the standard for how consensus government can and should function when all

parties agree to work together for the good of the people we represent.

Mr. Chairman, the report of the Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits falls due early in the next fiscal year. As we speak, members of the commission are studying the many complex and important issues before them. I look forward to tabling the commission's report during our May sitting and proceeding to a thorough and public debate about the recommendations contained therein.

Mr. Chairman, on November 17, 1993, this impressive building was formally dedicated to the wisdom of our elders and the spirit of their children. I know that I speak for all Members when I say that the experience and insight of our elders is among our greatest assets as a Territory. Mr. Chairman, in recognition of this, I have invited elders from across the Northwest Territories to assemble in Yellowknife for the first ever Elders Parliament from May 3 to 7, 2010. This unique initiative, which has already garnered significant interest, will provide our elders with an opportunity to learn more about the workings of our Assembly and express their views on important matters of public policy. I'm so excited about this initiative that I have decided to serve as Speaker of the Elders Parliament myself. After all, I meet the age requirement. I'm not sure whether they will be easier or a more challenging group to keep on track than you are. If all goes well this year, we will, in future years, alternate between a Youth and an Elders Parliament.

Members, by the end of the coming fiscal year, we will have only five months remaining in our term. This year marks the beginning of a two-year ramp-up of our elections office in preparation for the October 2011 General Election. We will be proceeding to recruit a permanent Chief Electoral Officer in the months ahead and hope to be fully staffed by this October. Brace yourselves, Members; it will come faster than you think.

Colleagues, this concludes my opening remarks. As always, I want to thank my colleagues on the Board of Management for their excellent work and dedication to the best interests of this institution. Mr. Chairman, if there are any questions, I will be pleased to respond to them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would you wish to bring witnesses into the House?

HON. PAUL DELOREY: Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Mr. Speaker, would you like to introduce your witnesses, please.

HON. PAUL DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is director of corporate services, Olin Lovely, and to my right is the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr. Mercer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee, we're open for general remarks on the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to let the Assembly know that I certainly wanted to say how pleased I was with the introduction of the first Elders' Parliament that you're going to have this year. I think it's a unique approach. It gives the elders who are going to participate in the parliament a sense of what us young leaders go through, a sense of the work. I think this is a good initiative that should be successful. You always have something to learn and it will be very good. I was talking to some of my elders in Deline over the past weekend and they're quite excited about this. So I think that's a good move on behalf of the Speaker and the staff to move on this initiative, and I look forward to seeing how the Elders' Parliament is going to come out in terms of some of the issues that the elders would be speaking on, in terms of their participation in the parliament, in this Assembly here.

I want to just make note of that, Mr. Chair, in terms of my comments to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and his staff there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much, Mr. Yakeleya. General comments. Does committee agree this concludes general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Mr. Speaker, response to general comments.

HON. PAUL DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the comments from the Member for the Sahtu. We have had a fair bit of interest shown in this Elders' Parliament and we're going to work to make it as successful a week as possible with the elders when they come here. Thanks for those comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does committee agree we go to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): We will defer the department summary, operations expenditure summary, on page 1-7, and start with page 1-8, information item, Legislative Assembly, infrastructure investment summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-9, information item, revenue summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-10, information item, active position summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-13, activity summary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can I just get a brief on the other, on 1-13, \$574,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I believe that was more detail on other? Is that correct? Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAUL DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll just get that information on the other expenditures here. I'll refer the question to Olin, and he'll run down the list of other expenses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll go to Mr. Lovely for this response.

MR. LOVELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The other expenditure is \$571,000 for the interest expense on the Legislative Assembly building payment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Once again, committee, we're on page 1-13, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Clerk, operations expenditure summary, \$8.277 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-14, information item, Office of the Clerk, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-17, activity summary, Office of the Speaker, operations expenditure summary, \$323,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-18, information item, Legislative Assembly, Office of the Speaker, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-21, activity summary, expenditures on behalf of Members, operations expenditure summary, \$6.805 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-23, activity summary, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, \$372,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-24, information item, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-27, activity summary, statutory officers, operations expenditure summary, \$1.462 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Page 1-28, activity summary, statutory officers, grants and contributions, contributions, \$258,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Just for clarity, committee, that was \$250,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Page 1-29, information item, statutory officers, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. If you'll turn back to page 1-7 for consideration of the department summary. Department summary, operations expenditure summary, Legislative Assembly, \$17.239 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that that concludes the Legislative Assembly?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Thank you to Mr. Speaker and your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Does committee agree that next will be the Department of Finance?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): So be it. I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if he would like to present some opening remarks.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Finance's main estimates for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

The department's 2010-11 Main Estimates propose O and M expenditures of \$76.528 million. This represents an increase of \$1.658 million or 2 percent from the 2009-10 Main Estimates.

In October 2009 the Department of Finance released its Strategic Action Plan 2009-2012, which provides multiyear direction for the department. The plan includes strategic initiatives flowing from two overarching strategic priorities, these being fiscal sustainability and modern management. These strategic priorities are critical to the long-term success of the GNWT and flow to departmental initiatives and action items.

The Department of Finance will continue the GNWT's longer term broad-based initiative to modernize government management in order to better respond to changing expectations and priorities. Key activities aimed at identifying and addressing areas for improvement within the current management framework include:

- investing \$200,000 to continue the renewal of the Knowledge Management Strategy;
- modernizing the Financial Administration Act, associated financial policies, procedures and directives;
- continuing to implement and maintain the new financial information system, SAM, by investing \$338,000 for incremental support costs and an additional \$595,000 in amortization expense to reflect a full year of service for SAM;
- investing \$125,000 in one-time funding to complete the planning, design and transition activities for the implementation of a financial shared services and procurement model;
- investing \$195,000 to implement the GNWT's Strategic Security Plan, which will help the GNWT to protect the government's electronic information assets;
- modernizing the Petroleum Products Tax Act; and
- implementing an electronic records and document management system.

Also reflected in the department's proposed budget is an increase of \$912,000 in collective bargaining increases.

The department's budget includes \$37.122 million in contribution funding for the NWT Housing Corporation. The department has no direct authority over this contribution funding, other than providing the corporation with its operating cash flow.

As the GNWT's lead revenue department, the department will address fiscal sustainability through initiatives that will enable the GNWT to generate long-term economic social and environmental returns that will over time increase the Territory's self-reliance. The Department of Finance's revenues are projected to total \$1.236 billion, which is approximately 91 percent of the total GNWT revenues being forecast for 2010-11. The department will undertake a number of revenue-related initiatives, including:

- following recent public consultations, develop a proposal for changes in the NWT tax mix to better balance the tax burden;
- continuing to participate in discussions on devolution and resource revenue sharing; and
- releasing a public discussion paper on the establishment of an NWT Heritage Fund.

For the 2010-11 fiscal year the Department of Finance's main estimates include a total staffing complement of 108 positions, 99 in headquarters and nine in the regions. This is a net increase over the previous fiscal year of one term position resulting from the Refocusing Government's Strategic Initiative to implement a financial shared services and procurement model. That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We'll open the floor up now for general comments. Or actually, no, Mr. Minister, did you want to bring in some witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister, and we'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses in. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and if I could just maybe have you introduce your staff for the record.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance; and Mr. Jamie Koe, acting director of policy and planning. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister, and welcome, Ms. Melhorn and Mr. Koe, to our proceedings. We'll open the floor up to general comments on the Department of Finance main estimates. Any general comments? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister in regard to his comments on page 2 of 2. He mentioned something about releasing a public discussion paper on establishment of an NWT Heritage Fund. Does the Minister have a date as to when this is going to be released to the public for discussion and what type of plan he has to have a discussion with the public on this? Is it going to be through various forums?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intention is to table the document either this Friday or coming Monday, March 1st. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: So the Minister is going to table a document on March the 1st and then this triggers a process where there's going to be public discussion now in the Northwest Territories as to the establishment of an NWT Heritage Fund. Is it six months of discussion with the public or is it going to be something like the other discussion papers we've had regarding utility companies? So I guess I wanted to see as to when does the Minister

see this discussion on the establishment of the Heritage Fund being concluded or to move to another phase?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The intention is to have a consultation and feedback period until April 30th. The intention, as I indicated in the budget address, assuming that there will be constructive feedback and consensus of this Legislature, that we'd have a bill before this House for their consideration and passage in the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I'd like to say that's good news and I hope we see the bill sooner than later. I wanted to ask the Minister about the uncertainty of some of the initiatives that are happening in the North regarding infrastructure on projects. Does that, from a Minister's point of view, the department's point of view, throw some type of wrench into our financial fiscal outlook or framework in terms of what you've presented us here? Is it possible that you could be presenting something totally different in two or three months down the road in terms of what you have before us here? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As a matter of course and practice we are always reviewing our fiscal situation and the Members are aware of some of the challenges that are out there. We've had our discussions and we've laid out some of the potential scenarios and we're going to continue to do that. I'm confident that regardless of what challenges arise before us, that we'll be able to make the right collective decisions to make sure that we maintain the level of service that our constituents now have. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I, too, also want to let the Minister know that I want to ensure that we have good sound footing in the finances in terms of challenges that we have to acknowledge and to deal with, but at the same time I want to ensure that what's before us here, this is probably the best-case scenario of all the assessments of our finances with a number of sunsets. You know, we heard from the Department of Health and Social Services in terms of their sunsets of some of the programs that the federal government is not going to fund anymore and at the same time we're going to provide some pretty valuable health services and that has to come from somewhere. So for us to keep on going, it would mean that we have to do business in a different way than we're used to. So more of a comment to the Finance Minister, Mr. Chair.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I appreciate the Member's comment as it pertains to sunsets or potential sunsets and any action or response from the federal government in terms of continuing on some of the health programs. We're going to be, of course, monitoring that. We're not going to know

that until the federal budget comes out in early March. We're already doing some initial planning, as the Members are aware, to try to accommodate the worst-case scenario, which would be that the sunset holds and there is no further funding. However, we will keep the Members apprised as often as we have to going forward with the various challenges that are before us. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: No, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Are there any further general comments on the Department of Finance? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to say that I appreciate the two overarching strategic priorities of fiscal sustainability and modern management, both of which I think we're failing in and I think it's very appropriate to give much more attention to. I think we're sort of working on the grace of God, really, and financially skirting our debt wall and we're very vulnerable there. I will be interested in more details on that. The modern management, as well, I am wondering if that includes in the modernization of the Financial Administration Act an improvement of the sole-source contracting procedures that is causing a lot of grief.

Also, I believe we had talked about reviewing the Petroleum Products Tax Act and I don't see that. Oh, I see here, it's mentioned here as modernizing Petroleum Products Tax Act. I am happy to see that. I would be happy in any of the Minister's perspectives on what modernizing that act means. Certainly, I know we are out of date with a number of things. For example, we are missing natural gas. We don't tax natural gas used for power generation and that's a big hole.

Finally, again, I may have missed it. I was out of the House for a minute there, but I'm wondering where we're at with carbon pricing. I know the public has been mentioning that more and more and I think it would be good to get some good research and preparatory work going if we are going to do something during the life of this Assembly.

So I will just keep it brief at that, but I just wanted to mention those things. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The policies regarding sole-source contracts are set out in policy and the Premier has already indicated there's a willingness to review those if there are any discussions required or amendments required. The Petroleum Products Act will be a much needed modernization and will have to link into some of the things we are doing, for

example, with tax shifting, with the work we intend to do with revisiting and updating our Greenhouse Gas Strategy to make sure that going forward we have an act that reflects the current thinking and demands and pressures of the 21st Century. The same goes for the issue of carbon pricing, was we look at our tax mix, as we look at our Greenhouse Gas strategy, that discussion and debate has to be entered into. That may take some time given the sensitive nature of the reaction that tends to provoke in just about every quarter when it's portrayed as a tax. Some of the things that are happening south of us with the politics both in the United States and Canada, that may impact on where we're going as a country with carbon pricing.

Those are all issues that there is work to be done on over the next coming months remaining in this 16th Assembly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thanks, committee. We're on the Department of Finance, general comments. Are there any other general comments? Does committee agree to go to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): The department starts on page 5-7, operations expenditure summary. If I could just ask if we could defer this until the end.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We'll move on to page 5-8, Finance, department summary, information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-9, Finance, department summary, information item, revenue summary. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering if we are expecting income from the plastic bag or retail bag program, if that would go into the general revenues.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We anticipate that with the institution of the levy, that there's going to be a significant drop-off in the use of plastic bags, but any funds that are collected will go into the Environment Fund with ENR and will be put towards other good work that needs to be done.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley. We're on page 5-8, Finance, department summary, information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-9, Finance, department summary, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-10, Finance, department summary, information item, active positions summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-13, Finance, activity summary, deputy minister's office, operations expenditure summary, \$41.921 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-14, Finance, activity summary, deputy minister's office, grants and contributions, contributions, \$37.122 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-15, Finance, activity summary, information item, deputy minister's office, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-17, Finance, activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.267 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-18, Finance, activity summary, information item, fiscal policy, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-21, Finance, activity summary, budget, treasury and debt management, operations expenditure summary, \$9.815 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-22, Finance, activity summary, budget, treasury and debt management, grants and contributions, contributions, \$34,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-23, Finance, activity summary, information item, budget, treasury and debt management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-25, Finance, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, operations expenditure summary, \$21.748 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-26, Finance, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, grants and contributions, contributions, \$14.085 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this one I just notice that the last, or this fiscal year our costs jumped by 40 percent in the Power Subsidy Program. I see no planned changes for this year. I'm just wondering what the future's looking

like here and I know we're doing reviews and stuff. Is this not a gradual thing? This is whenever there's a general rate review that we adjust this?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This increase is tied to the \$3 million that was slated to be added, the \$3 million a year for three years, to the commercial subsidy program. How it would be finally put to use will depend on the outcome of the electrical rate review, or the government's response and what's finally agreed to as the Legislature going forward to a restructured rate system. So the money is here reflecting that increase that came out of the \$60 million.

MR. BROMLEY: So we haven't even confirmed that for this year, is my understanding. Perhaps the Minister could confirm if it is being spent this year on a subsidy for commercial users.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: No, the existing commercial Power Support Program is not very well subscribed to, given its structure and complexity. It's considered too onerous. We haven't added that money to be used, nor have we changed that program. So the money is reflected here just because it was initially targeted for some support to the commercial subsidy.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm just wondering if these dollars are not being spent as we thought they would be last year, it sounds clear that we're not planning on spending them that way next year. I'm wondering if this is something that should be deleted from the budget. If I can get some perspectives on that.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This money is part of the \$60 million that was put towards looking at alternative energy; some of the structural reforms. I would suggest that we've committed to coming forward with a plan in May. I think government's response that the money should be reflected in the budget as it was initially intended and then when we look at May and see what comes out of that discussion collectively of where we go and how those funds could best be put to use.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's remarks there and his reference to these as alternative energy dollars. Can the Minister commit that the \$3 million will remain as dollars that will be put towards alternative energy, as he calls it? I would say renewable energy. Energy efficiency.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Initially this money was targeted \$3 million a year over three years to go into some type of commercial subsidy. It's reflected here because that's how it was initially intended. Part of the work that's being done as a result of our focus on energy and shifting how we do business and trying to come up with the best and fairest system is the work on the electrical rate review. In May we'll know, once we have the

debate and discussion about what that final response will look like, what's going to happen with the commercial subsidy and if it's going to exist. If it doesn't, that decision, I believe, will be captured in the final product that results from what's being brought forward in May. At that time we collectively will determine its best use.

MR. BROMLEY: The \$60 million has been touted about dozens of times in the last week or 10 days. Now I'm being led to understand that the \$3 million -- and I don't know if that's this year only or on into the future or what -- is being used to subsidize power. That's an artificial reduction in the cost of electricity. I'm all for reducing costs of power to our users, but I'd sooner see it spent in real ways, one of which is off-the-shelf alternative energy. I'm getting very nervous about... I agree if we sort of end up there collectively, but I want to stop hearing about \$60 million for alternative energy if it's being spent in a way that can be used for diesel power generation, for example, ongoing, status quo sorts of things. So I'm looking for that sort of commitment from the Minister and some correction in the terminology that the Cabinet has been throwing around here if indeed such a correction is or will be required.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: When this fund was initially contemplated and initiated and presented, it was presented to do a number of things. It was presented to minimize our reliance on fossil fuels, it was intended to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, it was intended to help especially the smaller, high-cost communities to decrease their cost of living through reducing the power. This \$3 million a year for three years was initially contemplated as an interim measure as we sorted out the way forward in terms of whatever system changes could be made, the time it would take to set up the structure to implement things like biomass, wind energy, mini-hydro, all of which have a planning cycle that does extend over a number of years. This fund had a number of multiple goals that it was trying to address. That's still the case. It's reflected here. One of the big pieces coming forward in May is going to be the response to the electrical rate review, which will I think speak specifically to this particular money that the Member's been discussing.

MR. BROMLEY: My point remains. I would suggest that the Minister of Finance find those \$3 million elsewhere or start revising the terminology that we're using and the promises that were made about \$60 million going toward alternative energy development.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I remember very well making the case for the funds and the intent to do the things that I just talked about in terms of greenhouse gases, getting off fossil fuels, and to look at things we could do to help mitigate in

the short term the cost of living in the small communities where one of the most prohibitive costs, especially when it comes with the food basket, is the price of electricity in the community stores. That's always been on the table. We're not trying to gild the lily. We're not trying to misrepresent the intent. I appreciate the Member's concern and it will be measured and tempered in our discussion, but I would suggest that this fund be left until May where we can make a collective decision once we look at the whole package as it pertains to the electrical rate review.

MR. BROMLEY: I also recall speaking to this subject in this House during budget reviews and pointing out that if we're going to spend this money subsidizing commercial power use, then it should be spent to support initiatives such as the Sachs Harbour Cooperative which put up solar panels to reduce their power costs. Then it would actually be alternative energy dollars spent appropriately and meet the interest of supporting commercial users.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: When we contemplated the commercial subsidy, the structure of the commercial subsidy hadn't been determined either. We had discussions about what would that money best be put towards. Would it be best put towards incentives to encourage stores to be more energy efficient as opposed to just a subsidy? I agree with the Member that subsidies on their own, as we've seen with the Territorial Power Support Subsidy, for example, it grows and I think the Member and I are interested in doing the same thing. The final determination of what these funds will be targeted for will be determined, I would suggest to you, in May and shortly thereafter once we have a chance to collectively look at what's being put on the table and what consensus can be reached in terms of moving forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We're on page 5-26, Finance, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, grants and contributions, contributions, \$14.085 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-27, Finance, activity summary, information item, office of the comptroller general, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-29, Finance, activity summary, office of the chief information officer, operations expenditure summary, \$1.777 million. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one question. Under other expenses, contractor services, I see an almost doubling of costs there. I am wondering what the target of those dollars is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Ms. Melhorn.

MS. MELHORN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The increase relates to money that has been allocated towards the development and implementation of the Knowledge Management Strategy and the Security Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Melhorn. Mr. Bromley, anything further? Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Thanks, committee. We're on page 5-29, office of the chief information officer, operations expenditure summary, \$1.777 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-30, office of the chief information officer, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-32, Finance, information item, Liquor Revolving Fund.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-33, Finance, information item, Liquor Revolving Fund, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 5-34, Finance, information item, work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thanks, committee. I would now ask you to please turn back to page 5-7, and that is the department summary, Finance, operations expenditure summary, \$76.528 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thanks, committee. Does committee agree that the Department of Finance main estimates have been concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. I'd like to thank you, Mr. Minister. Thanks, Ms. Melhorn and good luck at the Briar, Mr. Koe.

Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could escort the witnesses out. Thanks, committee. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I move that committee reports progress. Thank you.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I will now rise and report progress. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. RAMSAY: 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. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

---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 Tuesday, February 23, 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

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- Tabled Document 62-16(4), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2010-2011
 - Tabled Document 78-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation (Operations Expenditures) No. 3, 2009-2010
 - Tabled Document 80-16(4), Supplementary Appropriation (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 4, 2009-2010
 - 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 Tuesday, February 23rd, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

