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The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 24, 2004****Members Present**

Mr. Allen, Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya, Honourable Henry Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. David Krutko): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 15-15(3): 2004 Federal Budget**

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Finance for Canada, the Honourable Ralph Goodale, tabled the 2004 federal budget. I am pleased to report that this budget contained some good news for the Northwest Territories.

Among the issues addressed in the budget were the territorial formula financing agreement, a northern strategy for economic development, northern oil and gas development and health care. Also, there are provisions in the budget for environmental cleanup of contaminated sites and seabed mapping of the continental shelf. Although more detail is required on some of these initiatives, I believe that they will contribute positively to the overall situation in the NWT and we can be pleased with these initial positive signals from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the territorial formula financing agreement is the largest single source of GNWT revenues, and its adequacy is critical to our ability to provide health care, education and other essential services. I met with Mr. Goodale last month to discuss renewal of this agreement. At that time, he indicated he was prepared to increase funding under our formula financing agreement by \$7.6 million in 2004-05. This amount would increase to \$17 million in 2006-07 as the funding currently provided by Canada under the three-year territorial health fund is made permanent. These amounts were included in the revenue forecast I provided last Wednesday in my budget address.

In the budget address last Wednesday, I outlined a number of concerns with the federal proposal. The first was the need for additional funding to restore the adequacy of our formula to meet our expenditure needs. I noted that the federal proposal to address adequacy, while welcome, still fell short of the full restoration of the cut to our expenditure base made in 1996.

The second concern related to the calculation of the GNWT's tax effort in the formula, more commonly referred to as rebasing. The tax effort factor measures the GNWT's revenue raising capacity compared to the provincial average. Although Mr. Goodale's budget does not meet all our concerns, it does go part way and provides an important opportunity for us to continue to make our case on tax effort.

During our discussions about the renewal of the formula, we argued strenuously that initial calculations to rebase our formula made no sense to us. We have been unable to reconcile the numbers we were seeing with what we have observed about our own tax increases over the past 10 years compared with the provinces. Furthermore, rebasing would have a very large negative effect on our revenues. It would have offset any federal initiatives on adequacy, and would reintroduce perversity into the formula.

During discussions with Mr. Goodale, I proposed postponing rebasing for at least a year, to allow our officials to review the calculations, methodology and concept behind the tax effort adjustment factor.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the federal Minister has responded positively, and has agreed to postpone rebasing for one year, to 2005-06. More importantly, he has also agreed that officials should review the tax effort adjustment factor and report back to us so that a decision can be made for 2005-06.

The delay of one year in rebasing our formula will have a significant positive, one-time impact on our fiscal situation. The revenue forecast I provided last week for 2004-05 has now improved by approximately \$50 million.

---Applause

This money will be used to eliminate the deficit for 2004-05.

Welcome as this news is, Mr. Speaker, I must insert a note of caution. This is a one-time improvement that affects only the upcoming fiscal year, 2004-05. The long-term fiscal outlook does not change. In order to meet our target of a balanced budget by 2006-07, it is critical we maintain the fiscal strategy laid out in my budget address last week. We still need to identify an additional \$20 million in expenditure savings and cost avoidance in each of 2005-06 and 2006-07 and we must increase our own-source revenues.

Mr. Speaker, the federal budget also announced a number of other measures for the North. These measures will not directly impact the GNWT's revenues, as they will be delivered through federal programs. We will need to get more specifics about how this money will be allocated, and how the Northwest Territories will be affected.

The budget contained an announcement of \$90 million in funding over the next five years to implement a northern development strategy for the three northern territories. I understand that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Mr. Bagnell, will have responsibility for developing this strategy in conjunction with Minister Mitchell. We are anxious to learn how this funding will be allocated across the North,

and what the criteria will be for its investment. It is important that this money be invested directly in the North, in areas that reflect northern priorities. My colleague, the Honourable Brendan Bell, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, will be following up on this issue.

The \$75 million over three years that the federal government is allocating internally to northern oil and gas development will increase federal and regional environmental assessment capacity and streamline the regulatory process.

The budget also set aside \$3.5 billion over 10 years for the cleanup of contamination on federal lands. It is estimated that 60 percent of this funding will be spent in the North. This funding will be used to clean up contaminated sites such as Port Radium, Giant Mine and the DEW Line sites.

Mr. Speaker, an important part of our fiscal strategy is a better deal from Canada. The changes to the formula will also help us meet our short-term needs, but do not address our longer-term requirements. We must continue to work with the federal government to address the adequacy of our fiscal arrangements on a long-term basis in order to ensure a solid fiscal foundation for the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Minister's Statement 16-15(3): World TB Day

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is World TB Day. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the work that is being done to fight this disease, and the need for continued vigilance.

Mr. Speaker, the tuberculosis rate in our territory has remained five to 10 times above the national average over the past decade. Since the beginning of this year, five new cases have already been diagnosed, all in elders. The disease spreads through the air and can infect anyone. As Members know, this is very serious.

This morning we were launching a new video called Stop TB. The video is available in all of our health centres and we've also translated it into French, Gwich'in and Dogrib. It includes interviews taped in Lutselk'e, Rae Edzo, Wekweti, Aklavik and Yellowknife. I trust it will be a valuable resource and help people to recognize the early symptoms of TB. They can get tested in their own communities.

The department and authorities are working very hard to encourage people to get tested and to go for treatment if they need it.

- We have new clinical practice guidelines and are developing new hospital standard regulations.
- We are providing community profiles and training to identify TB patients.
- We have a new Tuberculosis control manual.

- We are developing proactive screening programs, because some people can carry the disease without getting sick.
- We report on the number of TB cases regularly.
- We are providing training and orientation to health care workers at all levels, including doctors, nurses, community health representatives and TB workers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the work that's been done, but it's clear that we still have a long way to go. I hope we can continue this work and lower our TB rates to zero. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Minister's Statement 17-15(3): American Gem Society Laboratories Visit

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the American Gem Society Laboratories is one of the major polished diamond grading laboratories in the world. The American Gem Society grades polished diamonds for colour, clarity, carat and cut. It is one of the world leaders in developing grading certification processes and was the first major laboratory in the world to grade for cut, based on its own cut grade system.

I am pleased today to host a delegation from the American Gem Society Laboratories, and at the appropriate time I will recognize my guests who are present in the gallery.

The American Gem Society currently operates one lab in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the United States is the primary market for their certificates. Some polished diamonds produced in the Northwest Territories are graded by the American Gem Society, primarily the higher quality and best cut diamonds, Mr. Speaker.

This visit is an opportunity for us to promote and explore Northwest Territories business opportunities with the American Gem Society Laboratories. These include the potential development of a coordinated certificate that includes the GNWT's certification of origin and the American Gem Society Laboratories' certification for quality. We will also explore opportunities to work together on research, development and technology with respect to new diamond cuts and rough diamond tracking.

The Government of the Northwest Territories looks forward to ongoing discussions with the American Gem Society Laboratories, and other prominent members of the international diamond industry, with the goal of ensuring that the NWT diamonds reach a broad market base and that our diamond industry develops to the maximum benefit of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Fort Good Hope Search And Rescue Volunteer Awards Night**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge the volunteers of the Sahtu region. It has been brought to my attention that the community of Fort Good Hope in the Sahtu region will be hosting a volunteer awards dinner tomorrow at noon. Mr. Speaker, these volunteers will be recognized for their efforts in the search and rescue of the fatal plane crash last year that took the lives of some precious people that we dearly loved and are missed by our people.

Mr. Speaker, there are many volunteers who make huge contributions to our communities. With the region pulling together to help one another, this shows that as northern people we are unstoppable when we pull together for a common cause.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that approximately 25 individuals in the Sahtu region will be recognized, and I would like to personally say thank you very much to all these individuals for making a difference in the Sahtu. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Access Road Connecting Highway 3 And Kam Lake

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to share with my colleagues an issue that is very important to my constituency and to the city of Yellowknife. The issue is that of an access road being constructed to connect Highway No. 3 to the Kam Lake Industrial Park.

Mr. Speaker, this access road from Highway No. 3 is necessary to lend our attention to for a variety of reasons. As most Members are aware, Airport Road in Yellowknife is a very busy thoroughfare. In fact, during rush hours at 8:30, noon and 5:00 p.m., it can be congested to the point where some residents are avoiding it. Businesses along the route suffer as a result.

Residents who live in the area have no choice. They just have to put up with the situation. The number of large trucks and service vehicles can create a safety problem along the route for residents who bike, run or walk. The City of Yellowknife would like to pursue the construction of this road, Mr. Speaker. The question is the availability of the land to construct this much needed strategic piece of road infrastructure. As I understand it, the Department of Transportation applied for this land to facilitate future airport initiatives, while at the same time working on a joint engineering study with the City. Where is this study?

In order for the City of Yellowknife to be able to afford the construction of the access road, it would need to sell lots along the route. This would be the only way the City could afford to undertake such an endeavour. Industrial lots are at a premium in Yellowknife. This initiative would certainly help open up additional land. Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this government is not getting in the way of the City of Yellowknife and their ability to get this initiative started.

We must do whatever we can to help facilitate this project. I would like to mention that I will have questions at the appropriate time on the order paper for the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement On Reflections On The 2004 Federal Budget

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will remain consistent with the theme of my Member's statements for this week, using wording that is complimentary to the federal budget address. Although the document acknowledges that much of the funding will not be administered through the Government of the Northwest Territories, this still gives my constituency much relief; the federal government will, once again, make a large investment in supporting a social economy in the North. It is nice to read that the federal budget provides new pilot program funding for the social economy and community economic development organizations for capacity building, financing and research. Although the plan for the projected \$90 million in economic development funding has not been established, we feel that this investment is nothing short of a plus for northern economic development programs.

Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging, as well, to see that northern oil and gas development will also see an investment of \$75 million over three years to increase federal and regional environmental assessment capacity and streamline the regulatory process. It is exceptionally beneficial for my region of the Northwest Territories as it provides for more research for work associated with development in the Mackenzie Delta/Beaufort Sea area.

Mr. Speaker, this funding announcement is crucial to the ongoing commitment to support the oil and gas activity in the North. I am pleased to have read the observations provided by the Minister of Finance this morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Observations On The Performance Of Premier And Cabinet

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to provide this House with my early observations on the performance of our Premier and Cabinet Ministers. Not so many weeks ago, we gathered here to choose from amongst ourselves people to fill various positions of leadership in the 15th Assembly. Some of us are returning Members, but we also have six new Members; almost one-third of us brand new to the territorial level of government.

Over the past few days and weeks, we have gotten to know each other a little better. We have had a chance to observe old colleagues in new roles, such as yourself, Mr. Speaker, having had to make the transition to the Speaker's role, which is a very unique role. Of the seven

Cabinet Ministers, four have some experience in Cabinet and three do not; committee Chairs are new to the role; and, we have a new Clerk. We are all getting down to work, many with some degree of a learning curve but, for now, I am on the subject of the Cabinet.

Let's start with the Premier. I know that when the economy is booming in Yellowknife, it might be hard to get excited about a vision for the whole Territories. I know we are planning to get together with other northern leaders in April but, with 50 participants and only a few days, the topics we explore will probably be fairly broad. I am personally disappointed that we didn't hear a sessional statement as I think the people of the North are awaiting a clear message in terms of direction and goals. The Premier has to be our point man on that front.

We could say that this session was the Finance Minister's dance because it was the budget session, but our people are waiting to see what kind of a government we are. They want to hear what we are collectively thinking, regardless of whether they agree or disagree. They want to hear something. It is not good enough to give our message once. We need to keep repeating it over and over.

A while back, I discussed with our mayor the subject of continuity in Cabinet assignments; for example, Mr. Miltenberger and Mr. Dent both have prior experience in their respective portfolios. I have no doubt that both are hard workers who keep themselves apprised of the issues in their departments. But, I must say, I don't see a lot of enthusiasm there. Granted, our government isn't flush with cash for new ideas and new initiatives at this moment, but I would really like to see a little more passion for the issues in their departments. I don't want to feel like I had to wake someone from a deep sleep when I get up to ask questions in this House.

---Laughter

---Applause

If we were just looking for good managers, we would let the deputy ministers run the departments, but we are looking for leaders with ideas and passion for the challenges that are facing our constituents.

Mr. McLeod and Mr. Zoe haven't floated enough material for me to form an opinion yet. They are getting up to speed with their departments, so I am very much looking forward to seeing what they are going to come out with.

To Mr. Bell and Mr. Roland, I give an early vote of confidence. I see new ideas...Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. To Mr. Bell and Mr. Roland, I give an early vote of confidence. I see new ideas, well-thought-out and well-spoken responses to Members' issues. They have obviously taken the effort to become well informed of some very complex issues. I have seen good interaction with regular Members. They seem responsive and engaged. I applaud them for that.

Mr. Dent may be the longest-serving Member on the Cabinet side, but I am the longest-serving Member on this side of the House. I hope that a little constructive criticism in the form of observations on occasion will be received in the spirit in which it is offered. I don't want this to be known as the "status-quo government." The clock is ticking. Let us get a little fire going here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Response To The Federal Budget

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should take a few moments to offer some response to the federal budget delivered by the federal Minister of Finance, Hon. Ralph Goodale. Mr. Speaker, as is the case with all government budgets, the devil is always in the details; I do appreciate Mr. Roland for providing some and I look forward to getting more into the details in the days to come. Nevertheless, I do like what I am hearing in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, most importantly, I believe we can say that the North is now definitely on the radar screen of the people who control our purse strings in Ottawa, including Prime Minister Martin. He has been to the North, I know personally, a number of times in the last 10 years, in the time that he was working to become the Prime Minister. I believe that he is more aware of the northern issues than any other Prime Minister we have had. I really think that we have to take note of the way the aboriginal issues and northern issues now hold a prominent place in this budget which is seen by most analysts as a low-spending/status-quo budget

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that the credit should also go to the Premiers and the Finance Ministers of this Legislative Assembly, including the new Finance Minister Roland and Premier Handley, who also was the Minister of Finance under Premier Stephen Kakfwi for four years. We have worked hard to push our northern agenda into the forefront of the federal government. As our federal MP said in the media, in our business the work never ends.

Sometimes we forget to recognize when we win; I think this is definitely on the winning side. Mentioning Ms. Ethel Blondin-Andrew, I do want to recognize her involvement in this. She has spent 16 years in Ottawa educating all of the players about our economic, social and cultural potential. I do believe that she plays an important role in advancing our agenda.

I look forward to seeing more about how the \$90 million in northern economic development, \$75 million in oil and gas and extra money that we are going to get will have...what sort of detailed implication that is going to have. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I do understand that these monies that were announced by the federal government on economic development, oil and gas and many other issues are not coming directly to the GNWT, but they are monies that will come to the North. I do believe it is incumbent on this legislature and the Cabinet to jump on every penny coming to the North and find the leakages so that we maximize our benefit.

There were lots of other areas, such as student financial support, where we know our GNWT program is under great strain. Any additional assistance that the federal government provides would lessen the impact and the pressure on our system, such as the \$50 million one-time expenditure that Minister Goodale had announced. I think it gives breathing space and I know that we are looking at a \$20 million deficit cut in the next two years, but you never know. If we keep working as a group and the Minister of Finance and the Premier keep working with the federal government, we may be able to get a break on that. I urge the Legislature to build on what we heard yesterday and keep going and to advance our agenda. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, members' statements. Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Tlicho Self-Government Agreement Information Session

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased last night to host an information session for Great Slave constituents and Yellowknife residents on the Tlicho land claim and self-government agreement. I was gratified to see on a cold evening, here in Yellowknife, an audience of about 30 people who came out representing a diversity of views and opinions. I would like to acknowledge the support, Mr. Speaker, of the Tlicho First Nation and James Wah-Shee, a former Member of this Assembly and now a senior advisor to his people, for his presentation and response to questions. As well, I would like to recognize the participation and involvement of the Honourable Joe Handley in his capacity as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Staff from the ministry also came out and helped with the presentation. Our colleague, the Honourable Henry Zoe, the MLA for North Slave, was also present. I appreciate and thank them all for their contributions.

When the 14th Assembly passed the Tlicho Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement Act last October, there was concern among many about the awareness and lack of public input and the lack of time for a process that we would normally undertake to pass legislation. I undertook then to provide an opportunity for people to be better informed about the Tlicho agreement and the next two bills that this Assembly will be considering.

Mr. Speaker, these bills will propose the establishment of community governments in the four Tlicho communities, and the establishment of service agencies to help implement the agreement and provide for services by the Tlicho for their own people. The federal government also has to pass enabling legislation, which we learned is to be introduced in Parliament at the end of March. Hopefully, we will see passage before the anticipated federal election call.

Land claims and self-government are complex issues. They affect us all, Mr. Speaker. One of the points that was made at this meeting is that process is important. There are not easy or simple answers to many of the questions that were asked. We heard points of view and questions of the North Slave indigenous Metis, mining and resource development, the impact of boundary issues, community governments, land tenure and resource harvesting, to name a few of the issues. It was a lively exchange of views, Mr. Speaker. I should ask, at this time, for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we heard last night, Mr. Speaker, was a strong signal that Yellowknife residents are taking an active interest in what is going on with our neighbours to the north and the east. The feedback that I received was that the meeting was informative and generally well received. I hope that there will be more. Mr. Speaker, I am a supporter of the Tlicho people's goals and dreams to have their own governing institutions and take charge of their own affairs, through the responsibilities that this government and this legislature has to pass these laws and implement the legislation. We have important work ahead of us. I look forward to seeing that being completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Debt Repayment To The NWT Business Credit Corporation

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak about debt-free payment and the Business Credit Corporation. I think we all recognize the importance of small business to our economic growth. I think we would all agree that this government should take every opportunity to support our northern entrepreneurs; to advocate for the small businesses.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I have a situation in one of my communities that I represent where several small businesses have borrowed money and, through no fault of their own, their business ventures have failed. They did have loans with the Business Credit Corporation. Recently, in our House, we debated extensively how we allowed a huge loan to lapse and grant the proponents a very lenient solution for their cash flow problems. Yet, here at the small business level, at the community level, we use the fullest extent of the law in our system to recover whatever we can from them. To coin the phrase, Mr. Speaker, we want their firstborn. I would just like to point out this glaring inconsistency in how we do business, and I want to ensure the public and my constituents that the government is indeed on notice, and we cannot govern with two standards. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Reflections On The 2004 Federal Budget

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, while we were grinding away in this House, with our lean, mean Minister of Health and Social Services -- listening to how he was going to meet the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories on what he was referring to as a shoestring budget of \$250 million -- exciting things were happening in Ottawa. The federal Finance Minister was delivering the first sound financial management federal budget under Paul Martin. Although I didn't get to listen to the budget address, I did take time last night to read through it. I don't know if this budget was put together with the best interests of Canadians in mind or the sheer desperation of political salvation.

---Applause

At one point, Mr. Speaker, I was feeling really good as I imagined that it was our very own Finance Minister addressing the needs of our residents and communities and doling out the figures to address our priorities. Figures like the health, \$34 billion over five years with an additional \$2 billion...Learning? Millions. I couldn't even add them up, Mr. Speaker. I never had time. Learning and commercialization, \$280 million over two years. Communities, \$7 billion into the hands of communities over the next 10 years. And then, Mr. Speaker, I woke up. But one line in that paragraph under municipalities did catch my attention, Mr. Speaker. It said, "This is real money for improved roads, clean air and expanded local services."

Mr. Speaker, on my way to work this morning, I listened to the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew giving her take on the budget. She was saying that it is the best the North has ever had. Their territorial formula financing of \$150 million, health support of \$60 million, economic development of \$90 million, northern oil and gas, \$75 million, contaminated sites, \$3.5 million...Mr. Speaker, I was excited once again in driving to work having listened to our MP on the radio, only to get to the Legislative Assembly and then get a briefing from our Finance Minister saying that actually we got \$7.5 million and a forgiveness of \$50 million over one year.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to speak negatively to the budget. I think there were some good things for the North, although it is not in our hands. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to close my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent to conclude your statement.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Although the money is not totally in our hands, there is a lot of money earmarked with DIAND for the North and the Northwest Territories. I think it is incumbent to us to keep the fire on DIAND to make sure that we get as many of those resources in the Northwest Territories as we possibly can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On Early Childhood Development

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my previous statements I spoke about the seniors of the NWT and their ever-increasing role of importance in the success of many of the various programs and services of this government and of the many benefits to our society. Today, Mr. Speaker, I will speak for persons on the other end of the spectrum who cannot hear their concerns in this House yet.

Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to speak about our children and the three-year early childhood development framework for action funding which comes to an end March 31, 2004. Mr. Speaker, during the past few months I have received numerous calls and letters from my constituents of Lutselk'e and Deninu Kue regarding budget cuts in this area. I was very impressed with how the family literacy programs and the early childhood programs have positively impacted my constituents, and with the high level of concern my constituents show in not wanting these programs to be affected by the current budget restraints.

Programs such as these are important for helping our children develop their literacy and language skills, as well as developing healthy parent/child relationships. I have directed some related correspondence about these concerns to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and made him aware that I am fully in support of my constituents' requests so that the budget cuts do not affect the literacy and early childhood development areas.

Mr. Speaker, I've also brought to the attention of the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment the speech from the Throne regarding the multilateral framework for early learning and childcare, and that the Minister acknowledged that his officials will continue to be in contact with their federal, provincial and territorial colleagues to monitor developments that will come out of this speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, I will later be asking the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to keep me informed as to how the changes in the literacy and early childhood programs after March 31st will affect my riding, the residents of the NWT and especially our most valued resources and our future, the children of the NWT, who should be provided and supported by this government with every opportunity to succeed. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Reviewing And Improving Legal Aid

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind all our colleagues that this government would allow overspending on the North Slave Young Offenders Corrections Centre but, Mr. Speaker, we take no drastic actions to save legal aid. We're going to allow it to grind into the ground. When will this government recognize and take their opportunities and waive those hands and say they need help? Because I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, this side of the Assembly will be there to help. We need them to lead by vision, show that they want to

work with us because this side of the Assembly is willing to save legal aid.

---Applause

When will this government recognize that they're in a pickle and we're not going to force their hands? We want to work together on this issue? Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine is now almost seven months without her very first appointment with legal aid. As I talked about earlier in previous statements, Mr. Speaker, this person has drastic issues about child support and maintenance, et cetera, so this person is under difficult circumstances, yet they're still waiting for an appointment.

Money isn't always the answer, but I can guarantee you that's the first thing out of the mouth of the Minister. We need more money, cut it from another program, just point to which one you want to take. Well, you know what? I wouldn't deny the fact that money is an issue and it is part of the solution, but we're willing to go into debt over a corrections centre, yet we're not willing to take drastic steps on saving programs that mean real value to our people.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, you know, I'll truthfully say I'm exhausted bringing this issue up every day, but thank goodness I'm one of the youngest Members because I'm going to keep going at this darn stamina for four years if this is what it takes to make this Minister listen to this issue. Using that stamina, and sometimes being referred to as stubborn, I'll move forward and continue to press this Minister to start focusing on the issue of vision and leadership to address this.

One day, Mr. Speaker, as I'm approaching the closing statement, someday this Minister will echo I'm working on this problem. I've not heard that yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Just to caution the Member that if you're making a statement, I don't think it's appropriate to pound on the table to get your message across. Speaking will do that job. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 15-15(3): Constitutional Questions Related To Attaining Provincehood

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Allen on March 17, 2004 regarding the constitutional questions related to attaining provincehood.

Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Summit is a society established by aboriginal organizations to represent their interests in the Intergovernmental Forum process, including the negotiation of the transfer of lands and resources to the Northwest Territories. While the Aboriginal Summit does not have constitutional status, many of its member organizations have lands, resources and self-government agreements that do recognize and protect their rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act. Other member organizations of the summit are in the

process of negotiating agreements that will address their aboriginal rights.

The Northwest Territories Act does not entrench the rights of aboriginal peoples. It sets out the powers of the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure that the business of government is carried out in the NWT.

The GNWT is committed to working in partnership with the member organizations of the Aboriginal Summit to ensure their rights are respected as we continue the process of negotiating a lands and resources transfer agreement with the Government of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Bell.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my Minister's statement today, I'd like to recognize the delegation from the American Gem Society who have come all the way from Las Vegas to visit us. They are: Charles Lacy, who is the chairman of the board for the AGS; Steven Viegler, the CEO; Peter Yantzer, the executive director. Also with them is Martin Irving, our director of diamond projects for RWED. I'd like to welcome you and wish you a productive visit.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: I, too, would like to welcome you to the Northwest Territories and hope you enjoy your visit. Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Finance and it's with regard to his statement this afternoon about the federal budget. Mr. Speaker, from the information that we have been provided with, it is my understanding that our government will be receiving \$7.5 million next year extra, but there's more in the next five years that amounts to about \$74.4 million. On top of that, we're getting a one-time break of \$50 million, which by my calculations is about \$124 million. Could the Minister advise as to whether or not this is new money? I understand, at least not the \$50 million, but \$74.4 million is already on the books. We've expected it to come, but it is growth money. It is new money that we're getting from the federal government. Is that not true, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the amount identified for territorial formula financing will be in the area of \$7.6 million for the 2004-2005 year and that is built into our estimates. In fact, even for 2005-2006, the \$9.2 million, those numbers are already built into our forecast of what we were working with as a result of our meeting with the Finance Minister in February. The \$50 million that I referred to is due to

putting off the rebasing exercise on our tax effort for the 2004-2005 year, which gives us a one-year amount. That's not new money. It would have been taken out. They've agreed to put that process on hold and have our officials work on the tax-effort portion of our formula. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to find a way to simplify these figures so the people who are listening to us can understand it better. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that this \$50 million is money, call it a break or the federal government not asking us for something that they were going to ask us for, but in the end it's going to have a positive impact on our deficit situation. My understanding is that while we were expecting a \$47 million deficit for this fiscal year budget, with this new \$50 million break, whether it's on paper or real money, we're not going to have to have that sort of deficit. So it is a positive in that aspect and my question, Mr. Speaker, I'll just make short. The process that we have been engaged in over the last week has been painful. We're trying to cut costs where we can and we're told that it's going to get worse in the next two years because we'll have to cut \$20 million extra over the next two years. Is there any way for us to get a little break on this and be able to do some things that we need to do now that we have extra money, at least on paper? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, taking the example the federal government has set, this government intends to be prudent with the money that we do have and not going forward with the rebasing exercise gives us a \$50 million impact for the 2004-2005 year and will be put towards our deficit. That's our intention with that money. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure we'll have more chance to debate on that one. I do understand that we need to be prudent and we don't want to spend every penny that comes our way, but I think it is something that we need to talk more about.

Mr. Speaker, my next question has to do with the announcement of \$400 million for immunization programs by the federal government. We in the NWT just did an immunization of youth and I believe we approved a supplementary budget or special warrant in the amount of about \$800,000. Can I just ask the Minister what sort of impact this new money, I think it's \$525,000 for the GNWT, will have on that budget item? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a couple of points. One of the reasons we are facing our fiscal situation is that previous governments were given one-time earnings and so on, and spent that money on important issues across the North. But now we're in a situation where we don't have the money to keep on going. We're putting this money towards the deficit.

---Applause

And that's what it's identified for, as I stated in my statement earlier today. The amount budgeted of the \$525,000, that's the impact we think we'll get in the Northwest Territories as a result of the \$400 million the Member has highlighted in the federal budget address. So we'll get approximately \$500,000 of that money flowing to the North based on the formulas used now. That won't affect the funding that was identified. That's existing year expenditures. The money that's identified here will be for 2004-2005. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should just state that I was right next to Mr. Roland for the last four years arguing for fiscal prudence and I'm behind him all the way. It's just that when we have to deal with raising taxes and giving a little bit of a million dollar break on a \$50 million windfall, I think we have to reconsider that.

Mr. Speaker, my next question is on the \$3.5 billion contaminated sites budget and to hear that 65 percent or so will be coming to the Territories. Could the Minister advise this House as to any further information as to how that money will be spent? What do we have to do as a government and such? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 67-15(3): Highlights Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding from the work done on the federal budget is that \$3.5 billion is over a 10-year period. Approximately 60 percent of that has been identified for the Northwest Territories. It will flow through the federal government. It is for the North. Let me correct that. It is for all of the North. So the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are included in that, it's not only for the Northwest Territories. We have, however, been highlighted in some of the detail, that whatever comes to the Northwest Territories will go towards the Giant Mine contamination area and Port Radium area. That's the detail that we've seen. There has also been mention of DEW Line sites, but again, it's over a 10-year period. It's between all the northern jurisdictions. We're not sure of the detail of how it will flow and when it will start flowing, but that's the detail we do have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 68-15(3): Access Road Between Highway 3 And Kam Lake

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today could go to two different Ministers: the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, but I'll start out with the question being directed to the Minister of Transportation. During my Member's statement I spoke of the City of Yellowknife wanting to get an access road built from Highway No. 3 into the Kam Lake industrial park. I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, where exactly does the Department of Transportation stand on this issue and what are the hold-ups? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 68-15(3): Access Road Between Highway 3 And Kam Lake

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the second part of the question is fairly easy to answer. Difficulty identifying funding and sources is always a concern. However, we have been working on a fairly detailed, comprehensive plan for the Yellowknife Airport. As the Member knows, the Yellowknife Airport is a very important airport in the Northwest Territories because of its location and its operational capacity and capability. We have had discussions regarding the desire to extend the road from Highway No. 3 to Kam Lake, which would go through the Yellowknife Airport reserve that we have in place now. We have concerns also that the development taking place in the airport reserve is not very structured at this point and we'd like to see that streamlined. We've had discussions with our federal counterparts. We've had discussions with the City of Yellowknife and we are in the process of putting together a report which I'm not sure we're in a position to table at this point, but I can get back to the Member with that information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 68-15(3): Access Road Between Highway 3 And Kam Lake

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering, given the fact that the Minister talks of the airport expansion being in the way of the access road being built, I'm wondering if maybe through you to the Minister, would the government look at perhaps making some land available a little further down Highway No. 3 to have this access road into the Kam Lake industrial park? Has that been on the table for discussion? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 68-15(3): Access Road Between Highway 3 And Kam Lake

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've not had the opportunity to talk about the possibility of establishing or designing a road outside our reserve. I will commit to talking to my colleague, the honourable Minister of MACA. We're also, I should point out, having discussions with the city as to responsibility of the city and what their role is in this. I can provide that information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 68-15(3): Access Road Between Highway 3 And Kam Lake

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering, if both the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and Minister of Transportation are going to be conducting some meetings and if this subject comes up to keep me apprised of that and perhaps they'll let me know when and where these meetings are taking place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 68-15(3): Access Road Between Highway 3 And Kam Lake

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we have done a considerable amount of work already. We have looked at some preliminary drawings and we have some designs that maybe at this point we would be able to share. I certainly will commit to keep the Member informed of our progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 69-15(3): Taltson Hydroelectric Development

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to reiterate some of the concerns raised by my constituents in regard to the new expansion of the Taltson hydro project being negotiated by this government. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the Premier what options and consideration will this government give to the residents who will be seeking compensation and benefits from the new hydro developments on the Taltson hydro system that this government is currently embarking on?

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 69-15(3): Taltson Hydroelectric Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the proposal to expand the Taltson is being proposed as a joint venture between the Akaitcho people, the NWT Metis and the Power Corporation. The partners have just begun to do consultations with the communities in the impacted area. Part of the consultation, certainly part of the consideration, is to hear what concerns people may have because of the impact of this expansion. My information from them is that they fully intend to look at the issue of impact benefits. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 69-15(3): Taltson Hydroelectric Development

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering if this government is going to develop any plans that would address the levels of compensation and benefits of residents, some of whom would be more directly affected than others by this hydro project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 69-15(3): Taltson Hydroelectric Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proponents of this very good project, in my view, for the region will certainly be taking that into consideration. The project, when it proceeds, will have to go through the environmental review process. As it does that, no doubt it will go to the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, who have responsibility for looking at socioeconomic benefits. It's through that mechanism and that process that the impact benefits and socioeconomic benefits would be looked at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 69-15(3): Taltson Hydroelectric Development

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that answer. I'm just on my last question assuming that this new expansion project gets the green light. I just wanted to ask the Premier, as with any other project of this magnitude there are always issues and effects that are overlooked or not taken into consideration during the initial negotiation process. I'm just wondering if the government has any strategy whereas this government can assume full responsibility and give compensation to residents for adverse changes and effects that were not taken into consideration during the negotiation process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 69-15(3): Taltson Hydroelectric Development

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this project is proposed as a joint venture between the Akaitcho, the Metis and the Power Corporation. The government will not take on responsibility or liability for the impact of it, but we expect that the joint venture partners, if the project goes ahead, would be required to take on those responsibilities that assume the liabilities for the impact of this. The government's role in this project is to support it--I think it's good for the region, I think it's good for the Northwest Territories--and to ensure that it works to the benefit of most people. We believe it's a good enough business deal that the proponents, if it moves ahead, will be able to take on the liability and responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary. Item 5, oral questions. The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to see that the Minister of Justice sits today because his return to oral questions certainly puts my question into proper context. On October 30, 2003, an interesting bill called Bill C-48 was reviewed under the Natural Resources of Canada Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce. The intent of the bill was to attract industry on private lands and further allow deductibles by industry on Crown lands, Mr. Speaker. So my question is to the Minister of Finance. Would he be willing to have his department do further studies to see if this form of taxation can be implemented in the Northwest Territories so that aboriginal groups or companies can use this type of

taxation to invest into social and economic programs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the present time, though many of the aboriginal groups now are working towards self-government status, they do not have the ability for tax regimes at this time. There are ongoing discussions with the Department of Finance in the area of tax sharing of when these self-government agreements come into effect. So for the time being, there's not that avenue. As a government we're looking at all the options we can put forward in securing enough revenue to provide programs and services for the residents of the Northwest Territories. So we will look at options brought forward and take them into consideration as long as we end up protecting our revenue base that we're operating from at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

MR. ALLEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite surprised that the Minister won't consider introducing this type of methodology to try to eradicate some of these problems. As we see, direct monies are flowing to aboriginal groups in many instances, as well as northern institutions. I'm asking the Minister again, would he consider in the context of this question introducing such a taxation mechanism to assist this government to see if they can cost-share some of the many expensive programs that we're currently indentured to deliver? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of our tax bases, one thing, as I stated, is that we are in negotiations and discussions with aboriginal groups that are on the verge of having self-governments established in their jurisdictions. We are also discussing our tax-sharing arrangements and seeing how far we can do that. As a government, we are interested in hearing from the groups and Members of this Assembly to try and enhance our situation. A form of that can be tax incentives. If we can use tax incentives to increase and stimulate investment in the Northwest Territories that's something we will look at, as long as we don't lose the revenue we have that would end up cutting our programs again, whoever would have that. If it's an aboriginal government we need to ensure they have enough revenue to continue those programs. As the GNWT we have to ensure we have a solid revenue base to continue the programs and services that we have. We are looking and would look for options that would be available to us to try and enhance what we have and work with the aboriginal governments to ensure that they can provide programs and levels of service at the levels that would be adequate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that as an ongoing issue between the aboriginal governments and our territorial government still requires us to form some form of partnership arrangements with our aboriginal governments in support of trying to introduce taxation that would be beneficial to our residents. I'm asking again, why is it such a difficulty to see if they would support such an initiative that would be very cost beneficial to our territory? I'm going to ask the Minister, in repetition to my first question, is he willing to have his department do some further studies to see if that can be applied across the Northwest Territories in the context of both private and Crown lands? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised this issue prior and referred to Bill C-48 and, as a result, I had asked for that information and we'd brought it to the department to have a look at the scenarios that could come out of it. The initial scenarios would cost the government in its revenue base. We'd have to see what kind of development could occur. As I stated, the exercise we're going through and will continue to go through is that we don't have enough revenue at this time to maintain the level of services and programs that are existing. We're looking at options. If there are initiatives that come forward that can protect the base as we have it or, in fact, aboriginal groups and governments as they become established could use those tools to enhance their level of services we'd gladly look at those. As I stated, we are in discussions now with the negotiators that are involved in the self-government discussions for their regions and looking at possible tax arrangements. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for replying to my questions. Quickly, in a similar context, can you make a distinction between what the Tlicho taxation agreement applies to the overall process of what would be so different from what I am asking the Minister? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 70-15(3): Self-Government And Taxation

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho agreement, number one, would have to be signed off and agreed to with the federal government. Once that is done, a number of things would happen and we are working already to ensure that when that timeline comes upon us we have agreements in place. There are discussions now on tax arrangements. Part of what would happen, and the scenario we see, is that we would...The federal government is involved in

these discussions as giving tax room to the self-government group. Once they have that tax room from a GNWT perspective, we would see potentially some tax room going to the aboriginal group as well. Along with that would come the expenditure that is being made on behalf of the citizens. So that tax room would come with responsibility and some burden with it. So there are negotiations going on now. There are ongoing discussions about net fiscal benefit for those groups, the same discussions we are having with Ottawa right now in trying to ensure that we end up getting an actual benefit. So we are looking at options, trying to work with the groups to ensure that we have the appropriate levels of services and revenues to cover those services. If what Mr. Allen has discussed allows that to happen, we will be glad to do more work in that area. In our initial look at it, it doesn't seem that it would provide that for us at the existing time, but we will look at investigating it more if we can get more detail on how it would work. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. They concern the cleanup of the Giant Mine site. An issue that I believe has been out there since last year was a stall in discussions between our government and DIAND on responsibility for the surface cleanup at Giant Mine. I understand there are difficulties there with jurisdiction and potentially financing. Could the Minister advise on the status of our discussions with DIAND on responsibility for surface cleanup at Giant? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all let me say that I think this budget was very favourable in terms of contaminated sites. The last budget, if memory serves me, identified \$500 and some odd million for cleanup of contaminated sites. It was short-term funding. I think this furthers that commitment. It is roughly ballpark. I think the same types of dollars per year, but it is a 10-year commitment, and there has been an indication that something like 60 percent of it will be spent in the North. I think that bodes very well for the NWT. I think even in the backup to the budget an indication that Port Radium, Giant Mine and DEW Line sites have all been identified. I think that is good. The funding hurdles that we have had seem to be stabilizing. I think that this can be put to good use. It is important that we stay on the federal radar and make sure that our contaminated sites make it to the top of the priority list, and it sounds like that is taking shape.

We still do have some jurisdictional issues with DIAND related to the surface cleanup at Giant. We had discussions about a framework for this cleanup, and I think it has been DIAND's position in the past that they wanted to bundle surface and underground together. We have always felt that the two shouldn't be confused and that the federal government had exclusive responsibility

and jurisdiction for the underground liabilities. So we are still in those negotiations. We are spending money, GNWT money in this current year, on surface cleanup, but we continue to have this dispute over jurisdiction. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to explore this issue of jurisdiction a bit more. There was of course at some point a transfer from federal to territorial jurisdiction for environmental responsibility. Is there difficulty at that sort of large high policy level, or are we simply in dispute about a single site, a single issue cleanup? What is this jurisdictional problem, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to get more information and more detail for the Member as to the nature of the concerns and the specific hang-ups between our two governments. I do understand that with the transfer we acknowledge some responsibility for surface cleanup, but not the degree and the level to which we believe the federal government is trying to imply we have. So the dispute surrounds that. As far as specific information on the detail, I think we can discuss that further, but I will get more information.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Miramar Mining Corporation, I think in a deal that worked I believe to their benefit as well to workers, continues to mine ore at the Giant property. It is milled at the Con property. I am wondering if the Minister could advise if Miramar is still planning on following their mine shutdown program and will they be stopping for good the mining of ore at the Giant property later this year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that underground operations have ceased at Con, the mill is still operating, and as the Member has indicated ore is being processed there from Giant. Our indications were that that would cease at the end of '04, approximately. I don't think that we have any information to make us believe that plans have changed. I did notice that gold was over \$400 U.S. the other day, and I am sure that these kinds of things factor into decisions, but I don't believe we have any official communication from the company telling us that their plans have changed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the major, perhaps the major outstanding issue of the Giant property, Mr. Speaker, is the question of how we are going to be managing the underground vaults that are full of arsenic trioxide. The federal government has indicated that it wants to proceed with an underground freezing option, and I would like to ask the Minister from the GNWT side has this government considered that option and is it prepared to give it its full endorsement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 71-15(3): Surface Cleanup At Giant Mine Site

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. After the issue has been studied for quite some time, and quite a bit of comprehensive discussion around this issue, we believe that given current technology, the in situ option that involves freezing is the safest and best, and most advantageous for us. So at this point we are supportive of that, but we don't believe that this is a walk away solution, and we are hopeful that future technology will allow...We are hopeful that at some point the material, the arsenic could be rendered inert or there would be some safe way to get it out of there and move it. At this point we believe that freezing is the safest option, so we are supporting it on that basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance. During the course of discussion and debate about our budget over the last few days, and the days that will be ahead I am sure, we keep talking about the sustainability of our programs and services given our sources of revenue and our transfer from Canada. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could be so succinct, what is it exactly that he sees at the end of the tunnel here? Where is the light at the end of the tunnel for us? We have been grinding on Ottawa now for so long for a better deal, I am starting to lose faith in that concept. Is the answer ultimately resource revenue sharing, that being the new deal? If so, realistically how far away is it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the sustainability we have moved forward is something we have to deal with as a government, and have to deal with it within our existing envelope. There are ongoing discussions and will be ongoing discussions with the federal government around the adequacies of our formula tax effort, re-establishing our base. There are also discussions about royalty revenue sharing. That is an important picture, it is an important item, but right now as our strategy is laid out that is outside of what we can

count on for funds in the Northwest Territories. We see it as definitely an asset.

If we can get a fair royal revenue sharing deal with Ottawa, then we can start dealing with our own issues and enhance our programs. Right now, operating with what we have as a budget, we don't have enough, and the numbers that are laid out now are built into our budget, built in for years forward, and we still don't have enough, we are still going to have some deficits going forward. So we have to deal with our structural problem. That is why our reduction scenarios are there for the future years of \$20 million and \$20 million, and our increased revenues. As we set out our fiscal strategy when we first got together in December we needed, just to get to our position of a \$50 million deficit, we were counting on \$10 million of our own source revenues, \$10 million in reductions, and \$30 million from the federal government. Through the process, the federal government hasn't put \$30 million into the basket. So we were planning on coming back with a negative supp to just maintain what we put forward as a plan, another \$10 million negative. With what has happened now in the formula, this \$50 million break that we have means that we won't have to come back with a negative supp, we will have a balanced budget, but our ongoing structural problem remains. We still are spending more money than we have in revenues, and right now, as I stated in my budget address, if we could see revenue flowing by 2007 that would be very optimistic. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about resource royalties comprising a part of our revenues, is the Minister saying that when we get those that those are going to be on top of what we already get from Ottawa, or isn't that just going to diminish what we get in the form of other revenue from the federal transfer? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct in a sense of how those royalty revenues would impact on transfers. The federal government would use that as an opportunity to drop the transfer payments, but at the same time, what we are trying to negotiate is a better deal where we would get to keep a larger portion before the federal government takes back from our transfers. So an actual incentive. Right now there is very little incentive to do any development in the Northwest Territories for, number one, any new revenues we get, we get a drop in transfer payments. That already exists today. So if we get more corporate taxes and so on we are going to drop down on our transfers. That happens today.

On the royalty revenue side, if we can negotiate a more positive deal we get to keep more of that. Today, existing in the formula, for every dollar we raise in additional revenue from the Northwest Territories we get to keep 20 cents of that dollar, 80 cents goes back to Ottawa. That is the way we lose it in the transfer. So we are hoping to increase that incentive, instead of 20 cents more where

we can really start beginning to see a net revenue and result coming to the Northwest Territories where then we can really enhance the programs that we have. Right now the way it is there is no real incentive for us as a government to see big development because we get to deal with the impacts of development, we don't have the payback after development happens and companies start making profits, and we don't get to see the royalty revenues side of it. So that is the negotiations side, but optimistically we would be lucky to see that by 2007. So we have to, as I have set out in a fiscal strategy, live with what we have and try to operate and fix our structural problems around our debt situations going forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that explanation because I believe there is a perception out there in the public in the Northwest Territories that there is, not quite the way the Minister describes it, but there is some utopia coming here to our fiscal situation as a result of these negotiations taking place on resource royalties. One of the questions that was posed to me by a constituent was with respect to the tax initiatives the Minister has proposed. They were wondering when we get this deal, and when we start to see the kind of revenue we need to sustain ourselves here in the Northwest Territories, would the Minister consider including in the legislation a sunset on those kinds of revenue raising initiatives. So that is why I am trying to put this question into context so that people can understand that it is not going to be a magic one-time bullet, it is a transitional ongoing negotiated thing. To the question of my constituent, is it possible that on some of the either reductions or revenue raising initiatives such as additional personal income tax, is it possible to build some kind of a sunset in those, just like what the Conservatives did with the GST that we are still waiting for? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, part of what we are putting forward in this strategy that we have and balancing our budget is increasing our own revenues, taking into the scenario that there is going to be a growth and demand of services. As we argue right now, we are not able to keep up with what we have, we are not able to keep up with the level of capital infrastructure that we should be putting into our communities and replacing existing facilities. We are not able to keep up with that because of our fiscal situation. So we have a long way to go before we can look at sunsetting some of our programs or our tax initiatives. What we put forward, again, based on what we discussed as all new Members when we got here, was \$10 million of our own source revenues, \$10 million reductions and \$30 million from the federal government. We haven't gotten that \$30 million from the federal government. What we did was get a one-year break in trying to work out our tax effort. So we still have a problem that is going to hit us in 2005-06 with our expenditure side of the picture versus our revenue side. So we still have to fix that. Future

governments, if things get so good that we become a have-territory, then future governments can as they have in the past reduce some of the tax effort that we have to put in place right now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the tax initiatives that were referred to in the budget address by the Minister have sort of grabbed the attention of the public here, and that is why we are getting questioned about it and it will be necessary to talk to people about this. So thank you for that explanation and I think that definitely does put it in context that this is probably not a short-term thing. I think it will generate a lot of response from the public and I am hoping that the Minister will make himself or his officials available when we return to our constituencies to get out and about and talk to people about these fiscal realities because it is difficult to understand. Does he have a plan or program to consult, communicate even after the fact on some of these revenue raising initiatives that he is proposing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 72-15(3): Formula Financing And Revenue Sharing

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to arrange with Members of this House meetings and trips into their communities to try to lay out what we have put in place, to explain the reasons why. There is a lot happening in this area and we need to get that across to Members and their constituents. When we took office and I took on this responsibility, it wasn't my intention and a target that I would automatically go after taxes of our own people in the Northwest Territories.

The unfortunate reality is we have to come up with some new revenue to maintain the existing level of programs and services. We have already heard from Members in this House of the need to try to continue some of the programs that are being sunsetted, that were already planned to be sunsetted. When we come forward with reduction scenarios in the future years there is going to be a request to have some more of these programs in place, and we are just unable to do that at this time. We have to come up with our program to match our situation. So that is why it has come forward. I will gladly arrange to go into communities with Members to try to explain through our process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance as well. They are to do with my Member's statement in regard to the federal budget. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the federal Minister, I don't know if he heard our MP, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, on the radio this morning really bragging up how good this federal budget was for the North. When she mentions territorial formula financing for \$150 million,

it's health support, \$60 million; economic development, \$90 million; northern oil and gas, \$75 million; contaminated sites, \$3.5 billion. How much of that money can we really expect to see in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the territorial formula financing side, of the amount that was identified, the Northwest Territories over the five-year period would see approximately \$74 million. That, Mr. Speaker, is already built into our budget estimates and forecasting, and we are still falling short. For example, the other one of \$90 million over five years, split, if you use the existing formulas that have been in place, we might see \$6 million a year coming North, not through the GNWT but through DIAND as we expect it will flow, and we are waiting to see the initiatives, the criteria that will be attached to that. The health funding that was identified as part of the formula, in fact as I stated, is part of the formula. The agreement that was agreed to with the Prime Minister and the three Premiers of the territories, on the \$20 million split between the three territories, there is a commitment to extend that beyond 2006-07. So the \$60 million is in there over three years, again split by each territory. So ongoing beyond 2006-07 we might be netting in the area of approximately \$8 million. So the numbers do break down differently as we see it and we'd have to get more details to see the final numbers and how they fall out. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I suspect then that the way our MP laid out the figures this morning, she is probably stealing a couple of other MPs' thunder because when she speaks of northern Canada, or when the federal government talks about monies coming to northern Canada, what area are they talking about? Is the Finance Minister aware of what area they talk about? Is it just the three territories, is it northern BC, northern Ontario, northern Quebec, how big is northern Canada? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know when I go south I think northern Canada is our territory, but as well we know when we meet with our federal colleagues they have northern jurisdictions as well. So it is difficult to pinpoint that, and as I said, we will have to wait to see what criteria is attached in those dollars and how they roll out in the North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is one thing we are getting good at and that is to wait and see. We have played that game before and I guess we will continue to do it for some time now. Mr. Speaker, in the budget it was addressed. If there was a positive one, it was the \$50 million to deal with our tax effort. How long will it be, Mr. Speaker, before we know how the federal government is going to treat that, whether it is going to be just a one-time thing, whether they are going to adjust the thing on an ongoing basis? When could we expect to find out how the federal government is going to go on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the correspondence I received from the federal Finance Minister, Minister Goodale, he states it is a one-year break. The rebasing exercise will not happen for 2004-05, and there is direction that we have our people get together and work out the tax effort portion of what we would say is rebasing. We will have that in place by 2005-06. So it is a one-year break and that is why we have the \$50 million for this year that would have been taken out, and we'd already built our budgets around that money being taken out. So he has given us one year to get an agreement in place with them around the tax effort and rebasing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on that line, when we say we are going to review our tax effort, they are giving us one year off and giving us time to review it or they are willing to look at it. If they decide to readjust that what can we expect? Would it be \$50 million a year if they decided to do away with the tax effort and if it did, what are the possibilities that these new revenues could maybe replace some of the reductions that the Minister has talked about for the next following two years, the \$20 million each year for the next two years? Could that affect those reductions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 73-15(3): Benefits Of The Federal Budget

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, without knowing if we are getting close to an agreement stage, I couldn't tell you if we would benefit \$1 million more, or \$50 million more. We just know that the existing exercise is costing us \$50 million a year ongoing if it doesn't get fixed. We feel we have a good example that it is not working properly, and feel that the federal Department of Finance has recognized that. That is why he has agreed to forego the rebasing exercise for 2004-05. If I stood here today and said if it is \$20 million, let's match that in reductions. If it doesn't happen I would have given you the wrong information. We are too early in that stage. Right now as things are going on, it depends on

what year they measure our tax effort on. It could impact those negotiations, so that is one of the reasons why on our side of safeguarding our revenue base through one of the initiatives I put forward in the budget address. So I couldn't give the Member an accurate figure going forward. All I know is I have one year to come up with a new tax effort situation. They will not get rid of tax effort, it is a matter of how it works out in the system, and what numbers will be used, and how they will be weighted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 74-15(3): Business Credit Corporation Loans Arrears

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to my Member's statement, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Business Credit Corporation a question for the benefit of my constituents who received legal notices that their loans have been called. What steps are followed after being given these notices that the BCC is calling in their loans? I am interested in the process that is followed after being legally contacted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 74-15(3): Business Credit Corporation Loans Arrears

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to get the Member more specific detail as to the steps that follow our contact with a client, and notification that we are pursuing legal means. I would say legal means are a last resort, we are not trying to be overly litigious. We work very closely with clients to try to help them through rough spots. I know the BCC makes every effort to look at temporarily allowing interest-free payments and withholding the requirement that interest be paid. There are even times when a stop payment is made on principal if businesses are in a truly difficult position. So we try to work with the clients and recognize the difficulty that they're in before we move to legal means. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 74-15(3): Business Credit Corporation Loans Arrears

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarification from the Minister, is it necessary that some of the arrangements were so that the term loans become flexible of waiving interest and deferring principal payments? When it's noticed that the business is in trouble, do they try to then look at these different alternatives for the BCC, as opposed to these letters from the lawyers to call in their loans? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 74-15(3): Business Credit Corporation Loans Arrears

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the Member's question, it is true. We try to do everything that we can to make sure we continue to support the business. Our goal is not to put people out of business, our goal is

not to push these things into the legal process. I think it's important to remember though that the onus is on the client to ensure that there is an ongoing dialogue with our department. If the dialogue breaks down, then we really have no choice but to try to get the money back. These are public tax dollars. But I would say we leave almost no stone unturned before we move to legal recourse. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 74-15(3): Business Credit Corporation Loans Arrears

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for those answers. I am sure we, as a government, are indeed looking out for our small businesses. The next question is when someone is utilizing our credit facilities, like the BCC or the NWT Development Corporation, they are, of course, not thinking that they will get into trouble or find themselves in situations where they are unable to pay any loans. I'm just wondering if there's any type of counselling available or advice given to the clients beforehand that if you are in trouble, these are the steps that are going to take place and this is what we'll be looking for as a solution to any problems that we have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 74-15(3): Business Credit Corporation Loans Arrears

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We look at these on a case-by-case basis, and there is individual case management. I think that that's something important to remember. We recognize that the BCC is a lender of last resort. As such, it takes on loans of higher risk; loans that typically banks are not interested in. In some of our smallest communities where banks won't go, it is the only lender. We acknowledge that there's additional risk, but we don't go into these loans and don't go into working with clients assuming or thinking that the businesses won't work out or that they'll fail. We go in and expect to see the best efforts of all parties, and we make every effort to work with the clients and counsel them where necessary.

I know that our economic development officers in the communities do have discussions and lay out options for recovery plans. Sometimes businesses do go sideways through no fault of the loan applicant or the proprietor. Things can happen. At that point, when we sit down to talk about recovery plans, we lay out all the options for clients and we look at wind-up scenarios. Sometimes they include things like bankruptcy, but I think the point is that we don't get into these loans assuming that they won't work. We wouldn't lend money if we thought the business was going to fail. We know and acknowledge that there is risk and do try to work with the clients, but I think that you'll find that the BCC does a very good job in working in the communities to make sure people recognize all the options before them. We're not trying to push them into any of these options. I think what's best for the client is important and we'll work with them on that basis. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 75-14(3): Impacts Of Federal Budget On Small NWT Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance regarding his statement to the House this afternoon. I don't know if Santa Claus is at the North Pole or in Ottawa in terms of the goodies and the good news that he has given to the Northwest Territories in the response from the federal Member of Parliament. In terms of the Minister's statement, I believe that the budget will contribute positively to the overall situation in the Northwest Territories. I want to ask the Minister if he could explain in plain language his belief on how this budget will contribute to the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance.

Return To Question 75-14(3): Impacts Of Federal Budget On Small NWT Communities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess first and foremost would be how the federal budget has impacted us positively and we can pass that on to our constituents. Number one, most critical is that I will not have to come back in the June session with a negative \$10 million supp which would mean cuts to programs.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, that's the most critical and most important this year.

Going forward on the rest of the federal initiative, the money that they have identified for immunization will help our Department of Health and Social Services ensure that they have this money and that they will be able to deal with, for example, the scenario of immunization of meningitis that occurred here not too long ago.

In other areas, they've shortened the municipal infrastructure deal that they had in place. They had that deal over a 10-year period. It is now a five-year period, which means that all jurisdictions can draw down that money sooner rather than later. So that will have a positive spin-off effect to our communities. There is one catch on that, however. It is still matched dollars that we're going to have to match, so there are some limitations there, but in fact there are some of those positive spin-off effects that can happen for us.

Mr. Speaker, any work that happens in the Northwest Territories can benefit our contractors, whether those dollars are flowing through our departments or through the federal government departments. New dollars in the Northwest Territories mean work for our contracts. That can have a positive spin-off as well.

One of the critical areas that we've talked about and heard about in this House is the Mackenzie Valley development that's occurring around the pipeline, and the fact that the federal government is paying attention to that area and starting to highlight it in the budget. It's a small amount to start with. We're not sure how exactly it will flow, but as long as it's starting to flow, we can continue to work on that and try to improve on it. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Just recognizing the clock, the time has expired for oral questions, but I will allow Mr. Yakeleya his supplementary. Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 75-14(3): Impacts Of Federal Budget On Small NWT Communities

MR. YAKELEYA: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I will also recognize the clock, and I have one final question for the Minister of Finance. I appreciate that, in light of the good news of the budget from the federal government and the recent discussions that Senator Nick Sibbeston had on naming of the Northwest Territories, the resources that the federal government takes out of the Northwest Territories I really think we should call ourselves Robin Hood, because the federal government keeps robbing us. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question with regard to sharing of the dollars in the Northwest Territories and what type of necessary steps you will take. There are lots of interested groups that are also going to look at these dollars that the federal Finance Minister announced yesterday. So I would like to ask what steps have you looked at in terms of sharing resources with other governments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 75-14(3): Impacts Of Federal Budget On Small NWT Communities

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost is the result of the exercise of not rebasing and that is \$50 million. The biggest thing is keeping ourselves in a healthy state. So that's why we've identified this to go towards the deficit. We're not going to dig the hole that we're in any deeper.

---Applause

That will have positive spin-off effects going forward.

The other side of that is if we don't get the parties to the table to deal with royalty revenue sharing and get some real action happening around that table; as well, if the negotiations with federal Finance on the tax effort side do not work out as we're hoping we'll have them work out, as a government we're going to have to look at all options, all alternative revenue sources that are out there and look at how we, as residents of the Northwest Territories, can gain and benefit from the resources that are being extracted from the regions in the Northwest Territories. We're going to have to look at all options.

Right now, we're working with what we have and trying to come forward in small steps. This budget we're dealing with now is a stepping stone going forward. If we can do it right, come up with a balanced budget and have the federal government look at our arguments in a favourable way, we can definitely set up our future in a more positive way. Instead of having our children looking at debt, they can look at some sort of heritage going forward that would continue to be a positive benefit from the development in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 7-15(3): WCB Revenues And Expenses For 2002-03 And 2003-04

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question to the Honourable Brendan Bell, Minister responsible for WCB.

Please provide the following for the years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, at the earliest opportunity:

- WCB revenues, specifically the categories of assessments, average assessment rates, and investment revenues.
- WCB expenses, specifically the categories of total number of claims, number of accepted claims, cost of claims, and administration with a separate categorization of salary included in the administration budget.
- WCB profit and loss statements for the same period.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

Written Question 8-15(3): Sex Offender Registry

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, one of our honourable Members pointed out a failing grade on the report card level, and I would like to take the opportunity for the Minister of Justice to redeem his report card implied level with this written question.

Would the Minister table in this House, in a timely manner, this government's position on a sex offender registry, and, further, note any work done to date in support of a national sex offender registry.

And finally, if the Minister would note this government's observations of any potential shortcomings that a future national sex offender registry has in comparison to the Ontario sex offender registry.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Mr. Braden.

Written Question 9-14(3): Reclamation Of Miramar Con Mine

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a written question for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

In the Miramar Con Mine lease agreements, is there a specified reclamation standard which the leaseholder must achieve?

With these leases does the Minister have the ability to set or alter the standards of reclamation which the company must meet?

If these specified reclamation standards are not achieved by the leaseholder, what remedies are available to the Minister to have the necessary work carried out?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Premier.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Return To Written Question 1-15(3): Bill Of Intent To Seek Provincial Status**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to a written question asked by Mr. Allen on March 16, 2004, regarding a bill of intent to seek provincial status.

The Government of the Northwest Territories and its partners in the Aboriginal Summit are currently involved in devolution negotiations with the Government of Canada that are expected to lead to the transfer of jurisdiction over lands, water and resources to the Government of the Northwest Territories. While the negotiations are aimed at the transfer to the GNWT of jurisdictions similar to those exercised by the provinces, it is not the government's intent to seek provincial status at this time.

The GNWT believes that the current devolution negotiations provide the best opportunity for gaining greater control over lands and resources in the Northwest Territories. Similarly, a number of factors suggest that seeking provincehood at this time may not provide the powers and benefits that are currently being sought through devolution negotiations.

Previous historical precedent demonstrates that attaining provincial status does not guarantee control over land, resources or resource revenues, as is currently being sought in devolution negotiations. The provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were all created from parts of what was then the Northwest Territories. Although this occurred in 1870 for Manitoba and 1905 for Saskatchewan and Alberta, control over lands and resources was not transferred until the 1930s.

As a province, the Northwest Territories would no longer receive funding from Canada through a formula financing agreement, but would instead be subject to existing equalization arrangements. Equalization payments are based on the revenue-raising capacity of a province, but do not take into account the cost of providing government programs and services. Formula financing arrangements with the federal government do consider the higher costs of providing programs and services in the Northwest Territories and provide an expenditure base that gives our government more money on a per capita basis than it would likely receive through equalization.

In keeping with the spirit and intent of settled land claims and self-government agreements, as well as ongoing negotiations, the GNWT had chosen to work in partnership with aboriginal leaders to pursue expanded jurisdiction over lands, water and resources in the Northwest Territories through devolution negotiations.

The GNWT has worked hard to achieve consensus with its partners at the table and, with the recent signing of the devolution framework agreement, has made significant progress in our negotiations. We continue to believe that devolution offers the best possibility for the people of the Northwest Territories to gain control over their own lands and resources. We do not believe that there would be any additional benefit to be had by putting aside the success we have achieved to date through devolution negotiations to embark on a new process to seek provincial status. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Ms. Lee.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 3-15(3): NWT Housing Corporation Invitation To Tender: 2004 Supply Of Mobile Homes**

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a document which is an invitation to tender put out by the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, the Honourable Michael McLeod; a tender for 22 mobile homes in which it states that the Government of the Northwest Territories business incentive policy will not apply. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Handley.

Tabled Document 4-15(3): Gwich'in And Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-In-Principle

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled, "Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle for the Beaufort-Delta Region." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Dent.

Tabled Document 5-15(3): Legal Services Board Annual Report, 1996-97

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I have six documents to table. The Legal Services Board Annual Report for 1996-97.

Tabled Document 6-15(3): Legal Services Board Annual Report, 1997-98

The Legal Services Board Annual Report for 1997-98.

Tabled Document 7-15(3): Legal Services Board Annual Report, 1998-99

The Legal Services Board Annual Report for 1998-99.

Tabled Document 8-15(3): Legal Services Board Annual Report, 1999-2000

The Legal Services Board Annual Report for 1999-2000.

Tabled Document 9-15(3): Legal Services Board Annual Report, 2000-01

The Legal Services Board Annual Report for 2000-2001.

Tabled Document 10-15(3): Legal Services Board Annual Report, 2001-02

The Legal Services Board Annual Report for 2001-2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabled Document 11-15(3): Action Plan To Strengthen Tuberculosis Management And Control In The NWT: Status Report, March 2004

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled, "Action Plan To Strengthen Tuberculosis Management and Control in the NWT: Status Report, March 2004." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, tabling of documents. 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 in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005; Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2003-2004; Committee Report 1-15(3): Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates; Committee Report 2-15(3): Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates; and, Committee Report 3-15(3): Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates. By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 2-15(3), the House is resolved into Committee of the Whole to sit beyond the time of adjournment until the committee is prepared to report, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. The matters before us have already been read out by the Speaker and I don't think we need to read them again. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee recommends that we review the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and we review them until the conclusion of that department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Shall we proceed with the opening remarks from the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The main estimates we bring forward today total nearly \$214 million. Overall, this represents an increase of \$3.2 million, or 1.5 percent, in the departmental budget over last year's main estimates. It is, however, important to note that increases for schools, based on enrollment changes, have not yet been finalized and, as a result, are not reflected in these numbers.

This modest increase in the department's budget represents a balance of program reductions and reinvestments in key areas.

First, within the education and culture activity of the department, we are proposing to spend nearly \$135 million. Spending in this area includes monies for early

childhood development, schools, as well as cultural and heritage programs. I would like to highlight a few key activities.

Early Childhood Development

For 2004-2005 we plan to spend \$4.4 million on early childhood development activities. These activities help provide children with a healthy start in life and assist in preparing them for learning in our school system.

As Members are aware, the three-year early childhood development initiative ends at the end of this month. During the last three years the GNWT has funded a range of activities to support healthy development of children. An evaluation of the initiative is currently underway and should assist us in determining how to effectively invest any future funding in this area.

School System

Schooling has been identified by most of the Members of the Assembly as being critical to the future development of the Northwest Territories. During the last two months, Members have told me they feel more must be done to keep children in school and to improve the results of the school system. During 2004-2005 we proposed to spend nearly \$115 million in support of schooling.

Madam Chair, our education system has made a number of significant gains over the past 20 years. For example, more students are accessing senior secondary programs in their communities and more aboriginal students are graduating. In 1999, there were 81 aboriginal grads and in 2003 there were 113. There were 620 students enrolled in community high schools in 1998-99 and in 2003-04 there are 872.

During the coming year, ECE will be making a number of modifications to its accountability structure for schooling. For example, the department is preparing an aboriginal language and culture-based education directive that will be sent to all education authorities outlining program requirements and criteria for expenditure. The department is also working with education authorities to expand student assessment activities.

Official Languages

Madam Chair, during 2004-2005 we will continue to follow up on recommendations made in the last Assembly regarding official languages. In addition to federal funding of over \$2.6 million, we proposed to spend \$2.290 million on languages activities during the year. This includes an additional \$100,000 to support the establishment of two language boards by July 1, 2004. The boards will provide me with advice on matters of importance to language communities. This will help determine the services we provide and initiatives that our government puts into place for the promotion, enhancement and revitalization of aboriginal languages.

Within advanced education and careers, the department is proposing to spend \$72.428 million. Programs and services within this activity are focussed on ensuring that northerners have access to skills training and the post-secondary education needed to successfully participate in our expanding economy. The branch also supports career development activities to assist residents in expanding their careers and offers a range of income

assistance programs ranging from student financial assistance to income support.

Career Development - Maximizing Northern Employment

At the present time there are a number of job opportunities across the Northwest Territories. If northerners are to receive the greatest benefit from these jobs, they need to have the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully compete for opportunities. The skills of the workforce must be linked to the requirements of employers.

During the next fiscal year an expenditure of \$7.7 million is proposed to support programming related to career and employment development as well as apprenticeships and occupational certification. Activities supported by this funding include: training on the job, stimulation of youth employment, the provision of career counselling and the continued work with employers in both the public and private sector to plan and deliver skills training.

In many cases, training to prepare northerners for work on NWT resource development projects must be planned and delivered in partnership with industry and aboriginal organizations. We remain committed to continuing to work closely with these organizations to plan, deliver and evaluate programming with a goal of ensuring that northerners benefit from relevant, high-quality and accredited training.

Colleges

Madam Chair, during the next year we plan to continue to support our northern college system with an expenditure of \$27.696 million. Aurora College has primary responsibility to provide training and adult basic education programs that will prepare students for jobs and productive activity in our communities. This year's main estimates include an additional investment of \$880,000 to implement a bachelor's degree program for nurses. This will help ensure that we increase the supply of nurses to serve in our communities.

Income Security Programs

Madam Chair, during the 2004-2005 year the department will increase funding for student financial assistance by \$825,000 to meet the needs of students participating in the program.

The GNWT also continues to provide a broad range of subsidies and services that address basic needs across the lifespan. To ensure these programs remain current, we have established an annual process for examining income support levels for food and personal care items. Current funding levels will allow us to continue meeting these needs.

Finally, Madam Chair, I would note that the capital acquisition plan for the fiscal year is valued at \$9.681 million. Implementation of the projects identified in the plan will result in the completion of the Mildred Hall School renovations and the Aurora Campus Academic Building in Inuvik; continued renovations to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and project activities to replace the Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita and to build the Ecole Boreale, the French first language school in Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time I'm going to ask the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya, to provide the committee's overview of the main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would also like to let the committee know we are going to do this through teamwork, and my honourable colleague from Nunakput, Calvin Pokiak, will conclude the report.

The committee met on February 23rd, 2004, with the Minister and his officials to consider the 2003-2004 draft main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The committee notes an estimated \$213.705 million for operations expenses, an increase of \$2.685 million over last year's numbers and a total of \$13.430 million for capital infrastructure for 2004-2005.

Yellowknife Aurora College Campus

The committee is concerned with rising costs and diminishing adequacy of the current Aurora College facilities in Yellowknife. During the review of the draft main estimates the committee noted \$145,000 forced growth due to increased lease costs for the Northern United Place, NUP, Aurora College Yellowknife Campus. The Minister clarified that the total increase to lease costs for this year are actually closer to \$329,000. Members note the total lease costs for the Northern United Place campus are now \$1.529 million. This does not include lease costs for off-campus facilities.

The committee is concerned costs are escalating for a facility known to have substantial shortcomings for college program delivery. The building has reached capacity and classroom space is already being rented off-campus. In addition, the NUP campus has no dedicated parking, insufficient student housing and the campus design provides limited opportunities for student interaction outside of the classroom setting. The Yellowknife Campus is the only Aurora College campus struggling to deliver programming in a facility that was not purpose built. The standing committee indicated a strong need to begin to look at options to address these problems.

During the review, the department commented that the NUP lease will expire in 2007 and they have begun to consider options. Committee Members were pleased to hear that the Minister had initiated a cost-benefit analysis of staying in the current location versus new construction. The committee supports a cost-benefit analysis and looks forward to seeing the results, possibly during the next business planning cycle.

Student Housing At Aurora College

The committee is concerned with the lack of vision that the department demonstrated for student housing at Aurora College campuses. Inadequate student housing is a problem for all three campuses and committee Members stress the need for a comprehensive plan to deal with the issue.

During the review the Minister explained that the decision had not yet been made whether to use the \$2.272 million total capital allocation for the Green Apartments and the

\$2.314 million total capital allocation for the Brown Apartments in Fort Smith for a retrofit of the existing apartments or for construction of a completely new structure. The committee questioned if the plan to retrofit the Fort Smith apartments would be cost efficient. They noted that \$446,000 had been allocated for work to begin as early as 2004-2005. Given the vagueness of the department's plans, the committee was concerned that the start date for this project was too soon and recommended careful analysis prior to action.

The Minister assured committee Members of further consultation on this issue prior to the commencement of any work. The committee is receptive to this approach.

Over the last few years, Aurora College has implemented a number of excellent programs geared at students from across the Northwest Territories. Many have relocated to attend. Unfortunately, the department's student housing initiatives have not been keeping pace with the growth of programs. As a result, housing needs for out-of-town students, particularly in Yellowknife and Inuvik, are not currently being met.

During the review of the NWT Housing Corporation draft main estimates the standing committee noted that a considerable number of out-of-town students were occupying social housing. Approximately 90 Aurora College students are currently occupying social housing and another 18 are on the waiting list. The concern is that student use has increased pressure on a program whose mandate is not to meet the needs of out-of-town students.

Student housing was an unresolved issue from the last Assembly and the committee sees no indication that Aurora College and the department are any closer to developing a comprehensive plan. Committee Members expressed considerable apprehension for what it sees as an ad hoc response to a crucial issue that warrants a carefully thought out strategy.

As the department and Aurora College had not yet finalized how they were going to deal with the issue, the committee got a commitment to be informed of further details as they unfold. The committee is giving the department the benefit of the doubt and has approved the \$446,000 because they do need the planning money to advance the project.

Residential School Survivors And Secondary Victims

The committee would like to see a proactive position from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on the issue of residential school survivors and secondary victims. The committee stresses the need to actively look into possible funding opportunities from the federal government for the GNWT and to support individuals and organizations in accessing the available funding.

Committee Members would like to see the department's efforts go beyond restitution to victims as directed by the Courts. Committee Members would like to see the department look for additional opportunities for involvement in assisting residents in accessing federal programs and dollars. The devastating impacts that the residential school system has had on families, language, culture and heritage are well known. Members of the committee hope that the department will keep this issue in mind and that it will be reflected in department goals and program delivery.

Rationalization Of Income Security

The committee is pleased to offer support for Education, Culture and Employment's plans to rationalize income security programs. Committee Members commented that excessive "stove piping" and compartmentalization of the various components of income security result in unnecessary frustration among clients. The committee feels that a more integrated case-management style delivery model would increase the quality of service to clients. The need for life management skills counselling to be integrated into income security program delivery was emphasized.

During the review the Minister provided a brief historic overview of the decision made in 1994 to separate what was viewed as strictly clerical income support functions from the counselling aspects of the social services program. The rationale was that this would free up more time for social workers to provide counselling services. Unfortunately the counselling mandate appears to have fallen through the cracks. Income support recipients in need of life-skills counselling are not always receiving the services they require.

The committee favours a broad-based approach to the review of income security programs and emphasizes the need for cooperation among all government departments involved in income security and social services program delivery. The standing committee also advocates increased training of income support workers to better identify the needs of clients so as to better assist clients to help themselves. The committee looks forward to a full briefing on income support programs and a discussion paper on options for the rationalization of income security by June.

The Minister proposed substantial committee involvement during the examination of income security programs. The committee is receptive to this approach.

Bachelor Of Education Degree Program

The Members of the standing committee are disappointed to note that the four-year Bachelor of Education degree program in the Northwest Territories will not go ahead as planned. Aurora College had anticipated beginning delivery of the fourth and final year of a Bachelor of Education degree at the Fort Smith campus starting in September of 2004.

The committee understands that current fiscal constraints have brought the Bachelor of Education degree as well as a number of other deserving programs to a standstill. However, committee Members are very supportive of the program and hope to see its implementation sometime in the near future.

Programs geared to training NWT residents to meet the NWT's needs for professionals in areas such as teaching and health care have been proven successful. The Bachelor of Education degree program is a key component of the strategy for teacher recruitment and retention in NWT communities.

Madam Chair, at this time I would like to ask the Member for Nunakput, Calvin Pokiak, to continue with the report.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Pokiak.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Early Childhood Development

The Social Programs committee is very concerned with the sunset of parts of this very important initiative, particularly under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Anecdotal evidence has placed a very high value on the success of the language nest portion of this program as part of any successful early childhood development program, such as the aboriginal Head Start program.

There was general consensus between Members from both smaller and larger centres on the success of the program and the need to save it from being lost because of the failure to ensure ongoing funding. It was also recognized that the infrastructure is in place to continue this program, but there is a danger of losing this infrastructure if the program is allowed to lapse for any significant period of time. There was no advance evaluation done by the department on the success of the early childhood development programs affected by the sunset of the applicable funding.

The committee pointed out that in a direct and tangible way, language nests deliver many aspects of Education, Culture and Employment's departmental goals: better beginnings for children; support and resources for community involvement in the education process; and the promotion of aboriginal language and culture.

What's more, it is a program that has been successful in virtually every community across the Territories. Few programs attain this level of success across all regions. Young children have had the opportunity to spend time with elders where they are exposed to aboriginal language through storytelling at the time that the mind is most ready. They gain a strong foundation in their aboriginal language in a cultural context and are infinitely better prepared to learn once they enter the formal K to 12 education system.

The committee recognizes that current fiscal realities force this government to make some very difficult decisions. However, this committee feels that the aboriginal language nest program must be a priority at this time. Investments in the youngest members of our society ultimately pay off. Committee noted that language is fundamental to identity. Pride and competence in an individual's aboriginal language improves self-esteem, which directly translates to success in school, in post-secondary education and in employment. The far ranging benefits of language nest programs have been well documented in New Zealand and Hawaii, where they have been established for 25 years.

Committee Members noted that the department is currently undertaking a review of the effectiveness of the sunset programs under the early childhood development program. The committee is very concerned, that a program, that by all accounts is successful, can be lost without any proper analysis as to its effectiveness.

Until such time, as committee Members can be persuaded to the contrary, we offer the following recommendation:

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that the department of Education, Culture and Employment continue to provide base funding for its

early childhood development program at 2003-2004 levels and program delivery parameters.

This concern was passed on to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and was subsequently conveyed to the Minister of Finance.

Community And Family Support For Education

The committee recognizes the positive effects that community and family support have on the education process. Some Members commented that in smaller communities families are interested in what's happening at school and yet, in many cases, parents are hesitant to become directly involved. The committee supports Education, Culture and Employment to work with local education authorities to continue to foster increased involvement at the community level and to develop strategies to overcome barriers to family participation.

The committee supports a conception of education that recognizes culture and language as a vital component of the education process. A system that reflects the values of a community is more likely to draw involvement and support of family, which directly translates into increased success for students. A healthy individual self-identity is an important component in preparing school-aged kids for success in further education and productive life choices.

Quality Of School Programming In Communities

The committee was pleased to hear the Minister's comments that more students are accessing senior secondary schooling in their home communities. The committee applauds the work that has been done to implement grade extensions in communities. Grade extensions permit students to complete senior secondary education in their own communities where family and community involvement, and continued exposure to cultural heritage, provide the necessary support for students to be successful in school and for healthy personal development.

However, the committee did note that anecdotal evidence suggests a number of problems that substantially undermine the quality of senior secondary education in the smaller communities. Notably, students in a single class often range in age and grade level to such an extent that individuals are hindered in their ability to learn. Not only is this frustrating for students, but it is hugely detrimental for students who go on to further their studies in larger centres.

The committee would like to see an across-the-board standard of evaluation and a strategy to ensure that this standard is attained or exceeded by all Northwest Territories students, regardless of where they attend senior secondary school.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that a quantitative evaluation on grade extensions be undertaken to ensure that not only are students accessing senior secondary schooling in their home communities, but moreover that they are graduating with a quality of education that allows them to be successful and competitive if and when they pursue post-secondary studies.

Northwest Territories students in smaller communities deserve the same quality of education that their

counterparts in the regional centres receive. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment must ensure both quantity and quality in smaller communities. The committee looks forward to being apprised of a documented improvement in the quality of senior secondary education in smaller communities over the next four years.

Student Financial Assistance

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is concerned with the rapid increase in costs for the student financial assistance program since 1999-2000. From 2002-2003 actuals to the 2004-2005 draft main estimates, the budget jumped by \$5.394 million, representing a 24 percent increase. If this proves to be an ongoing trend, it is alarming. Committee Members are concerned that this kind of an increase over any length of time cannot be sustained.

The committee was informed during the review of the draft main estimates that the increase is due to increased uptake; more students are accessing funding for post-secondary education. The Minister explained that the level of funding available to students has not changed since a substantial overhaul of the program in 1999-2000.

It is well known that the cost of education is skyrocketing across Canada. According to StatsCan, Canadian undergraduate students paid an average of \$4,025 in tuition fees for the 2003-04 academic year. This is up from \$3,749 in 2002-03. The committee pointed out that the program will need to be reviewed again sometime in the near future. The concern is that student financial assistance costs are already increasing unsustainably, even without increases to funding levels to meet the rising costs of education.

The committee would like to see further analysis focusing on the sustainability of the program, to ensure that it is keeping up with students' needs and to see whether the program is attaining the desired outcomes. The committee looks forward to detailed examination of this program during the committee's review of all Education, Culture and Employment's income security programs.

Pipeline Employment Opportunities

The committee acknowledges the work the department and industry have done to date in delivering oil and gas training to the residents of the Mackenzie Valley. Committee Members support these efforts and encourage the department to step them up so as to be in a position to benefit from this one-time event. The committee stresses that preparations are essential and the window of opportunity is short. If residents of the Northwest Territories are not prepared, opportunities will be lost.

During the review of the draft main estimates, committee Members questioned the Minister about the department's preparedness to cooperate with southern unions. The Standing Committee on Social programs was pleased to hear from the Minister that departmental representatives had held initial meetings with unions that will likely be involved in pipeline construction.

The committee cannot stress enough the importance of a cooperative approach to dealing with industry and their unions. A relationship must be developed if NWT

residents are to receive the full benefit from the construction of the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

The department and its partners must be prepared to concentrate on the training necessary for northerners to qualify for the 250 jobs related to the operation of the pipeline. The committee will be looking for tangible training targets in September 2004 when reviewing the department's business plan for 2005-2008.

Services For 16 To 18 Year Olds

Members of the standing committee remain concerned with the gap in services experienced by 16 to 18 year olds who are no longer living with their parents or guardians. This issue was raised in the last assembly and resulted in the passage of Bill 22, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, on October 30, 2002. Changes to the act made the Department of Health and Social Services unequivocally responsible for children under the age of 19.

Nonetheless, individual Members of the Legislative Assembly are still contacted on a regular basis by 16 to 18 year olds who are having problems accessing the services they require to address their basic needs. It would seem that many of these problems result from a lack of awareness if frontline workers in the income support and health and social services fields have of recent amendments. The committee would like to see training for frontline staff so that they can ensure this demographic receives the services they require.

Harmonization

The committee understands the harmonization initiative has been put on hold and is looking forward with enthusiasm to working with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in reviewing and rationalizing income security programs.

The committee is expecting a new era of cooperative efforts between all departments involved in income security programs.

Madam Chair, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the review of the budget of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. At this time I would like to ask if the Minister would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, okay. We will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses in. We will allow them to get set up. Is it the wish of the committee that we take a brief break?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, we will do that.

---SHORT RECESS

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. On my right I have the deputy minister for the department, Mr. Mark Cleveland, and on my left Mr. Devitt, who is director of management services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We will start with general comments on the main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to offer some general comments on the department and its budget. The first issue I want to speak to is in regard to the Aurora College. I want to state that I believe that it is very important for our society and in jurisdictions like the Territories to have an advanced education institution. I do believe that Aurora College has come a long way, but it does have a lot more potential to fulfill. Especially in light of the training needs and employment needs that we are faced with and will probably continue to be faced with with all the economic opportunities that are before us. I feel that there is a lot more we can do with respect to resourcing Aurora College and especially for me, the Yellowknife Campus.

During the discussions in committee, I was provided with statistical information from the department which shows me that the enrolment of students, the number of students being enrolled in the Yellowknife Campus is quite similar to the number enrolled in the Fort Smith campus. I appreciate that the Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith is the main campus and Yellowknife is the regional campus, but I do believe at a certain point the resources have to be comparable to the demands being placed on a facility. I believe that Yellowknife campus needs a lot more resources than it is being currently provided.

One of the more serious issues for the campus is the fact that it does not have a stand-alone campus and that now it's gotten to a situation where a lot of spaces are outside of the campus because the campus itself cannot sustain the demands that are being placed on it. Another of the more serious situations is the housing issue. I think the Members that are coming into the city are recognizing and living and experiencing firsthand what it's like to deal with the housing shortage and housing demand and high cost of housing in Yellowknife.

What is happening right now is that there's not enough housing for students at Aurora College and certainly they cannot afford to be in the market and rent apartments or anything like that being a full-time student while attending Aurora College. The Aurora College students have taken up, at least by my latest figure, 90 units at Northern United Place, for example. Those are units that would otherwise be available to other people in low-income categories or for seniors. I know there is a huge waiting list for seniors who normally would have gone into housing at Northern United Place and now they are lined up with everybody else and that line-up is not moving at all. Given that they don't have as long a line up at the Aven's Court, the independent living there, the situation is really dire. I think I need to stress this, and this is something I need to work on and I am going to work on and push the Minister and the government to address within the life of this Assembly.

Madam Chair, I am as well aware as anybody else here about the fiscal realities, but I do believe we still have

money to operate and we cannot close our books and go home because we are faced with a deficit. It just means that we have to pay closer scrutiny to the money that we are spending and that we are paying close attention to the priorities that are being given to various items that are coming to us.

I also understand that during the discussion of this department's budget we were given lease costs and other expenses that go toward the Aurora College renting the facility at Northern United Place and it is not a small amount. We do spend a lot of money yearly already on these payments and I think there is an opportunity there for the government to not necessarily spend any more money than what it is now spending in that facility for utilities and such and rental costs and really do long-term planning to do a stand-alone campus building in Yellowknife Campus.

So I would like to ask the Minister at the moment what he has done in his time as Minister of ECE to look at this situation and what his plan of action is with respect to this issue. I understand he has, I'm sure, a myriad of issues that he's had to deal with, but I want to get some indication from the Minister if he has addressed his mind to this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, like the Member, am interested in ensuring that we have adequate programming space for all our students in the Northwest Territories, and one of the first things I did after becoming Minister was to take a look at what we had in terms of leases and where we might have opportunities opening up. So I asked the department when the lease would be expiring on Northern United Place and finding out that it was coming up in a few years, directed that they work with the college and Public Works and Services to do an examination of what we should be looking at, whether it makes sense to stay in the same place, whether it makes sense to stay in the same place and do renovations, or whether it makes more sense to look at occupying new space. At the moment there is some work underway. Again, it's a three-way process between the college, Education, Culture and Employment and Public Works and Services to examine the programming that will be provided. Following that final sort of decision, that's being led by the college at the moment, then we'll take a look at space requirements and that part would be led mostly by Public Works and Services. Hopefully we'll then, fairly shortly, have an idea of what the options are for the space.

As the Member has pointed out, there is a significant amount of rent that is being paid for the space. We are currently utilizing space outside what is now known as the campus, because there isn't enough room there for what we're offering and there is going to be some expansion, as Members know, because of the nursing program in the course of the next little while. So we are going to be short of space in our current location, even more short of space, and we are planning to make sure that we are well positioned to use the public dollars that we have to house the college in the best way possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get an indication as to what the time frame is that he has instructed his staff who is getting information for him? I think the Minister mentioned that there is partnership going on with the college board and such. I'd like to know from the Minister at what point we, as a committee, would expect to see him get back to us as to his findings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly advise the Member that we would be prepared to brief the committee this year. I expect that the programming will be decided and set by later this spring. I would expect then that over the course of the summer that the space requirements can be decided from that and determined. Then by fall we should have some options available for the space that we can present for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see that I have about nine seconds. I'm prepared to get back on the line-up if there are other Members who want to raise points.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, just with respect to Aurora College and possible increased vocational training opportunities to our youth, especially with all the plans of industry and growth that we'd like to plan for in the future. I'm just wondering if there's appetite within the department to look at alternative training facilities, particularly creating some of those facilities in the Nahendeh riding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for the most part there won't be any considerable growth in permanent facilities for the college outside of the three campuses that we have. But the college is certainly anxious to be involved in training and has worked extensively to develop partnerships in the oil and gas industry in particular. We're always looking for ways that the training can be provided in the regions. There's an awful lot of mobile training that is offered and it's offered usually in conjunction with industry and doesn't require the same sort of investment in infrastructure to have a permanent building to put it in. It can be delivered in communities and provided to people close to where they're going to find job opportunities. We find that's a very successful way to deliver that kind of programming. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the Minister for that response because that's the type of thing that I'm particularly interested in. It's just with respect to if we're going to identify a priority region, which is happening in this case, in particular with the pipeline training in the oil and gas sector. It's being impacted in the Deh Cho and I'd like to see at least some future direction, some future concentration of our training, particularly in

the trades like welding and carpentry, given thought of in our region. I don't know if it's in the particular plans of the department right now, but I sure would like to stress that point right now and ask the Minister if there is some direction given by their department to look at that and head in that direction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department is going to be offering through the career centre over the next couple of days, some seminars to make sure that more people in the area are aware of what sorts of opportunities for training are going to be available in the oil and gas field in the next little while. There is very shortly a significant training proposal for federal monies that's going to be made that includes a partnership that is made up of a number of aboriginal groups, including the Deh Cho First Nations, industry and this government to try and make sure that we can expand even further the amount of training that takes place in the regions. This training would be targeted at the Deh Cho and other regions in the Mackenzie where the employment is likely to be targeted.

I'd like to assure the Member that we are, as a government and department, working to make sure that we don't miss any opportunities that we can find to expand our training for northern residents, particularly to make sure that they're ready to take advantage of opportunities in the oil and gas field. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to get assurances from the Minister that the training will help develop our northern youth and our northern communities, especially to just prepare ourselves for the planned impacts. I believe the Minister made reference to ASEP, the aboriginal skills employment partnerships program. I would just like to ask the Minister that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's one of the programs that I was mentioning. I understand the proposal is very close to its final stage in draft form and almost ready for submission. One of the big advantages of that kind of training proposal is that the industry partners with their involvement make sure that the training is targeted specifically at the jobs that are going to be available and they commit to taking on the people who have been trained through that program. So we know we're training people for the jobs that will be available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chairman, no further questions at this time. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't expecting to come back to the line-up so soon, but I'm pleased to have the opportunity. I have some questions to the Minister on his opening statement. The first one is to do with the early childhood development. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Social Programs made quite a lengthy comment about the positions that committee Members have on this issue. I think it's not always the case that Members from small communities and larger communities agree on an issue so solidly, and this was definitely one where all Members in the committee were able to present evidence that we see in our respective constituencies where these programs are having a difference and it's really providing a positive impact to our young children. I know that in my riding of Range Lake and at Range Lake North School there were various literacy initiatives and other things that were happening in the school where teachers have gone out of their way to comment to me that it's one of the best things that they've seen come along. Some of them have been teaching young children, kindergarten children for over 30 years. They cannot say enough about all the good things this is doing in terms of giving an early start to the children and helping them read and helping them get into the social setting and school setting.

I think that when we discuss the motion and when we discuss the specific section of the budget we will have more opportunity to elaborate on this, but in the meantime I would like to ask for the Minister, on page 2 of his opening statement he stated that the department plans to spend \$4.4 million on early childhood development activities, but in the next paragraph he mentions that the three-year early childhood development initiative ends at the end of this month. I'd like to know if the Minister could state for the record how much money is being cut in that second paragraph and what are the things that he's able to do with the money that he is keeping on the budget and what precise things are being cut out or that at least the Minister is proposing to cut out of his budget this year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to say that I appreciate the committee's comments on the early childhood development program. Like the committee, I believe very strongly that it's important that we provide this kind of programming for the youngest people in the North. The early years are the most important and we have with this type of programming a real opportunity to significantly impact their future. So it was quite troubling to me that we were going to have to reach the end of the funding for this programming and I must say that I, with the committee, agree that this is an area that we should be looking for. If we can find extra funds this would be one of my priority areas in which to put it.

Now, the Member asked how much we were going to be cutting. It works out to about \$1.3 million in reductions from our department. This is on top of what the Department of Health and Social Services cut. They also had money under the early childhood development framework for action. I think in total the monies were approximately \$3 million between the two departments.

In terms of what, in fact, is being cut from Education, Culture and Employment, we're losing contributions to the healthy children initiative. The funding for that is dropping

from over \$3 million to \$2.2 million in this budget that we're proposing. We're losing some of the money in programs that included programs like the language nests, which did involve typically elders working with younger children to help them gain literacy skills and also help develop aboriginal language skills.

There were a number of areas, but when I say they were carrying on with \$4.4 million in expenditures we still have, as part of the department, a responsibility for some expenditures. So we have had to reduce the amount that was in the framework for action, but we still will have almost \$1.7 million in early childhood programs which go towards day care spaces and provide, for instance, an increase for Aurora College for the early childhood education certificate program, which is a transfer from contract delivery last year. It also includes, as I said earlier, \$2.2 million in healthy children initiative funding.

So that funding isn't disappearing completely, but it has had to be reduced significantly with this cut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I ask the Minister whether this reduction in his budget would decrease the funding that has in the past gone to the NWT Literacy Council, who has benefited from getting money from the GNWT as well as some of the federal programs to introduce a lot of literacy initiatives, and ones that have made some headway. I don't know if they will have a direct impact there, but I would like to have confirmation on that from the Minister.

Another comment that I want to add, which I think is important, is that what he has been hearing about this program is that in the last years that this has been in place, it has made very huge progress. A three year is a critical time and any program that begins takes that much time to get going and get started. The unfortunate thing with this is that when the program infrastructure got put into place and got implemented and started seeing some results that we are basically, in large part because of the reduction, not complete elimination but a reduction, we are really cutting the legs from under some of these very successful initiatives. So I wanted to make that point and then go back to the question about what kind of direct impact this might have for the NWT Literacy Council if any. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to answer the Member's first question, there is still \$251,000 for the Literacy Council to maintain their program. Where that money is coming from is federal monies that we are going to be flowing through to them to allow their programming to continue. The federal contribution is carrying on for another two years. So even though the territorial money is sunsetted after three years, we did have some federal money for the same source of programs.

The Member had asked about what sorts of things had been cut. I had mentioned the language nests, the family learning kits, the childhood family resource centres. Those sorts of areas are the ones that are going to feel the impact of this cut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I think the family learning kits is one of the things that a local school teacher has given me as anecdotal evidence of something that is quite simple, but quite effective. It is something that she really thought that we should continue doing. I really think that there is power within this Assembly to see how we could save this, although I know that this is supposed to expire in a week.

Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary question on the funding cuts for the NWT Literacy Council. Could the Minister tell us as to what the NWT Literacy Council would have received in combination with the federal funding had the GNWT contribution not been cut this year as a result of this reduction? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: I can't say exactly, because there wasn't an agreement that goes beyond this year for funding. For instance, last year, the family learning kits which were done in collaboration with the NWT Literacy Council, there was \$76,000 in funding. That is one of the areas that is being cut. We have still got the \$251,000 that is still going to be going to them. We are going to have to discuss with them how that is being spent, but it is not an easy number to come up with because the amount that the Literacy Council got each year was not the same. So there wasn't a set amount that was going; it always depended on how things were negotiated. I would like to say to the Member that, as I have said, I share her concern about cuts to this area, and I would just like to assure her and all Members that I will continue to work with my Cabinet colleagues to see if there is any way that we can find any extra funds that this would be the first area of priority for me to see a reinvestment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next I have Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be as brief as I can. I want to centralize my discussions on a small component of the Minister's statement in the career development and maximizing northern employment. I will readdress this in the response he provided me in the Oral Question 10-15(2) in part by employment opportunities. In paragraph three, he said in September of 2003 the Government of the Northwest Territories organized labour groups to begin discussions about the construction of the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. It speaks a bit about a meeting with the northern pipeline projects, Alberta Building Trades Council and the Christian Labour Association of Canada. In follow-up to that, I had received another letter from the NWT Federation of Labour, which replied to my question to the Minister, and it makes reference to the fact that given the past experience of the Northwest Territories' pipeline construction and it points out the Canol project Painted Mountain in Norman Wells, and it seems to me that they understand some of their misgivings. Although we support the development of future pipeline development, we also want to talk in the context of the pipeline construction and the role that the unions play. We talked about the United Association is a craft union representing welders, plumbers, pipefitters, the International Union of Operating Engineers, representing equipment operators, labourers, the International Union of

North America represents skilled pipeline labourers, the Teamsters represents equipment haulers, and a number of others. I am curious to know, in terms of investment in maximizing northern employment, that the Minister has taken a more concerted effort to identify -- and again I am going to phrase it in the context of my earliest question -- how we have influence over the union politics. It concerns me, Mr. Chairman, that our past experience doesn't give us too much clout in the context of the overall picture.

I think I raised the point yesterday to the Minister of RWED that we really have to move away from socioeconomic agreements, going to more covenant agreements that would give legal binding to any kind of agreement. So I am going to ask the Minister if he has worked with those specific unions identified and tried to advance training opportunities in the context of maximizing northern employment. That would be my first question to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Subsequent to the Member's question in the House and my response to him that he has referred to, I heard from the Federation of Labour and they offered to meet with me to discuss this issue. I have accepted that offer and indicated to them that I am prepared to meet to carry on these discussions. I am purely confident that unions will understand that northerners expect to see significant northern involvement in employment in the construction of pipelines in the North, and I think it is incumbent on us, through the Minister of RWED, to negotiate a good agreement that involves benefits, including employment. Then we will have to make sure that we all work together, the companies, the unions and the government to make sure that we have northerners trained and ready to take on the odd jobs in the pipeline and the oil and gas sector as those jobs come up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the Minister because I think he gave an overview of what the level of expectations are along the valley. I think the important point I want to make in my final comments, Mr. Chairman, is that I think we need to take a more proactive role, and talk to not only the unions, but also the private sector, and try to develop a strategic plan that would ensure that we do begin to train the employables on actual pipeline construction sites so they will be prepared from a skill level to participate in the actual project. I believe it is not harmful.

If I may go back, even though we have a greater percentage of our northerners as skilled pipeline labourers, that would be beneficial to our territory. I am trying to define exactly whereabouts would be the best areas we could concentrate on this at the earliest possible level in trying to ascertain training opportunities for our northerners. I believe there are two areas that we have an opportunity to concentrate on, and they are the International Union of Operating Engineers who represent the equipment operators, and the Labourers International Union of North America who represents skilled pipeline labourers. So I am just curious to know, and certainly would support the notion that we should be concentrating on those two specific union groups to put into effect some

kind of training program at the earliest possible date. With that, I am going to ask the Minister, through you, Mr. Chair, if he would address that key question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am advised that our people are already working with industry to try and develop that kind of programming, an operator training program to make sure that we have it delivered before people are needed to perform the jobs. So we are trying to stay on top of that.

The other area that I know the Member will be interested in is the area that Mr. Menicoche was talking about, the aboriginal skills employment program. That proposal -- which is shortly going in to the federal government -- will be seeking about \$10 million, for a total of \$14.5 million worth of training for people in the Mackenzie Valley to participate in the oil and gas and pipeline work that comes up. We are quite hopeful that we will see that money. It would be a significant increase in the amount of money being spent in training for that field, over what we have been able to put into it alone. So we are really hopeful that that proposal will be in shortly, and that it will be seen favourably by the federal government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to, for the record, state that my background is employee relations and I was quite active with Dome Petroleum in the Beaufort in developing their labour force. One of the areas that we do need to ensure that when we talk about training programs is that we do give the trainees the opportunity to accumulate the seat time. Seat time is a common phrase used in industry in that the longer they spend on the actual job site the more seniority they get in terms of union standards. I am just going to ask again quickly if the Minister would have his officials and his partners negotiate with the union representatives where we can in effect get trainees onto the job site, give them a tenureship on a piece of equipment that would be used in the North. I think that would be one of the first steps that we should take in terms of trying to maximize northern training and northern employment opportunities. With that, Mr. Chair, I will conclude my comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will follow up on the Member's advice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen. At this time I would like to ask committee if it is okay if Mr. Delorey can take the Chair for now.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Chair recognizes Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When you break down this Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we have some extremely important issues in regard to education in the Sahtu; very strong in the cultural component of this department and the potential for

employment within the region of the Sahtu, and also down the whole Mackenzie Valley. Mr. Minister, your department and staff have a huge responsibility with regard to the Northwest Territories. There are some good people on your staff. I have worked with them before and they work hard. I know in my dealings with them in the issues of residential school especially, that some of the good people there in your department helped us out a lot there.

In saying all of this, Mr. Chairman, the one issue that has come forward is there might have been rumours about the language nest program, and you have confirmed them today. Mr. Chairman, I want to talk about the importance of this, because I had several letters and phone calls from my constituents in the Sahtu region who wanted to have a really good understanding about why this program is being cut and what can this department do in terms of reprofiling or looking at ways that they could continue to support it, because the concerns I have are that this program is worthwhile. A lot of Members have talked about it and even the Minister has commented on looking at this worthwhile project. The language nest programs that we have in the region provides an opportunity for our young people to connect with our elders. That is a very culturally significant point of education in that our young children are going to one day, hopefully, through good training and good leadership, be sitting in our seats.

A lot of our guidance has come from our elders in the Sahtu region, and a lot of our survival depends on our elders. However, today it has changed because of the different lifestyles, yet we still look to our elders for guidance in how we live our life today. In this short time that we have with these young people that we in our communities are exposed to the aboriginal language to our people, and we do it through storytelling, drumming, something that they are very proud to be associated with in terms of our culture.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister and his Cabinet also there is funding that is there but it is for the Literacy Council, they have their own mandate, they have their own views, and that \$251,000 is not very much in terms of some of the aspirations and initiatives that the regions want to do or the communities want to do, especially in small communities where the language nest program has been very successful in terms of what I am hearing, and the concerns from the communities that somehow this language nest program could be looked at again by the Minister and his Cabinet to see if there is any way that they can look at saving the program. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to make those comments because it is important, and I want to hear from the Minister. I may have one more question after this, depending on how much time I have left.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Cabinet was certainly aware of the recommendation that the committee made, and there was some discussion about it. As I have said, I think we would all agree that investments in early childhood programming are significantly important investments, but we haven't yet found a way to say that we have the money to put this back into the budget yet. As I have already said though, this is something that we are continuing to discuss. I am convinced that this is the area where we should try and

look for an opportunity to reinvest, and we will continue to do that.

In terms of the language nests, I know I have heard these comments from across the Territories. I know a number of Members have gotten letters from their constituents and passed on the information to me that this has been a very useful program. It certainly does tie into culture across the Northwest Territories. It is close to \$900,000 that was being spent on it this year. So that is not a small amount of money, it is not easy to find. That part alone is almost a million dollars of what we have given up. So we have heard the concerns, and I don't have the answer yet, but I am going to continue to look and to work with my colleagues on Cabinet to see what we can do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much. I just wanted to also mention the importance of supporting our children and youth in schools. I was really pleased to read the increase of the enrolment of our schools from 1998-99 to 2003-04. There is a significant increase in our schools, and the department must be doing something right or something that the communities and our schools are doing right together to get our students to that level of enrolment. It shows that the students, teachers, and the communities are doing something right that got our kids into school. The numbers are up and we need to continue to support our children as they go through to high school, college, and post-secondary programs. We are looking for them to receive some good educational training and come back to our communities and be very productive especially when it comes down to something like the Mackenzie gas pipeline and other initiatives that may happen in our communities. Again, I will hammer back onto the point where it is going to have all of this training, but for our students to know that hopefully there will be some strong cultural initiatives. We know who we are, but we also need to know and practice our culture, and it has to be supported by this government. That is why I said, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister has...(inaudible)...Department of Education, Culture and Employment, it is a huge department, and that for our people our culture is who we are in our livelihood. So I want to see through the main estimates. I will look at some of these initiatives that the department is going to be taking on throughout the life of this government, and I want to just keep my comments to that, Mr. Chair. I know my time is running out and I want to respect other Members. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I didn't hear too many questions. Did you want to respond Mr. Dent?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Yakeleya was commenting on the improvement of keeping young people in school. I must say that I was really pleased to see the committee and their report reflected on the importance of community and family support for education. Because while the Department of Education and this government have a role to play in schooling, when it comes to culture and language the schools should reflect and reinforce the community. We aren't there to teach culture and language as much as we are to reflect it. There has to be a significant buy-in from the community, from the families, from the parents in order for the system to improve. What

I find most heartening about the increase in numbers is that that has to mean that we are seeing more and more support from families and communities for our schools. We have some areas where it is really strong and that is typically reflected then in the participation rates and the success rates of kids in school, and we need to do more to make sure that we get that family and community support because that is the biggest predictor of what I can see of whether or not we are going to have success in the schools. Again, I am really pleased to be able to say that we are seeing some increases in numbers, and I along with Members of the committee, want to keep encouraging the people in our communities to recognize the important role they play in helping young people be successful in school. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I recognize Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, I would like to reiterate with some of my colleagues about the early childhood development program. This program is very important to the smaller communities because it does help the young children be able to work with elders, and also prepare them for the...(inaudible)...too. In the opening comments, Mr. Chair, the Minister indicated that the department will re-evaluate the program to determine if they can invest in the future. Mr. Chair, can the Minister find out how long this evaluation will take place in order to fund it further down the road? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the evaluation should be completed in April. Then what we would hope to be able to do is if we are able to find any new money, use the evaluation of what programs that have been particularly successful, use that as a guide for where we should then start to emphasize the new money going towards, if we are able to find some new money. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is good to hear. Hopefully we can see the re-evaluation by the end of April as he mentioned. Another one that I would like to get into is the school system in his statement. Again, my colleague Mr. Yakeleya indicated the increase in graduates. Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the Minister, of those graduates, how many of those aboriginal people are actually up to par when they do go down to college or university? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to graduate, it means that you typically had to achieve certain marks in the departmental exams, and we use the same exams as Alberta. So if we have people who are graduated they should be at the same level no matter what community they are at. I know that there are concerns about how many programs can be offered in all communities, and the small schools have a real problem with delivering the same level of programming as a larger school does. So not everybody has access equally across the Territories to the same level of program. In

general, the level of schooling on graduation is supposed to be the same. I know that we have had a considerable amount of discussion at the committee about whether or not we are delivering the same sort of program in the smaller schools. I think one of the concerns is whether or not in high school young people are at the same level. Sometimes there are some problems with being at the same grade level in the 10th year or the 11th year of schooling, but if somebody graduates they should have the same level of schooling. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The experience that I have encountered in my region, again I will go back to the level of education, it is well known and I am aware of it that a lot of our young people, although they end up graduating from Grade 12, they still lack the education that's required. There are some Grade 11 students in some of my communities and they are supposedly in Grade 11, but they are at a level of about Grade 8. They say that the level of education is the same as in Alberta, Madam Chair. I think the department should at least try to ensure that our students are getting the required education as in Alberta.

I think the department should consider or review their programs in terms of the level of education in the small communities. I would like to see a comment from the Minister. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Response, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think Mr. Pokiak is talking about two different issues. One of the issues is whether or not children are all at the same grade level if they're in the same grade. It's not uncommon that you have differences. For instance, in a Grade 4 classroom you will have some children who are reading at a Grade 2 level and you may have some children who are reading at a Grade 6 level. The teachers can typically deal with the different groups they have. Some kids will need extra help and some kids will need extra challenge. So it isn't unusual to have in a classroom a variation in terms of what the kids are doing and at what levels they are achieving. But if a person passes a Math 30 or a Math 31 course in the Northwest Territories, they are passing the same test as given to kids in Alberta. So if they achieve that at graduation, that means that they have achieved the same level.

What is often happening is that in our smaller communities the range of programs that we can offer, the courses, are not as great as in the larger communities. So young people who graduate may not have the courses they need to get into the post-secondary area of study that they want to go into. That is an ongoing challenge for us, and it is one that in the smaller schools is problematic. I have discussed this issue with the Chairs of all of the divisional education councils. It was one of the issues that came up for discussion when we had meetings here on February 24th and 25th this year, and it is an area that we have agreed we need to find some way to work at improving the range of courses that we can offer in the smaller schools. So it is something that we're going to try and work on. I don't have an answer for how we're going to do that yet, to give the Member. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to go to the Aurora College again. Maybe I'll defer that and go into income support programs. This program does help some residents in the Territories...(inaudible)...of my region. I'm just wondering at this point in time, in the Minister's opening remarks he indicated they are examining income support levels for food and personal care. Does the department have any idea when the examination of income support whether to increase in the communities will be available? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I said in my opening comments, the rates are adjusted every year. Subsequent to the Bureau of Statistics doing studies to find out what the rates should be adjusted to in each community, the rates were adjusted in November of last year. So we would be looking at doing it again as we get into winter this year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Pokiak, general comments.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one follow-up question with regard to income support. Will the department, Madam Chair, look at the policy with regard to income support? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have committed in this House to make a presentation to the Standing Committee on Social Programs to go through the policies underlying the program, outlining what the benefits are now, and discuss with the Members what might be some options for change within the program. So it is my intention to do that with the Standing Committee on Social Programs, hopefully within the next little while.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Anything further, Mr. Pokiak?

MR. POKIAK: Thank you. Just one last one, Madam Chair. Under the capital acquisition plan, it does name a few programs that are planned right now. I'm just wondering what the department will consider as part of the plan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, I'm sure that when we get to those pages in the budget I'll have it in front of me. I know that the Mangilaluk School is in the plan for some time in the future; I can't remember exactly which year it is being proposed at this point. But I am advised that we're starting to see planning monies in 2007-08. That is when we should start to see programming being designed for that school. I know that the Member has talked to me about this issue and how important it is to the community. We face so many serious problems with schools on piles that are collapsing, and we've just had a real problem finding enough money

to come up with what we need to adequately address the capital acquisition plan. So we've had no option except to put a number of projects back. I suspect that that's a year later than what we were hoping to see that project, but I haven't been able to find adequate money to deal with all the demands that we face for projects in the department. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on the list I have Ms. Lee, but Mr. Delorey hasn't had an opportunity to speak yet on general comments, so I will go to Mr. Delorey next. Thank you.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a few comments on the Minister's opening remarks. I was going to talk about the early childhood development program, but it has been addressed quite extensively already and I am sure the Minister has gotten the message that that's a program that everybody is hesitant to see disappear. I know that the Minister will do whatever he can to find funds to keep that program going. But I was wondering if the Minister could maybe expand a little bit more when we're giving numbers out how they relate to actuals, how we can see where the system is improving. For example, on page 3 of his opening comments where the Minister mentions that in 1999 there were 81 aboriginal grads and in 2003 there were 113. Then he goes on to say that there were 620 students enrolled in community high schools in 1998-99 and in 2003-04 there 872.

What I'm trying to get at, Madam Chair, is this could be strictly from an increase in population, for example. Is there a direct correlation between the 81 and the 113 in 620 and 872? How do those figures show any kind of an improvement in the system?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. In fact, for instance this year the school population has dropped by just under one percent. So school populations haven't increased very much at all over the last four or five years. What we're finding is a good part of the growth is in the smaller communities when it comes to secondary school graduation. So it's not something that doesn't indicate that we are seeing an improvement. Given the small numbers of people we have in schools, the numbers tend to jump up and down a fair bit, but the trend seems to be going the right way. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. When you put out a figure of 620 and 872 for enrolments in community high schools, it would probably be easier to ask which ones are not included in this figure. Yellowknife wouldn't be for sure and probably not Hay River. What schools wouldn't be involved in this figure? It would probably be far less than are not involved than what would be involved. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, the aboriginal numbers will include children in all communities. So it doesn't exclude any schools. But we can break it down by community, we can provide it by region, we do it by

regional centres, we do it by smaller communities. So we have a broad range of statistical numbers that we're quite prepared to provide Members. We have a bi-annual report that we put out that puts a lot of this information in graphs and the numbers available for the members of the public. The next one is due in the next couple of months. The deputy is telling me he's not going to get out until the fall, but I thought it was the spring it was due. We do publish this information, and if any Member has any questions about the detail, we can put that information together very quickly and we would be pleased to provide it in writing to Members if they have any questions about specific schools or specific regions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Then I guess I was reading this a little wrong, because I was thinking this 620/872 as the total enrollment in the schools, but I take it this is just aboriginal students then. Okay. My next question would be what does it look like in the total population of kids? In the enrollment in high schools in general are we seeing more kids entering the high school and going on to graduation? Do you track those figures at all, and how is that looking? Are we constantly improving in that area, as well? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, the total graduation rate jumps up and down a significant amount because of the small numbers of young people in our school system. So there can be a large variation year to year. But in general the trend does appear to be in the right way, it is increasing, and it seems to be consistent in smaller communities, in regional centres. It isn't something that appears to be concentrated in just the regional centres and not in the smaller ones. So we do seem to be getting more graduates as a percentage throughout the system. Since the numbers are staying constant, if you're getting a bigger and bigger number through, it does tend to indicate that we're improving.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I get the Minister to expand a little bit on the second paragraph on page 3 where, for example, the department is preparing an aboriginal language and culture-based directive that it will be sending to all education authorities outlining program requirements and criteria for expenditure? Could you expand a little bit more on what directive is going to be? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, when I met with the Chairs of the divisional education councils we had some discussion about how...Some of the funds that we identify in the formula are categorized as funding aboriginal language programming. There has been a fair amount of latitude about how that money is being spent, and we are concerned that in some instances it may not be being used in the ways in which we had expected that Members of this Assembly would expect. So what we're going to do

is work with the DECs. This isn't something that we're just arbitrarily imposing ourselves. We have had staff working with the divisional education councils to see if we can't come up with a directive which would reflect what we think the expectations are for the use of that money, and make sure that it is actually being used for aboriginal language programming.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. On the bottom paragraph where the Minister states in addition to the federal funding over \$2.6 million, we propose another \$2.29 million. That includes an additional \$100,000 to the support of establishing two language boards. Is that \$100,000 the total expenditure for those two languages boards? How does that play into that? Is there more money out of this \$2.29 million that's going to be going into the operation, the running, whatever, of the languages board, or is the rest of it actually going to be going into programs? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, there may be a slightly higher cost to the boards over the \$100,000. We're hoping that we can get them to operate for that amount. Remember we're just starting them in July of this year, so it's not a full year of programming. It will be close to that, we think. So the goal is to have most of the money going to programming and keep the cost of the boards as low as possible.

This \$100,000 is reflective of what was transferred from the Legislative Assembly. That's the amount of money that the Assembly had in its budget to operate these boards, and when the responsibility for the boards was transferred to my department, this money was also transferred over. So that's the money we have. If it costs a little bit more, we'll have to find a way to deal with that. But we're reasonably confident it will be close to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you. Just one more area I would like to touch on, Madam Chair, and that is on maximizing northern employment or job training, whether it be in apprenticeship programs or getting people into the trades. It's an area that I've addressed a number of times over the last four years with the previous Minister of Education. At that time I got the same answer more than what I wanted to hear about. If we do it in one place we can't do it in the other. We have to do it right across the Territories. In an area such as Hay River if there's a huge interest in promoting the trades in the school, and we have a huge volunteer base there now and it's in big demand. Kids are really taking on to this. They have some work in carpentry, some work in welding, some work in automotive, but with very little resources and very little equipment to work with. Is the department still under the same impression, that there is no help for these areas? If we do it there, we have to do it right across the Territories. Are we going to find a way to help and promote in an area where there is a demand and to pick up students who are maybe falling through the cracks or whatever, if this would help? Is the department willing to look at areas where there is a demand? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I think this is an issue that there's an interest for this in high schools right across the Territories. There is a lot of demand for improvement in this kind of programming.

When we had the meeting here on February 24th and 25th with the Chairs of all the DECs, we took an opportunity to talk about partnerships and we talked specifically about this kind of training. The Yellowknife Catholic Schools here have an example of how, through a partnership arrangement, they have managed to put together a fairly good operation. The people from Yellowknife Catholic Schools talked to the other Chairs to how to perhaps structure themselves and take advantage of opportunities. Yellowknife Catholic Schools have, for instance, offered their facility to the Dogrib Community Services Board so that their students could come in during the Yellowknife school break. The students at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School were attending, so they could come in and use the facility. They found opportunities to make the facility available to the college for pre-trades training. So what they've done is looked for opportunities to expand outside of what is normally considered within the box, and they've found sources of funding outside it.

As I said to the Chairs, this is really something that we're all going to have to get better at is looking for partnerships. Unless this Assembly is going to vote me a whole bunch more money, I'm not going to be able to respond to the demands. I certainly don't hear the interest in this just from Hay River, I hear it from communities across the North. Wherever there's a high school there's a demand for increased programming in the trades area, and it is a legitimate demand. We know there's a need for improved trades training, we know that there are jobs for young people if we can get them trained, but we're constrained by what we have in our budget and are able to provide. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on the list I have Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Minister and his colleagues for meeting with us today. I just have a couple questions with regard to the opening remarks by the Minister in the new program reductions and reinvestment in key areas. I was pretty sure that Mr. Delorey had stole my notes somehow, because he pretty much asked most of the questions that I was going to present, so I guess it's going to be pretty short. Again I can't stress any more than a lot of my colleagues who have already stressed the importance of the early childhood development initiative as far as development kids in realizing the importance of education and language and healthy lifestyles and the child/family relationships that it helps develop within the smaller communities. I'm just curious as to the evaluation process that is going to be completed in April, which is after the March 31st deadline when this program or initiative is going to be sunsetted. I'm just wondering if the Minister can tell me when the initiative of evaluating the effectiveness of this development initiative has come to light. Has it been in the last year that they've done the evaluation, over the last three years, or is it just in the last couple of months when it came to the attention of the Standing Committee on Social Programs?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I understand it, when the program was started three years ago, the intention that was always stated was to review it at the end of the program. So the review process wasn't started until fairly recently. So it hasn't been an ongoing review; it is something that has been recently undertaken.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just another question on that issue is on a program or an initiative that has received the positive feedback of all the players who have been involved in this initiative, has basically come to a lot of the Members' attention in the last few months just due to the fact that they knew the program was going to be sunsetted. I'm just wondering if the Minister could give me some indication as to when they do determine, and I don't think it's going to be too hard to determine the effectiveness of this program, through all the correspondence that the Legislative Assembly has been receiving as far as the early childhood development initiative. I know that the initiative has cost the government around \$800,000 as far as our share into this whole program. I know that the whole department has taken some cutbacks in a lot of areas, but I really feel that reinvesting into this very important key area in education especially at the early childhood stages where research has shown us that the more your investment into it is the best return for your dollars spent. I'm just wondering if the Minister would be able to put every effort he can into finding some additional funding to keep the program running on a quarterly basis. I'm sure on a quarterly basis, \$200,000 wouldn't be too hard of a find in a budget of close to \$250 million. Just to keep this program going over the next three months after this evaluation process is done, then basically reassess it and reprioritize it after these quarterly stages.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it's certainly an area that I recognize the importance of investing in. I think all of my Cabinet colleagues do, as well. It is something that we have had some discussion about, and we are certainly interested in seeing what we can do. We will look at whatever options we can. Without having rolled it out, just off the top of my head I know that non-government organizations don't like to see short-term funding, and I don't know how excited they would be about quarterly funding because it's tough to get staff to commit for programs that you don't know how long they're going to be going. The shorter the term, the tougher it is to find people for them. I am certainly prepared to put every effort I can into seeing how we can find the money to reinvest in this program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Madam Chair, I thank the Minister for his passion in this topic.

---Laughter

Moving on to page 3 of the statement, I'm just wondering if the Minister could just give me a short briefing on what the department is talking about when they want to expand student assessment activities in relation to the aboriginal languages and culture-based directive.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you. There are two separate things that we're talking about in that paragraph. The first is the aboriginal language and culture-based education directive. That's the issue I explained to Mr. Delorey that we're going to try and reach an agreement with education authorities as to how monies will be spent supporting aboriginal language and culture-based education.

As a separate topic, I've also broached the subject with the Chairs of the education councils about the need to be able to demonstrate to legislators that the money that we're spending on education is in, in fact, improving the system. So we are also taking a look at expanding assessment activities, so we will have some yardsticks that we can use to demonstrate to the Legislative Assembly that the system is making improvements in how students are doing.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just moving on to the issues of colleges, there is the Aurora College system with expenditures of \$28 million within the next year and it does have some primary responsibilities of basic education and training. I am just wondering what proportion, if any, of that expenditure is going to be directed to the development and the accreditation of a lot of the instructors that are in our northern college system -- and no disrespect here -- which do have the expertise in the fields they are instructing in, but really don't have any education experience in educating. I am wondering what portion of that funding might be towards certifying our instructors or upgrading their structural requirements that the students require every year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The college does have a program for professional development for the staff and as part of the collective agreement, we are required to invest in professional development for staff at the college. So there are ongoing opportunities for the staff to improve their skills and the college will, of course, be regularly encouraging people to do that because they, too, would like to see people encourage their skills. Having said that, we don't have any territorial standards for certification. The college does oversee people to make sure the people who are teaching are qualified and doing their job properly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Next on the list I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was going to save any additional comments on this early childhood funding that is being proposed for a cut, but seeing that there has been some tremendous passion and momentum being built here on this issue, I wanted to perhaps put an

exclamation mark on the point we are raising here and enforcing. I think many Members have raised the fact that it doesn't make sense to be evaluating a project as the project is being finished. I know, having been here long enough, if we pass this budget and go away, all the requests will be made to the Minister and the department to find the money and the commitment that Minister makes to try to find it may not result in keeping this program or reinstating it. I am not doubting the Minister's commitment on this, but it's just the way things shake out around here usually. I just think it's really unfortunate if we were to cut this program where it seems to have such momentum and it's got widespread support across the Territories.

I am just noticing how strange it is that it appears that some programs are just entrenched and they just stay and they get funded and funded and funded over again and then something new comes along and lights up a spark, you start making some differences and then three years is the time it takes to build some kind of momentum. Just when it's getting some legs under it, we are going to cut them out. I don't know if I can walk away from that knowing I have a hand in that. I think I would really urge this Assembly to try to figure out a way within the next week to see if we can save this program.

The understanding out there already is that this program will come to an end. It could be that all those people who have been involved in this program have found something else to do. We may be too late to resuscitate this. I think that goes to the argument of the difficulty restarting it once it has been concluded. If there was any chance at all to maintain this and improve this, it's now and we have a week to do so. I know, Madam Chair, that the Minister of Finance is very firm on saying and I am sure he's going to do everything he can to keep a \$50 million drop we got from the federal government to clear our deficit because he's determined to have a deficit-free budget, but I do believe this year we were going to end up with a \$47 million deficit. But now we have a \$50 million correction from the federal government, so we may actually have \$3 million to play with.

Madam Chair, I just want to say that's how governments usually work. You get into fiscal difficulties and the Minister of Finance sends a directive to 13 departments and says we have to cut so much and then things get cut. People out there don't care that ECE has to meet certain requirements and had to cut this program. They are going to say why are you still doing this or that, still spending \$12 million in travel but you are going to cut \$800,000 on a program that is really working for us in the communities. People don't care where the money pockets come from and they may not really care that you have zero deficit versus a \$47 million deficit and that's a good government. I don't want to make light of that, but it is our job to look at all priorities and see what our decisions are. I do believe we have to tighten our belts where we can and we should cut programs where there is a waste, but if there are programs that are working, we must make priority decisions. If there was anything that I have seen during the time of the review of the ECE budget and many other departments our committee reviewed, this is really something we must do everything we can to save.

So there is a lot of passion there. So that is my point and I think we are going to be dealing with this motion later on. We will continue to work with that. I am going to keep on

fighting this. I do believe our committee has the support of the Members to do something about this.

I do have a question that is a lot less exciting, I think. I just want to ask a question on the general government department area because I don't really know where it fits into the specifics. It has to do with the announcement, press release, that the Minister let out on February 10th about agreement to provide assessment of international credentials. This has been an important issue in the North as well, especially in light of the fact that our territory is part of Canada and the immigration trend has been to try to attract potential professional people to work and live in Canada. The NWT is certainly right up there. Whether they are doctors, lawyers, engineers or any other professions, in the past those people have had problems getting the proper credentials to practice their profession in Canada.

Reading the press release, I have some questions on the details. I would like to know what professions, trades or qualification areas the assessment service applies to. I understand we are using the service of Alberta. Do those residents in the NWT who want to be qualified for their international credentials have to apply to Alberta? Are there any linkages to any federal funding programs that I know are available in other jurisdictions? For example, in British Columbia, I understand there are pilot programs to provide financial support to engineers, for example, who are educated in other countries, to train to get their credentials up to speed. I am sure they have all the credentials, it's just being qualified for Canadian papers. Those are three prongs to my questions that are quite unrelated to my first passionate point. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I think this would be an appropriate time to give Mr. Dent some time to contemplate the answer to those questions while we take a short break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. We left off with Ms. Lee asking a question. Ms. Lee, did you want to restate that question, or is the Minister ready to answer that question? Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member had asked three questions about a program that we have in terms of recognizing international credentials. What we have done is rather than try and develop the expertise in house, is we have actually contracted the service with the Government of Alberta so that it is their people who will evaluate. What has to happen is that the credentials have to be sent to the office in Alberta where they are then checked for authenticity, for consistency, and the institutional status to make sure that they would qualify. What happens then is a general statement of comparability with Canadian standards is issued. So some bodies will then recognize it. There are a good number that will, but not all bodies will recognize that. For instance, the College of Physicians and Surgeons still would have to have their own criteria for making sure that a doctor was able to practice in Canada, but there are other jurisdictions across Canada or other bodies across Canada that will accept them. For instance, BC speech language pathologists, their speech language society will recognize the criteria. CGAs in Nova Scotia will

recognize. So it is quite broad and it does include organizations across Canada, but it is one where not all bodies will recognize the qualifications.

The Member had asked where people should apply. They can apply or get the address through any career centre. So all of the career centres in the Northwest Territories can make the information available. There is also a 1-800 number so that if people have questions about it they can get answers to their questions using the 1-800 number.

The Member also asked about a sponsorship program. In the Northwest Territories we don't, for instance, have a program that provides sponsorship to people who are engineers in another country and they are planning to come into the territory to work. Those sorts of programs are run by each individual province or territory, and are set up exclusively by them. So the example from BC that the Member had mentioned is one that was set up by the province of BC, and if we wanted to do the same sort of thing we could. To date, our government hasn't embarked on any of those sponsorship programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Just a small follow-up to that question. I asked the Minister if he could tell us what professions this assessment applies to, but I am thinking it might be a really extensive list. I will rephrase that and ask if this assessment program that we have contracted with Alberta is subject to consent by professions. For example, the engineering society here, or architectural society or medical or law society, they have to agree to be part of this program, that it is not a blanket application to all professions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this doesn't replace the registration with their professional organization if that is required to practice a profession. What it does is the credentials are checked and then assessed against a Canadian standard, and what you get is a certificate that says yes, you meet the standards, then you could submit that to the professional organization and they would then review it and determine whether or not to agree that you should be able to practice. For instance, Alberta Opticians recognize the standards and are willing to accept them. It is a fairly extensive list, but it doesn't replace the regulation that comes from the professional bodies.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. No further general comments. I will now move to the detail, 9-7 is the department summary. We will go to 9-9, directorate and administration, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6.444 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Keeping up with the work that we have been doing, may I ask the Minister for the breakdown on the other expenses for \$2.9 million? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under other expenses under the directorate, miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies, purchased contract services, and public relations. Actually, sorry, purchased contract supplies are \$99,000; public relations, \$36,000; under policy and planning the EFAP, family assistance program, education leave, miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased contract services there is \$84,000. Mr. Chairman, I will start that again.

Under policy and planning, under EFAP and education leave there is \$84,000; under miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased contract services there is \$126,000; under management services, ECE system maintenance there is \$2.239 million. Over half of that is for chargebacks on the computer system, by the way, that is for ongoing support for CMAS and computer chargebacks, for department contracts. Fax, copier, mail, and courier there is \$155,000, and for miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies, purchased contracts services there is \$193,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you for that detail, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that we are dealing with a level of details that we have not gone through before. I understand that, but what I am noticing now from the Minister's answers is that the way the department reports these figures is quite different. So far we have had, I don't know how many departments now, all of the other expenses were broken up with travel and transportation first, then material and supplies, and then contract services, purchased services, then often you would have another other expenses that would have a sub-breakdown. Whereas, the department here is breaking down each activity by another program underneath. I am wondering if it is possible for the Minister to just give a breakdown by travel, because that is what we are really interested in, and material services, contract services, purchased services for the whole activity section if possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, what I could do is if the interest of the committee is travel, what I do have is I have a listing of travel broken out for the whole department, and perhaps I could just run through that listing. This wouldn't be under this task then, this would include all of it, so you get the total travel budget all at once if you'd like, you can tell where it is coming from. But I could break it out for the committee all at once here, and that might be the easiest way to do it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Yes, that will take us to some length here, but also we are not disinterested in the other areas of other expenses either, such as material and supplies, contract services and such, where in some departments it was in the millions of dollars. Could the Minister help us out with that, please? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, we would be happy to do it whichever way the committee would like. We have all of the information here and we can do it any way. It appears to me though, that Ms. Lee would prefer that I stick to mixing travel in as we go through each page, or separating it out as we go through each page, and I can do that too. For instance, on this page we are talking about under the directorate and administration, there is \$73,000 for travel.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think that is what the Member was looking for. Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you very much. Then under this section on this page, could I get the Minister to give us figures on other categories, materials and services, contract services, purchased services I believe, and fees and payments if there are any, and computer software and hardware? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Certainly, Mr. Chairman. Materials and supplies is \$95,000; purchased services is \$191,000; contract services is \$631,000; fees and payments is \$106,000; other expenses is \$199,000; computer hardware and software is \$1.637 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you very much. May I just get some indication as to what sort of services are purchased under contract services for \$631,000, as well as \$1.6 million for computers seems high. Is there something unique about the programs that this division uses? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the computer chargeback, there are eleven systems that are maintained, so that is the chargeback that we pay for the maintenance of those systems basically. Mr. Chairman, I am advised too that that includes contract payments for software support. When you have software you often have to pay the manufacturer for support as well, so that is included in there. But this is all basically related to the 11 different systems, like the CMAS, the student financial assistance programs, the income support programs. There are a number of different computer systems that we run, 11 in total, and that is what the software support is for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a last follow-up on that item. Could I get the details for contract services for \$631,000? I believe what he just said has to do with the computer services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister, did you wish to respond?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The biggest portion of that would be for support for the CMAS system we pay to CGI.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I am done with that item. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Okay, back to directorate and administration, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6.44 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 9-11, advanced education and careers, operations expense, total operations expense, \$72.428 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am looking for a breakdown there too, please. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. A breakdown, Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of other expenses, I am assuming, Mr. Chairman, travel is \$177,000; materials and supplies is \$126,000; purchased services is \$168,000; utilities is \$526,000; contract services is \$3.091 million; fees and payments is \$17.116 million; and other expenses of \$4.274 million; computer hardware and software is \$212,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I get some information on that fee payment for \$17 million, as well as the contract services and further breakdown of other expenses for \$4 million? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, that is a very difficult one for us to break out because it is included in all of the different tasks. It includes everything from colleges and ABE literacy. I am not sure; I could give a more detailed breakdown I guess by task if that would help Members, but I can't break out where the fees would necessarily be in each of these. So I am asking for the direction of committee here. I can provide a much more detailed breakdown, but I can't answer the question as to how to break out other expenses and separate out the fees, because some of it is included in each of the tasks and I don't have it here divided up by fees.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. In the interest of time, I am prepared to just accept a commitment from the Minister to provide this info in as much detail as possible, but we are not looking for every dollar, we are looking for some categories. Secondly, I am interested in knowing, for the record, general ideas about what is entailed in the fees and payments and contract services, meaning what sort of things does that money go to? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, let me just read through this list that I have, it may answer the Member's question, although it may give it in more detail than what

she is interested in. Under the task colleges, and we are talking about the \$25.69 million. Of that, minor capital under colleges accounts for \$211,000; travel, materials, supplies and purchased services accounts for \$44,000; under ABE and literacy, curriculum and exam development accounts for \$28,000; travel, materials, supplies and purchased services accounts for \$14,000; under apprenticeship and training on-the-job subsidy contracts there is \$1.077 million; under apprenticeship upgrading programs, exam development, evaluation, tuition and promotion there is \$313,000; under apprenticeship again, still, occupational training and development there is \$417,000; diamond training subsidies of \$34,000; and miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased services there is \$66,000.

Under the task career and employment development, there are training on-the-job subsidy contracts for \$611,000; oil and gas training on-the-job subsidy contracts and agreements is \$350,000; youth at work is \$780,000; career centres is \$117,000; curriculum development and delivery, career counselling and training is \$106,000; labour market development contracts is \$60,000; miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased services of \$73,000.

Under income assistance, we have systems support of \$430,000; income assistance benefits of \$12.74 million; community delivery costs of \$914,000; seniors' supplementary benefits of \$1.953 million; the wood fuel subsidy for seniors is \$525,000; daycare user subsidies is \$1.42 million; miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased services of \$80,000.

Under student financial assistance we have remission write-offs to loan recipients of \$4.140 million; and miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased contract services of \$124,000.

Under the task regional management we have miscellaneous travel, materials, supplies and purchased services of \$107,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was trying to save time by offering the Minister to provide this information in writing or in another form, but now that he has read it, I think that really speaks to how absurd and how nonsensical the way we are reporting our budget is. Under this other expenses, it has everything from money to buy a pen and pencil and a chair, to providing subsidies to citizens for wood. Other expenses is just a big, huge basket and there has to be a better way for the Department of Finance and government in the way they keep the books so that it enables us on this side of the table to see what it is that we are approving here. In my five years here -- this is my fifth year -- I don't think we have ever gone into the kind of detail in examining other expenses. When you think of, for example, grants and contributions, somewhere along the way in the past somebody decided that grants and contributions should be listed. So every \$10,000, \$5,000 or \$1 million grants and contributions are listed as an item with an explanation provided, but for some reason in other expenses, for example if government provides any kind of program, even if it is for \$10,000 it is itemized, but if it is given as a contract to a private company in Yellowknife and they provide training on oil and gas it doesn't have to be listed,

it is just lumped up with \$26 million in other expenses. There just has to be a better way, and I think what we are doing here highlights that, because I don't think you can have the kind of accountability and transparency that people expect from us as long as we keep the books this way.

Also, we are not able to suggest and help the Minister of Finance make priority decisions about where we could cut, and where we can do better, and weigh the qualities and the merit of government expenditures if we keep on keeping the books this way. I am not laying blame on any individual government employee, I think it is just the way that the books have been kept and I think it is time that we change that. I have a question unrelated to other expenses under advanced education and careers, but the point about how we keep the books, I am going to make a point about that being dealt with at another forum, perhaps through a committee process.

I have a question on the advanced education and careers brought to me by a constituent, and it has to do with the lack of office or manpower there to provide support to people who are going through apprenticeship programs. It is my understanding that there have been a lot of reductions, or at least that there is not enough manpower to deal with those who want to sign up for apprenticeship or need support or supervision, in light of the fact that this is a very important area given the economic activities that are taking place. I think the Minister might be aware of this already. It has been brought up in the House a number of times. Could I ask the Minister whether he has taken any steps since he took over this office to better resource this area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sure the Minister of Finance was listening to the Member's earlier comments and will be prepared to respond to the Member at an appropriate time on those comments.

On her second point when it comes to the apprenticeship issue and the human resource support that we provide, I have indeed heard the concern expressed by Members here, and I have asked the department to take a look at that. There is a review underway right now. We currently have six staff supported by career development, or career centre staff across the Territories, but we are examining the situation to see what might be appropriate levels of support to provide in those offices right now. The Member is right; it is an issue that has been raised and it is one that I have directed staff to come back to me with a report on, and I will be moving forward shortly after I get that report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee, your time has expired. I'm going to now move to Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the department a question in terms of advanced education and careers. In the last couple of months I have been in some of the communities in the Sahtu and they asked about the initiative of this department in terms of helping the young people for preparing them for oil and gas training. We have the highway there and a lot of people want to work on the highway. One of the issues they have talked about is having Aurora College come into

the communities and start training them to help them obtain a class I driver's licence, or as mechanics or on heavy equipment in the Sahtu region. We have some oil companies that are also working in the Sahtu region that are willing to help, and it seems like we're having a hard time getting the department and the oil companies together to look at some training programs. I'm not too sure if the coordination is communicated well in the Sahtu region. Are we missing the boat somewhere? That was something they brought up to me during my visits into the communities there. I want to ask the Minister and his staff if the Sahtu can expect some solid commitments that when the communities are ready they could ask the Aurora College board or ask the department that we have some oil companies that may be coming back into the Sahtu that maybe you want to look at some advanced training or career training that falls in line with the Department of Transportation in terms of class I driver training. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would certainly like to hear if there are problems in communities in terms of there being a willing partner to work with us in training. I would like to know about it if there's a problem having us take advantage of it. We are always anxious to work with partners to make sure training can take place. I think in the past we've been pretty good through the regional offices. The staff have been very aggressive at finding partners and making sure that there are opportunities. But if something seems to be slipping through our fingers and if the Member hears about one, I would certainly like to hear about it because I'll make sure that we get moving on it right away. So, yes, the commitment is there that we will look for opportunities to find partners for training.

The Member talks about things like heavy equipment, mechanics and so on. For those we have to have the partners. We have to have partners who are willing to take on apprentices in order to provide that training. So if there are people in the region who are prepared to do that, we're anxious to work with them to make sure that young people can take advantage of the opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I had one partner in the Sahtu communities who said they were interested in looking at an initiative where they can start training our young people, men and women, in terms of the heavy equipment in terms of mechanics and driving and so forth. That's something that maybe after this we can have some discussions. They were very interested, and they said we could look at this and this government to get the show on the road and start training our people here.

The other point I want to make to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, is there was a company in Fort Good Hope that worked up there last winter. Some of the young students want to get into training, so this company donated a considerable amount of money in terms of saws and hammers and all sorts of carpentry equipment for the Fort Good Hope school. We have good partners and good business people in the communities to support our youth

in advancing their careers. I'm not too sure if that has been communicated to your department, Mr. Minister. I was in Fort Good Hope when that thing happened and the teachers were smiling. This is where we want to get our young people in grades 10, 11 and 12 to start thinking about careers either in law or medicine or administration or carpentry or electrical and plumbing, and start steering them towards that direction and give them that direction. This company has done that in that sense, because it knows that it's good business for them. It helps the students and it's good for public relations with the communities. I wonder in terms of career development and career advancement, would the department look at communicating with the Chairs in terms of starting to steer the students into the trades area or into the world such as business, law, medicine and management. I would like to ask the Minister if he would somehow communicate that to the boards and his officials to take a look at this process here.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In our recent discussion at the end of February with the board Chairs, the issue of trades and the demand for trades training in the North was certainly a big topic of discussion. So I think that we are already taking that opportunity. There has been a real change in emphasis in the past six or seven years in education in the Northwest Territories in what sort of emphasis we put on trades training. There are so many future jobs in the Territories that are going to require trades training, that it really is an area that has a tremendous amount of opportunity. It's also a great area for young people looking at it, because they can take their four years of training, come out without having a lot of debt, they earn while they're learning, and the earning potential for people in the trades in many areas is as high or higher than what they can earn in professions.

I will take the Member's advice when it comes to recommending that young people take a look at the law, particularly given the shortage we have in the North of family law practitioners. I would love to see a few more northern lawyers, particularly if they are prepared to take on the practice of family law.

Counselling services are expected to be provided to all of the students in the Northwest Territories. It's supposed to involve their families. It's important that all of the schools and the counsellors and people in the education system are aware of what all of the opportunities are for young people, and that we're making sure that people are making the right choices so that they can move forward and achieve the education they need to be successful.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I have about 40 seconds, so I'm going to make a really short comment here in terms of helping families who are on income support programs, that we could look at the ways of supporting families to be more self-reliant in the communities that would be more productive in the communities to look at other areas that this department has been doing. I lost my train of thought, Mr. Chair, so I'm just going to leave it at that. Trying to ask my question

in 40 seconds just doesn't do it, so I'm going to leave it and put some more thought to it, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the best things we have going for us here in the Northwest Territories is our student financial assistance program. It's one of the best in Canada in terms of the extent of support we provide. I think it is one of the great advantages that we hold out to helping families stay in the North and helping attract families to consider growing here and living here and expanding the economy and the society we have.

In looking at the budget item here, Mr. Chairman, I see an increase in the program of \$1 million, from about \$11.8 million in this current year to \$12.8 million in the coming year and I'm wondering if the Minister could provide a bit of detail on the growth in that line item. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is made up a couple of things. There is a bit over \$800,000, as I mentioned in my opening comments, that relates to the expansion of the nursing program. Sorry; it's \$269,000 due to the bachelor program and nursing program because of the increased enrolment. The \$825,000 is a catch-up in student financial assistance. That's really just growth that has happened because of an increased uptake over the years. The money wasn't in our budget previously, but it got to the point that we couldn't cover it from other places and have now asked and received permission to put it in the base.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. An area that I'm hearing a little bit more on from some people in Yellowknife, and certainly there is a lot of traffic on the national media, Mr. Chairman, is in the skyrocketing rates of tuition and the expenses that students incur as they go about their post-secondary education. I would like to see if the Minister could tell us what are we doing to keep pace with this. I know, for instance, that we have certain caps on the amount that we provide for tuition. As generous as they are, we might be losing pace here. I'm wondering if the Minister could tell us are we monitoring this, what is the trend, are we in a situation where we should be looking at keeping pace? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now the average across Canada for tuition is about \$4,000 a year, and our program provides a grant of \$3,500. So students' families have to come up with about \$500 towards the cost of tuition on average. There will be a number of programs, obviously, that are higher than that and some that are less expensive. But our program provides a maximum of \$3,500 towards tuition, and that hasn't changed for quite some time, since the program was redesigned a number of years ago.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, what are the trends here? Should we be looking at augmenting this \$3,500 in the relatively near future? Are we keeping watch on this? Are we keeping tabs on it? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very shortly after I became Minister I raised this issue with the department and asked that they do some work to take a look at what trends were across Canada. I, too, had heard from people that our system appeared to be falling behind in some areas. So it is something that we're watching. We're looking for opportunities that we may have to restructure the program somewhat to try and make it more relevant, more useful. That is, of course, a challenge when we have the fiscal climate that we have. But, yes, it is something that hasn't fallen off the radar, it is something that we're looking at, and I'd certainly be prepared to provide a presentation to the standing committee. In fairly short order we should be ready with the work that I've asked to have done.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. In this area and coming from some of the very diligent questioning that Ms. Lee has been putting Ministers to in the area of other expenses, the Minister mentioned under student financial assistance about \$4 million for loan write-offs, I believe was the term used. Could the Minister describe what is meant by the term "write-offs?" Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, the vast majority of that money is remissions, so there will be some money for student loans where the person passes away or goes bankrupt while still owing some money on their loan. In those situations there are write-offs, but most of the money we're talking about here is remission.

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

MR. BRADEN: Another area of general interest under this area, Mr. Chairman, in advanced education and careers, is the need for us to somehow provide assistance to new Canadians in the area of English as a second language instruction. Can the Minister advise does the GNWT make this kind of training available through any of our institutions or perhaps indirectly through NGOs? What are we doing to help out new Canadians who need that kind of literacy help? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our government doesn't actually spend any money on delivering that kind of program. The programs are available through Aurora College, and the federal government contracts with Aurora College for the delivery

of those programs. So the programs are available, but they're paid for by the federal government.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay, thank you. I will ask the question whether you have any ability to know is the need being satisfied through the federal programs? Are we providing enough programs and enough access to satisfy the need? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, it hasn't been raised as an issue with us. We do talk to the federal government on a fairly regular basis. The college hasn't alerted us that there is a bigger demand than what can be satisfied through what's being delivered. So to the best of our knowledge right now, the demand must be being met.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask the Minister about the career and technical centre project in Yellowknife. I think a lot of Members here have spoken about the need for resources for training of our young people so they could take advantage of economic opportunities that are happening around us. I know that the government has transferred the land on which the centre is built, but I don't believe there has been any resources to either help with the project or in terms of any commitment to any programs that could be held there that would go toward paying for the project. Also, we are already aware of the fact that some of the major industries and companies, such as De Beers, have made some significant financial contributions towards this project. The people involved with this project are working really hard to raise money from outside of the government, and they have been quite successful to a certain extent. I think we will know more about the extent of that when the centre has the official opening come next Friday. But I know that this project is in desperate need of some assistance from the government, and I do believe this is in line with everything the Department of Education, Culture and Employment stands for. So I would like to ask the Minister as to whether or not he has given any thought to this project, and a commit from the Minister that he would look within the budget to see whether this project could qualify for any funding from his department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned to Mr. Delorey earlier, this sort of program I think is on everybody's radar right now. It is an extremely important type of program, but, unfortunately, we haven't identified any money to add into the formula for schools. So the schools are going to have to look for opportunities to partner up. I know, for instance, the Yellowknife Catholic Schools have gotten some short-term contracts with Aurora College for the use of the facility. They did make it available, as I said earlier, to the Dogrib Community Services Board for some of their students to take advantage of over the spring break. But at this point, the schools would have to choose to reallocate funding from within the formula if they wanted to support this kind

of programming. All the money that we have that we can provide the schools is going to schools, and we haven't been able to increase that funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Am I to understand that that's that and there's no point for these project people to come and ask for any kind of assistance from the government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would hope that we are at some point going to be able to take a look at this important type of programming throughout the territory. But in the budget that you have before you there is no extra funding to accommodate trades training in schools.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate whether or not he has had an audience with the people involved with this project, to see what it is they're doing and what it is that they're looking for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have had an opportunity to tour the facility. I have had an informal meeting with members of the board, so I am aware, in a general sense, of what the interest is. I do know what the programming is that they propose to offer, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems like there is a pretty solid wall there, and I'm not sure if I could break through that at this setting. But I think I have to make a note of the fact that while what the Minister is saying makes sense in terms of the way our budgeting process works. I don't think the people out there, especially people in Yellowknife who are seeing the resource development activities happening around us and the call on the part of the government are aware of it and that they're doing everything they can to support training of our young to get ready for it. I don't think that makes sense to the people, that when a community group like this on their own initiative and a board that has been elected by the people on their initiative comes up with an idea, comes up with a facility, finds a niche and finds the need and endeavours to fill those training needs, then to succeed in raising as much as \$500,000 or \$600,000, and for the government to say we don't have one penny to add to that is just not something that is consistent with the message that the government is sending. So I don't have a question, but I would really urge the Minister and the government to rethink that process and pay attention and pay time to this to understand the merits of it, and find a way to give assistance to this project. I'm wondering if maybe even the oil and gas money that was announced

by the federal government or economic development money, or if there could be any linkages found to help projects like this. I wonder if the Minister could undertake to look into that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had mentioned earlier to Mr. Delorey that Yellowknife Catholic Schools had a good example that I discussed with the Chairs of other boards, for a facility that they had managed to find partnerships to develop it. I don't think anybody is denying the importance of trades training for young people in the North, particularly given our opportunities in the resource development field over the next several years. So I would dearly love to be able to say that we had some money in the budget to improve what we have for trades training.

I guess I also need to say that the budget you have before you, I've already mentioned, and I realize, Mr. Chairman, we're on the wrong page because actually what we're talking about is on page 9-17. The budget you have before you, the contributions to schools, doesn't include all the money given. I'm going to have to come back for a supp for \$2.8 million on top of this just to have enough money to maintain the contributions that the schools in the Northwest Territories are getting right now. That's without adding any extra programming. So what you're seeing in this budget now is not the final dollar. We didn't have the final count for enrolment until just recently, so we couldn't demonstrate the need for the increased funds. We now have the final count for enrolment as of this year. So based on the actual enrolments, we're going to have to come back to this Legislative Assembly for a supplementary appropriation in the range of close to \$3 million just to maintain what we're doing already.

So it is an important area, we need to find some way to do it, we are examining what makes the most sense in terms of programming for schools and how we should do things when it comes to funding the school districts, the divisional education councils. But as it stands right now, we haven't got any extra money to put into that kind of program.

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

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to speak to something that has been on people's minds in my riding for many, many years, and I think it's time I have an opportunity to speak to it.

In terms of our value system, there seems to be a conflict between what we call a land-based economy versus a commerce-based economy. Unfortunately, as we, if I may use the word politely, Mr. Chairman, have been marginalized, we tend to deal with on an ongoing basis of those who are on income support. The difficulty seems to lie in the way we manage the transitional change or the stages which we go through. Unfortunately, the majority of my riding is in that boat.

Once assistance is offered, many times over and over, we need to offer some support to income support clients through a funding mechanism to put people back on the land where they will come resourceful again. I asked the Minister of RWED the other day if he would consider

working with your ministry to see if you can reform some of your policies so people can become self-reliant again. It goes beyond the promoting of self-reliance. It also entails a number of interesting concepts and those are concepts such as the healing process, heading back where living off the land becomes job worthiness rather than one where you have to earn an income to support yourself. Once you learn the skills on the land, there are many different aspects to it. Certainly it's a learning institution in itself. There are survival skills and I look at hopefully with the reform in RWED to support educational transition and how we use animals for commercial purposes, the collection of qiviuk, for example, and trying to overcome some of the political problems we do have at the community level to advocate the need for some kind of an economic reform.

So, Mr. Minister, I want to take this opportunity to talk a bit about how those productive choices can be managed through a different effort, an effort which requires the combination of on-the-land skill development as well as incorporating certain educational tools. I want to just say in my 14 years of teaching in the wilderness area, we made a lot of scientists out of young trappers. They understand the geology, the geography, the biomass, the plants, the different seasonal uses. They also became good mathematicians because they could understand the value of distance, trigonometry. Although I am not an expert in mathematics, I certainly understand when they try to factor in the different degrees of grades of a hill. So it does have an educational factor.

Just in conclusion, I would like to ask the department to consider if they would work with another department and see if we can put people back on the land developing certain teaching modules and perhaps that can be considered as part of their educational process. That is something we need to look at as an alternative other than keeping people on income support and paying huge community costs to maintain them. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we would be prepared to work with another department to accomplish that sort of thing.

I don't think a lot of people are aware that a traditional lifestyle is a productive choice in our income support program. It is supported through the income support program right now. For instance, if somebody wants to choose that, we are quite prepared to support them by the purchase of fuel and shells to help them get back on the land and help them become self-sufficient on the land. That is already accomplished. The Member also talked about the need for training, and that is the one area that isn't available right now. So we would be prepared to work with others to achieve that. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just going back to some points that the Minister had made during some questions on his opening remarks on this education budget. The Minister had noted that the level of the number of students that have been enrolled in high schools in the NWT has declined over the past few years. I am wondering if the Minister can elaborate a little more on that in the context of are these students...I don't see an enrolment change per se or a drop in population, but is

the Minister aware that perhaps a significant number of families are now considering sending their students who qualify for high school to southern institutions? Does the Department of Education know what that number might be? Does it fill the gap and difference between the changes in the levels of enrolment?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't earlier say that the numbers of students in high schools had dropped. I said the overall schools population had declined by just under one percent. It's about .8 percent year to year. Most of the decline is in the younger ages rather than the older, and that is consistent with the aging population and it is somewhat expected. As the population ages, you tend to have fewer young children in the population as a proportion. What I did say was the high school participation is increasing. We are getting more young people, particularly more aboriginal young people, into high school and into graduation. The trends seem to be pretty good.

I know there have always been some people who have preferred to send their children south for any number of reasons, but we have no way of tracking when people might be doing that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On another point, the question of students being sent to southern institutions to be more academically challenged with their curriculum, I wonder if the Department of Education has considered the development of some type of a multilateral strategy that includes the government, industry, the federal government and any private input from individuals or families into some kind of an education fund that would assist a lot of academically challenged students from the NWT to go to institutions which will challenge them academically, intellectually, socially and mentally so that the NWT can realize that these students can go on to even higher professional development careers as doctors and lawyers and professional engineers. I wonder if the Department of Education has ever considered such a plan.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have good schools in all regions of the Northwest Territories and we've had people who have gone on to become lawyers, teachers, professors, doctors from all regions. So our plan is to continue to support the schools in the Northwest Territories. There is no plan to develop any process to support students to attend schools outside the Territories.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to ask the Minister if he would be supportive of an initiative that would develop some kind of an endowment fund, something like the Chair was referring to in a different department, that industry could contribute to and education would support and work to develop some kind

of a revolving fund, an endowment fund, that would allow students to seek career development, higher education, in other countries. Institutions would specialize in areas of real professional development and expertise.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Member is referring to secondary schooling, then the answer is it would not be likely. If the Member is talking about post-secondary schooling, we currently support students to take their schooling in other jurisdictions if that is where they choose to find that it's best to do it. There are a number of aboriginal organizations that help their members to top up from student financial assistance to ensure that they can achieve at a higher level if that will help them. That sort of process is always going to be available, but I am not sure that we would be interested in seeing it happen for high school students. We want to make sure we have the best possible system in the Northwest Territories. So if there is money available for schools, I want to see it go to improving what we can do here in the Territories and making sure, for instance, that we do have better training for high school students before we start sending our students away. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That sounds okay to me. It sounds like the Minister is willing to keep it under consideration for further discussion.

Just getting back to some of the increase in some program funding, the increase in the student financial assistance and the income support program, I am curious as to the levels of increase that these programs are going to be receiving. What percentage of those increases are actually going to be going to the students and what percentage is going to just administration of the program delivery?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no money going to administration. It's all program. No additional staff at all.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would there be any change in the levels of funding for these programs?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: No, there is no change to the program. We are still going to have \$1,750 maximum per semester for the tuition, for example. This is really related to a volume increase. We've had a significant increase in the number of students who are accessing student financial assistance and so that's really the biggest driver, the numbers of people taking it. The loan side would be driven by cost to cost increase.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will now move back to page 9-11, advanced education and careers, operations expense, total operations expense, \$72.428 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 9-13, advanced education and careers, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$8.578 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Contributions, continued on page 9-14, total contributions, \$29.903 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total grants and contributions, \$38.481 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 9-17, education and culture, operations expense, total operations expense, \$134.837 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I get a breakdown for the other expenses there, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The travel is \$480,000; materials and supplies, \$234,000; purchased services, \$157,000; utilities, \$227,000; contract services, \$1.388 million; fees and payments, \$563,000; other expenses, \$21,000; computer hardware and software, \$383,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier the Minister indicated that the enrolment figures are in and he's seen an increase. Could we get some more information on that, please? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These numbers are not completely finalized and that is why I said we would likely be coming back for a supplementary request. In the 2003-04 school year, the contributions to schools was \$110.375 million. What we are expecting that will be in the next year is \$113.233 million. That's made up of UNW increases, cost for implementing curriculum, updating of average salaries for the enrolment change and to maintain the 15 percent inclusive schooling directive, basically.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of that increase that is attributable to enrolment increases, could the

Minister indicate as to the regional trend by the enrolment increase in major centres? Is it all over the Territories or is there something distinctive about age groups? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Beaufort-Delta and the Sahtu appear to have had relatively significant decreases. One of the boards in Yellowknife has decreased while the other has increased. It's almost an offset there. So there isn't a significant change and in the other regions there is not significant change. The actual enrolment change in the Northwest Territories has not been growth. The total drop in the school system in this year over last is 352 students. So there are 352 students fewer this year than last. Sorry, it's not quite that. It works out to just less than 100 in total is what the reduction has been. It works out to about .8 percent apparently.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I am not going to try to do the Minister's job, but could it be just forced growth from salary increases that are part of the collective bargaining and not as a result of overall growth in student numbers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, Mr. Chairman. In fact, that's what I said. There hasn't been any growth in the students. The number of students has actually gone down. There has been a reduction in the number of students. Almost \$2 million of that is due to salary increases.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Those are my questions for now, thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make some comments with regard to the early childhood program. Before I make a comment, maybe I will ask a question. When was the last time the Education Act was reviewed, amended or looked upon by the Territories?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We brought in a new Education Act in 1996.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. The reason I ask is because education and the curriculum from K to 12 is important. The people in the small communities have a lot of things happening and there are a lot of things that need to be taught to kids in schools such as the land claim agreements that we settled in the Sahtu in 1993. That's a living document that's going to be used by future generations and parents are talking about how the land claims document needs to be taught in

our school. We need to start educating our children on what it says in that document because that's the document they will be living with for years to come unless they change it.

The other one is about the history about our elders and the treaties that were signed in 1921. When I went back home, one of my children was writing an essay on Sir Alexander Mackenzie. He asked me about Sir Alexander Mackenzie. He said in his report that he went down the Mackenzie River and the river was named after him. I said you didn't know that Sir Alexander Mackenzie landed in Tulita and took one of our people with him as far as Arctic Red River? He kidnapped him and took him to Arctic Red River. He got there and during the night, like a good native, he made a quick escape back to Tulita. He came all the way back to Tulita and that's our history. I said you should write this story because that's part of our history. I really appreciated that the teacher accepted part of that story and he got a good mark for that.

In terms of curriculum, our history needs to be told in a way that's respectful. History has to do diligence. We have the education system and we are part of it, but it seems like there is not enough teeth to really say here is the land claim document and it's part of your curriculum because it's part of your life. That's what the people want. They want to see changes like that. They want to see real changes in the communities that make a difference and look upon it as a contribution to the society and helping people who came to the Northwest Territories and live on this land. So far, our curriculum has been one-sided and we need to balance it. It's high time to balance it. With a lot of respect, we need to look at that.

I know I have said a lot to you and the officials. I want to convey the wishes of the Sahtu region that education is important, no doubt about it. Our elders have said that times are going to be changing and we are going to have to learn to read and write and work in a different way, but we shouldn't forget who we are and where we come from. It's important that our history is told to the rest of the world and the contribution we made to the world and how we help each other out. That's what I want to convey to you and the department. I know it's a lot of work, but it's really important. That's what people in the Sahtu have stressed.

A lot of things have happened, good or bad, right or wrong, it's happened in our region. An example is the residential school experience. That happened. We dealt with the impacts and effects of it and now we see it in our community. People are seeing this and that, but a lot of people are saying it has stemmed from the residential schools and flow into our family, our lives, into our school and our kids are really getting into trouble. We have to look at what it did to us and acknowledge it and keep on going. That's what we say. The residential schools also did some good for people in terms of learning about writing and math, but it did a lot of harm for us and we want to look at the true history of the residential schools in our communities. The Roman Catholic report was important. Just in Inuvik alone, in the Grollier Hall facility, 2,500 students went through that system from 1959 to 1979. A lot of damage was done. Just recently it is being looked upon.

I just wanted to say a few comments to ask you about this stuff here. The people in the communities want to see some changes and they want to look at things that would be positive for us and see where we can go as a region in

the Northwest Territories and contribute to the Northwest Territories. Until those things are dealt with, we are going to be back here next year and will probably be saying this speech, Mr. Minister. I just wanted to make comments to the staff that you have a big job ahead of you. What we are saying has some merit to it, a lot of merit to it. There are a lot of things that need to be changed and I hope your department will look upon that in terms of getting the message to the people and what is meaningful to the people in those small communities. That makes a difference. Mahsi.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The curriculum should reflect the local culture and history all the time and it can. What we can do in curriculum development is make sure the suggestions are made for specific things to consider when dealing with curriculum.

The issue of treaties has been raised by other people. I think it's one there is a real interest in seeing there be something mentioned in school about treaties and it would certainly be appropriate in the social studies course. At the current time the curriculum for kindergarten to Grade 9 social studies is under review, and we can make sure that as we're doing that we keep in mind the Member's comments about the issues that should be raised as part of social studies that reflect the culture and history of the Northwest Territories.

One of the challenges we're facing is that with the fiscal climate, the development of curricula has slowed down because we've taken resources away from that over the years in order to make sure we can continue to put as much as possible into the classroom. But we are continuing to work on advancing the curricula and we will keep the Member's comments in mind. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is line items on education and culture. I'd just like to speak on them, but perhaps if I can ask the Minister what the latest initiatives in terms of supporting the acquisition and maintenance of aboriginal languages and culture just in terms of whether there are any recent studies being done to support these important initiatives in this department.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of any recent educational studies, but I know that a special committee of this Legislative Assembly spent a considerable amount of time travelling around the North talking to people about what was important to them. The inclusion of language and culture in the schools was considered important. We do try to reflect that as much as possible.

The Member for Sahtu has spoken often about how a person is stronger when they know their culture, their history and their language. I think there's been a lot of research over the years that shows that's true. You have to be confident in yourself, know yourself and where you belong in the world in order to be successful.

There is a significant investment by the department in monies in the formula for schools to undertake the program of language acquisition, maintenance and revitalization, but to date we've left it to each of the regions to determine themselves how to spend that money, by and large. They've not had a lot of guidance. But as I've said in my opening comments, because there had been some concern about how it's being spent, we're working on a directive now in order to make sure there is an agreement that we're spending the money in ways that can satisfy the expectations of legislators who are providing the money to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to ascertain from the Minister whether the priorities that we establish here as the Government of the Northwest Territories, does that become the priorities of the regional divisional education boards?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indirectly, yes. This government controls the funding flow to the boards, so there's an expectation that the boards will follow the philosophy of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment when they're providing the schooling. But boards are given a significant amount of freedom because they're elected locally, and as long as they're delivering the service as set out in the Education Act and subject to the directives and standards that we have in the department, then they can set their program delivery pretty much autonomously.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think the next question for the Minister from me would be that I'm just trying to determine whether the priority is identified in this special report. I was wondering if there was a move or trend towards having more aboriginal language and culture used in the school. Some of my constituents were talking to me. They're saying, Kevin, the way it looks to me is that the government has a priority in languages and culture, yet we're actually only spending five to 10 percent of our time in these endeavours. So what's the real priority? I'd just like to ask the Minister if, in fact, there is a move to utilize aboriginal languages and cultures more in the school.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in terms of total funding in 2002-2003, we provided school boards with almost \$6.5 million in total towards aboriginal language and culture programs. As I said, there hasn't been a lot of consistency in how that has been spent, and there has been some concern about whether or not we can demonstrate to this Assembly that it has been spent in ways that Members would consider appropriate. Knowing that, I've talked to the Chairs of the boards and advised them that we need to work on a directive to make sure that the spending is able to be demonstrated to the Members of this Assembly as being

spent appropriately. That's what we will be ensuring is happening starting this fall.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I can appreciate also some of the local resource problems with regard to aboriginal languages and culture. Some of the things that lead me to think that it can be improved more efficiently is if we use the languages and culture more and it's more supported by our government and as a result by our education department. For instance, it was brought to my attention the Jewish people in Ontario are all really strongly knowledgeable in their languages and in their culture. I was wondering how an almost dead culture continues to be fluent in their language and their culture. It was pointed out to me that what happens is that they got buy-in from the school boards in Ontario to spend a huge amount of time utilizing their language and culture to be taught in the schools. For example, it would be taught all day on a Friday.

It kind of made sense to me that that's something I'd like to pursue as an elected Member to this government, that we should be using our aboriginal languages all day. The way it's situated right now, it's just not working to be speaking English all evening, come to school in the morning, speak Slavey for an hour and then finish off the rest of your school in English. I'm gravitating towards increasing this component. Yes, it's every day, but perhaps let's set it aside for a Friday and spend most of our time in the aboriginal language.

It might take a huge shift in our thinking because now we're not just going to be teaching languages all day, we're going to have to start concentrating on the fundamentals of math and sciences. That's a huge undertaking itself, but I'd like to steer the government in that direction, saying it's valuable enough and this is the direction we should go to maintain our language and culture, and to reaffirm them for our youth and for our future. I'd just like the Minister's comments on those thoughts of guiding our aboriginal languages and culture and firmly entrenching them in our education system.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now DECs and DEAs can do that sort of thing. That's permitted. We would welcome seeing it happen. The problem is often, as the Member has already noted, the resources and finding teachers who are fluent in the local languages is sometimes a problem. There's no question that it can be done. There can be more done in aboriginal languages in the school and we encourage more and more of it to take place. I think it's important to remember that the schools can't save the language. Again it comes back to family and community buy-in. There has to be more than just an hour a day or all day Friday at school in order to make the language stay alive and thrive. It has to be something that people in the community are supporting and happy to use at home.

One of the areas where we have tremendous success in the school systems is in the Tlicho region. You visit Chief Jimmy Bruneau School and when you walk through the halls there you don't hear teenagers speaking English. You tend to hear the teenagers speaking in their own

language. When you know that the kids are comfortable in their own language, they're speaking it without being in a classroom, without being forced to speak it, that's when you know that the language is going to stay alive and thrive. That's what you need to see. That's not happening because it's being taught at the school, it's happening because there's community leaders' support for the language, and the leaders and the community use their language all the time. The schools are part of it, but there has to be a real broad support for language use in the communities around the North in order to make sure that the languages stay alive and thrive.

We can do our part, and DEAs and DEC's should be doing as much as they can to use the language of the communities, but we need families and leaders to buy in as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. What I heard from the Minister was that the authority is there with the divisional boards to allow that kind of structure to exist, which is to have a day set aside to concentrate on education of aboriginal languages. Maybe if the Minister could confirm that for me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's something that is completely open to DEAs. For instance, in K to 3 the DEA could decide to do the entire program in an aboriginal language. It could be five days a week. The flexibility is there within our system to allow a significant amount of aboriginal language programming. It's a challenge for a lot of districts though to find adequate resources, to find people who can teach and speak the language as well. That does become a big problem. Then we need to make sure that our communities are being supported.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Now we'll go on to Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one more issue with the education and culture. I just wanted to touch on a subject that I'm sure we've all had questions about and we're all familiar with. That has to do with sex education in our school systems. Just noting that, I know that people and students that are well educated in sex, and the outcome of irresponsible sexual behaviour would make more informed decisions with respect to the actions they take and some informed decisions in modifying their sexual practices. It would help alleviate a lot of problems we have with combating STDs and other diseases such as HIV and AIDS, and just basically improve the overall health of students. I know it's something that has always been an issue with a lot of families and high school students and a lot of DEAs.

I'm just wondering if the government has a policy with respect to how sex education is conducted, or if it is in any of our school systems and how they could develop a system where students wouldn't be so compelled to take it lightly and be more diligent when considering courses of this nature. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Courses that teach the sorts of things the Member was talking about -- I believe it's called Healthy Relationships - is part of the health curriculum and is required to be taken. I think it starts in Grade 8 or so. There is a requirement that it be taught. I can tell the Member that when I was Minister five years ago, I would often take the opportunity when I was visiting schools to ask high school students their thoughts about AIDS and so on. I found that the students were actually very well informed about sexually-transmitted diseases and the implications, yet, after I asked the question, they would often indicate to me that it didn't seem to matter in terms of altering their behaviour. There seems to be a bit of a problem in altering the behaviour, not teaching it. They were very well informed and able to prove that they had taken the course, but they didn't seem to think it was all that important to them. So we have some work to do there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to top up on that question. I know in a lot of communities there are high incident rates of teen pregnancies and what not. I know that it has always been a conundrum for district education authorities to try and tackle and find ways to resolve and educate youth in that area. I was just wondering if it is a DEA role whether a school incorporates a program like that, Healthy Relationships and such.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, that's not an optional program. It's a required part of the curriculum, it must be taught.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): If there are no further general comments, we'd like to proceed with detail. One moment. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one small question under this area, and then two motions that I'd like to move. My question, Mr. Chairman, has to do with the waiving of... We're still on page 9-17, right?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Yes, we are.

MS. LEE: Okay. Thank you. My question has to do with the fees that the schools were charging to students which the Minister has, I believe, sent a directive asking the school boards not to levy those fees to aboriginal students. I understand the position of the aboriginal governments that this is a treaty right for the students to go to school and they shouldn't be asked to pay, and that's fine. I'm just wondering about the repercussion that may be in the school system that might have relied on this as extra funding for the school. I'm interested in knowing what the financial impact of that might be and whether

there have been any requests by school boards to the department to make up for the loss in that revenue they've had for a long time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there have been no formal requests for the department to reimburse boards for those monies so far. I think it's important to remember that there are only a few boards that actually charged fees. Most boards in the Northwest Territories did not charge any extra fees. We would be hard pressed to justify giving extra money to some and not to all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that those boards who were charging these fees have decided that they would not charge those fees to anyone at all, not just those who have been defined to be exempt. Does the Minister have any indication as to what the dollar figures were that school boards who were charging them were raising under this fee?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware. I think there were three boards in the Northwest Territories that were charging fees. I know that at the meeting with the board Chairs that at least one of the Chairs did mention a number, but I can't remember what that amount was; I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Minister could make a commitment to just look into that. I guess the schools will just have to raise the money in other ways and do more fundraising than they have done in the past. I think the money was usually used for school activities. If the Minister could make a commitment to get back to us with the figures, I would appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, this isn't a number that the boards have ever reported to us. Like I say, most boards did not charge any extra fees, so it's not something that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment was ever involved in. We could write a letter requesting the amounts that they were getting, if the Member would like, and we can pass that on to her. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would now like to move a motion. The first one has to do with the reduction being proposed by the Minister on their early childhood development program.

Committee Motion 6-15(3): To Continue To Provide Base Funding For The Early Childhood Development Program, Carried

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment continue to provide base funding for its early

childhood development program at 2003-2004 levels and program delivery parameters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not going to say a lot on this one. I think a lot has been spoken in support of what we are trying to achieve through this motion. I think it's very clear from the debates this evening and early afternoon that there is strong support on this side of the floor to see that this very important program continues, and we would urge the government with this motion to find in their hearts and their passion and their commitment to find \$1.2 million, please. I would ask for support for this motion from the Members. Thank you very much.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just be brief. As I see it, this program means a lot to the communities and to the culture of the communities. It seems like a shame that we would find money for three years through programs and transfers and then let the program dissolve in its own way and evaluate it after. It would only seem reasonable that evaluation would happen before we send it off into the sunset and say goodbye to this program. It seems alike a shame -- shame -- but I'd like to see that the government demonstrates some passion and leadership, which seems to be the theme today, by finding some money for this program. I'd like to ask for some compassion and consideration of those people who will feel the loss of this program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Ms. Lee.

Committee Motion 7-15(3): To Undertake A Quantitative Evaluation On Grade Extensions To Gauge Student Success, Carried

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another motion. I move that this committee recommends that a quantitative evaluation on grade extensions be undertaken to ensure that not only are our students accessing senior secondary schooling in their home communities, but moreover that they are graduating with the quality of education that allows them to be successful and competitive if and when they pursue post-secondary studies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

We're on page 7-19, education and culture, operations expense, total operations expense of \$134.837 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just keep my comments brief. I think most of my colleagues here have gone over most of the things I would have mentioned. The question that I have is with regard to a new school in Yellowknife. I know the Minister is aware that there are definitely some problems in the schools in Yellowknife in terms of overcrowding and limited space. I know a school in my riding, Ecole St. Joseph School, has programs, Mr. Chairman, for special needs students that they're running out of broom closets at the school, and I've observed that myself on a visit to the school. I know the enrolment at Weledeh has grown by 17 percent. There's no space at St. Patrick High School, and even by the government's own standards the need for a new school in Yellowknife is clearly identified. I'm just wondering, Mr. Chairman, where on the radar screen is a new school for Yellowknife. The community is growing. By most accounts, the population in Yellowknife is just over the 20,000 mark, and it seems to be growing. The vacancy rate is remaining low: 1.7 percent, even though there have been at least 400 new rental units brought onto the market in the last 18 months. I think it's time that the government took the situation seriously here in Yellowknife, that we do need a new school and we're going to need it in the very near future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Ramsay, I'm just wondering if we can place your question under the capital acquisition plans.

MR. RAMSAY: Sure, I'd be happy to restate my comments under the section. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Okay. Education and culture, operations expense. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the area here of culture, heritage and languages, the notes in the main estimates refer to the development of a northern arts strategy. This is something that is a carryover from the previous assembly, something that I've been looking forward to and so have dozens of organizations and hundreds of performers and volunteers in the arts area.

This is a joint approach, Mr. Chairman, between this department and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. I wanted to ask the Minister when we might see the actual completion of this strategy and the start of its implementation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I indicated to standing committee that we expect to have it completed by May.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. In the notes here in the main estimates, Mr. Chairman, there is no reference to any particular budget line that may be devoted to starting the implementation, and I'm wondering if the Minister might be able to speak at least on his department for what budgetary measures are anticipated to help get this strategy going. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been no funding identified for the strategy, per se. The strategy is more to cover how the government responds overall. The strategy itself doesn't need funding, but it would guide us in how we would handle contribution programs and so on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. That opens up a number of areas, but they are probably more hypothetical and what I should do is wait until the strategy is brought forward, and then engage in that funding question. So that's all I have, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a short question under the culture, heritage and languages aspect of this page. Mr. Chairman, I believe Minister Dent is the only Member unique in this Assembly who has the functional ability to speak French. I think it's a very good thing and I would encourage him to exercise that capacity as often as possible. I think it is a good thing to have as many of the official languages being spoken in this Assembly as possible.

Mr. Chairman, having said that, I wanted to draw to the attention of the Minister that within the guidelines, six of the official languages guidelines manual under the act, I believe, there is a requirement to have government documents and government announcements translated and broadcast in official languages which include French. I'm not sure about the burden of that requirement. I don't believe it's mandatory, but it's certainly encouraged. I understand that there are some departments who do practice that guideline, but not all departments. So I would like to have a commitment from the Minister, perhaps a letter or guideline to all the departments reminding everyone of that requirement and to encourage them to follow that guideline. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly talk with my colleagues and make sure that they're reminded of this requirement.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After I have complimented on his ability to speak French, I was hoping for a firmer commitment on the part of the Minister. May I

ask for the Minister to write a letter to all of the Ministers or employees, or make some sort of a public statement reminding that department? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I'll make sure that I remind all Ministers of the guidelines and remind them that they should be paying attention to those guidelines.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I would ask for a copy of whatever communication he puts out, please. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: I'll keep that request in mind, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: That concludes my question on that matter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Further comments? Details? Page 9-17, education and culture, operations expense, total operation expense, \$134.837 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-19, education and culture, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$52,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Contributions, carry over to 9-21. Total contributions, \$121.761 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 9-20, the item at the bottom of the page, the NWTTA professional improvement fund. Noting about a 40 percent increase from the current year to the coming year, I wonder if the Minister could provide some information on the case for this seemingly quite significant jump. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a benefit that is negotiated through the collective agreement, so there was an increase from 2.25 percent to three percent of salaries.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: I guess if it's a negotiated item as per a collective agreement, there is no discretion in this figure then, is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, this is negotiated as part of the contract with the NWTTA, so there is no discretion. This is an agree-to amount that is stipulated in that contract.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under this item on page 9-20, NWT Arts Council, I want to just raise a concern that has been brought to many Members here from the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre for some assistance with their core funding. I just wanted to lay out the situation here where currently the northern arts centre, I think a lot of Members are aware that this facility was set up by community volunteers. They raised a lot of money to set this up and it is a very important institution in our city. I think arts and cultural activities and performances are a very integral part of any civilized society. It is something that is very appreciated and valued by the Yellowknife citizens. It certainly brings lots of cultural performances that people enjoy. But the facility is in under serious deterioration. It does need some assistance. They do raise a lot of money from selling tickets to their performances and through various funding organizations. I think what should be made aware is under the funding structures that the GNWT has, they have to apply for money along with every other society and cultural group. The only burden they have that others don't have is that they have to maintain a facility that does cost money, that does need capital investment, it does need capital replacement and such. When you look at the Yukon Arts Centre, and the Yukon has a larger population than we do and I don't think Whitehorse is much bigger than Yellowknife, yet the Yukon government gives \$500,000 for core funding to their Yukon Arts Centre. Whereas, NACC gets a mere \$30,000 a year from the GNWT.

What's more, Mr. Chairman, the City of Yellowknife gives \$40,000 to this organization, and I think it's a real shame that the GNWT gives less than what the city does. The organization is in a serious financial situation and I just want to know if the Minister would look at his programs and see whether the government's contribution to this important organization could have any chance of improvement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't disagree with the Member that NACC is an important and useful organization. The facility is quite unique and also important to have. But I think it's important to recognize that the contributions from this government involve the space there. If they had to lease that space it would probably cost \$100,000 a year. That's provided by this government as a charity lease. This government does pay for the utilities and maintenance, and that costs about \$48,000 a year, on top of the \$30,000 grant. We are always prepared to listen to requests from volunteer agencies and try to work with them to do what we can. But as recently as when Sir John was renovated, the facility was re-carpeted and

painted. To be honest, there hasn't been an official approach from this agency asking for a change in the contribution either. We would be hard pressed to change what we're doing, and as I have outlined we are doing more than just the \$30,000 grant that the Member mentioned. It is a good facility and we hope to see them be successful. But this may be another situation where we're going to have to look for partnerships. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I just ask the Minister to consider my statement here as somewhat of a notice of the situation that's going on with NACC? I know the Minister is also well aware of the situation, and I am sure the NACC representatives would be making some sort of formal proposal. I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't ask the Minister to take a look at the proposal and give it good consideration. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, certainly when a proposal comes forward like that, it will be given careful consideration. I would be happy, at that time, to meet with the board and discuss their proposal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. That concludes my comment on that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask the department a question, Mr. Chairman. I was in Norman Wells and they asked about their museum. They said that it was in the government's books and all of a sudden it disappeared, and they want to know what is happening with the Norman Wells museum. I don't know if it's infrastructure dollars or program dollars, I didn't do enough checking. I said I would raise it with the Minister and I think this is the appropriate time to raise it with this department. The museum in Norman Wells is really nice, and hopefully one day I will be in that museum there for people to come and visit and pay tribute.

---Laughter

I want to talk about this because the people in Norman Wells and the town council want to know what was happening with the museum in terms of the infrastructure.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Can we refer this to capital acquisition?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no doubt that Mr. Yakeleya would like to see it under capital acquisitions, but unfortunately the only place we are liable to find funding for it is on page 9-19 under

community museums, which will indicate the level of support that we might be able to find...

---Laughter

...which, unfortunately, is not going to be great. I would agree with the Member that it is quite a nice little museum, and there is some money under community museums on page 9-19, and there is \$27,000, as well, for community museums for improvements to buildings. This is application-based and hasn't all necessarily been allocated this year, but there are not big pots of money. That is where the community could apply for some funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was what I was alluding to, to give some hope to the people of Norman Wells and all the people in the Northwest Territories. I just wanted to say that to the Minister, and I did my job with asking these questions. So I'll follow Sandy's suit; that's it, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I still have under here Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Basically, the Minister just answered my question. I was wondering why community museums appear on page 9-19 and also on page 9-21. What separates that funding?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The one is for improvements to the buildings, so for minor capital. The other would be available for ongoing funding; displays, et cetera.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you. That's it, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Next I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will reserve my comments for later. Thank you.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will stress up front I won't pursue the aggressive line of questioning my honourable colleague, Mr. Menicoche, just did. I would like to follow suit on some of the comments Ms. Lee brought forward with regard to the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre here in Yellowknife. NACC had pointed out that they had an original lease that was established between the GNWT and I guess them, the way I understand it. They brought forward, in a very articulate manner, that they felt the lease was still strong and when it changed to the school board the lease had never truly been amended in such a way to account for some of the guarantees that were written into the lease. NACC had brought forward the concerns of such as what may seem

as trivial issues to some people, but they seem to have the highest of gravity to them; issues such as washroom access. I can't imagine that not being paramount. Other items such as access to air conditioning, and there were a few minor items. Would the Minister commit to have his officials leave here today with honouring a commitment of evaluating this lease to ensure that the GNWT is living up to their contractual commitment to that original agreement, just for clarity's sake, therefore the government is either off the hook or on the hook. We'll get those issues cleared up. Will the Minister commit to sending his officials off to have a good look at that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been assured by my officials here tonight that there was no change in the lease. What has changed is who is responsible for delivering on some of the responsibilities. I am also advised that they have had a look at the issue of the lease and what should be delivered, and are satisfied, according to the lease, it is being done as is required.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Without presuming I'm a lease expert or a contract expert, it's my understanding that there is still dispute of who is the ownership of the lease in the sense of who the agreement is still standing with. Either it is with the Yellowknife education board or the GNWT, and that seems, from my understanding, an issue never cleared up since the transfer of the education program directly to the board.

Maybe I'm not being clear. Would the Minister be willing to look at it and substantiate it and just reaffirm that the GNWT either has a commitment or no commitment on this issue?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The GNWT still holds the lease, so the lease is with the GNWT for the facility with NACC. But officials at the department believe that they are fulfilling all the requirements of the lease.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It must be late because I think I heard two answers. There were two different answers, and I stress it could be late and it could be me. It is the NACC officials' understanding that the lease is not being lived up to properly so, therefore, I'm asking for commitment from the Minister just to have a look at it. I can't imagine the bureaucracy not having an extra moment to have a good look at it, therefore we've satisfied our concerns. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly ask Public Works to have a look at the lease.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate the passionate response. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I appreciate the commitment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Any further comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Detail. Page 9-19, education and culture, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$52,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Contributions, pages 9-20 and 9-21. Total contributions, \$121,761 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$121,813 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Active positions, information item. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-23, lease commitments - infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-24, student loan revolving fund.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-25, detail of funding allocated to education authorities. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-27, college funding allocation. Questions? Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, just trying to put the college housing into perspective, and I'm looking at the glossary on page 9-27, under buildings and works, and college facilities, equipment and utilities. As you know, we have an inherent problem with student housing Inuvik, and the Blueberry Patch is kind of beyond economic repair. So I'm going to ask the department if they would consider a build to lease with some private developers who can provide the college with adequate student housing. This is the only place I can really find the appropriate areas to question the Minister on, so if they would consider that question at this point. To the Minister, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If memory serves me right, in this current year there is \$200,000 in minor capital going to repairs in that area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you. I'm raising a question there, Mr. Chairman, under the glossary of the buildings and works. I'm going to ask again, just to repeat for the benefit of the Minister, would the department now consider that since the Blueberry Patch is beyond economical repair, if they would consider engaging under a long-term lease agreement with some private developers who can provide adequate and affordable student housing for the Aurora Campus? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I have to be cautious about agreeing with the Member that we just spent \$200,000 on buildings that were beyond economic repair, so I am not going to agree to that. We are not saying that.

In the longer term, there does need to be something to address the housing issue in Inuvik and I have met with the Chair of the college board and we've talked about the solutions to the housing issue in all three communities, Smith, Yellowknife and Inuvik. They all have housing issues. I have told him I am prepared to consider innovative solutions, and I have encouraged the college board to take a look at alternatives that might be open to us in dealing with the housing situation in all three communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We can go to college programs on page 9-26 and 9-27. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to confirm my source of information to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, this point was raised to me by the campus directors in Inuvik in one of my sojourns into Inuvik in the last several months. This is just for information purposes, Mr. Chairman, that it was raised to me by the director of Inuvik campus. This is just for the Minister's information. That is my comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Hawkins.

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you for your confidence, Mr. Zoe. Wait until we get to MACA.

---Laughter

Mr. Chairman, if the Minister would honour us with the regional breakout of the total regional college contributions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would have to ask the college board to give us a breakdown if they could. We don't fund them by regions. We don't track it that way. We fund the college and the board, and the board, like a school board in Yellowknife, for instance, spends their money as they see fit. They don't tell us how much they are going to spend at each campus they have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Can I have the Minister supply it to me later?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Certainly, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Details?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): College funding allocation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-28, detail of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 9-28, on the Sahtu implementation of \$20,000. Could the Minister give us a quick look into that item? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The explanation there that is written in the book is pretty much what it is. For instance, under the terms of the agreement if we need to do some consultation, we receive the funding from the federal government in order to undertake that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Details?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-29.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Detail of work performed on behalf of others, continued, total department, \$10.114 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 9-31, revenues, recoveries and transfer payments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Now can we go back to page 9-7, Education, Culture and Employment, department summary, operations expense, total operation expense, \$913.705 million. Let's try that again, \$213.705 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Now can you go to infrastructure acquisition, CAP-17, Education, Culture and Employment, advanced education and careers, total advanced education and careers, \$3.749 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know it's getting late. I will keep my comments brief. I know folks want to get out of here for the evening. We need a new school in Yellowknife. By the government's own standards, that bears true. Like I mentioned, at Ecole St. Joseph's, that's a school in my riding, they are conducting programs with special needs students in broom closets and I think it is unacceptable. I believe the enrolment at St. Patrick High School is full. I believe YK 2 needs a new school and I think it's incumbent on the government to ensure that land availability is available to make this happen. I am not sure of the process, because I am new to this whole system, of how to get a new school for Yellowknife on the five-year capital plan, but I would like the Minister to know that that is a big interest to me in getting a new school in the city and something I will bring up quite often. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I am always pleased when I can be responsive and passionate and...

---Laughter

...I would like to point out that I have already responded to the Member that there is a new school for Yellowknife in the plan with construction starting in 2006-07. We have already identified in the five-year plan the need for the school. We now have to work with all the boards in Yellowknife to discuss the school and figure out where and how it's going to go. The school itself is in the books. There hasn't been any decision yet as to which school board is going to get it at this point, but we are going to have to have that discussion fairly soon.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to ask the question again and do my job before I call it a night, about the Norman Wells museum. I see it in the books here and I would like to somehow communicate to the community. They indicated to me that they were in the books somehow and all of a sudden it disappeared and they are scratching their heads and wondering why. I want to see about this issue in terms of getting this back on the books for Norman Wells. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is \$27,000 in the budget, as the Member has noted, and it's based on application. So it isn't a lot of money. Part of the problem is the cash situation the government finds itself, but that's available to museums in the North to

apply for. It will be assessed as we get the applications as to how we can spend that money.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last comment is the museums in the Northwest Territories are an asset to our people and knowledge for our kids. I suppose the museums in what they are doing and I think museums should be in all the regions because there's a lot of knowledge for our children to visit, and I was taken aback when I went to visit the museum in Norman Wells and saw a lot of good things that I didn't take notice of before. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are my comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: I take the Member's comments and would agree with him that museums are an important aspect of life in the North.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When will the Minister be determining which school board this new Yellowknife school will be directed to? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I haven't set that up. I have been approached by three boards in Yellowknife who have an interest in a new school. We have quite a challenge ahead of us working with all of our partners here to determine how this money can be used to serve all of our needs.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to leave this with one last question, has the Minister investigated potential locations for this new school yet to be determined under which school board? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, there's been nothing but some general discussion about where it might fit. Some of that will depend on some program decisions and the overall discussion we have to have with the three boards in Yellowknife.

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

MR. HAWKINS: I can't help but ask one last question. Will the Minister be engaging any of the Yellowknife Members with regard to this new school yet to be determined under which school board? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I would hope so. Mr. Minister.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, if experience serves me, I will have no doubt that there will be a significant amount of involvement by Yellowknife Members as this decision works forward. We are going to have to try to find some way to work collaboratively to deal with the needs of our constituents.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, will have to talk with regard to the Mangilaluk School addition. I know it is way back to 2006-07. Can you move that up to next year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, every year we go through a process of evaluating the needs in the capital plan and every year there will be some movement because we will sometimes find that the piles are rotting on a school somewhere that we weren't aware of and have to move some project forward, or we discover that the population has dropped in a community in the school, therefore it isn't quite as urgent to deal with the project. I will certainly keep the Member's request in mind as we are looking at the capital projects next year. It's difficult to make any promises. It's impossible to make promises at this point. We will have to assess things as we are preparing the capital plan for next year.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the process in terms of the requests for the numbers in the schools, but again there is a situation in my community. The classes are crowded and there just isn't enough space. Also the fact that I mentioned earlier at some of our meetings that the younger kids have a tendency to see what's going on. Inuvik is a good example in terms of the high school. They have SAMS and they have Samuel Hearne. They are divided from grades 1 to 7 and grades 8 to 12. It's a good example of what the younger students can see what's happening with the older students. Having said that, in my community of Tuktoyaktuk, this is what they are requesting. This is one of the problems they are encountering and issues they raised with me. I would just like to bring that forward, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have heard often from Mr. Pokiak and his concerns about the school in Tuk. I know it was one of the first issues he raised with me. I am aware of the Member's concerns and I will do my best to work with him and the community to see what we can do. We face though some significant challenges in terms of the needs we have out there for schools where there is significant overcrowding or structural safety issues we have to deal with. That all has to be taken into account as we figure out the mix for each year. I will continue to discuss the issue with Mr. Pokiak and we will have to see how things shake out as the next capital plan gets developed.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One last comment on the subject of schools. I wonder where this school wood pile remediation is going to be of \$2 million. I have a lot of constituents that would be qualified as instructors in any school that deals with wood piles.

---Laughter

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, this might be a different kind of wood pile than the Member is used to seeing in Fort Resolution. Most of the expenses for this year are planned for the Beaufort-Delta region and the Sahtu where we have a number of schools where the piles underneath them are rotting out much more quickly than had been expected.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To the topic of schools and planning schools, especially in Yellowknife. Now that we are on the record, I would like to add another comment that is becoming more and more evident. I think the Minister has mentioned that he has heard from three school boards in the city that are anticipating new schools. I count four. Then I would add the Arctic College campus for many years, I think since its inception, there has been talk of a campus. I guess my suggestion there is because we are looking at so many different institutions, potential institutions at such a cost and such a large land quantum that I would like to suggest the department take a lead role in doing a city-wide, all-inclusive board survey of the city's needs, perhaps a 10 or 20-year period because I don't know that planning various schools on a one-off basis really serves the community in the best way. We seem now to have so many things coming to the table at the same time that more of a comprehensive review would serve us well. I will stop there if the Minister wants to make a comment; I have one other point I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Braden certainly raises a good point and we can certainly take a look at what we can do. It's complicated by the different numbers of boards we have in town and trying to predict where the growth is going to be in relation to each one becomes more difficult and makes planning an overall response a lot more difficult. It would certainly be advantageous if we could find some way to do that. We will certainly raise that with our partners here and see what the opportunities might be.

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

MR. BRADEN: To the inclusion in the capital plan here, Mr. Chairman, of K'alemi Dene School replacement and, as we have already discussed, a new potential high school in Yellowknife, are these new additions to the capital plan? I am wondering at what point did these items get added to the plan, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, these were in the 20-year plan, but each year we go through the plan and a lot of it depends on population. What has happened is that Yellowknife has gotten to the point where we can predict when the schools will reach full occupancy, and so that caused that one to get moved into the system. So they are always identified as somewhere in there being needs. But every year we go through the plan and some communities are going to move around depending on the occupancy load of the schools, on the physical condition, the safety issues that we have to deal with. They aren't new projects but this is their first appearance in the five-year plan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will now go to Education, Culture and Employment, CAP-17, total advanced education and careers, \$3.749 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Then we go down to education and culture, total education and culture, \$9.681 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Total department, \$13.43 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress.

---Applause

Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Devitt, and Mr. Cleveland. We appreciate your time today and this evening. Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005 and Committee Report 2-15(3) and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Do you have a seconder for that? Mr. Braden. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Board of Management tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m.; a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at 9:00 a.m.; and, a meeting of the Governance and Economic Development committee at noon.

Orders of the day for Thursday, March 25th:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
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 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005
 - Bill 4, Supplementary appropriation Act, No. 3, 2003-2004

- Committee Report 1-15(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 2-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 3-15(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 25, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

