



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 9

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, March 26, 2004

Pages 349 - 402

The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, March 26, 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, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya, Honourable Henry Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. David Krutko): Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Ms. Lee.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Kids' Helpline Bowlathon

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being Friday, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a fundraising event that was held last weekend in support of Kid's Help Phone, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an event that is held every year to raise money for Kid's Help Phone which is a national program where kids can call a 1-800 number about anything they want to speak to an expert about, whether it's about bullying in school, health conditions or what's going on at home. Any kind of issues that they are having problems with, they are encouraged to phone in. It's a very important and essential service.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend the event held in the NWT raised more than \$50,000. Two hundred-plus people in teams participated. There were also major corporate contributors: Canadian North, BHP Billiton, Canadian Tire, Great Slave Helicopters and Polar Bowl were among the main sponsors.

I should also let you know that the Legislative Assembly was very well represented by a very strong team made up of Honourable Brendan Bell, Yellowknife South; Mr. Dave Ramsay, Kam Lake; Minister Charles Dent; and our colleague from Sahtu and his son, Chase, was a big help in getting us a really good score in the end.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to make note of this very important event and the effort made to raise money for it. There were lots of constituents from Range Lake in that event, but I want to recognize two young people who participated: Emily Thagard, who is in Grade 3. She raised about \$290 plus. She was going door to door to raise money for this event, and her friend, Sam Embleton, who also went door to door and raised money. Their parents were there and they were telling me that the kids were there to let kids know kids can do a lot to help other kids who need help.

I would like to recognize all those who participated and all the sponsors for making this a huge event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On All-Weather Road In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to give a Member's statement on the all-weather road in the Sahtu.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why this government spends a lot of money fixing the Ingraham Trail, which some people have called the best bush road in the North. Communities like mine don't have any bush roads like that, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living in the Sahtu is almost double that of Yellowknife. Yellowknife isn't a cheap place to live, so you can imagine what the communities face in the Sahtu region. In the rest of the world, poor people eat potatoes because they are cheap and because there is nothing else to eat. They even feed them to their farm animals, Mr. Speaker. When you live in the Sahtu, potatoes are very expensive. We only eat them on special occasions and even then we slice them very, very thin.

---Laughter

In Colville Lake, for instance, a four kilogram bag of sugar sells for \$25; a can of pop, \$2.50; a tin of evaporated milk sells for \$4. We are also really isolated. Mr. Speaker, for a few weeks a year, we have a winter road; a few weeks. The rest of the time if you want to see your family in Fort Good Hope, it will cost \$400 return per person and that's just from Colville Lake. If you go to Norman Wells and back it costs you almost \$500. Mr. Speaker, driving from Wrigley to Tulita is 148 kilometres and it takes seven hours to drive, while it takes only one hour from Rae to Yellowknife; this takes into account the bumps in the road.

I am happy to say, Mr. Speaker, there is a solution. The Sahtu needs an all-weather road. With an all-weather road, Mr. Speaker, a few dollar's worth of gas will give some in the Sahtu access to training, jobs and family and good fresh food at a reasonable price. While the road is being built, my people can be trained as heavy equipment operators and gain experience in road construction.

I am asking them to do what is right and get to work on making an all-weather road in the Sahtu. For the benefit it will bring, there is no better investment. If we need to find partners to help us build it, then let's get to work on that too.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Transportation if he has considered taking the first step in getting the people of the Sahtu an all-weather road. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Closure Of The Paulatuk Community Freezer

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On my recent trip to attend the Beaufort-Delta interim regional council meeting in Inuvik, I was approached by a resident of Paulatuk who was very concerned about the possible closure of the community freezer. I also heard the same concern from two other residents in Paulatuk.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that community freezers were installed about 20 years ago to help small communities store their fish and game hygienically and to ensure that a supply was always available when game was scarce.

Public Works and Government Services used to fund the core maintenance of the community freezer program. This program was transferred to RWED in 1996. In 1999, RWED turned over the money to the communities in the form of block funding. Mr. Speaker, the community freezer in Paulatuk is being heavily used by the residents of Paulatuk according to the information supplied by my constituents. Community freezers are a vital component in a small community for preserving their fish and game. The most recent concern raised by my constituent is that RWED is considering not funding the community freezer in Paulatuk. This individual indicated that to maintain the community freezer, it would cost about \$17,000 a year, money that the community of Paulatuk or its residents do not have readily available.

Mr. Speaker, Paulatuk residents see the community freezer as a valuable resource for preserving their fish and game. Surely RWED can accommodate a request of just \$17,000 a year for the maintenance of the community freezer in Paulatuk. RWED should reconsider assisting Paulatuk, as well as Holman and Sachs if required, in funding this program.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will ask the appropriate Minister questions on the funding of the community freezer program in Paulatuk. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Accomplishments Of Hay River Biathlete Brendan Green

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to use my Member's statement to talk about an outstanding young athlete from Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, Brendan Green completed his most successful competitive season so far with a series of incredible finishes in his first exposure to European competition. His crowning achievement was winning the German youth championships in the 15-kilometre individual event. Biathlon is a major sport in Germany, one of the top-ranking nations, and many of his German competitors attend special sports schools that focus on producing world-class biathletes. Their programs have developed a number of world champions. His win was the result of a combination of outstanding shooting and skiing against some of the top youth biathletes in the world today.

He followed up this victory with a silver medal in a 10-kilometre sprint race only four seconds behind the winner. Brendan also competed in the Europa Cup No. 6 in Arbersee-Langdorf, Germany. To compete, he had to move up an age category and race with the junior men who are two to three years older than him. He managed to place 15th in his first race, the 10-kilometre sprint, just one minute and 30 seconds behind the winner. Although it was a very difficult and challenging course, and he had to ski three penalties loops, he still managed to achieve a personal best time of 29 minutes and 30 seconds to break the 30-minute barrier.

In his final race, the 12.5-kilometre pursuit, he hit 18 out of 20 to tie for the best shooting in the competition and moved up to seventh place and top finish for the Canadian team. Although seven world champions were amongst the 25 entries, no one had better results on the shooting range.

Brendan is a member of the 2010 Olympic development program. He follows a training program that demanded 410 hours of physical training and 200 hours of shooting this season. He got his start in biathlon with Coach Pat Bobinski who has supervised his training for the past eight years. Pat has developed many outstanding biathletes during his coaching career and has played a critical role in developing Brendan's marksmanship to the high level demanded for success in this sport.

Brendan assists with the jack rabbit ski program developed by the Hay River Ski Club for the Hay River school system. He has also managed to maintain his standing as an honour roll student in Grade 11 at the Diamond Jenness Secondary School.

I would like to congratulate Brendan and say that Hay River is very proud of this young man. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On 49th Annual Caribou Carnival

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. This is carnival season in the Northwest Territories and it comes to life in Yellowknife this afternoon with the start of the 49th Caribou Carnival, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken about these events, with passion I hope, Mr. Speaker, several times in this Assembly. They are tremendously important to me and all of our communities.

In the Northwest Territories, we have so many unique things to celebrate and I think we take a bit of an optimistic view and we take winter as something we actually celebrate through many of our carnivals. The ones here in Yellowknife, like the Caribou Carnival, the Canadian Championship Dog Derby and one of the most wonderful and unique attractions and events that has grown very much from the inspiration of one man, Tony Foliot, is the Snow King Festival, which this year is going to complete its 9th season.

We have the Cariblues Festival, the Aurora Arts Society, attempting to get a February music festival off the deck. Ndilo and Detah are going to be having their local festivals as well.

These are things that define our community. They define our culture. They are good for our communities and families. They are one of the anchors and I am positive will be a very significant part of our tourism industry as they grow.

Mr. Speaker, I have to save my most sincere message for the volunteers, having been one; I think we have all done our bit for these festivals, it is the volunteers who are the heart and soul of these events. We cannot take them for granted. I am looking forward to things that this government can do in the way of the NWT Arts Strategy that is going to be coming out later this year, hopefully as an anchor that we can use to really build on this and the efforts of the volunteers who deserve all of the credit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Congratulations To Tammy Cazon On The Birth Of Her New Daughter

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi Cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to recognize Tammy Cazon, a constituent of mine who gave a safe birth to a baby girl at 6:30 this morning. What is important about this matter is that she is the young lady that had the dubious distinction of being in the House last year about this time, and virtually gave birth in the gallery. I just wanted to bring that to your attention, just a special recognition to her today. I am glad that she is tied to the Legislative Assembly in her own personal way. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 25-15(3): Update On New Housing Re-investment Proposal

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Allen on March 18, 2004, regarding an update on the new housing re-investment proposal. Specifically, the Member requested an update on the status of a proposal submitted in August 2002 to create a flat-rate rent scale for public housing clients in the Northwest Territories.

After studying the impacts of a flat-rate rent scale, the Housing Corporation has opted not to move in this direction. The corporation's decision not to proceed was made in light of the fact that the proposal to create the flat-rate rent scale would have resulted in increased rents for low-income families and students. In addition, this proposal included another significant change in that seniors' households would now be assessed rent. It is the corporation's position that increasing rents for the most vulnerable members of our society is not in the best interest of the public housing clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to take a moment to recognize two Pages who have come over from Fort Simpson: Mr. Gerald Hardisty, and Mikhaela Antoine. I sure hope that they enjoy their time here serving the Legislative Assembly. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of my constituents from Rae-Edzo who is in the gallery, Mr. Fred Behrens. Mr. Behrens is the interim project manager for the NWT Broadband Business Alliance. Welcome to the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize and thank two Pages from Hay River South for serving us in the Chamber this week. They have followed the debate, and were very interested a couple of times and said they wanted to jump in when we were reviewing education. So I think we have some future politicians here. Thank you. Matthew Gagnon, and Carisa Broadhead.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't see them from where I sit, but I do believe there is a Grade 6 class from Range Lake North School in the gallery today. This is Mr. David Speakman's class. Along with them are the Principal, Ms. Sandra Bowden; the educational assistant, Mr. Spencer Lyman; and one of the parents, Eleanor Young, are accompanying them today. I would like to welcome them to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As well, I would like to recognize two Pages from Hay River North who have been here all week helping us get through our week. One of the busiest, Mark Benoit, over here, and the tallest one I think, Jordan Shaw. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe Mona Morrow from Weledah Catholic School is here as well on tour today. So I want to welcome one of my constituents. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to welcome you to the House also, and I will always welcome you back. You are always at home in the House, so come on back and visit. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. David Speakman, a one-time Sahtu constituent now living in Yellowknife. I also recognize Ms. Eleanor Young who works for MACA.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement today, I explained how expensive life is in the Sahtu, and how the cost of travel separates us from our families, the good jobs, and how the cost of food is overwhelming us. Yes, we have a winter road, but it is only open for about seven to 12 weeks, and that depends if the winter road is really long, and if it is really cold outside and the snow is good. We wouldn't limit anyone in Yellowknife to seven weeks of grocery shopping, or visiting other communities, or visiting families, et cetera, for the whole year so I don't think the government should ask the good people of the Sahtu to do that either.

I offer the solution of an all-weather road. An all-weather road would increase the quality of life for the people in the Sahtu by 100 percent. You need to connect the communities of the Sahtu before we connect south. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation if he is interested in reallocating some of the funding for the Canal proposal to connect the communities of the Sahtu by all-weather road. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation is also very interested in the concept of an all-weather road into the Sahtu, from Wrigley to Good Hope. The early engineering studies have indicated that the cost of this road is approximately \$220 million, and we certainly don't have that kind of money within our budget, but we have been fortunate to access some money through the SIFF program where we would partner 50/50 with the federal government.

Over the next five years, we intend to extend the use of the winter road in the Sahtu. We are investing a total of \$46 million over the next five years. We intend to put in 23 bridges in that area, we are also expecting to do a lot of grade work. This will result in an extended season. As for the question of moving money from one project to another, I believe it was referenced in the Member's statement that Highway No. 4 was suggested; right now we are looking and talking to the federal government in identifying other projects. However, moving more money into the Sahtu is not something we are considering at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Would the Minister commit to consider writing another proposal to the Minister of Transportation with the federal government to initiate the development of the all-weather roads in the Sahtu?

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

Further Return To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have already embarked on that line of discussion. We have met with our MP to discuss the possibility of her assisting us in setting up a meeting with Tony Valeri, the federal Minister, and she has also indicated, through a call to me this morning, that she has talked to him and he's very interested in talking to myself and our officials about a number of issues, including new programs and how they will unfold. We need to have a good sense of where the national highway strategy is and the possibility of further access of dollars to the SIFF program. We also want to talk about some of the projects that were listed under A-Cap and some of the projects that didn't get funding this year. We want to talk to him about a number of things, so he has indicated he is willing to meet and we are trying to set our schedules accordingly and trying to arrange for that meeting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Would the Minister consider looking at developing some training proposals and opportunities for people in the Sahtu to begin training in road building and heavy equipment operation? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in light of the high amount of activity that we're expecting in the Sahtu and the amount we're planning to invest in that area, I would certainly be willing to meet with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to discuss the opportunities. We are also planning a tour and I want to meet with the members of the communities in the Sahtu to discuss and talk about the different options out there. We believe industry also has a role in this, and they have indicated they were interested in having that discussion. So we will commit to talk to the departments that we believe should be part of this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks Mr. Minister. My final question, Mr. Minister, is that the Sahtu is quite a distance from the regional office in Fort

Simpson where they have the highway office. Would the Minister consider instructing his department to assess the feasibility of having the regional office of Transportation in the Sahtu region? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 88-15(3): All-Weather Road Connecting Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have looked at the issue of having the office for Transportation in one of the communities in the Sahtu. At the present time, we are looking at costing it out and looking at the pros and cons and how effective it would be and where and how we could set it up. We haven't concluded that review, but we would be glad to share our findings with the Member when the entire review has been concluded. Thank you.

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

Question 89-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for Mr. Handley, in his capacity as the Minister responsible for the Mackenzie River bridge project. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we heard from my colleague, Mr. Delorey, about situations such as rapidly-rising steel prices in Canada. We know we're already dealing with an unexpected potential delay in the project due to environmental and regulatory hearings. This is a significant project for the whole of the south Mackenzie region. I'm a bit concerned and I've heard expressions from the business community that they are also concerned with the viability of this project. I wanted to ask Mr. Handley just what steps are available for government that we can do to help keep this project not only alive, but keep it healthy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 89-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, this project is a private/public partnership. The private ownership of it is the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. The bridge corporation has approached us and we have, as I told Members, provided up to a \$2 million loan guarantee to them, and I have advised Members that we have extended that for a year.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased yesterday when Mr. McLeod, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and myself were advised that the federal government, through DIAND, have now approved a \$3 million contribution to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation.

---Applause

I appreciate the work that our Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, has done on this project for us. I think this now gives the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation the working capital that they need in order to continue this project ahead. But, Mr. Speaker, the only hold-up right now is on the environmental assessment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that's great news. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 89-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Yes, that is terrific news. This injection will certainly make a difference. It's the kind of thing that I know we were looking forward to; having \$3 million less that we have to finance through a toll, I think is good news for the customers. The Minister indicated that it is only the environmental step that needs to be resolved now. Is there a sense now of the timing of that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 89-15(3): Deh Cho Bridge Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we expect that the environmental assessment is probably going to take until this fall to complete. I expect that while we could see some preliminary work being done on, for example stockpiling gravel and so on, that could start earlier. I haven't talked to the bridge corporation on their plans. If it looks good, we will see working on this certainly this winter.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify that the only major thing that's holding up the progress right now and delaying the bridge for a while is the environmental assessment. But we are still in the midst of finalizing the financing, for example, for the total project, but I think there are no hurdles on that now that we have the \$3 million from the federal government. There are issues around insurance and, of course, still finishing up the final design and reviewing the design. There are things that we're doing right now, but none of them are holding up the progress. The only one that's slowing us down at this point is the environmental assessment, but I'm optimistic we'll see work this fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. As I stated in my Member's statement, the residents of Paulatuk rely on the local community freezer to store their fish and game. Will the Minister find the necessary funds to continue this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member did, in his Member's statement today, provide some very useful background information on the program. In fact, these community freezers have been government assets, but at a point in the recent past we made the decision that this was not the most cost-effective means of storing traditional harvests and we're looking for a way to do something that is more energy efficient. So we have been in the process of closing these freezers down, but I think in all cases, we have made the offer to the community to transfer the asset to the community for a nominal charge, and I'm sure we would do the same here.

I do know that my officials are in discussions with the community of Paulatuk to see if some alternate arrangements can be arrived at to make sure that we still continue to support the traditional harvest, because we do recognize the importance of country foods to the community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that information, Mr. Bell. Will you keep me informed with regard to your department's discussions with the community of Paulatuk so I know exactly if funds will be available? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I will keep the Member apprised of any development on the file with Paulatuk. I believe we are also in discussions with Sachs Harbour, so for any of the Member's communities in relation to this program I will certainly keep the Member apprised. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

MR. POKIAK: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. One more question for the Minister. Mr. Minister, will you ensure that the hunters will be able to continue operating these programs? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. We're looking at a number of solutions and I don't want to say that we're going to continue this program. We have been in the process of either closing the freezers down, or turning the assets over to the community. I'm not sure of the exact figures to maintain the freezer for a year. In some communities, the freezers have been well used; in others, not very well used. I think we can't just have a program that we would extend to Paulatuk and exclude all other communities. So if it's \$20,000 a year or so for O and M, we would have to look at that for all communities in order to be fair, and it has proven to be a very expensive way to store the traditional harvests. So I think the best offer I can make to the Member is that we'll look for better solutions, work with the community to make sure that there are more energy-efficient solutions, and I'll certainly keep the Member apprised of any developments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

Supplementary To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it's fine to provide assets to the communities, but one more time, Mr. Minister, will you provide the funds necessary to ensure

that the community of Paulatuk can continue using their freezer for fish and game? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 90-15(3): Community Freezer Program

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. As I've said we would make the offer to turn the asset over to the community. We can't provide the O and M funding at this point, but we are sitting down with this community and others to look at alternative approaches. I want the Member to know that we certainly are supportive of the traditional harvest, but in discussions in the last few weeks here, we have seen that we have fewer resources than needs and this area is no exception. We want to be as supportive as possible, but we have to do so in a cost-effective manner. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 91-15(3): Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, and it's with regard to the document that I tabled in the House which was a notice of tender for 22 mobile homes; I believe that closes this Friday. The most interesting part of that notice was a little quote saying that the government's business incentive policy would not apply. So I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation when he made this decision and why he made this decision to exempt the government from their own policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 91-15(3): Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. Our tender indicates that the BIP will be waived on this initiative to supply market housing to the non-market communities. It's an initiative that we have put together to attempt to meet the demands that are being voiced by the communities for housing for people who can afford to live in market rent units. Our communities across the North are facing a real challenge to attract professionals. Now that we are seeing our economy allow more people to become employed, we need to have accommodation in the communities where they can lease or rent. We decided to target some communities and look at different methods of trying to put accommodations in these communities in the cheapest way possible. The direction from Cabinet was to determine what it would cost to set up units in these communities where we would have competitive rental rates and would also have a good resale value, and we also needed to be able to recover all our costs and not have any subsidies towards these units. We, therefore, decided that trailers were the best way to go. To remove any potential for increased cost, we also requested that the BIP be waived for this initiative. It is one time only. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 91-15(3): Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of all the things that the Minister just stated, I don't think the argument that because we need to provide housing that we have to waive BIP makes any sense. I don't think government should be comfortable in saying we have to do this and the way to do it is to waive the BIP. I think the most germane thing that the Minister said is that there is cost involved in the BIP. He's saying that there was potential for cost, this is the cheapest way to do it, and I've been reading from that that the Minister and the Cabinet are suggesting that BIP costs money. I want to know from the Minister what information he has and what his information says about how much extra cost applying the BIP would have made. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Two questions. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 91-15(3): Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is indicating that I alluded to the fact that there were increased costs. My comments were that we wished to remove any potential for increased costs. As the Member knows, it's very difficult to calculate whether the BIP does cost us more or whether it costs us less, and that's a difficult calculation to make. In this case, we wanted to ensure we had removed any potential for increased costs and that we knew fairly comfortably that we were working with solid numbers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 91-15(3): Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe the Minister is working with solid numbers and I don't accept what the Minister just stated that the Members are aware that it's hard to figure out the cost of the BIP. I don't accept that. That has been the government's position for the last Assembly. During the debate about the government exempting the BIP on the jail, that was a multi-million dollar project. If the government cannot figure out what the extra cost would have been on 22 mobile homes, I want to know what all the number crunchers are doing in the government if they can't figure that one out. I want to know from the Minister what information he used and the Cabinet used in waiving this policy. I'm telling you if you're going to exempt yourself from government policy, you better have the figures to back it up. You better say it's costing us X amount of dollars and it's worth it for us to exempt ourselves. So I want to know from the Minister what were his numbers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 91-15(3): Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've discussed this, as the Member indicated, yesterday. I informed the committee that we used the best-case and the worst-case scenarios that we could provide. It's very difficult to calculate these things, so what we did was calculate them on a best-case and a worst-case scenario. I have committed to the committee that we will compile all the information and it will be submitted to the committee. I will commit again to the Member that we will get this information to her. Thank you.

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

Question 92-15(2): Flat Rate Rent Scale

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, today my question is to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I would just like to say thank you for addressing the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes with regard to the flat rate rent scale zone. I did bring it up yesterday in Committee of the Whole that it's something that my constituents were interested in. More specifically, the way it currently exists is that they're not interested in paying rent or mortgage on a fluctuating scale. I was just wondering if the Minister was looking at some other alternative where they can base the rent scale on let's say last year's annual income. I'm just wondering if perhaps the Minister is looking towards that at all.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we have looked at the concept of a flat rent scale and, as I indicated in my response to Mr. Allen, it is not something that at this point we are looking at as an option. Right now our social housing programs have a ceiling of 30 percent of household income, and we are concerned that by going to a different methodology of calculating rent, we would allow our clients to have to pay higher than that. It would have effect on some of the groups. We would really be putting extra burden on especially our seniors and our singles. So it is not something we are looking at at this point. It is something that we are keeping an eye on or leaving open as an option as the CMHC funds decline, and we have to keep everything that is a possibility on the table. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I understand more about the flat rate rent scale, I am not in a position to support an increase in the cost of living when it comes to one of the basic necessities, which is having a roof over your head. However, I am just trying to get the Minister to lean towards an appetite that my residents are interested in, which is to base their rent and/or their mortgages on last year's salary, instead of doing a month-by-month verification of income. I am just wondering if the Minister has looked at that and if there is

an appetite by the department to go in that direction. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we haven't recently been looking at any changes to the way we apply our rent scales to our public housing units. In fact, we are in the process where we are trying to increase and encourage homeownership. Our rent scales reflect what the client is making, we do an assessment on a month-to-month basis; however, if the Member is encouraging or would like us to take a look at the whole policy again, and look at a longer term, then maybe it is a good opportunity or a good time to review the situation. We have more people entering the workforce, so we can take another look at it and come back with some comments for the Members.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that the Minister is willing to be flexible and open to this whole question, and willing to address it. I think I brought it up, as well as the household income, anything else like running a business, you operate best once your expenditures are fixed, and, of course, rent and/or mortgage is one of the biggest expenditures that any one person and/or family has. So this is just one of my ideas of stabilizing household income as well as maybe reducing some of the overhead with regard to maintaining the current program the way it exists for the department. I am glad that the Minister would be willing to look at that. What process would kick in from the department that would address this process of re-evaluating rent and/or mortgage scales? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope I was fairly clear that we would take the opportunity at this time to direct our officials to take a look at how we charge rent. We have to recognize the nature of a lot of our clients in our public housing units are on the low income side of the wage scale. More and more of our clients are seasonal workers, therefore the income fluctuates throughout the year. We have to have a system in place that is responsive. The current system has proven that it works. Although it has its problems, as the Member has indicated, it allows for huge spikes when a person goes from not working to finding a job. Again, we will commit to the Member that we will take a look at the system we have in place, and make comments back to the Member.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I would like to thank the honourable Minister for his reply. My next question is should we be leaning towards this direction? What is our relationship to the local housing organizations in each of the communities, and how can we say this is the direction we are going and do we have input into how they run their boards? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 92-15(3): Flat Rate Rent Scale

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our relationship with the local housing associations or authorities is a partnership arrangement. We have signed universal partnership agreements with roughly half of the LHOs in the Territories. These agreements will be kicking in on April 1st of this year. As per sending a directive, I don't know if that is the way we want to approach it, but if we could come up with a better way to appraise the rent and do assessments, we certainly will bring that to their attention and encourage them to utilize it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the visitors' gallery. We have a class from Range Lake North School, the grades 6 and 7 classes, with the Principal Sandra Bowden, teachers David Speakman and Mr. Spencer Lyman, and also one of the parents, Mrs. Eleanor Young. I would like to welcome Eleanor. I know Eleanor from her many days up in Holman Island with the Beaufort-Delta leaders meetings. So I would like to welcome you to the House and hope you learn something here today, and if not come back and we will try to redo it all over again. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 93-15(3): Highway Maintenance Priorities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to direct my question to the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, this has to do with the fact that the Department of Transportation had figured there should be no improvements to Highway No. 6 in the foreseeable future. Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out again the importance of this highway link for residents of Deninu Kue insofar as travelling to the Hub -- Hay River -- to pick up medical supplies, prescriptions, dental and banking, and many other activities that members of Deninu Kue and the settlement of Little Buffalo River rely on on a daily basis. The volume of traffic has been increasing over the last two years due to the fact that we lost our air service. Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister to tell me how the department measures the volumes of traffic on the highway systems, and what the criteria is to prioritize the amount of work that should be on each road system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 93-15(3): Highway Maintenance Priorities

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of highways require surface overlay, and the department has been attempting to respond as best they can. We have to realize that we are working with a limited budget. We were fortunate this year to receive approval for some funding from the federal government. We have two revenue sources: a partnership arrangement with the federal government, and also through our corporate capital planning system. Highways 5 and 6 were submitted under the corporate capital planning system this year. They were assessed and did not receive any funding. I am not in a position to force the review committee to decide what projects are going to be brought forward or not. What we can do is resubmit them again next year. The capital planning process allows for review every year, and we will certainly submit it on the community's behalf. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 93-15(3): Highway Maintenance Priorities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a question on the review committee's criteria for the allocation and review of the highway system, and the basis on which they prioritize the Transportation department's commitments to highway improvements. I want to know how much weight the review committee puts on the ratio of collisions to highway volume in their evaluations.

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

Further Return To Question 93-15(3): Highway Maintenance Priorities

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do put a lot of emphasis on the safety factor, but there are other criteria used; the condition of the road. As I indicated, it is something that has to be approved through the corporate capital planning system, and unfortunately this highway did not make the grade for any major improvement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 93-15(3): Highway Maintenance Priorities

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister if he can provide me with some of the terms of reference for the review committee and their basis of how much weight they put on each factor that they take into consideration, and if the Minister will commit to re-evaluating the importance of this section of highway for the residents of Deninu Kue so that when they come and ask me as to why there will be no improvements on that section of the highway that I will be able to provide them with some legitimate reasons and explanations as to why the department disregarded or just didn't consider this highway for improvements in the foreseeable future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 93-15(3): Highway Maintenance Priorities

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, we would be glad to provide that information in terms of where it ranked throughout the process. We have to recognize though that we are not able to accommodate all of the capital projects in the North. I think we are doing roughly 60 or 70 percent of what comes forward. It is difficult when we can't access the funding for certain projects. However, the road, we feel, is still in fairly good condition. We will take another look at what was being raised as safety concerns by the Member, and we will provide back in writing where the status of this road is, and what we are presenting to the corporate Capital Planning Review Committee for consideration. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regrettably the Minister is so ideologically married to the old doctrines of this government that he is not willing to consider a change from a rent geared to income to a more leveled kind of rent scale that we so advocate here to help the people adjust to the changes in social economies. Mr. Speaker, that brings me to the point I want to ask the Minister. Has he decided to suddenly introduce new policy changes that would now charge seniors rent, contrary to the old policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I understand the question correctly, the Member has asked if I am introducing rent to seniors. If that is the question, no, we haven't made that decision. We have deferred the review of the harmonization initiative until the fall. That will come up for consideration at that time, but as of today, no. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under legislative rules to last administer a fee, in his statement back to me he says significant change that seniors' households will now be assessed rent, thus the question is raised again to the Minister, is he willing to or is he planning on introducing policy changes to that effect on charging seniors rent, based on his statement in his reply to my oral question? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my reply to the Member with regard to the oral question, the letter indicates that a flat rent scale if implemented

would cause and place a burden on our seniors and our singles, because a flat rent scale does not take into consideration seniors, or singles, or low income families. It is across the board based on the number of bedrooms, or the number of rooms in a house, and it applies with no discretion. So in the letter I have indicated that it causes us concern to introduce or look at that concept, because it would mean charging rent to seniors. I did not indicate in the letter that we will be bringing to the House a rent scale for seniors. I want to clarify that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then would the Minister interpret the precise wording of this letter to me in the context of assessing seniors' rent? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had answered that very question in my previous answer, but again...

MR. SPEAKER: You can answer the question, you can take the question as notice, or don't answer the question, but it is a question.

Further Return To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, again I will answer the question by stating that the flat rent scale would apply undue hardship to our seniors and our single people, and the people on our low rent scale. That is what I indicated in the letter, and that is the reason we haven't moved forward with this whole concept. To us it is, of course, a very attractive concept. It is a way for us to look at bringing more revenue because it would increase the rent scales and it would bring more revenue to the Housing Corporation, but at this point we are not moving forward on it. We have put that on the back burner for the time being. It is an option that we can look at some time in the near future, but at this point we are not. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Allen.

Supplementary To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then I would ask the Minister, based on his pro forma statement he introduced yesterday during Committee of the Whole, based on his operation expenses in excess of \$35 million and rent recoveries only in the neighbourhood of \$2.9 million, would he introduce some calculators that would prove that a flat rent scale wouldn't work for the communities under our ideology of trying to promote a social economy? Would he introduce calculators to that effect? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 94-15(3): GNWT Rent Scale Policies

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think our calculators work fine, but I will get a breakdown of those numbers for the Member and provide them to him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during my questions early in this Assembly, I had requested more information from the Premier in regard to the written policy on how the Cabinet chooses to waive the BIP, or subsequent to how they choose to apply it would be sort of part and parcel to the question. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Following up on that note, what signal is the Premier looking for in order to bring the whole BIP to general discussion amongst Caucus Members? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the BIP is one that has been debated a lot over the last 10 years. It has gone through several amendments, modifications and so on. There is a lot of debate about its value, what it costs us or doesn't cost us, who it works for and who it doesn't work for. During the coming year, RWED is doing an assessment to determine what it costs us in the various scenarios, and when we have that then we may choose to review the whole BIP, but at this point there is no decision made to review the whole policy. We recognize that it fits some situations better than others, but there is no commitment at this point to review that policy again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I reaffirm that Cabinet does have to have the liberty of knowing when to waive the policy and when to apply it, I will state that upfront. I have to admit on the other side -- and I am referring to the regular Members' side of this Assembly -- we have to wear the blindfolds of the decisions made by Cabinet, and when they decide to waive the policy the phone calls come to us, and it truly affects all of our constituents as well as our industry. My question to the Premier would be in this particular case, when Cabinet decides to use that waiving discretion, would they be able to brief Caucus on some of the pros and cons of why they chose to go in that direction, because I think that truly affects the general membership of this Assembly in a critical way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a policy is a general statement of intent, and direction, and so on from a government. It is not a commandment, it is not a law. It is statement of how we

intend to conduct business. Every policy we have in government has a statement that says that nothing in the policy shall be construed to limit the prerogative of Executive Council to make exceptions where the circumstances warrant. We have to look at the various interests and determine what the best way of doing this, does this warrant an exception. Mr. Speaker, in some cases we do that, but in other cases we most often choose not to. If we are making a lot of exceptions, we need to review the whole policy. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't take this to Caucus. I don't think it is a matter we want to deal with in Caucus, but certainly it is an issue that we intend to fully communicate with AOC and let committee Members and Members of the Legislative Assembly, where we can, know in advance. But on the communication side, we will do everything we can to make sure that everyone knows why we are making the exception before we do it.

Mr. Speaker, in this case, we have pushed a budget very quickly, and there may be some things that we could have done better in communicating the most recent decision here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My line of questioning is focused on appreciation that we are not here to limit their discretion, but I guess the way some of us hear about this discretion that is being used is through the media. It is difficult to walk down the streets of Yellowknife without having to wear a helmet due to safety on the concerns that many citizens are very upset about the fact that you can waive or apply the policy. So without prior notice of this coming, or for us to understand some of the reasons why, it is difficult for us to defend our Executive Council or even understand why they consider their approach. Not to say we speak in favour of it, but it is a position. Therefore, I am asking the Premier, although he slightly said it, I wish him to clearly commit that he will send us some information as to why they chose to waive a policy; therefore, we will protect the general membership and our belief in the system. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to remind Members that this issue was brought up in committee. It was brought up in committee as you reviewed the mains for Housing, we did it there. If that wasn't enough and we didn't provide enough information on why we were doing it, or the rationale for it, then we would be happy to do that again if Members want, and we'd be happy to talk about how we may be able to communicate these kinds of exceptions more effectively. We want to do business with all of the MLAs cooperatively, and we want to do what is right for the majority of the people in the Territories, recognizing we are not going to please everybody all of the time. Mr. Speaker, we are trying to do what we can to make sure Members are aware of changes we are making. We will continue with that, and certainly we would appreciate any

advice on how we can do this when we meet in committee at some point to discuss this further.

In terms of the impact of this, again, we'd be pleased to provide information as best we have following the awarding of this particular contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess in my old age I musn't be hearing very closely to the commitment that was made there, and I am not sure I actually heard one. I almost got the feeling that our Ghandi-style Premier has traded in his sandals for Fred Astair tapping shoes because he tapped right through this and I didn't hear a solid commitment. Will the Premier clearly commit to us that he will brief us prior to this becoming public knowledge, therefore, we are up to speed fully on the reasons on why they chose to waive the BIP? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 95-15(3): Business Incentive Policy Discussion

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this particular situation is already public knowledge, so I can't do it before that. In terms of any future exceptions to BIP or to other policies, then we will undertake to let the committees know as soon as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in keeping with my young age. Would he consider looking at the possibility of working with the education board in the Sahtu region with regard to bringing in a curriculum around the land claims document, because it is a very important document for our children. We have a living document that will benefit and that is going to have an impact on their lives and futures. So it is something that they need to learn about in our education system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the teachers, the schools, the divisional education council could ensure that as part of the curriculum for social studies that there is some consideration of the treaties that involve that region right now. So that would work within the current curriculum. I would be happy to work with the Member to make sure that everybody is aware in the region. I suspect they are already aware. We are also, as I would like to advise all Members, in the process of revising the kindergarten to Grade 9 social studies curriculum, and one of the aspects

that will be in the curriculum is a consideration of land claims documents for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could we get some clarification that it includes the Treaties of 1921? My grandmother's first husband, Chief Albert Wright, negotiated the Treaties in 1921, so I think that should be part of the curriculum. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the intent would be to make sure that the curriculum includes reference to those sorts of documents, documents that are important to the history of the Northwest Territories and how they helped shape the culture and our lives here in the North. They are certainly ones that should be included in the social studies program for children in the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Minister. Would the Minister commit to some information not only for the schools, but also for the Aurora College programs in the Sahtu region with regard to a curriculum or a course in terms of the land claims for the younger adults? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to discuss with the college what sorts of courses are being offered in the region. I know that as part of the TEP program, there is some work done to make sure that teachers who come through that program are made aware of treaty and land claims, and are able to work with those documents and include them in a social studies program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sahtu land claims have been negotiated and were settled 10 years ago. I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit to fully looking at the Aurora College programs again, as he mentioned in his comments to me about looking at the possibility of having some programs next year in the Sahtu that reflect the Sahtu land claim agreement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 96-15(3): Including Land Claims And Treaties In Curriculum

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly undertake to discuss with my department and the college what's being offered in the region, and see if there are any ties to the documents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask some more questions about the government's decision to waive the BIP in the purchasing of 22 mobile homes. I must say, Mr. Speaker, in listening to the Premier's statements and other Ministers, I am truly disheartened by the condescending and patronizing ways in which they are suggesting that we had full consultation on this issue; I don't believe that is correct. I would challenge the government to provide us with documentation that would show that.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask at this time, a question to the Minister of RWED, who is the Minister responsible for this policy. I want to read from the Hansard yesterday, on page 773, wherein the Minister, Mr. Michael McLeod, stated, "Madam Chair, the whole idea behind this concept of waiving the BIP was to get the cheapest rates possible." So I would like to know from the Minister of RWED, whether or not he agrees with this view that seems to be implied from the government that the cheapest way possible to do business is to waive the BIP. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't, I guess in this case, know what the cost of the program will be and we won't know that until the tenders are evaluated. I guess I would say that, potentially, with the application of BIP, there could be an additional cost. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if I understand what the Minister said. Mr. Speaker, potentially there might be some cost. Minister McLeod suggested that he had to look at the worst and the best scenarios in coming up with the prices. Like I stated yesterday, I'm sure it might be the cheapest if we dialled up a 1-800 number out of Las Vegas and ordered 50 mobile homes. But as a government, you have to think about the opportunity cost of having this kind of policy. So I would like to know from the Minister of RWED, in his discussions -- and I'm assuming that he approved this policy -- what is his knowledge about what the extra cost of BIP is in this tender contract? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation has committed to the Member and to committee to come back with the information that was analyzed by Cabinet, and he will provide that so you can get a sense of the decision that we made, the information we had at our fingertips. I think it's important, and something I'd like to point out to committee Members, that the government has acknowledged that it doesn't have a handle on the true cost of BIP. I think what we've said we're going to do -- and I commit to this -- is when the new contracts registry is up and running and functioning, we will be able to measure the cost of BIP where it has been applied in certain contracts. We can look where BIP is applied, and that is with the successful contracts, we will have a sense of what that premium was.

Now as far as a true cost of BIP, we may never be able to fully know the true cost of BIP. Potentially, there could be southern applicants who don't submit bids on BIP tenders because they believe that they won't be able to be competitive with the BIP. There are many other scenarios. But I would say that after a year of tracking this, we will know, where the BIP was applied, what the premium was. At that point, I will come back to committee and we can have a discussion. Whatever that number would be at that time, we can then have an informed discussion about whether or not this program makes sense and what the cost of this program is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I must say there is an epidemic of inconsistent thinking going on on that side of the floor. Yesterday we had to argue with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment who was cutting a program before an evaluation was done, now I have the Minister of RWED telling me that this thing will be evaluated afterwards. Afterwards. After the tender has gone out and somebody from Las Vegas has won the contract to provide 22 mobile homes in the North, then he's going to do the evaluation, and after the contract registries. How is he going to know, Mr. Speaker? How is he going to know how much the BIP cost if none of the northerners bid because they will think there's no point, they can't complete with Las Vegas prices. How is he going to know, Mr. Speaker?

---Applause

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

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

Further Return To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not evaluating the cost of BIP on the program that the Housing Minister is conducting, but I am going to look at

the cost of BIP once we have the contracts registry up and running, track it for a year on all of this government's contracting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Time for oral questions is up, but I will allow Ms. Lee her final supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what happens when the Minister is going to these departments. They talk the same line as the previous Minister. Mr. Speaker, I need to get a commitment from the RWED Minister that he provides and his Cabinet colleagues provide us with the figures that have been committed all morning today. I would like to know if he can provide us with that on Monday, prior to the session. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 97-15(3): Benefits Of Waiving The Business Incentive Policy

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Minister has already made this commitment. As to timelines, he tells me we believe we can have it for the Members on Monday so that we can take up this discussion further, and we will endeavour to do that. Thank you.

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

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 11-15(3): Statistical Data For Sahtu Schools

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

For each of the schools in the Sahtu region:

1. How many students are enrolled in K to 12 by grade?
2. What is the pupil/teacher ratio?
3. What mixed-grade classes do they have? Classes which include students at different grade levels.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written question. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act

Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, No. 2

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has reviewed Bill 2, An Act

to Amend the Income Tax Act; and, Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Income Tax, No. 2, and wishes to report that bills 2 and 3 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Handley.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 14-15(3): NWT Power Corporation 2003 Annual Report

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled NWT Power Corporation, 2003 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Zoe.

Tabled Document 15-15(3): Public Utilities Board 2003 Annual Report

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Public Utilities Board, 2003 Annual Report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Tabled Document 16-15(3): Second Year Activities Of The Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy – March 8, 2004

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Second Year Activities of the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy, March 8, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 17-15(3): Official Voting Results Of The General Election Of The 15th Legislative Assembly

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. I wish to table the official voting results from the general election of the 15th Legislative Assembly held on November 24, 2003. The official voting results are published in accordance with section 162 of the Elections Act.

Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Zoe.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 5: Tlicho Community Government Act

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, March 29, 2004, I will move that Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Bill 6: An Act To Amend The Payroll Tax Act, 1993 And The Income Tax Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 29, 2004, I will move that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993 and the

Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, 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 will resolve 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 19: 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 Speaker has read out the list of items before us, and I would just like to ask what is the wish of the committee. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee would like to continue the consideration of Bill 1, with a recommendation that we review and conclude the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Justice, in that order. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I'll ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs if he has opening comments. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am pleased to present the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs main estimates for the fiscal year 2004-2005. The department is requesting \$77.4 million in operating expenses for the 2004-2005 fiscal year, and approximately \$7.5 million for capital acquisitions. This represents a slight decrease of one percent from the 2003-2004 main estimates.

This budget strives to balance current fiscal reality with the important role that community governments play in serving the needs and interests of the people of the Northwest Territories. Operating funding is provided to community governments to assist them in ensuring quality municipal programs and services are available to all residents. By working in partnership with community governments, the department strives to support good governance and enhance the quality of life for all residents in the Northwest Territories.

Now more than ever, Northwest Territories communities are facing great opportunities and significant challenges. These include negotiation and implement of self-government; implementation of new municipal legislation

with broader powers; increased resource development activity, including the Mackenzie Valley pipeline; challenges in generating revenues; and, pressures to ensure quality municipal services, including safe drinking water and fire protection.

The department plays a significant role in supporting community governments to meet these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that come their way.

The lion's share of the operating budget goes to community governments through contributions. These contributions include formula funding for ongoing community government operations and additional funding for areas like sport and recreation programs, water and sewer infrastructure, municipal insurance, senior citizens and disabled persons property tax relief, grants-in-lieu of property taxes, infrastructure projects and community development. In total, 74 percent of the operating budget goes to community governments. Even with an overall budget reduction of one percent, contributions to community governments have risen from 73 percent of the 2003-2004 budget to 74 percent in the proposed 2004-2005 budget. In this time of fiscal restraint, the priority is to ensure that community governments are adequately funded to deliver their legislated responsibilities.

A key goal for the department over the next year will be to continue to support and nurture strong collaborative relationships with key partners, including community governments, aboriginal governments, the Government of Canada, industry, the private sector and non-government organizations in order to aggressively pursue shared goals and interests. The department has successfully leveraged additional funding from the federal government for community infrastructure projects, and will strive to explore more options like this to help deliver funding and much needed capital projects to communities.

Through partnering with key stakeholders, the department will be able to advance community interest with a positive, productive, win/win approach.

The department's budget includes a request for forced growth of approximately \$1.3 million, which will help to better serve the interests of community governments of the Northwest Territories.

One significant area where the department requires forced growth funding is to support our responsibilities related to the implementation of the Tlicho final agreement. The budget includes \$471,000 to support the community governments established pursuant to the Tlicho agreement. Upon effective date, the four Dogrib community governments as we know them today will cease to exist. Replacing them will be four new community governments established under the Tlicho Community Government Act, which will combine aboriginal self-government with public government. Currently, under the department's community government funding policy, Wekweti and Gameti are funded as band communities. When they are established as Tlicho community governments, these communities will be funded for the increased authority and responsibility they are assuming. This increased funding will flow directly to the community governments through formula funding.

There is \$495,000 in forced growth is being proposed to keep pace with rapid growth in the property assessment function. The Standing Committee on Governance and

Economic Development has raised concerns about this proposed investment in their report, and I would like to address some of those concerns.

The department has worked hard to maintain current property assessments, particularly for the tax-based communities who rely on these revenues to fund their operations, but it has reached the point where it is not possible to keep pace with the growth in the larger communities and with the rapid increase in resource-based activity.

The department has worked closely with the Department of Finance to ensure that this is an appropriate investment, and that additional revenues can be realized in the short term, which will more than offset the costs of assessment. Not only the Government of the Northwest Territories, but tax-based municipalities will benefit from this initiative.

With regard to the standing committee's suggestion that other alternatives need to be explored, the department is completing the first stage of a review of property assessment practices in other jurisdictions, which may lead to recommendations for improvement.

The standing committee has also raised concerns about the timeliness of the process of transferring Commissioner's land to municipal governments. Improvement is needed in this area, and the department is taking aggressive action in this regard. Funding in this budget will help to complete a comprehensive review of land-related policies, and support the development of recommendations for streamlining and improving these processes.

The budget also contains funding to complete the development of a geographic information system that will provide community governments with an effective tool to streamline the land administration process.

The standing committee noted that it is not enough to invest in community infrastructure, but it is equally critical to invest in proper maintenance and upkeep. Resources in this budget will support expanded training opportunities for community government staff in infrastructure maintenance and management to address this important need.

These are just some of the areas where the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is working to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our program delivery.

Community governments are key partners who want to work with the government to address challenges and opportunities. The investments that the government makes in communities are essential to ensure good governance throughout the Northwest Territories and quality of life for all residents. Madam Chair, I look forward to any comments and any questions that the committee may have at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Zoe. I believe at this time Mr. Delorey is going to read the Governance and Economic Development committee's review on the main estimates for MACA. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Public Works designs, constructs,

acquires, operates and maintains buildings, works and equipment and implements energy efficient projects in the Government of the Northwest Territories; buildings and works required for the Government of the Northwest Territories to deliver its programs and services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Delorey, sorry. Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

MR. DELOREY: Sorry, Madam Chair.

---Laughter

The mandate of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is to provide community governments with the support to deliver public programs and services essential to sound community life, to assist with the development and maintenance of community governments, and to provide the resources necessary to achieve community goals.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and his staff on February 19, 2004, to review the department's draft main estimates for 2004-2005.

Property Assessment Positions

MACA is requesting forced growth funding of \$495,000 for three new property assessment positions which it advises are needed in order to clear a backlog. The department estimated that additional property tax revenues resulting from completed assessments could amount to \$3 to \$4 million per year. The committee is concerned that this will be an ongoing expense for the department in future years and there does not appear to be a joint strategy between MACA and Finance, which is responsible for setting mill rates and collecting property taxes, to ensure additional revenues will be sufficient to make this investment worthwhile. In any case, it will be some time before the revenue is even sufficient to offset the assessment costs. Members noted the following specific concerns:

- 1 There are no apparent plans to prioritize the assessment of high revenue potential properties, such as resource development properties over lower revenue potential properties, such as residences;
- 2 There is a backlog of assessment appeals, the outcome of which could impact on assessment values and consequently property tax revenues;
- 3 There are no apparent plans to collect tax arrears more aggressively;
- 4 Other alternatives to assessments may be possible for some properties, for example, MACA could look at indexing older properties with established assessments instead of reassessing them.

The department also advised the committee that they have attempted to address some of the backlog by contracting the work to the private sector, but have had difficulty finding enough contractors for all the work. Considering that private contracts are often more lucrative than salary and benefits, Members are sceptical that the Department will be successful in recruiting three full-time assessors.

The standing committee recommends that funding for three new property assessors be taken out of the 2004-2005 main estimates.

The committee would be pleased to reconsider this proposal during the next business plan reviews if MACA and Finance are able to come forward jointly with a strong business case for investing in additional property assessment resources.

Community Financial Services

The standing committee noted the large increase in this division's other expenses. The department explained the increases were made in response to recommendations from the Auditor General that MACA improve its financial advice to community governments because so many communities were running deficits. The committee was advised that the funds have largely been spent hiring contractors to assist communities. For example, communities often have difficulty recruiting and retaining senior administrative officers and financial officers, and need temporary replacements for these positions.

The standing committee suggested that services could be provided more cost-effectively by using departmental staff rather than contractors.

The standing committee also suggested that the School of Community Government should increase its efforts to train people committed to staying in the communities so that there would be less of a turnover problem. The standing committee also warns it is important bad management practices not be seen to be rewarded and that additional resources are made available to communities in financial difficulty.

Transfer Of Commissioners' Land To Communities

The standing committee advised the Minister of their concerns about delays in transferring Commissioner's lands to municipal governments, particularly in the Inuvik and North Slave regions. These delays are placing limitations on development. The Minister acknowledged the need to rectify this problem, although it is not entirely within MACA's control to do so. The department indicated it has hired a consultant to review its lands policies, which may provide some assistance. The committee recommends that MACA take a leadership role in simplifying and expediting the transfer process within all existing policies.

The standing committee will continue to monitor this issue.

Arctic Winter Games

The committee is aware that the Arctic Winter Games International Committee has a policy in place until 2010 that it will not consider bids involving more than one host municipality. Members see this policy as unfair to smaller communities and requested that the department continue to work on this issue and do what it can to influence the International Committee.

Youth Programs

The standing committee is concerned that there is a Minister responsible for Youth but that the funding for youth programs is included within MACA's budget. This creates confusion about where funding applications should be directed and does not serve the public well.

The standing committee looks forward to seeing this situation resolved by the Premier as soon as possible.

Planning Act

The standing committee was pleased to learn that MACA is undertaking a review of the Planning Act in cooperation with the NWT Association of Communities in order to address many longstanding concerns with the outdated act.

Squatters

The standing committee was advised that the department is working with the Akaitcho Territory and Canada on a common approach to dealing with squatters in the Yellowknife area. As part of this effort, the department has developed a database to track who is living on the Ingraham Trail.

Members were pleased to hear of the progress on this issue and look forward to further updates.

Performance Measures For Grants And Contributions

The standing committee noted that the MACA budget includes significant grants and contributions. While the department monitors the financial management of community governments quite closely, the committee believes the department could do more to develop performance measures to ensure value and accountability.

Maintenance Of Community Infrastructure

Members have noted that while significant dollars are invested into community infrastructure, the resources are not always put into maintenance and upkeep. Members gave examples of community facilities being allowed to deteriorate resulting in a need for expensive repairs.

The Minister acknowledged this is a concern, and advised that the department is training the recreation facility managers to work with coordinators to work towards better maintenance programs. The committee looks forward to update the success of this initiative.

Land For Access Road From Highway No. 3 To Kam Lake

The committee was advised that discussions are taking place at the staff level between the City of Yellowknife and MACA to address the matter of land availability to develop an access road from Highway No. 3 to Kam Lake. Members look forward to hearing of further progress on this issue.

Duplication Of Functions

Committee Members noted several apparent duplications of functions and would encourage government to consider whether addressing these areas could save costs. The community governance division appears to overlap and duplicate some Aboriginal Affairs activities. The sport and recreation division needs to be streamlined and thought needs to be given on how it will work with the new NWT Council of Sport and Recreation partners and whether some resources should be transferred out of the department. In terms of community preparedness, there is also duplication with MACA and RWED on the pipeline development.

Members were pleased to hear that the department has given consideration to the Deloitte and Touche report which recommends dismantling MACA. The committee understands, however, that the NWTAC had opposition to the total dismantling. The committee would like to suggest that even if dismantling the department altogether is not an option, there is an opportunity to deal with some of the specific duplication issues mentioned in that report. Committee Members hope to see changes in the next business plan.

That concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, Madam Chair.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Just before we take a break, I would like to ask Mr. Zoe if he would like to bring his witnesses in, to give them an opportunity to get set up while we're having the break. Would you like to bring in witnesses?

HON. HENRY ZOE: Yes, thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Then I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring in the witnesses. Before Mr. Zoe begins the consideration of his department's main estimates, we will take a brief break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We are considering the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Zoe, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right, I have Deputy Minister Debbie DeLancey; and, to my left, I have Director of Corporate Services Sheila Bassi-Kellett.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. General comments. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee had a chance to review the draft main estimates for this department and there were some of the areas where the committee had some concerns. In property assessments, the committee did come forward making a case for \$495,000 to put three new assessors' positions in place to get caught up on a backlog of assessments. The committee had a hard time to justify this extra money based on the case that MACA put forward. There were a lot of uncertainties from the committee's point of view where we get good value for our dollar, although MACA did make the case that we could possibly recognize \$3 million to \$4 million per year if we did catch up on the backlog on property assessments in cases from backlogs. There was a lot of concern from committee on this issue. Also, the fact that the committee had some doubt as to whether the department would even be successful in recruiting three new full-time assessors. There seems to be some concerns about how many property assessors are out there and whether we might

not be better off getting this work done by the private sector. I would put a question to the Minister on the availability of assessors. How does the department think they would be in recruiting three full-time assessors? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe I will start by explaining the rationale and why we've decided to go in house and try to get those three staff positions that we are asking for. Years ago, the department had more assessors, in '96. They went from five assessors to only two. At that time, the committee of the day suggested that we move people to regional centres. They tried recruiting assessors to be moved to the regional centres. That was during the decentralization period when we had five assessors at headquarters, but once we moved those positions to the regional centres, none of those assessors moved with their positions to the regional centres. So we did have a problem there. After that, the department decided to recruit from the private sector. This is a skilled position. You have to have people who are very skilled to do this type of work. We are even having a difficult time recruiting them from the private sector. So we've decided now that we are going to try to recruit for headquarters. We are confident that we are going to be successful in adding these positions here in headquarters.

I know some members raised the concern about Yellowknife, but I can tell the committee in the earlier days it was decided to move them to the regional centres. If I had my way, I would move them, but because these are very skilled positions, we felt at this time that we would like to start off with headquarters first and maybe down the road, we could move them into the regional centres. If we are successful in getting these positions, we are going to hire a qualified senior property assessor and we are going to get a northern trainee who meets the entrance requirements for property assessment certification and assessment technicians. Those are the positions we are going to be looking at.

We are going to enter into long-term committed contract arrangements for northern firms for providing incentives for training and certification for northern residents as property assessors and we are also going to expand contracting activities, establish property assessment funding directly to tax-based communities, effectively decentralizing the function to those communities. We have similar arrangements with the City of Yellowknife. We are also going to ensure all industrial properties are assessed and paying tax revenues to our government. We are also going to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements of the Property Assessment Taxation Act.

So those are the three positions we are going to be looking at. We are quite confident we can attract these three positions, if they are situated in headquarters for the department. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. From what I am hearing now, there would be only one assessor position and then a trainee and technician. That seems like a lot of money for one assessor and one trainee and a

technician that would basically be training. It seems that that is a considerable amount of money. Is that all this money is going to be used for, strictly for those three positions? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, the Member is right, it does look like a lot for those three positions, but you have to take into consideration, because of the three positions that I identified, it's not going to take up all the money that is allotted for the assessment section. We are going to continue using the private sector to help us catch up or to do the proper assessment, so that we are up to date. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would think that that would be a function that MACA was involved in doing before anyway, land assessment and dealing with the private sector. I guess another question I would have is what is the department's priority area as far as backlogs are concerned? Where are they going to prioritize doing the assessment? Is it on industrial, residential, tax-based municipalities? What kind of a priority list does the department have? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is suggesting maybe we should take a look at assessing only certain properties, but the act doesn't allow for any such distinction. We are required to assess all properties equitably. Therefore, we need these positions to undertake that initiative. As I indicated during the review, we have to bring all these assessments up to date and we have to do it in all categories. We definitely require additional money to undertake these initiatives. Some of this will be used for our private sector and also these three new positions will try to bring us right up to date, so the assessments are current. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a few comments with regard to my constituents, particularly to the Village of Fort Simpson. I know we have discussed this issue in the House as well and it's an issue because of the distinction of being taxed as non-tax-based communities. Therein lies our challenges. The Village of Fort Simpson is on the borderline. Yes, there is a tax base, but there are only 130 people and yet they are classified as a tax-based community. If they are to assess a tax of \$100,000 per taxpayer, we would be okay, but the reality is that there isn't enough of a tax base there. I just wonder how the Cities, Towns and Villages Act compares with the Hamlets Act in terms of funding and taking care of these communities. Perhaps the Minister can answer that; the distinction between the Cities, Towns and Villages Act and the Hamlets Act. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. What I hear you asking the Minister is you would like him to articulate the distinction from a tax point of view, how that would impact Fort Simpson to revert

from a village to a hamlet. You want to know the specific implications.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: No, just the distinction between that act and the Hamlets Act and how communities are taken care of.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you for that clarification. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, for the Hamlets Act, we have formula funding for non-tax-based for hamlets. The capital acquisition is done through our department. We budget for that on behalf of the non-tax-based. With the tax-based, particularly with the Village of Fort Simpson, we also have formula funding arrangements for the tax base for the Village of Fort Simpson. But in terms of their capital acquisition, that's done internally by debentures that they take out. So that is the main distinction between those two. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not going to spend too much time on this because there are some other issues I would like to bring up. I just want to make that distinction on how that works. Perhaps I could have one more question with regard to this. Would, in fact, the funding available to the Village of Fort Simpson increase if it was a hamlet within this year? Presently they are funded at \$890,000. Tuktoyaktuk, as a hamlet, gets a lot more than that. I am just wondering if the funding arrangement would go up for the Village of Fort Simpson if they were to change to a hamlet.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, if I heard the Member correctly, he asked me if their funding would increase or decrease from village status versus hamlet status. If that's the case, it will vary. We have a formula in place. A hamlet is based on a number of factors that is taken into consideration, but on the capital acquisition side, that's done through our department. If you go back to the village status, the funding formula is a little higher, but they also raise their own property tax so they can undertake their own capital acquisitions. So if you create on the capital side, I think it will increase if they are on hamlet status. It's more in control of the department and the municipality. But in terms of the formula funding, it would decrease a little but the support to assist if they were hamlet status would be there because our staff would be assisting them on a regular basis. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's been an ongoing debate in this House and with this government for many years. I hope we can work towards an amicable long-term solution to the issues that are very important to the residents of Fort Simpson. I will just make note that it will be in the forefront as one of the things that I will represent over the next year and maybe a couple of years if that's what it takes.

The next issue I would like to address to the Minister, Madam Chair, is that Nahanni Butte is in a unique

situation in terms of it's one of the only communities not to have a school or gymnasium. That is the direction they are heading in. They are looking at a gymnasium/community hall so they can raise their level of competitiveness when they travel to other communities for sporting events. As well, just to have a central gathering place for community meetings. I did note and did research that it is in the capital plan. It's way down there near the light in the tunnel, but I would like to ask what the process would be to advance something that is now becoming a priority for the community of Nahanni Butte. How can we work together and move a capital item up to say within five years? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we have a process in place for our five-year capital planning. If the community has prioritized a need as a first priority, our regional staff do meet with the community on a regular basis. If that is communicated to our regional staff, then it can be incorporated into our five-year capital plan for that particular community. The initial request has to come from the community, so we are aware of their priority on the five-year capital plan.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Zoe.

---Laughter

It is definitely Friday afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have no further comments at this moment. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I was noting something on page 5 of 6. It's noted that the department will be taking aggressive action. It's talking about transferring Commissioner's land to the municipal government. Of course, in my experience as a sitting councilman previous to this Assembly experience, it seemed to be whenever we needed something, it was like trying to float a lead balloon. We just couldn't get actions in land transfers and it seemed like there were lots of hoops and difficulties. Maybe from a municipal point of view it may seem obvious, but on a territorial perspective there are reasons for those hoops and hurdles and little tricks and some may say snares are out there. I would like to hear more detail on how the Minister foresees this aggressive action that will streamline and improve the process. I would like to hear more on this right now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am glad the Member asked for more details. These are aggressive steps that I mentioned in my opening remarks. We've taken steps and have established an agreement with Inuvik and are working on one with Norman Wells, and working on agreements with other communities to expedite the transfer of land in fee simple title where land claims have been settled. We have also been undertaking

a comprehensive review of all land-related policies with a view to bringing forward an updated streamlined policy framework. We are waiting for the final consultant's report on that.

I hope the Member can come to our department to see the atlas geographic information system that we have set up already. This system is to provide one accurate, comprehensive land information database and it's an administration tool for all stakeholders. We've also just put forward a proposal to convert an existing lease held by the Housing Corporation to fee simple title in settled land claims areas. We also established a term land specialist position in the South Slave region to work on verifying the accuracy of land files in all regions. We also updated the land administration procedure manual to reflect streamlining practices.

So we have, as I stated in my opening remarks, taken an aggressive action. These are the areas we have done to date. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. First, let me say that's very positive news to hear those types of revelations are coming forward. If I may compliment first, on the atlas GIS system. I have heard a little more about that and I am going to take the Minister up on his invitation. One of the people working on that happens to be one of my constituents, as well as a former employee of the City of Yellowknife when I used to be a councillor. I knew he was being scooped and moving on to help work on a big, broad-based program that will do a lot for all of us. I am very interested and I appreciate the invitation from the Minister.

Could the Minister explain when this report will come forward so all regular Members will be able to see the recommendations from that? I want to stress its importance and value. I don't know if all people here recognize that switching from the existing lease to fee simple in settled areas is a significant step for people's lives out there. It creates a lot of surety.

The Minister did refer strictly to settled land claim areas, if I understood him correctly. I can't speak on behalf of Inuvik or Hay River or elsewhere in this particular case, but I can speak for the City of Yellowknife, with my experience, noting that the land claims in our area haven't been concluded. That causes me some small bit of concern because this could mean still many, many years ahead with the City of Yellowknife wanting to access land for further development. I am looking for some type of surety that the streamlining process or the consultant's report may have some indication on how to aid the City of Yellowknife accessing more land for future growth. Can the Minister respond to that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, I will answer the question about the consultant's report the Member referred to. We are anticipating that within two or three months, the consultant's report should be within our hands. We can share that with the committee once the final report is received.

With all the streamlining and all the initiatives our department is doing, it is going to benefit the City of Yellowknife to try to fast track the request for Commissioner's land. Besides assisting them to fast track their request for Commissioner's land, we can have similar arrangements as with other communities for the City of Yellowknife but, to date, that request has not come forward from the City of Yellowknife. That offer is there if they are willing to undertake this type of initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Suspecting this problem is not completely unique to the City of Yellowknife, I refer again maybe the community of Hay River, maybe the community of Inuvik, et cetera, have had the same problem. Is the Department of MACA working with MAA, as well as the tripartite agreements such as aboriginal groups, in identifying some of the potential future lands they will be claiming or wishing to claim so that we can move forward on the municipal concerns of acquisition of lands? Any agreement from this report? Do you suspect the report will be highlighting anything of that nature? Not that long ago, the City of Yellowknife wanted to move forward on an acquisition from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. After the application was made, it was only later identified as a land that was requested.

So this has caused some confusion both for the City of Yellowknife and it does cause some confusion for the aboriginal groups that want this land. I think this would clear up which land is available, which land isn't available, working with MAA and the specific aboriginal groups in the area. Therefore, everyone gets what they want, we know what's on the table and we can work forward together as a seamless process. Can the Minister comment on any of that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, our department is working very closely with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs pertaining to the issues you were just raising with regard to land acquisition, particularly Commissioner's land. The process that we have in place is very simple. Our officials at MACA, city officials and also the Akaitcho Territory officials, particularly the Yellowknives First Nation are, on a regular basis, meeting and discussing the issues pertaining to land. The agreement that is in place now is supposed to be a schedule C attached to it, but, unfortunately, that particular schedule G, which would identify the areas that the First Nations want versus which areas that the city wants has now been concluded. Currently, the First Nations and the City of Yellowknife and my department officials are currently talking and trying to resolve that whole issue today. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Next on the list for general comments is Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you Madam Chair. I just want to commend the Minister and he does have some real changes and that he is addressing some of the opportunities that the department has to improve some of the program delivery of MACA.

I just wanted to ask a question on the department's direction with regards to resolving a lot of property assessment issues that have been brought to their attention by a lot of smaller communities within the GNWT and not just pertaining to my riding. Just to note that, particularly in a lot of non-taxed-based communities where property assessments have been carried out and assessment notices and tax notices have been mailed out to residents in various non-taxed-based communities with little or no favourable response from these ratepayers.

I just wanted to ask the Minister what new initiative or new directions the department is going to be taking to improve the communications between the FMBS, who collects the taxes, and the assessment department, to ensuring that the residents who are receiving the assessment and tax bills know what the difference is between the two and what it all means. They should take up the challenge to making sure that the communities are consulted through a process of maybe an open house where the community members can go and ask questions that are actually pertaining to these assessments that have actually been carried out regardless of their unfavourable response to allowing assessments into the community.

I am sure the communities would be open and welcome any staff members, along with probably with some assessors, just to go into these communities and explain to the people exactly what and why they pay property taxes and how and when they are assessed. I don't think that the department does enough actual direct public consultation with regard to property assessments and how they relate to taxes. That is why we run into a lot of people who seem resistant to the whole concept.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you. My colleague from Deninu Kue is correct. Many people don't understand the whole process of tax assessment, property tax assessment and how they calculate. There are various categories and so forth. My department has made a commitment next month to travel into your community, Mr. Villeneuve. We are going to be doing a community consultation exactly as to what you are talking about so that the community fully understands. They can also ask our department officials various questions pertaining to this whole issue. We are planning to go into your community in April. Also, I believe, the Department of Finance will be accompanying us with their officials so that they can also answer questions pertaining to the billings, et cetera. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is good news, I am sure. I am sure they will be welcomed with open arms. I think that something like this should be an ongoing thing. I think communities in all of the Northwest Territories, and not just in my riding, deserve the attention to the matters where they are paying tax dollars. I am sure many of them want to pay and wouldn't mind paying given the explanations as to why they pay and how it relates to their municipal budgets and infrastructure and various other items that many people just take for granted. If it is a one-year thing, probably in a few years they will be running into the same problem. People tend to forget and disregard obligations, especially tax obligations when

they receive income tax notices or assessment notices or a tax bill. I am wondering if this is just going to be a one-time thing that the department is going to be going around to the various communities that are having problems with this assessment initiative, and whether it should be a common practice for the department to keep the communication links with the partners and the communities open and transparent at all times with regard to assessment changes and changes in taxation policy. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this community consultation is not going to be a one-time thing, but we are not going to infringe on the communities that don't want to have these types of consultation. My department is going to be open for a request coming from them. As a former SAO, Madam Chair, I have tried, even when I was there at the municipal level, to try to educate my own municipal councillors as to what this whole assessment process that is used, what it means and how it reverts back to our municipal funding. Many of our SAOs do that for their own councillor so that their own municipal council will understand that whole taxation concept. Through our School of Community Government, part of their training reflects in that area. I can tell the Member that any community that wants to have our officials with the officials from the Department of Finance to come in and thoroughly explain or just to go there for question and answer period, we are willing to accommodate them. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to go on to another point then, I am just wondering what the assessment section's initiative is on some possible changes on into the Property Assessment and Taxation Act and if they reviewed the act of late, but I know it is a pretty outdated act. It should be updated soon with regard to assessing more mining infrastructure projects and government projects such as dams and dykes and other projects with regards to earth works. I know that there is probably a fair number of dollars invested into putting this type of infrastructure in place. I am just wondering if the department has given any heavyweight into developing some amendments in the Property Assessment and Taxation Act that will allow them to recover some tax dollars from this infrastructure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. My colleague hit it right on the head of the nail. We are in the process of reviewing the Property Assessment and Taxation Act. We are going to do a full review. We are currently waiting for the consultant's report which will give us the basis to go the next step. It is currently in the works. We will look at all of these other areas that you mentioned; hydro, earth works, mining, et cetera. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: No, those are all the questions I have for now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MADAM CHAIR: Thank you. Next on my list, I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will try to stick to the topic here, which is in general comments. I have a couple of questions that are for the relevant page when we get to it. An area that I and others have talked about in the past and still keeps coming up is the issue of squatters and land availability at least in the Yellowknife area, Madam Chair. The long standing lack of resolution on land claims is, of course, the main barrier to being able to provide access for people to recreational properties. There is a significant demand. I think that is what is causing the increase in squatting and unauthorized land use. I know from my own experience, Madam Chair, my family has had a cabin at the Cassidy Point area on Prosperous Lake for many years now. We have noticed on that lake growing encroachment of people building structures of some kind. Some of them are quite sophisticated. They are not just temporary shelters, these are substantive properties. I know that it is also happening on other lakes on the Ingraham Trail and along Highway No. 3 between here and Rae. The committee's report refers to some action that the department is taking: a database of who may be or where incidents of unauthorized use are happening. It seems to be an extremely conservative approach to this. My understanding is that we do have laws, regulations and policies that give our government ample latitude to enforce policies that should not allow unauthorized use, for obvious reasons. For some time now, MACA and the Department of Transportation have been very reluctant to act on situations where there have been encroachments on their land.

It is a bit of a saw-off here, Madam Chair, to sit here and demand that we would use our enforcement authority to the maximum, remove these people and that is it. Be done with it. The government has done its job. Really, the solution, of course, lies in some kind of resolution with the First Nations and claimant organizations to permit this kind of access. There have been virtually no leases authorized for about 15 years or maybe more along the Ingraham Trail area. There is a bit of demand and, as I have said, I think that is what is causing the encroachment.

One of the reasons that people would choose to live in the Northwest Territories is the image we project of a vast, clean land accessible to all, a beautiful place to live and enjoy recreation and nature, but we just can't seem to find a way to make that a reality. I think this would be a new advantage to be able to put out there and say we have good policies that allow reasonable access and controlled access to our recreational areas.

This is a plea, Madam Chair, to get far more innovative with this whole area of access to land for recreation purposes, I am not going to advocate that we should go out and start throwing people off their properties. As I understand it, in some jurisdictions an unauthorized cabin or land is posted and, 30 days later the government could move in and burn it down. It is really simple and very easy for everybody to understand. There tends to be very little problem with squatters in some areas. I think we could do better than that. It doesn't seem that we are going to see a land claim settlement in the Yellowknife area for some time. But we do have interim land use protocols, I believe, with First Nations. Isn't it time we engaged and took a look at what could be done to

everyone's advantage and benefit? I will leave it at that, Madam Chair, as a comment. If the Minister would like to respond, I would certainly like to hear about it. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the issue the honourable Member for Great Slave raised is a concern. He may recall a number of chiefs -- Chief Edjericon is a chief in Detah and also the chief from Lutselk'e -- raised a whole concern on Ingraham Trail. It was about a year or a year-and-a-half ago. It is a big concern for First Nations. Through our consultation with Akaitcho Territory and with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, our officials have been meeting on a regular basis to deal with that specific issue. Talks are ongoing. We haven't come to an agreement in writing, per se, as to where designated areas are going to be selected for other people's use so that we don't have squatters. There is a plan in place by the First Nations that they want to take a look at the whole corridor. They are going to start pre-selecting their areas that they are going to select through their claim process. We are going to have some sort of interim agreement prior to their final land claims so that we can address that particular issue that you raised so that we don't have any squatters.

As I indicated to the committee, we are monitoring the situation, where we did aerial photos. We know where people are. As you indicated, we are not going to go in there today or tomorrow and start burning down cabins and stuff like that. We are taking an approach where we are reasonable. We are trying to resolve this issue through the three parties, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, MACA, and also the Akaitcho First Nations. So we are pursuing this whole issue, as you mentioned? Is it a concern to all groups, and are we on top of that file?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: Sure, thank you. We are showing progress on it, and that is excellent. In the meantime, a quiet signal is out there that if you go out and start building somewhere, pick a piece of ground without asking any permission, chances are that you will get away with it and you won't have to worry about any consequences. I think this is where people are basically pushing the envelope, because no one is acting against them we are seeing more, and more, and more of this. What steps can we take to curb this growing trend until something comes into place? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is exactly as the Member is saying, people are not aware as to what is available to them. They take chances squatting, and that is the case right now because they don't want to tell us, or the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs if it is federal Crown land because they don't know the rules. So one of the initiatives that we are taking now so that the people understand, is that we are going to do a campaign between the territorial government and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to let the public know particularly in this corridor of the Ingraham Trail as to what is available and what is not available for recreational use. A lot of times people don't understand what recreational use means, and that is the problem.

Even with the current people who have recreational use leases, some of them ended up permanent residents, and the initial leases that were given out weren't meant for that, it was meant for a more recreational-type use. You go there weekends, or during the summertime, these types of things. The governments haven't been monitoring their leases effectively, and nowadays we are getting more people that are permanently living on recreational leases. That is a problem, but we are trying to rectify that now by the three-way communication between ourselves, Akaitcho Territory and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and even with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of general comments with regard to the property taxation assessment. Again, somewhere along the lines like Mr. Villeneuve, people have a hard time understanding this. I, as a private homeowner, have a pretty good idea of how it operates. The one question I have is that every year MACA goes out and assesses the property, and each year I get my property assessed and so does everybody else. Maybe that is where some of these assessors might come in handy in terms of assessment of lands. How do they do that at the present time? Do they just fly in and fly out, or do they take the assessments from the previous year and work with it? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, we do send out either our contractors to do the assessment or our own staff that do assessments. We send them into the community and they do an assessment right in the communities. These assessments are not done on a yearly basis. I believe currently we do it about every 10 years. That is how assessments are currently done. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. We talked earlier about these people that they have to know what they are doing in terms of assessing the properties. In terms of contractors that you mentioned, are they pretty well professional, or are they up to par in terms of how they assess the properties? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I indicated earlier, this field is specialized. You have to have special training in this area. It is specialized and that is why we are also having a hard time recruiting in the public sector, because there are limited people in the Territories who can undertake this type of work. That is why we are requesting now that we do in house hiring so that we can get three more assessors to assess for us. It is complicated, as the Member knows, and once you get your assessment it is as accurate as the assessor can be. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am wondering, maybe I am missing something here, because each year I do get my property assessment and I do have to pay a certain amount every year for land plus school tax. How do you determine a cost in non-taxed-based communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't quite get the question, but is the Member asking how do we determine the rates or the mill rate? I wasn't too clear on the question. Could the Member repeat his question?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Pokiak, just for clarity for the Minister. Thank you.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand the mill rates in terms of what the government put in place. I think the question I am asking the Minister is when he mentioned earlier, that every 10 years they do an assessment. I don't know if I am following correctly, but I am wondering which year I get my land tax, school tax sent to me, I am going to have to pay a certain amount. How does that fit into every 10 years? Maybe I am missing something here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. I think that the Minister was saying that the assessments are updated every 10 years, but how they adjust the mill rates is another matter. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, once we complete the assessment, then that is given to the Department of Finance. The Department of Finance has a mill rate, which includes property tax and the school tax, and different categories have different mill rates. If it is residential, then the residential mill rate is applied. Based on the latest assessment, that is how the department does their billings, year by year. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you for that explanation, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to talk a little bit about municipal lands again. In my region, we do have a final agreement; especially Paulatuk and Sachs, they are infringing on private land. I think this might have to do with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. I am wondering, are you talking with the IRC with regard to accessing private lands for municipal services? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I recollect correctly, through the land claims with IRC there is a process that has to be followed. If the municipality is seeking additional land, and if it happened to be private land, there is a process that has to be followed. There currently is a process in place. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up again. I know Paulatuk has been talking about that for a long time now, and they would like to access private

lands. I think through your department or through MAA we should move ahead and accommodate the people in Paulatuk. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, our department can facilitate the request. If the request comes from Paulatuk, once we get that request then we can facilitate so that we can get it rolling into the process. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Another thing I would like to talk briefly about is our shoreline erosion in Tuk. It is a big issue that is coming up every year, and it costs a lot of money; sorry to say that. Will your department continue to allocate funds to help preserve our community of Tuktoyaktuk? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, that erosion problem is an outstanding issue. It has been an ongoing issue for a number of years now, as the Member will recall. The department officials and the municipality are jointly working together to develop a long-term plan to see how they can resolve that erosion problem. It is underway now. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. One more thing. As you well know, the water source in Tuk is a problem. Again, it is on private land, but the issue right now is to try to find another source. Is your department working closely with the hamlet to try and accomplish their goal of moving to a new location? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, my department officials at the regional level are currently working with the municipality to find the best option that they should undertake. If that means moving the intake, then they may determine that. Currently no decision has been made, but we are currently working with the municipality. Thank you.

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

MR. POKIAK: You can move on, Madam. My time is up now. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. There were five seconds on the clock, and I was going to give you a chance to jump in, but that is fine. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister and his officials and I did a Sahtu tour a couple of months ago. One of the concerns in the Sahtu related to the amount of heavy activity that went on with regard to the oil and gas exploration activities, and the

communities in the Sahtu were somewhat concerned with regard to the amount of traffic that went through their communities. The infrastructure took a pounding, I guess, in terms of extra costs because of the big trucks going through their communities, tearing up the roads, and using some of the facilities in the communities. I am interested to hear from the Minister in terms of his opening comments on page 2 of 6. He talked about collaborative relationships with key partners. I believe some of those key partners would be the oil and gas, and any other large trucking industries that are being used to haul equipment up to the Sahtu for the oil and gas exploration. Has his department looked at what steps they will take in terms of ensuring that the communities, the oil and gas companies that come through our municipal boundaries, are well advised in terms of their responsibility once they hit the municipal boundaries, that they have certain cautions and responsibilities in terms of not damaging too much of the roads in our communities? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Sahtu trip was very memorable. Mr. Yakeleya and I travelled through his constituency. I know the issue that he is raising. Just to follow up on the comments that he just made, we are working closely with the Department of Transportation to try to resolve that issue, and also with the municipalities that are affected by this gas and oil exploration. I understand particularly Tulita, if I recall correctly, the big trucks were going right through the centre of town and our roads were being all chewed up. That was a concern raised. So we are working with the Department of Transportation, and we also have, as I indicated earlier, two positions. One is in Fort Simpson, and one is in Inuvik to assist the communities to identify all of these impacts that the communities are having with regard to resource development. Our staff at the regional level are facilitating and assisting the municipality as to how they should undertake the concerns that are being raised, and how they could curb their concerns.

With regard to Tulita, we are working with Transportation and our staff at the regional level to see what we can do next year when the winter road comes back in. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know that the Minister and his staff had some discussions with the leadership of Colville Lake. One of the things that they pushed towards is the discussion of infrastructure in terms of a community hall. The community of Colville Lake again asked if I would raise this to the Minister and his officials with regard to looking at an office building in Colville Lake. The office in Colville Lake is really small, and it is quite heavily congested with all of the activity going on because of the oil and gas stuff. Because of all the congestion, Mr. Minister, there is no space in Colville Lake. In my ignorance about Colville Lake, when I was there one time I wanted to use the men's facilities, little did I know I had to go outside in between two log buildings, so they had an outhouse facility. I thought the Minister would give some comments in regard to the Colville Lake situation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Zoe, on the outhouse.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, my colleague from Sahtu is correct. The leadership did raise their concerns while we were both there. I've made a commitment that I would have our staff meet with them so that they could discuss the issues further. There are a lot of things that have to take place within that municipality in terms of community planning, roads, water intake, fire protection, parking garage. This particular community that we visited, I made a commitment that we would try to do our utmost to try to bring them further ahead than they are now. We do have in our capital plan some capital items that are going to be going into Colville Lake for 2004-2005, but nevertheless I've also indicated at that time to the leadership and to my colleague that because of all the gas and oil activities happening in terms of partnership, we're going to try to facilitate through my department with the gas and oil to see how we can have the community and the resource developers in that area try to work together so that maybe we can jointly help the community with their municipal infrastructure. So we are working in that direction, as I've indicated to the leadership, and we are going to be facilitating that with their community leadership and with my regional staff and the resource developers in those areas. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. One last comment I'd like to make is that I have a letter sent to me from the Town of Norman Wells dated March 25th indicating that they would like to see the support for the request put by this department in regard to additional resources to carry out property assessments in that community. Saying that in the same breath there that I think this department could look at doing some educational work with our people in the Sahtu region in regard to our property assessments. As much as we let our people know, as much as the communities let our people know, people still have a hard time in determining their property assessments and why they're paying taxes because of the land claims. They're really mixed up; these are good issues and no fault to them that they have these concerns and questions about why they are paying taxes on their own lands. Stuff like that, I think, is just because of the land claims and the nature of the land claims that we could have some workshops in our regions to talk about property assessments and the taxation.

March 2nd, 3rd and 4th we had a regional Sahtu regional leadership meeting in Norman Wells with about 50 participants, and one of the themes that came out was infrastructure in our communities. A lot of issues in this department that Mr. Zoe is responsible for took the lead in gathering this leadership, because of all the things that happen in the Sahtu we just wanted to put the brakes on and say, listen, we have to look at some major issues such as MACA, land claims, oil and gas activity, and we need to slow down because it's been quite busy in the last year in the Sahtu.

I'd like to thank the Minister and his staff for initiating this for us and helping us get it off the ground and we'll continue on reading. Hopefully at the end of the day the people in the community will feel some level of comfort and satisfaction in terms of knowing something about the taxes in terms of their property assessments. That was

several of the concerns from my communities. Some of the older people wanted to know why they were paying taxes on their own land, land that they own and all that. Just in terms of communicating that to the people in a way that's understandable to them. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I extend the same offer as I did to Mr. Villeneuve. If your communities have time, I know there are a lot of activities going on in the Sahtu and people are really busy -- even while we were there, there were a lot of activities going on that we didn't have time to really have a good two or three-hour municipal council meeting because members had to run away to different meetings and stuff like that -- but I still extend that offer as I did to Mr. Villeneuve. If your communities want to have a session on how we do assessments, and I can also bring in people from Finance to explain how this whole taxation works in non-tax-based communities, we're willing to offer that type of consultation with your communities.

On the other note, Madam Chair, I'm glad that the Member for Sahtu received a letter from one of his communities, particularly Norman Wells. Norman Wells does understand the whole concept of what we do in terms of property tax assessment and collecting tax because it does benefit them. If you have current assessments up to date, then you may increase your revenue for your own municipality and I'm glad that the Town of Norman Wells has suggested to you to support my recommendation in my budget. Thank Norman Wells for doing that on behalf of Municipal and Community Affairs. I think other municipalities do understand the need for the request being made by my department for these three positions that are currently in my budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. We're considering the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs under general comments. I have Mr. Hawkins on the list, but Ms. Lee hasn't spoken yet, so I will go to Ms. Lee first. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have a long general comment. I do have a question on the Minister's opening remarks and it has to do with something that is not there. I noticed the absence of any reference to the new sports governing council. I'd like to ask the Minister if this would be an indication that he has shelved the whole plan and, if so, I would like to know. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, that initiative that the honourable Member is referring to is not shelved. We're still working on it and it will be coming forward at a later date. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Members have had a chance to get a briefing from the Minister not too long ago about his work in that area. I do believe the Minister made a commitment to meet with the head of Sport North

at the time. I'd like to know from the Minister whether he's had that meeting with the head of Sport North and if he could let me know as to whether or not he was able to address the concerns that the head of Sport North has on this governing council. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I did meet with the president of Sport North, Mr. Abe Theil. In my meeting with him there were no concerns raised pertaining to the sports council. He raised different issues with me when I met him, but on the issue of the sports council that the Member is referring to, no concerns were raised with me when I met with him. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Would the Minister be able to advise us as to what issues of MACA concerns, if any, they talked about if there were no concerns raised about this? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, he talked on a few issues, but the main one that they were more concerned about was trying to acquire a building that they could see if they could raise money and operate a particular building. That building currently is the property of the government. So he raised it to see the possibility of them acquiring or buying that particular building. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question on a separate item and it has to do with the extra resources that the department is asking for the property assessment. I do believe this has been an ongoing issue in the department for a while and there have been efforts for a long time to speed up the process with respect to getting the assessments done in the communities especially, I believe. Having said that, I just wanted to ask a question to the Minister about something I have heard about. There is some talk out on the street that there is going to be a major move on the part of MACA to reassess the mining properties in the Lac de Gras area or Slave province. I'd like to get confirmation from the Minister as to whether or not this is, indeed, the plan and whether that is the reason why these additional positions are being asked for. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, with regard to the issue the Member is raising, we are not reassessing the properties in Lac de Gras. I'm not sure where you heard that, but one of the things that we're doing in house is that we're reviewing other jurisdictions to see what type of assessments they do. We're looking at all jurisdictions where we're going to be reviewing our Property Assessment and Taxation Act. We're doing an in house review and looking at other jurisdictions as to the types of things that they assess and tax so that we're no different or no less than other jurisdictions. We feel that our current legislation is outdated and we'd like to bring it up to date.

So we are doing some work in house and that may have triggered some people on the street saying that, oh, they're looking at reassessing us. That's not the case, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one more final follow-up question on that, just on what the duties of the additional assessors that the department is asking for are. I was just assuming that these new positions would be involved in assessing properties in communities. That they would actually be out into the communities to actually make sure that the assessment is done so the government can raise proper revenues. Now I'm hearing from the Minister that they will be engaged in updating the legislation and doing a cross-country sort of survey on how things are done. Could I get the Minister to explain whether or not these new positions will be involved in any actual assessing of the properties? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. May I remind the Members to engage in inside conversation outside the Chamber? Thank you. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, in response to Ms. Lee, these assessors will be doing assessment work. They're not going to undertake the legislation review. A different section of the department is going to be doing the review that I mentioned. Earlier on when Mr. Delorey was asking me questions I did make reference to these positions. You weren't in the House then. I'm not sure if you caught it, but I did make reference to it and these people will be doing the actual assessment at the community level and outside the communities also. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that the Minister should be aware that I was listening to what he was saying and, in fact, I was asking these questions on the basis of what he said in response to my question. Anyway, I am generally in favour of what this initiative is trying to do, I just wanted to confirm my understanding of what it was and clarify any of the new information that I have received. I would appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, if you would remind the Minister that he's not supposed to say who is here or not, because we do do other work outside of here, too. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee, for that information. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad that my colleague agrees with the request that our department is making in regard to these assessors because they are a very important component of our operations and it does generate funding for tax-based and non-taxed-based. So I'm glad that she is aware of the significance of the work that these people do. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, although it was briefly touched upon on sports and recreation programs, Ms. Lee brought up a comment which drew out a bit of an answer with regard to Sport North by the Minister. Presently, what is the position of the

department and the work done to date with regard to finding a permanent home for Sport North? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is working very closely with the people of the Sport North Federation. We are assisting them in any way, shape or form for them to acquire their own home. We are in the works right now talking with the Department of Public Works and Services in regard to trying to acquire a building that is currently available for them to try to acquire. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that building that you're presently working with the Department of Public Works and Services a public asset at this time, or is it an asset belonging to someone in the private industry? If it's a public asset, can you let us know which asset that may be? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Currently the building that we're looking at is a government asset. It's here in the city of Yellowknife and we're currently working with Public Works and Services to see the possibility of acquiring the building for the sports council and Sport North. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice the Minister didn't point out which public asset that was. Is there a reason the Minister didn't point out which public asset that was due to confidential reasons or other reasons thereof? I'll wait for the answer. I'm still looking for the name of that public asset, unless the Minister can supply me an answer as to why he didn't mention it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, I can tell the Member that it's the administration building of YCC. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for confirming that. My question to the Minister next is sort of alluded to in his statements here, but just for clarity for my sake, will the department be taking on a complete overview of the Planning Act under this year's work? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, we are planning to do a review of the Planning Act. That's on our schedule. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I'll reserve detailed comments in regard to my opinion of the current Planning Act in comparison to the rest of Canada. Canada such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba and their Planning Act, which are much better. I'll reserve those comments until later and just confirm that the Minister will hold a full public consultation in regard to the Planning Act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Yes, we will. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister. That's a very inspiring comment. It brings warmth to many constituents out there concerned with the existing Planning Act. I'm sure there will be many happy faces when they hear that. Then again, maybe not many happy faces after the results.

Just one last comment and then even I will yell for detail. I just want to pass a comment along in regard to the \$495,000 being spent for forced growth in order to keep up with the property assessment function. Maybe not necessarily looking through a question, but just a compliment in the sense that it's good that Municipal and Community Affairs is attempting to keep up with consistent assessment updating their acts and obviously this will spill out too. Although, the fact that there will probably be more reviews. No one likes to see the tax man come to town, but consistent tax application, as far as property tax, is healthy, therefore, it avoids any shock to the system such as communities may receive when they realize that their property assessments have not been assessed on a regular basis and probably assessed unfairly in the sense of not being reasonable. When they're quickly brought up to date that puts communities in a difficult position to understand that or accept that. Therefore, political intervention is sometimes required in order to find a happy middle. Therefore, I welcome this growth because I think that will again apply fair consistency to tax-based communities which probably are a little more regular on assessment reviews. I wish to lend my support to that one specifically. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Would you like to make a comment, Mr. Zoe?

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you. I'm glad that my colleague from Yellowknife Centre is in agreement that assessment is a critical component of Municipal and Community Affairs' function. Just another note to add to his comments. If the assessment that communities, individuals receive for their assessment role, if they're not quite satisfied or if they don't think it's right or accurate, we have three levels of appeal that they can go through. The first one is revision, the second one is to the tribunal and lastly is the courts. Those provisions are there for people, if they feel they are not treated fairly they have those three avenues they can pursue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. General comments. Would the committee like to go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Would you turn to page 4-9, directorate, activity summary, directorate, operations expense. We'll start again. Page 4-9, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3.89 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm looking for just the breakdown please of the other expenses. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$154,000; supplies, \$90,000; purchased services, \$155,000; contracts, \$467,000; fees and payments, \$87,000; other expenses, \$250,000; computers, \$110,000; total of \$1.313 million. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Ms. Lee. Thank you. Page 4-9, directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$3.89 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Directorate, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$225,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Contributions, total contributions, \$440,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$665,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-13, community financial services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1.196 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the breakdown for other expenses of \$717,000, please?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$81,000; supplies, \$31,000; purchased services, \$45,000; contracts, \$495,000; fees and payments, \$51,000; other expenses, \$2,000; computers, \$8,000; total of \$717,000. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get a further breakdown on the contract services? Just an indication of major contracts that are put out under this item. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, I can't elaborate on what the purpose of this \$495,000 is going to be. The contract services budget consists of three of Municipal and Community Affairs, four areas of core businesses providing the legislative and financial framework for community governments to carry out their responsibilities, providing financial management and technical support to community governments, and providing training for community government. Mr. Chairman, it's difficult for the department to predict the level of need in this area from year to year. That's why I can't specifically give you what type of contracts. These are the main areas that we're going to be looking at for this \$495,000 for contracted services. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Am I understand that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs hires services, enters into contract services with a third party to provide financial and accounting services to municipalities? Is that a correct understanding? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: The answer is yes and on a required basis. Mr. Chairman, some communities run into difficulties such as if their SAO quits or if their financial officer quits and they request assistance from my department, we do sometimes hire on a contractual basis to send somebody in to either cover for a short period of time or to assist them to bring up their books to current date. We do assist them in those manners, but it varies from community to community and on request. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a note of the fact that this division has more money going on contract services to hire other people to do work than they have their own employees. My point there is that we really don't have a good handle on how much money we're spending in this area. It seems like, based on what I've been hearing all week, I think this government may have many more people on their payroll by way of contract services than we do under government employment lists. This is definitely an area I'd like to pursue further with the Minister of Finance at a more opportune time. I don't have a question there, but I need to make a note of that comment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Page 4-13, community financial services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1.196 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-17, emergency services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$858,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I have the breakdown for \$325,000 under other expenses, please?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$33,000; supplies, \$26,000; purchased services, \$25,000; utilities, \$1,000; contracts, \$98,000; fees and payments,

\$5,000; other expenses, \$4,000; tangible assets, \$115,000; computers, \$18,000; total of \$325,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Ms. Lee. Thank you. Emergency services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$858,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Community governance, operations expense, total operations expense, \$772,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask for a breakdown of \$128,000, please. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$50,000; supplies, \$13,000; purchased services, \$15,000; utilities, \$1,000; contracts, \$30,000; fees and payments, \$14,000; computers, \$5,000; total of \$128,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Community governance, operations expense, total operations expense, \$772,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Lands and infrastructure administration, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7.209 million. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question about transfer of Commissioner's lands. As the Minister is aware, Hay River has had a problem with trying to acquire land and I know that the department has been working with Hay River for some time now trying to address that. I would like the Minister to, if he could, tell me where the negotiations are at on that and what the department is doing to simplify the process of transferring Commissioner's land to municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member for Hay River is correct that we are currently working closely with the Town of Hay River to acquire the Commissioner's land that they're looking at. We've consulted with them. We've told them the process that we have to follow. To date we have not received any formal application from the Town of Hay River pertaining to what they want to do. Once we receive that formal application from them, then we have a process that we have to follow. We already explained the process that we have to follow, but we're still currently waiting for the formal application from the Town of Hay River. Once we receive it, we'll process it as expeditiously as we can. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was under the impression that they had gotten that formal application in. I was told by the mayor that they had it in to the department now and they were waiting. That was some time ago, shortly after the Minister had addressed that we had to put in a formal application. Now, I have to check with the mayor again. That's what I was told. On the other

hand, could the Minister please just update me on what the process is now, once they receive the formal application? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you. Just to backtrack. Our headquarters here, we have no knowledge of receiving it yet. But it's possible that our regional office has received it. We haven't checked within the last few days if they have received it or not. Here in headquarters we haven't received that formal application, but there is a possibility. Like you said, if they told you that it has been submitted, it could have been submitted to our regional office. We can have our staff check into that. Once we do receive that formal application, as I indicated, we have to do consultation with the affected groups and I think Mr. Delorey knows the process that we follow within our department in regard to land applications. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had been given a good explanation as to what the process they would be following is, but I was also told that they had looked at some ways of expediting the process a little bit. Has there been any movement in that more consultations have been done or a better process been put in place to expedite the transfer of lands once they do get a formal application or is it still, I can't even remember what it was, a three-month process? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you. The Member is right; we do have a process that we explained to him. We are going to try to expedite the land application once we receive it. As the Member is aware, through IMA that's in place we have to consult, but there are provisions in there where we can try to expedite it less than 60 days, maybe to 30 days or so. So that provision is there for us to look at. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In another area under land assessment and the assessor's position. How many land assessors does the department have right now at headquarters and do they have any outside of headquarters in regional centres? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have two assessors here and a technician. Also the manager for that section and one technician in Hay River. A total of five. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I understand then that with the addition of these positions that the department is asking for, they would end up with

two technicians, one trainee and four assessors. Is that correct?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: We'll have, like I indicated, there's one technician currently in Hay River, one here in Yellowknife. There will be an addition to that. So there will be three technicians and we're going to have three assessors and one trainee. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What would be the bulk of the work for, say, the two where you need an extra technician, the two technicians' positions? Those two positions, I'm sure, would be staying at headquarters, would they not? Where is the bulk of the load there for the requirement of an extra technician? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, the additional technician, as the Member is aware, would have to do all the ground work, basically, to do various files and database. It's very time-consuming. As the Member knows, if you're dealing with lands there's a lot of paperwork and a lot of data that has to be entered, et cetera. That's what the technician would primarily be doing. That's why we need an additional technician. The workload is going to increase if we have these other assessors on stream. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you. Just one final comment on that. As you know, when committee is looking at these draft mains, we've been under the assumption and the knowledge that the government is under fiscal restraints and the committee was very cognizant of watching for growth areas and not wanting to see too much growth in departments and deal with expenses that the government is pretty well bound to. The committee would really appreciate having a heads up when there's going to be growth to go through the proper process through business plan reviews and to make a proper case for growth, especially at headquarters. I think the department should be aware of that, that we're at a time of tightening our belts and not of growth. I would like to get the Minister's comments on this, that this is actually growth at headquarters. The committee is very concerned about that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you. I agree with the comments that Mr. Delorey is making. This forced growth is, as I indicated in my opening comments, in regard to creating the Tlicho government through their Tlicho agreement. That's one component of it. The other one is forced growth which is required because of the physical restraints that we have. By having these people in place at headquarters, I know headquarters is an issue for some people, but we feel that they would be better housed here

so that we can undertake the work which will generate more money for the government and the municipalities. On top of that, it would bring our assessment roles up to date. That's the reason that this forced growth occurred this current year. Thank you. But I agree with the honourable Member on the comments that he has made and we are going to be very cognizant of what we do next year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Now I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Oh, sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just looking for the breakdown of \$1 million. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$54,000; supplies, \$35,000; purchased services, \$30,000; contracts, \$842,000; fees and payments, \$30,000; other expenses, \$5,000; computers, \$33,000; total of \$1.29 million. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I have more information about the \$842,000 for contract services, please? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the bulk of the money in contracts, approximately \$500,000, would go to assessment and the others would be for all the reviews that we're planning to do on our taxation, Planning Act, et cetera. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: So for the latter item of the reviews of legislation and Planning Act and taxation and such, are the contracts for legal services on that contract, please? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, some are going to be for consultants, some are going to be for people to analyze stuff, some are going to be actually indicated legal reviews also. It will encompass legal review also, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be remiss if I didn't raise a point in follow up to the Member for Hay River North in regard to the lands section which manages the Commissioner's land in accordance with the Commissioner's Lands Act and the Territorial Lands Act and prepares land disposition documents. It's an ongoing concern, I think, for any community that's reaching a stage of industrialization and Inuvik is not immune to that at the moment. Concerning this news release the other day that they had a little over \$15 million in land sales in the last fiscal year. The question to me is would the Minister consider the transfer of statutory powers to the regional offices so they can expedite the quickness of the land disposition documents, rather than having to come to Yellowknife to circumvent some of the existing processes? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's going to be very difficult to decentralize that to the regions. The reason being that the land registry office in the Department of Justice is located in Yellowknife. That's why all the land applications and stuff have to come through our office so we can register them here in Yellowknife at the land registry office. It will make it more difficult. If I had the opportunity and if there was a land registry office in Inuvik we could take a look at that, but today it is not. We have only a land registry office in the Department of Justice and it's located in Yellowknife. That's why we're still going to maintain it here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

MR. ALLEN: Thank you. Then I would assume that it's incumbent upon yourselves to try to expedite and manifest a quicker turnaround time. I'm just trying to suggest to you perhaps you would speak to the Department of Justice to see if they could be more accommodating to the process, rather than saying we can't do this or can't do that. This is a matter of trying to expedite a document that could serve the community and territory well, and I think when you do have the pressure to meet land development and try to move in through your land disposition, I think it's necessary that you try to work with another department to see if they can somehow accommodate the wishes of the community. Again, Inuvik is unique at this point, but my point is that I think you should really look at this and put some emphasis on the Department of Justice to see if they can have their people address this as quickly as you can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you for that comment, Mr. Allen. But currently, as the Member knows, up in Inuvik our regional staff is working very closely with the Town of Inuvik to try to expedite their requests through the regional office and they're working very closely with the Town of Inuvik in regard to land applications and so forth. I'll take his comment very seriously and I can talk to my other colleagues. Thank you.

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

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't beg to differ with the process, but what you're hearing from the town and the government is not necessarily to the satisfaction of the constituents. As you know, the demand for industrial land in Inuvik is at a premium today and we need to be able to give them some certainty that perhaps a 90-day turnaround is much more to their advantage than 120 days. I'm just trying to see if you would convey that to the Department of Justice so they have people on top of the issue, as well. That's my final comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Zoe. Thank you. Lands and infrastructure administration, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7.209 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-27, lands and infrastructure administration, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$4.156 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$4.156 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-29. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek unanimous consent to go back to page 4-25.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The Member is asking to go back to page 4-25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-25. Mr. Delorey.

Committee Motion 9-15(3): Recommendation To Remove Funding For New Property Assessors From 2004-05 Main Estimates, Carried

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a motion to make. I move that this committee recommends funding for the three new property assessors be taken out of the 2004-2005 main estimates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): There is a motion on the floor. I'll just wait until they hand out the motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to put on record that I will not be supporting this motion. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in putting this motion forward, the committee gave it a considerable amount of consideration and we spent a lot of time on this issue. Again, in considering the growth at headquarters, the committee was not convinced that the department was doing as much as what could be done in land assessing with the resources and staff that they had in house right now.

Also, there was no comfort level that these three positions could even be recruited. The committee was very concerned that the growth at headquarters level, without going through business plan reviews and a good case being put forward as to why these three positions were being needed, we felt that the department should put a better case together and come forward during the next business plan reviews and bring this issue forward again. The committee encouraged the department to do that, and we would be willing to do that again and put those positions in place. I know that we considered this thing for a considerable amount of time. We want the department to have a serious look at this with the possibility of waiting until the next business plan reviews and then we would consider looking at this again.

There's no doubt that there is a backlog in land assessment and that was part of the other thing that the committee looked at, was where the priority areas are and where the department really wants to work with catching

up in the backlog and the new assessments. The committee still wasn't clear that the department really did have any priorities in where they wanted to go with this, so the purpose of the motion is to encourage the department to put this on the backburner for a short period of time until we can come back with business plans and listen to the good case why this should be done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have difficulty supporting the motion, principally because I understand from some time ago this particular service was considerably reduced in staff numbers due to cutbacks in the mid-1990s. We're going back some time now, Mr. Chairman. Then through the process of division with Nunavut, the workforce in this department, as far as I understand, was never really restored to levels that would otherwise be called adequate. So I guess where I take exception with my colleague and the GED committee, I would also take some exception with the way the Minister has characterized this as forced growth. I don't think it's forced growth at all. I think it's a long overdue replacement of workers in a really valuable part of this government, not only for government and municipalities in terms of revenues, but efficiency of services to individuals and to the business community. Where there may be performance or efficiency issues, those are management issues. The department should be looking at those all the time. But as far as allowing the initiative to bring three more staff on, I think it's long over due. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, I will not be supporting this motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Questions? Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: It's okay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you.

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'll go back to page 4-27, lands and infrastructure administration, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$4.156 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$4.156 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-29, sport, recreation and youth, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1.31 million. Ms. Lee. Mr. Delorey.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the breakdown for \$266,000, please? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$89,000; supplies, \$41,000; purchased services, \$50,000; contracts, \$76,000; other expenses, \$10,000; total of \$266,000. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this issue with this new sports board was brought up by my colleague, Ms. Lee, a little bit earlier. The Minister said that he did have a meeting with the president of Sport North and there were no concerns raised at that meeting. If there are no concerns with Sport North and there are no concerns being raised with this initiative, where are we as far as timelines and when is the department planning on putting this new sports body into place? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're anticipating to have this particular council fully operational by the fall; September. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there's an issue that has come to light just recently and my colleague, Mrs. Groenewegen, recognized a very special athlete from Hay River that is achieving some feats that not to many northern athletes at his age have been able to accomplish and is really making strides as far as even representing Canada, for that matter. There's a very big gap in the Territories as far as finding funding for an athlete of this calibre when you start travelling internationally. I know that becomes very expensive. He's had a coach who has been working with him -- as Mrs. Groenewegen has said -- Mr. Bobinski. That coach continues to work with him when he's in Hay River. There's an issue now that we're going to have to somehow try and put some processes together to help this athlete along. I'm just wondering what kind of programs the department has or what willingness there would be at the department level to assist an athlete at this level, when they start accomplishing at that level. Are there any programs he would be able to tap into or any funding the department could be able to fund for this athlete? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I recall from Mrs. Groenewegen's statement today, I believe that particular athlete that Mr. Delorey is referring to is in Grade 11 in Hay River. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, our department does not have a program for

elite athletes such as that individual they have mentioned today. But we do have a program called NWT high performance athlete bursary program. The program provides assistance to high performance athletes who are pursuing a post-secondary education for costs associated with their sports training program. We do have a program of that sort, but they have to be in post-secondary. As I indicated, right now for Grade 11 students who are in that calibre, we don't have a specific program within sports and recreation department. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The program the Minister was referring to, I think there's an age limit on that one as well as being in post-secondary. Is there not an age limit on that program, as well?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware of any age limit pertaining to the bursary program that I just mentioned. Just to add to the issue that is raised by the Member from Hay River, the issue of elite athletes such as the one that you mentioned, I would suggest that you approach Sport North to see if they could assist him because of the accomplishment that he has made. I think Sport North would seriously consider him for maybe special funding since he is an elite athlete. The other area is that there is a program called the kids' sport program. They just launched that a couple of months ago. I was there at the mall when they launched the kids' sport program. They also have funding for students that can't pay for themselves to get into sports and stuff. That is another area that you may look into to see if they can assist him in any way. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is all I have for now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Sport, recreation and youth, operations expense, total operations expense, \$1.31 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-31, sport, recreation and youth, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$28,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total contributions, \$195,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$223,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-33, regional operations, operations expense, total operations expense, \$60.272 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Ms. Lee.

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

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel is \$803,000, supplies are \$139,000, purchased services is \$160,000, utilities is \$43,000, contracts is \$206,000, fees and payments is \$58,000, other expenses are \$73,000, computers \$82,000, a total of \$1.564 million. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the travel budget of \$803,000, could I have more information about who would spend, who would have the benefit of that travel budget? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will give her a further breakdown on that \$803,000. North Slave region \$169,000, South Slave region \$149,000, Inuvik region \$244,000, Sahtu region \$97,000, Deh Cho region \$144,000, for a total of \$803,000.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I am assuming that this is for the regional staff to do their travel. Am I correct in that? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Yes.

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

MS. LEE: My last question, Mr. Chairman, this is a pretty big travel budget, and I appreciate that this is regional operations and that aspect of it too. Is there a contract of some sort to reduce the cost, or rationalize the cost because each individual package is a pretty good chunk of the travel budget? Has there been anything like that done by the department? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Similar to other departments, MACA doesn't have a contract arrangement for travel bookings. Each division and region makes arrangements as they see fit. The bulk of our proposed travel for Municipal and Community Affairs staff in 2004-05 is within the Northwest Territories. MACA staff travel predominantly to communities in their respective regions.

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

MS. LEE: No more questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In regard to regional operations, I have skipped ahead a few pages with regard to grants and contributions, under infrastructure contributions...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Just one moment Mr. Menicoche. Which page are you referring to?

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Page 4-36.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. When we get to that page can you bring your question up? Thank you. Regional operations, operations expense, total operations expense, \$60.272 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Regional operations, page 4-35, grants and contributions, community government, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$38.880 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Contributions \$7.405 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-36, infrastructure contributions, \$2.709 million. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. A quick question for the Minister. The distinction of this category versus the capital plan, I am just wondering what the difference is.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, if I heard the Member right, this money that is on page 4-36. We gave a contribution directly to the community, and the community owns the asset. If it is in our capital plan, then we buy the equipment, and bring it into the community, but we as government own the equipment. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I just want the Minister to be aware that I was contacted by the Hamlet of Fort Liard, and there was some discussion last year with regard to a maintenance garage being constructed in their community. Their concern is that now it is off the radar screen, I don't see it in the capital plan, nor in this category. Are you aware of any commitment to build a maintenance garage in Fort Liard at all and, if so, what has happened to that commitment?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, the Member is correct. It was in the five-year capital plan, but as you know because of our fiscal restraint, and although I made my business case for it, that particular project did not make the cut for 2004-05. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to thank the Minister for at least letting me know where the status of that project is, or isn't, as this is the case. It is still a priority for the community so at some point we are going to have to address that. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Infrastructure, contributions, \$2.709 million. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to bring another point of interest to the Minister's attention on the regional operations grants and contributions on infrastructure contributions, I have got the infrastructure contributions for the community of Lutselk'e on some capital projects, which are included in 2004-05 with the purchase of a sewage truck. Now with the infrastructure contributions I see now that it is no longer on the '04-05 main estimates. In reviewing the acquisition plan it has been bumped to '05-06. Why was the purchase of this piece of equipment bumped ahead to '05-06 considering the fact that the sewage truck is in really dire need of repair and maintenance and what not? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. There has been a request to review that during the capital plan at the end of the program. Thank you. Mr. Villeneuve, you can hold your question until we get to the capital plan. Thank you. Any further questions, Mr. Villeneuve?

MR. VILLENEUVE: Not until the capital plan.

--Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Infrastructure contributions, \$2.709 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total community government, grants and contributions, \$48.994 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-37, regional operations, other grants and contributions, grants, \$55,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Contributions, \$3.027 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total other grants and contributions, \$3.082 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Sorry, what page were we on? Sorry, I had something for page 39. Sorry.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total other grants and contributions, \$3.082 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$52.076 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-39, School of Community Government, operations expense, total operations expense, \$2.169 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the breakdown for \$1.3 million under other expenses please? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel, \$102,000; supplies, \$89,000; purchased services, \$25,000; contracts, \$1.072 million; computers, \$15,000; total, \$1.303 million. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: May I have a further breakdown on the contract services please?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All of this money in contracts is for all of the trainers that we hire on contract for our School of Community Government. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the trainers that the department hires; is the Minister able to provide a regional breakdown on that, or are the trainers mostly hired from here? Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do hire trainers, Madam Lee. We do hire trainers out of this money to do some training here in the capital city, and also in the various regional offices, and also at the community levels too in some cases. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A final follow up on that. May I ask the Minister to provide us with how that budget item was spent in the last year? I want to still get more detailed information about where the training money was spent. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Yes, we can provide that to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The community governance program, I would like some information from the Minister in terms of how the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs...I know there was some talk about the mini...(inaudible)...funding, I am not too sure how long it is for. So is there anything in terms of giving us a heads up in the communities in terms of the funding by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in terms of supporting this initiative? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs through their band council trainee, sometimes come with us, they do buy services from us, and we do a joint thing to train their employees also. The department officials and their

officials are in constant contact with each other if they require any services or not. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I have brought this up is because I attended one of the community governance training programs, and I thought it was really excellent in terms of attendance and in terms of the training that we had. I would like to call on putting this type of training into our regions, in the communities. I know they offer it in larger centres, which makes sense because of the cost sharing and keeping the costs down, but sometimes it would be good to have the training come to the communities. Not as much as we want, however, to have the training come into the regions, especially in the regions where land claims are being settled and self-government agreements are being negotiated. The community training would be good for our future leaders in the Sahtu region. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Zoe.

HON. HENRY ZOE: I echo the same belief as my colleagues, and we are doing our utmost to try to accommodate the community needs within our school of governance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the School of Community Government, I want to make a comment again in terms of my experience there last June, it was good, we had a good trainer, and we had a good group of people at the Explorer Hotel here in Yellowknife. One of the reasons why I am sitting here today may be because of the content of the training and the discussions that we had and the interest to get back into politics in the Sahtu region in the Northwest Territories. I just want to lend a little of my support in terms of it's a good job and it should be done in all the Northwest Territories. It was a good training program and it takes in many facets of the Northwest Territories. I just want to say a good job to the department on this one here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Would you like to comment, Mr. Zoe? Thank you. School of Community Government, operations expense, total operations expense, \$2.169 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-41, School of Community Government, grants and contributions, contributions, \$25,000. Total grants and contributions, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Information item, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 4-43, details of work performed on behalf of others. Page 4-44, 4-45, total department, \$387,000. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you. Just a question I have on detail of work performed on behalf of others on 4-44. That community training program agreement with DIAND of \$100,000, what has happened to that agreement? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Mr. Chairman, the community training program that the Member is referencing, the reason we don't have any budgeted item is that DIAND won't commit to multi-year funding. We don't have any commitment from them so it's not in here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$387,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up on Mr. Delorey's comments. If DIAND won't commit to multi-year funding, will they commit on year-to-year?

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Normally they do, Madam Chair.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I take it from the Minister's answer that's a yes, they would commit to it.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Currently they are doing it year to year, but not a multi-year commitment. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: I apologize, Madam Chair. Thank you, Madam Chair. If they are doing it, would it show up in the numbers here? Because it's not in here right now, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, it will show up next year as a revised estimate. Currently we have a revised estimate of \$100,000. That was for this past year. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Detail of work performed on behalf of others, total department, \$387,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Could you turn back to page 4-7. Municipal and Community Affairs, department summary, total operations expense, \$77.397 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Would you please turn to infrastructure acquisition to CAP-7. Municipal and Community Affairs, lands and infrastructure administration, total lands and infrastructure administration, \$6.995.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Regional operations, total regional operations, \$7.002 million. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just referring back to my earlier question on the sewage truck in Lutselk'e on the 2001 capital acquisition plan has been bumped to 2005-06 now. I'm just curious as to why the change was made when the sewage truck is barely making it around town, it is in really dire need and there is more money being expended on it just in keeping it running and doing a lot of replacements on it. Why it is not going to be replaced in this year's acquisitions? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, I don't have the previous year's five-year capital plan, but if it did move back one year, then the reason being is once it got into our process of prioritizing various capital needs, there were other pressing needs. That's the reason it has been pushed back, if that's the case. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just noting a note I got here from Chief Archie Catholique of Lutselk'e Dene First Nations stressing the need that the sewage truck is being underutilized. They are only using it when they deem it absolutely necessary that it has to go to a certain number of houses per day. They are trying to minimize the use of the truck, just due to the fact that now they have to wait one more year and will probably expend more municipal dollars on the upkeep and the maintenance to keep this truck going, as well with the depreciation of the garbage truck. I'm just wondering if any extra dollars will be given to municipal operations and maintenance for the upkeep or the extra money required to keep these vehicles on the road. Is that taken into consideration when commitments like this are suddenly bumped one or two years down the road with the government's re-appropriation of funds? I'm wondering if new monies are going to the council just so they can keep these vehicles in working order for the extra year or two that they have to use them. Thank you.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Madam Chair, I understand where the Member is coming from, and I can assure him that I can have someone...Actually, I do have someone from

Municipal and Community Affairs who is a mechanic who lives right in Lutselk'e, and I can have him look at how bad a shape that particular equipment is in and report back to me. If it's required, based on his assessment, if we have to buy additional parts to enhance the life of the equipment, we will assist in that manner. But I can get an assessment done by the mechanic that we have living in Lutselk'e. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the prompt direction that the Minister is going to give to this request, and I look forward to receiving some correspondence in relation to what the overall assessment is on the condition of the sewage truck and possibly the garbage truck, also. Maybe if they could get an assessment done on that while they're conducting this one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. HENRY ZOE: Yes, we will get them to assess those two pieces of equipment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Regional operations, total regional operations, \$7.002 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Total department, \$13.997 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does the committee agree that we have concluded the review of the main estimates for Municipal and Community Affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you, Minister Zoe, and thank you to your officials for helping us get through this department today. Thank you.

What is the wish of the committee now? Would you like to proceed with the Department of Justice and the Minister's opening remarks?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I am seeing mixed messages here, so I would like to take a five-minute break. We will have a five-minute break and come back with the Minister of Justice.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call the committee back to order. Would the Minister like to begin with his opening comments for his department? Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the 2004-2005 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice offer details of how the department will allocate its resources to meet its mandate of

administering justice, corrections and policing in the Northwest Territories.

The proposed operational budget for the department is \$79.973 million. Overall this represents an increase of \$4.7 million, or 6.27 percent, in the departmental budget over last year's main estimates. The capital acquisition plan budget is \$645,000. The estimated revenues for the department are \$10.416 million.

Working together to make communities safer remains a priority for the department and this is reflected in the main estimates.

In 2004-2005, the department will spend an additional \$2.461 million in forced growth for RCMP resources. These funds will provide the RCMP with 12 new members.

Six of these new members will form a relief unit to maintain staffing levels in small detachments while members are on leave. These members will also increase patrols to communities without resident RCMP. The RCMP has indicated that the other six new members will be assigned to Inuvik, Rae, Yellowknife and Hay River.

This additional funding for the RCMP will help meet only some of the most pressing demands. The Department of Justice is working with the RCMP to meet its resource needs over the long term.

Another initiative to make communities safer is the implementation of the Protection Against Family Violence Act. This important piece of legislation will provide both short and long-term protection orders for victims of family violence. An additional \$414,000 is included in the department's budget to implement this legislation during the fiscal year.

Additionally, the department is working to increase the safety of our communities with the hiring of intensive support and supervision program workers in Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik to provide increased supervision for young offenders who have committed serious offences. There is \$253,000 included in the department's budget to support this public safety initiative.

The 2004-2005 Main Estimates also includes an additional \$1.692 million in forced growth for collective agreement and other salary increases; an additional \$200,000 for court registries, and \$347,000 for operating the Giant Mine civil trial.

An additional \$315,000 in federal funding for legal aid services will help increase access to legal aid. This money is part of the new access to justice agreement between the governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada. This funding will be used to hire an additional family law lawyer and to allow lawyers and court workers to spend more time with their clients in a community before a court appearance.

The department also receives \$1.972 million from the Government of Canada to support legal aid services provided by the Legal Services Board.

There are budget reductions of \$1.916 million in the 2004-2005 Main Estimates. This includes more than \$1 million in reductions to travel and other operations expenses in response to the government's fiscal situation.

I would like to highlight some of the revenues collected by the Department of Justice. These revenues are collected through agreements with other governments or through fees for services provided by the department.

The department receives more than \$5 million to support justice services through agreements with the Government of Canada. This includes \$3.25 million for youth justice services. This revenue supports the operation of our youth custody facilities and community supervision of youth.

The Department of Justice is committed to providing a modern, safe, secure and culturally appropriate corrections system. This has resulted in the opportunity for more federal offenders to serve their sentences in the Northwest Territories, closer to their families and communities. Through an exchange of services agreements with the Government of Canada, the department expects to receive at least \$980,000 annually to accommodate federal offenders.

The department has a similar agreement with the Government of Nunavut to accommodate Nunavut offenders resulting in a minimum annual revenue of \$912,000.

The final main revenue area relates to fees collected by the land titles and the personal property, corporate and securities registries. The department estimates revenue of \$3.081 million in the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

Those are the highlights of the 2004-2005 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice, and would be pleased to answer any questions Members of the committee may have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Dent. At this time, I will ask Ms. Lee, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs if she would provide us with committee's overview of these main estimates. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on Thursday, February 19, 2004 to review the draft main estimates for the Department of Justice.

Members of the standing committee noted \$79,973,000 in operations and maintenance, \$645,000 for infrastructure acquisition and estimated revenues of \$10,416,000 for the department in 2004-2005.

The standing committee made note of the following issues and concerns.

Capital Planning Process

The committee was very concerned with how the capital planning process works. It was noted that in last year's infrastructure acquisition plan over \$10.0 million starting in 2004/2005 was identified for the construction of a new Territorial Women's Correctional Centre in Fort Smith. In this year's plan that project no longer appears.

Committee questions how a \$10 million project could have been important enough to be included last year and yet not survive the current year's process.

Committee has taken this concern to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for a possible

recommendation on the seeming inequities in the capital planning process.

RCMP In Small Communities

There are communities in the Northwest Territories that are too small to generate a sufficient caseload to justify a permanent RCMP detachment. With recent court cases dictating that single-member detachments are not legal under the Canada Labour Code, it is unlikely the RCMP will be able to have a presence in every community in the Northwest Territories for the foreseeable future.

Regardless of the factors, the committee believes there is a strong case to be made to change the way policing is delivered in communities without a regular police presence.

Using their own experiences committee Members illustrated that even within communities of a similar size, there is a need for different levels of policing services.

The community of Sachs Harbour is a small traditional community that would like to have a permanent detachment once again. Failing that, the community would like to see RCMP patrols on a more regular basis with a possible emphasis on working with the children in school to deal with a recent increase in vandalism.

The community of Colville Lake has a different need. Resource exploration activity in the area has meant that many residents, of what was a traditional community, are now participating in the wage economy. Excess money has meant an increase in alcohol and drug use and related problems especially around paydays. Residents of the community of Colville Lake would like to see the RCMP in their community during the payday weekends to provide increased security.

Committee hopes some of the resources provided by this budget will go toward improved policing in communities without full-time detachments.

Increase In Number Of Police Officers In The Northwest Territories

The department and Minister of Justice have embarked on an ambitious plan to increase the number of police officers serving the general public. The committee supports this plan.

This year's main estimates contain an additional \$2,461,000 in forced growth spending for police services. This funding will provide nearly \$1 million in increased funding for operations and maintenance, with the remainder used to hire 12 new officers for the NWT. Six officers will form the core of a relief unit to make sure that detachments in the communities are fully staffed when permanently posted officers go on holidays. The other six officers are to be posted in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Rae and Hay River.

Working from a resource requirement report prepared by the RCMP last year the department plans to provide funding to hire an additional 15 officers over the next two budget planning cycles.

The Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs will not be offering any comment on where these new officers should be posted as it is understood

that the decisions related to the number of police officers in any community is the sole purview of the RCMP.

The committee looks forward to reviewing the Minister's plans for increasing the number of RCMP officers in the NWT during the next business plan review in September.

RCMP Positions Paid For Solely By The Federal Government

Several positions for which the federal government is responsible, related to diamonds, drugs and organized crime, are not staffed at this time. Members are concerned that as the number of diamond mines increases, and the pipeline gets closer to fruition, a rise in organized crime and drug use will occur.

The committee supports the superintendent of "G" Division and the Minister in lobbying to ensure that these positions are filled well in advance of any increase in resource development activity.

Members also offer their support for having further positions in the RCMP related to diamonds and protection of Canada's arctic sovereignty moved from the South to the Northwest Territories.

Planning For The Pipeline

Committee is concerned with a perceived lack of coordination and planning related to the proposed pipeline down the Mackenzie.

There is a need to work together now at the community and territorial levels with the RCMP and the courts to identify what the anticipated problems will be and how the justice system will deal with them. Waiting until such time as the construction of the pipeline is upon us is unacceptable.

In the next business planning cycle, committee will be looking for evidence of a plan addressing the justice needs of residents living along the pipeline corridor.

Continuity Of Care For Inmates / Justice And Health And Social Services

It was noted by several Members of the committee that there seemed to be a lack of sufficient linkage between the programming offered by the Department of Justice while a person is incarcerated and those services offered by the Department of Health and Social Services and their partners upon the release of that person. Members believe that a community-based case-management approach must be taken to ensure an inmate's success upon release.

Committee Members understand that totally cooperative efforts are somewhat limited by privacy legislation, but would point out that at the very least the Department of Justice should be identifying treatment opportunities in an inmate's home community and offering to assist the inmate in accessing these services upon release. Hopefully, a released offender would take advantage of the programs and services available to him or her.

The Department of Health and Social Services has the responsibility of ensuring that programs and services are available in all communities in the Northwest Territories. If we release an inmate into a community, without adequate supports, we are setting that person up for failure.

Chances are without those supports, a person will gravitate to the situations and behaviour that caused them to offend in the first place and end up back in jail.

The committee believes there is a need for a multi-pronged approach that includes a role for the community justice committees, the local community governments, aboriginal governments, chiefs and the mayors in ensuring the successful reintegration of an offender into his or her home community.

Any help we as a government can give to residents that limit their contact with the criminal justice system is worthwhile.

The committee will be following up on this issue with the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Social Services.

River Ridge Facility In Fort Smith

The committee would like to commend and support the department in its decision to convert the River Ridge Young Offenders Facility into an adult male facility to deal with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders amongst inmates.

It is important inmates who may not have the cognitive skills to recognize the consequences of their actions are removed from situations where they may be subject to violence from other inmates or disciplinary action for acts unacceptable to the correctional institution.

Because of the decrease in the number of young offenders sentenced to custodial sentences, this program also has the benefit of utilizing unused facilities and staff to deliver an effective program that relieves strain on other adult institutions.

The committee looks forward to reviewing the effectiveness of this exciting new correctional program during the life of this Assembly.

Young Offenders' Facilities

With the coming into force of the federal Youth Justice Act in April of 2003 the way in which young persons under the age of 18 are treated by the criminal justice system has changed significantly.

The new Youth Justice Act focuses on a community-based approach rather than the custodial/incarceration approach under the old Young Offenders Act. This has meant an increase in the use of warnings, alternative sentencing options and probation in the young person's home community. The consequence of this is that the majority of young offender facilities have been operating at well below capacity.

The Arctic Tern young women's facility in Inuvik is a case in point. Prior to the coming into force of the new legislation that facility was operating at or near capacity, caring for between eight to 11 female young offenders at any one time with a staff complement of 20 employees. Since April of 2003 the Arctic Tern facility has averaged two offenders at any one time with the same staffing complement.

Committee notes there would be lower costs involved for female young offenders if they were sent to out-of-territory institutions. However, this has to be balanced with the

human costs of displacing offenders so far from their families and communities.

It was noted by the committee that the federal government is subsidizing 60 percent, or approximately \$1.2 million of the \$2 million total operations cost of the Arctic Tern facility. Hence, the cost to the Government of the Northwest Territories to house two young offenders is not as high as it would appear on first blush.

The standing committee believes that it is important to review how sentencing under this new legislation plays out over the next while before any decisions are made in rationalizing young offender facilities in the Northwest Territories.

Members of the committee will be following up on this issue in the next and in subsequent business planning cycles.

Residential Tenancies Act

The committee noted the act was originally drafted in 1988 and has not been significantly examined since that time.

There have been numerous complaints from both landlords and tenants made to Members of the Legislative Assembly asking for this legislation to be examined and changed to meet the present day realities.

The standing committee is satisfied with the Minister's commitment to include amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act as part of the legislative agenda.

Wilderness Camps And The Correctional System

Committee opinion is split in the value of the wilderness camp program with some Members having questions as to the long-term viability of the program and whether the low level of inmate uptake justifies the sustained cost, while other Members believe the program should be expanded so that inmates could be in camps closer to their home communities.

The committee noted there is a request for proposal out right now calling for interested parties to put in proposals for the operation of wilderness camps. The Standing Committee on Social Programs looks forward to a briefing on the results of this RFP and further discussions on the wilderness camp program.

First Nations Policing

The standing committee is very interested in the continuation and expansion of this program in the Northwest Territories. Members strongly believe that a community is best served by an effective police force made up of persons representative of their culture and language. The RCMP and the department are to be commended for their efforts thus far.

Committee will be following up on this issue throughout the next business planning cycle.

Auxiliary Police In The NWT

The committee noted that the use of auxiliary police in those communities with an RCMP detachment is an important way of improving police services at the

community level while not impacting seriously on the budget.

According to information supplied by the department there are presently 35 auxiliary police in communities. This ranges from 11 auxiliary in Yellowknife to one auxiliary in Deline. After security clearances, the RCMP provides training.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs strongly encourages communities and residents to take advantage of this program and to help the RCMP in delivering services in their communities.

Northern Rents For Federal Employees

Members are aware that there may be a change in the way rents are calculated for federal employees. As Members understand it, rents may be increased to market rates. This could have serious consequences for the Territories as it may make it difficult to attract RCMP and DND personnel to accept northern postings.

In addition, should the federal government decide to increase to market rents there is a strong likelihood that the isolated post allowance would be increased to compensate. If this happens it would result in increased costs to the GNWT for their portion of the isolated post allowance related to the payment for RCMP services.

The committee will be monitoring this issue and following up at the next opportunity with the Minister of Justice. Madam Chair, that concludes our committee's report on the Department of Justice budget review. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. We will move on now to general comments for the Department of Justice. Are there any general comments? I'm sorry. Would the Minister like to bring in witnesses? Mr. Dent.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort Mr. Dent's witnesses to the table.

Minister Dent, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, on my right, I have Deputy Minister Donald Cooper; to my left is Assistant Deputy Minister Shirley Kemeys-Jones; and we also have with us Ms. Kim Schofield, who is the director of finance.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Now are there any general comments?

MR. DELOREY: This is more a question I had for the Minister. I am not on the Social Programs committee. I just wanted to ask a question on page 2 of 4 where the Minister mentions that they will be hiring intensive support and supervision program workers in Hay River. I wonder if I could get the Minister to expand on that a bit. I haven't heard of this before. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, this is a program of supervision for young offenders, particularly young offenders who have been involved in more serious offences. It's a more intensive form of supervision, which they are very closely supervised to reduce the risk of re-offending and to improve the chances that they will integrate successfully back into the community.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can I get an indication from the Minister if this includes employees who are presently employed at Dene K'Onia or are these new workers? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. The person has already been hired. They are working in the probation offices in Hay River.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Madam Chair. So we are only talking one worker? It says workers, so I didn't know how many we were looking at. Is it just the one person?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are three people in total across the Territories, so one in each of the locations named in my opening comments.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know I raised this before with the Minister. I know it might not happen, but I will put it on record anyway. When can we get RCMP in Sachs Harbour? Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. That was a very direct and succinct question. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we don't have the money in this budget to open a detachment or pay for the opening of a detachment by the RCMP in Sachs Harbour. I have met with the chief superintendent of the RCMP and discussed with him the community's desire. I know the chief superintendent is also aware of the community's interest in seeing the detachment open. I believe the RCMP are looking at all of the options that might be available to them, but to date I can't tell the Member that we have found a way that it can happen. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one follow up. It's good to see that you will be getting six new members and they will increase patrols. So let's hope they can organize more visits to Sachs Harbour. Thanks.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, that's one of the intentions of the increased number of RCMP as I mentioned in the opening comments. Some of the members will be stationed in communities like Inuvik and one of their functions will be to increase the numbers of patrols to the smaller communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of increased patrols to communities without resident RCMP, the Minister made a statement on page 2 of his opening comments. How does he plan to communicate that to the communities? Similar to Sachs Harbour, Colville Lake is also looking for some police patrols into the smaller community. Could the Minister give me some signals as to when the Sahtu can expect to see some concrete plans?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure when the new staff will come on stream, but the intention is the relief unit will be made up of people who will be able to increase the patrols to the smaller communities. When and where they happen will be entirely at the discretion of the RCMP. We do not have any say in that. I expect that the RCMP will be sensitive to the regional concerns and make those visits to communities as necessary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: I appreciate the Minister's comments. I guess I'm looking for something more concrete. I am not sure if the Minister will give it to me today in terms of increased patrols to the one community in the Sahtu, Colville Lake. How soon can they expect to see some sort of plans? I know the Minister is probably in communication with the RCMP in terms of increased patrols into the communities.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The RCMP have proposed that this is where they will be locating the increased staff because they know they need to make more patrols to small communities. I can't say which communities those will be. It will depend on what the RCMP see as the needs in the communities and they will make them according to what they see as the need in those small communities.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess sometimes we need to get the communities and the RCMP together because sometimes

what the RCMP sees as need is different than what the communities sees as need. I guess it's a matter of communication between RCMP and small communities such as Colville Lake. It's a matter of having them communicate with each other.

I want to move on to page 3 of his statement. He talks about federal funding to legal aid services. In his statement, he comments to allow lawyers and court workers to spend more time with clients in the communities before a court appearance. What is his definition as more time with clients? One day, two days, three days, one hour? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Five minutes would be more time, but I am hoping it would be more than that. The intent is to try and get the lawyers into the community, not just on the same day as the court party, but perhaps to get them in ahead of that so they can actually have a chance to meet with their clients before the court day itself. At this point, I can't predict exactly how much we are going to do. A lot of it is going to depend on the volume of cases and the timing of the court circuits. The goal here is to improve access to those who have to appear before court.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I hope that we have more than five minutes for our people before courts. The statement says working together making communities safer remains a priority for his department. I would like to somehow see this reflected into the main estimates. It seems there are serious concerns for the people that we have these fly-in lawyers and they come at the same time and spend as much time as they can, based on the finances of the department. They take off the same day and sometimes they don't even have interpreters there. Everything is done in English. Out of courtesy, some of the clients will go along with the lawyer. Sometimes you have only one translator and it's quite busy. So I just wanted to make note of that to the Minister. That's just a comment, Mr. Chairman.

The last comment I have is with the wilderness camp proposals and the comments from the Sahtu is there was a facility here in Yellowknife and they went to see if it was in line with the Minister's comments of working together to make communities safer as a priority. I am looking at some kind of a program in the smaller regions in terms of connecting and working together with inmates that have been out of the communities for awhile and integrating them back into the communities where they would be welcome back in, sometimes with open arms and sometimes not. I just want to make that comment. If the Minister wants to respond, I may have some more questions as we go through detail.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: With the last point the Member made, I am sure he will be interested to know that we have a program starting on the 29th of March at Tl'oondih Healing Camp which is intended to help reintegrate people back into their home region and it is being run with

the community. So there's a lot of community involvement in the programming to try to do just that. This is a pilot project, so we are going to see how it works, but it's something we are going to try to improve on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think back in December -- and he may have to correct some of the details for me -- the court circuit was going to be extended from six weeks to nine weeks. I think part of the reasoning was due to the fact that Judge Halifax was resigning in Hay River and there was going to be none in Hay River. I wonder if the Minister still intends to have extended delays between court circuits in the Nahendeh riding.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The court circuits, their timing and how often they take place is entirely at the discretion of the chief judge. The department is not involved in the setting of that schedule. When the concerns were expressed by some Members about the change in timing, I did take the opportunity to talk to the chief judge and he assured me that there would be no increase in the amount of time that people would wait before they actually saw their day in court and, if necessary, he would make sure that extra circuits are scheduled if there is a demand for them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for that response. Another reference is with regard to translation services. Last spring in Fort Simpson, there was a situation where there was an elder who wasn't provided adequate translation services. In fact, it was a gun registry problem. As a result, he lost his gun, but the whole point of what I am bringing up is there wasn't translation made available. What was happening is the courts were just grabbing people from the general crowd and they weren't comfortable in translating because they aren't trained in that particular field and didn't want to make a mistake on behalf of the elder who was in question. So I'm just wondering what steps are in place for court parties to acquire necessary translators as they tour the communities.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I could ask to have Ms. Kemeys-Jones answer this question. This was before my time as Minister and I'm not familiar with the case.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Shirley Kemeys-Jones.

MS. KEMEYS-JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The situation that the Member is talking about took place in Justice of the Peace Court. When we became aware of the matter, we did bring it to the attention of the RCMP. We were able to review the transcripts, and we worked

with the RCMP and the families, and the matter has been dealt with to their satisfaction. We have taken steps to ensure that adequate translation services are available at all times. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Kemeys-Jones. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering what specific processes are in place to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Ms. Kemeys-Jones.

MS. KEMEYS-JONES: Yes, Mr. Chairman. For all the parties involved in the Justice of the Peace Court, with the RCMP, court workers are available. If translation is a concern, it has been stressed that it's very important that those services are available. If they are not immediately available, probably what will happen is the court will be adjourned to ensure that proper translation services are there. So there has been some increased awareness on the importance of ensuring that adequate translation services are available to those who need them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Kemeys-Jones. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if this will be in the Department of Justice mandate or not, but what provision is there to help us train community justice translators with reference to legalities, courts and other matters? I think we had a system before, I'm just wondering if it is under the realm of the current Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We no longer have a training program to teach translators legal terms.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are just some of the comments I had for right now that are of immediate concern, and I thank the Minister for responding appropriately, Mr. Chair. Mahsi cho.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for appearing and thank you for bringing your A team. Mr. Chairman, if we could have the Minister explain a little bit on page 3. We have the access to justice agreement between the Government of Canada and the GNWT. If he could explain that agreement, and what restrictions it causes the GNWT to put into place with that agreement. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, it's an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories in which they outline the support that they will

provide to us for legal aid services. It's a negotiation process in which we work with the federal government to determine the size of the contribution and the terms of its use.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time would the Minister be willing to share the terms of its use to the regular Members?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: The new part that we're getting funding for is to provide clients in communities with better access to lawyers by allowing lawyers to visit clients at least once prior to the court appearance. It's to be used to recruit and retain an additional family law lawyer, and it's to be used to fund initiatives to recruit and retain staff lawyers within existing positions, and to fund initiatives to recruit and retain aboriginal court worker staff, as well as to improve information technology for all legal aid service staff. The agreement stipulates that the new funding cannot be used to increase the tariff for lawyers.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Could the Minister repeat the portion around the aboriginal staff? I'm a slow writer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent, can you provide a copy to the committee?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, the last two points that I mentioned were initiatives to recruit and retain aboriginal court worker staff, and finally to improve information technology for all legal aid services staff.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, I would like to follow suit on your comment if I could be provided a copy in that regard, for my information as well as all Members' information on that issue. Could the Minister make that available?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would be happy if the Sergeant-at-Arms could make a copy so all Members could have a copy of that briefing note.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Minister, for being so helpful. I appreciate that. With regard to aboriginal recruitment, what initiatives is your department taking to accomplish that goal under that agreement? I think that's one of the reasons why I wanted to hear it again, is the fact that I didn't quite hear it properly. Was it to hire aboriginal staff or something along those lines? If we could get a further clarification. Like I say, I couldn't hear it very well.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are court workers in most communities in the Northwest Territories. Many of them are aboriginal right now. It would be up to the board that administers this funding to ensure that they were using the funding to recruit and retain more of them. So there are two parts to that: recruiting and retaining, and the board would have to decide how they were going to spend that money to accomplish those goals.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the Minister let us know in what direction he provides the board in administering their total budget, as well as this new initiative?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I don't provide them with direction. If we're not satisfied in the way in which the board was operating, then the Minister's role would be to replace the board members.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Minister, for providing that comment. Does the Minister recognize that that we're having difficulties with legal aid? Is the Minister willing to take concise direction to provide for the board, seeing how he doesn't provide specific direction to the board, but is the Minister willing to call the board on meeting some of the directives or their intent? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm afraid Mr. Hawkins is going to have to explain the question to me a little more clearly. I don't understand what he is asking.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Well, I have the Minister on record saying...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Layman terms.

MR. HAWKINS: Sorry?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Layman terms.

MR. HAWKINS: I have the Minister on record recognizing that there are significant problems with legal aid and meeting some of our challenges, and I'm just wondering if he doesn't provide specific direction to the board, what is the Minister willing to do.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: I'm still not certain what the Member is referring to. I have said that I am concerned

about the backlog in family law cases, and if that's what the Member is referring to then I am on record as saying that I have asked the board and the department to provide me with options for consideration for how we can deal with that. I've said that both in a letter to the Member and in response to a question in this House.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Just one last point for now, just as an observation, I guess. It appears that the federal government provides \$1.972 million where the Government of Canada supports the legal aid services initiative to the Legal Services Board. Is there any other funding that this board receives, outside of the Government of Canada and the GNWT providing direct funding to that that we need to be made aware of? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, the majority of the funding comes from the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Canada does contribute a somewhat smaller proportion.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not a mathematician, but if I take \$1.97 million, I quickly subtract that from, as I see it, the \$4.1 million in the budget, wouldn't that almost appear as half of the budget and not a significantly lower portion of it? Unless I'm missing something. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, we get about one-third of the money from Canada.

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

MR. HAWKINS: That will be fine for now. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have an opening comment, but I do have a question on one issue with regard to the registry for sex offenders, a Sex Offender Information Registration Act that's currently before the Canadian Parliament. Mr. Chairman, there were some questions that I had asked the Minister earlier in the week, and the Minister responded with some information about this. I wasn't clear from his correspondence whether or not this new registry would apply to young offenders in the Territories. Could the Minister provide the answer for that? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, it would only apply if they were sentenced as adults.

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

MS. LEE: So without going into the details, a case that was subject to discussion in this House, I believe that the sex offender was 15 when he was originally charged and he may still be under...Actually, maybe I should get information on what age group qualifies for a young offender and, as best as he can, if the Minister could advise as to whether or not the case that we were talking about would fall under this registry had there been a registry or if this registry system was in place. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure whether or not we could create a registry that we could automatically put a young offender's name on without going to courts to get permission to do that in the first place. That's something that I had agreed that I would look into, as some additional information for Mr. Hawkins, but that's one of the things that I don't have the answer to right now.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. Could we know whether or not it is at all permissible for the prosecutors to ask to have a young offender registered? I guess I'm asking the same question a different way, but his officials must know whether or not this is possible. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, again we would have to do some work on this, but because of the whole issue of young offenders and the Youth Criminal Justice Act is that young offenders are dealt with differently than adults. There is a lot more protection of privacy for young offenders. Whether or not we could create a registry that would include young offenders, without us having to actually get a court order to approve each name being added to that registry, isn't something that I can answer today. I will endeavour to get that sort of information, but I'm not sure that we could create a registry that would allow us to automatically put young offenders' names on it.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think I'm asking whether or not a young offender could be automatically registered, because I would think that would not be possible or that would not be easy. What I am asking is does the Minister know whether or not a young offender would be automatically disqualified from being registered? I'm asking from the other extreme. I could see how a young offender would not be automatically registered, but in cases where a young offender was so dangerous and a young offender was found to be very predatory and highly likely to recommit a crime, could a prosecutor file an application to register that young offender?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, under the proposed federal law, young offenders are automatically excluded, yes. As things stand right now, to release the

name of a young offender who is considered a sexual predator, if the crime was that heinous it would probably wind up with the person being convicted as an adult in any case, which changes the situation. But as things stand right now, it would be extremely rare for a successful application to the courts to release information about a young offender.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the answers on the basis of what we know is this registry, even if it was in place, would not really work in the situation that we had been talking about in the House.

My last question on this item is I would like to know more about what kind of work and interaction our Department of Justice and our government is having with the federal government with respect to this bill in the House. Is there a position that the department has put forward that has the government express position on that, or is it a case of just waiting to see how that bill makes it through the House? I'm just assuming that a bill to be at that advanced a stage in Ottawa, that there would have been some kind of a work at a pan-territorial/provincial level as to the input and such. So I would like to know about what kind of involvement our government had. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at the last federal provincial/territorial meeting of Justice Ministers, the territorial government did take the position that it supported the development of the registry, with the condition that the government didn't know whether or not it had the money to implement the program, which is a position that has been taken by the RCMP as well, who are likely to have the lead in the implementation of the registry when it does move ahead. There are a number of other details that are going to be quite important to the Northwest Territories as the bill moves forward through the House, and we'll have to watch how it develops to make sure that it is something that we can use in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee. At this time I would like to ask committee if Ms. Lee can take over the chair.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Minister indicated that the federal government's contribution to the legal aid was one-third. If the Minister could provide me some updated numbers. Can he explain the total budget of legal aid again, and maybe strictly for my benefit, but if he could point out the total budget for legal aid and can he reference the total funding provided by the federal government? As I see it with my quick little math and my nice little calculator here, I have 48 percent of the budget is provided by the federal government, where he pointed out it was one-third of the budget, therefore I am missing a small portion or, in

million dollar terms, a big portion. So if the Minister could clarify that for me, maybe for my benefit, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't have my calculator, and Ms. Schofield is used to having one but did her calculation manually, so our number is not as accurate as the Member's.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Then at this moment I believe Mr. Pokiak has questions and I will defer, but I might want to come back after Mr. Pokiak has a moment at the mike. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Thanks for trying to do my job, Mr. Hawkins. I will now recognize Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up to what Mr. Yakeleya talked about earlier about legal aid and the amount of time the court party sits when they travel to the smaller communities. How quick of a turnover do the so-called people who are going to appear before court get legal aid when they actually sit down at the court hearing? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, a lot depends on the priority of the case. If there's a court date set and if it's a high priority case, then they will get a lawyer fairly quickly. The increase in funding that we're getting from the federal government is to help us to try and get the accused person to have a chance to meet with their lawyer in advance of the court date, so that it doesn't happen all on the same day as is common right now.

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

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up again. It's good to hear that they might have a little longer time to sit down with the lawyers with legal aid. As it presently stands now...(inaudible)...some people who have been charged before and have to appear before the court and then sat down with the legal aid for only 10 minutes and then they appear. I'm glad to hear that. Again I'll go back to Mr. Yakeleya's point, is how much time they actually spend to sit down with these clients. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I can't say exactly how much more time lawyers are going to have with their clients. A lot of it depends on the volume and the numbers of people who have to be seen. Again, the purpose of this money is to try and increase the opportunities for an accused person to spend with a lawyer before they appear in court, and that's what the money will be spent to do.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Follow-up, Mr. Pokiak?

MR. POKIAK: No, that's it, Madam Chair. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. I will now recognize the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for my clarity, the Minister pointed out that some of this funding came under an agreement with Canada, which goes underneath the control of the board which he referenced that some people will have their court case will be before a judge. In a community situation it will be under the discretion and direction of the board as to decide how much time they'll make available, or what policy they will draw up, or how they will format that. Is that sort of how I understood that?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, it would have to be the board that administers the program. So they will set the policy up and determine which lawyers go to see which clients.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. So as an observation from this side, the Minister truly has no control in that particular regard if the board decides not to use that discretion, because as I see it, the board can decide five extra minutes, as we heard earlier, as more time. Can I just get that reaffirmed or clarified? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would be surprised if it was anything like that. I think that the people who work on the board are dedicated people who have the interest of justice at heart, and aren't likely to be mean spirited, as the Member seems to be suggesting might happen. So I am quite comfortable that we will see the funds administered properly and we'll be able to account for them to the federal government.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: I apologize for inciting improper use of the funds, but I think the way I understood the Minister describing earlier is he has no control on how they decide to administer the funds. We did reference that five minutes would be more time, but would the Minister be willing to write a letter as a suggestion to the board that they ensure a certain amount of time, therefore the people who do receive community justice under this program access to justice agreement with Canada will ensure at least a standard amount of time, be it one hour, in consultation with the board but whatever the board deems lawful in this particular case. Some clients are only seeing a lawyer for the first time just prior to their case, we should be setting a standard and a direction. Would the Minister be willing to address some of those issues, with a suggestion to the board? Obviously, because he doesn't tell the board what to do because they are arm's length, I

recognize that, but would he be able to follow it up with a letter? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't think that that's necessary. The board is well aware of what the terms and conditions are for the money, and their interest is, in fact, in seeing adequate time for all the clients with lawyers. So there isn't a need for me to try and dictate how the monies are spent. I'm quite comfortable that the monies will be spent properly and ensuring that adequate time is found for an accused person with a lawyer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Some of this money being directed, the \$315,000 being directed to the Legal Services Board under the board's discretion, of course as the board sees fit, is there any way to identify on how some of it is being spent, whether it's going to be spent on civil or family law? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Madam Chair, the monies all have to be accounted for as they are spent. But as I pointed out in my opening comments and then in the briefing note that Members were given a copy of, we know that some of the money is going to be spent on family law because part of the funds are going to pay for a family lawyer. I do not believe that legal aid is used for civil cases anymore, and the Member did ask about civil cases. I don't think that that is encompassed in their funding anymore.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Mr. Minister. To his surprise I will change subjects. On page 2-4, implementation and the Protection Against Family Violence Act, the Minister referenced \$414,000 being spent for that implementation. Could the Minister expand on why we need so much money to implement this in a layperson's perspective? It looks like a legislation update change, awareness campaign. I am not sure if the Minister could clarify that. That would be most helpful to regular Members. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the department has been working on the implementation plans for this legislation with an advisory committee that has been made up of the RCMP, the YWCA, Health and Social Services, the Native Women's Association, and so on. So the implementation plan has been developed in concert with all of these agencies. The costs are to implement this new legislation; it is not a question of updating legislation, this is legislation that this Assembly has passed. It has not been proclaimed because we haven't got the training done yet to have people in the field to implement it. So what we are doing is ensuring that we have training for the RCMP, for

Justices of the Peace, for shelter workers, and others in the communities who will have to be conversant with the legislation before we can actually see it becoming effective in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: I am prepared to see details.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Is the committee ready for details? We are on page 7-9, Justice. Services to government, operations expense, total operations expense, \$10.456 million. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the benefit of our Chair, I will ask for details on the other expenses.

---Laughter

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oooh.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Mr. Villeneuve, you are building a momentum here. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Under services to government we have \$261,000 for travel and transportation, \$287,000 for materials and supplies, \$212,000 for purchased services, \$249,000 for contract services, \$282,000 for fees and payments, \$1.145 million for other expenses, and \$388,000 for tangible assets. Under other expenses, that included maintenance chargebacks for facilities to Public Works and Services, furniture and equipment for facilities.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you very much, Minister Dent. Any other questions on total operations expenses? Any other questions on page 7-9? Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just wondering about the \$1.145 million under other expenses. The mains chargebacks and office furniture, could I just get a quick breakdown on what the percentages for those two categories of the \$1 million? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I actually read the wrong line when I read that part out. So other expenses of \$1.145 million actually all relates to departmental systems and communications chargeback, and that is the TSC chargeback.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee): Thank you, Minister Dent. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, I just thought the maintenance was pretty steep. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-9, services to government, operation expense, total operations expense, \$10.456 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-11, services to government, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$79,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-13, law enforcement, operations expense, total operations expense, \$22.802 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The whole area of adequate police services is one that is always out there, certainly in the media at the community levels, and with non-government organizations working with social services on the front line. I personally don't see a tremendous part of the solution or a big part of the solution to violence and security issues as just simply hiring more police. There are many other factors that go into a safe and a secure society. I won't get into that right now, I don't think that would go anywhere. What I did want to do though is reflect on a report that was done by "G" Division about a year ago, Mr. Chairman, that suggested that the Northwest Territories "G" Division needed about another 27 officers to fulfill what it saw as its duties. The information provided around this budget says that we are going to see another 12. I figure in this day and age that is not bad if you can see a 50 percent requisition filled for something as expensive and as hard to come by as police officers. There are not a lot of these trained people out there. So I think we have done okay within the last year...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Members on this side, can you quiet down while the Member is speaking? Thank you. Mr. Braden.

---Applause

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we have information that says we are going to get another 12 police officers in various positions. What I wanted to ask about was where "G" Division has suggested they would like to see about another 15 officers. Is our government going to continue to get resources, to get more policing in place, or are we going to hit the pause button on this, are we going to make due with what we have? Is that all we will be able to do for the next while? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am not the Minister of Finance so I am not sure that I can answer that question. I can't make a commitment in a subsequent year's budget. It is certainly something that we are planning to continue working with "G" Division to see how we can address their requirements. We will have to take a look at where we are as we develop the business plans, and I am hoping that we will be able to continue to address their request for manpower.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Braden. General comments? Law enforcement, operations and expense, total operations expense, \$22.802 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the breakdown of the other expenses, which comprises the 100 percent of the budget under this section? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The money is all for basically police services. There is \$261,000 for First Nations policing, \$22.4 million for the RCMP contract, and \$132,000 for a DNA agreement.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't catch the last one. What agreement was that, DNA? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, the DNA agreement.

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

MS. LEE: That is fine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Law enforcement, operations expense, total operations expense, \$22.802 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): We will go on to 7-17. Legal aid services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$4.149 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question on the briefing note that the Minister had provided about the legal aid funding. I am reading from this that the federal government has put in extra money, which was something that was discussed a lot in this House previously. I am not clear as to whether or not the GNWT has kept up with their own funding. Could I get the confirmation from the Minister that whatever money we got from the federal government was to top up whatever money the GNWT was paying prior to that? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I believe that our contribution has maintained its level.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, that is fine, I appreciate that. The other thing, I would like the breakdown of other expenses please. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: I'm sorry, I missed Ms. Lee's question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. She was asking for a breakdown of other expenses. Ms. Lee, can you clarify? Thank you.

MS. LEE: You stated it exactly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you. Other expenses under legal aid services, \$315,000 for travel and transportation, \$30,000 for materials and supplies, \$78,000 for purchased services, \$172,000 for contract services, and \$1.557 million for fees and payments.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I have some more information on the contract services, and the fees and payments? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, the \$1.557 million is mostly payments to lawyers.

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

MS. LEE: Could I have the information on the contract services please? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am advised that the contract services are payments for one or two lawyers that haven't quite become civil servants, but are in the process of becoming civil servants.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister indicated that the funding has been maintained. Would the Minister indicate on how many years the funding has been at that level?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: I am not sure if we have that information with us, Mr. Chairman, but we could probably provide it to the Member subsequently, if that is satisfactory, but we don't have it with us.

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

MR. HAWKINS: I believe that would be more than satisfactory. I hope Monday will be fine.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Legal aid services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$4.149 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Turn to page 7-21, registries and court services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$10.013 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Breakdown for the other expenses please. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, travel and transportation, \$1.259 million; materials and supplies, \$530,000; purchased services, \$282,000; fees and payments, \$1.180 million; and other expenses, \$441,000. Sorry, fees and payments are \$441,000. There are no other expenses in that listing of other expenses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am missing some numbers out of 3.69 there. I just need confirmation from the Minister, what portion of the travel is on court travel, and could I get the number for fees and payments again, and I am assuming that is for the lawyer's fee as well? Could I get a breakdown there please? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is \$996,000 in for court travel in that figure. In the \$441,000, that is for the coroner's fair practice office, rental officer.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to spend too much time on this, but I see other expenses for \$3.6. The Minister indicated \$1 million for travel, \$535,000 for materials, \$282,000 for purchased services, \$441,000 for fees and payments, and that doesn't add up to \$3.6. We are missing a huge number there, or I have missed a point there.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I may have inadvertently not said it, but I thought I'd said contract services for \$1.18 million, which would be the number that I believe Ms. Lee is missing. If I can anticipate her next question, that is judges' salaries and pension makes up the biggest portion of that.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does that mean that the judges are on contract? I guess they must be on contract, they are not government employees. Thank you. I just answered my own question.

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

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask the Minister of MACA a question in regard to the land titles registry. He had referred that the administrative hiccup seems to be between his department and the Department of Justice in the preparation of land disposition documents. So I am going to ask the department if they will work cooperatively with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to speed up the processes. The demand for land transactions has occurred in my riding. So, Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Minister if he would

commit to that administration so that we can see faster movement on the land title registries. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, yes.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask a few more questions about the court translators and the translation that is being used in the communities. Does the Minister have some information in regard to how many translators are being used? I am speaking mostly of the Sahtu region in terms of the court parties that go through there, and how much of the translators are used in the communities, such as Deline, Fort Good Hope. I am not sure if the court goes into Colville and Tulita.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could ask the deputy minister to answer that question.

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

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My information is in days past there used to be a group of trained court translators that were utilized considerably, but as education levels have increased and the knowledge of English, the demands for translations has dropped significantly. My understanding of what transpires now is that in any case where it is identified that translation will be required, our court personnel arrange for the best qualified interpreter they can find to accompany the court party and to provide translation on a contract basis, but it is on an as-required basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Cooper. I am not too sure if this is the time, however, about half-an-hour ago I received a message from Fort Good Hope, and my community contact informed me that yesterday one of the local members in Fort Good Hope got sworn in as an auxiliary member there, so you see an increase of the policing in the community. Either it is the powers that be of this government or just the luck of the draw, or the power of AOC, it is a good sign that we are going to see this...

AN. HON. MEMBER: We asked for it, we got it.

MR. YAKELEYA: So I just wanted to let the Minister know that it is a good sign for us. I want to ask about the support for the Justice of the Peace down the valley, and what type of support does this department give to the Justices of the Peace in dollars and cents in terms of training them, and keeping them informed of the new laws and legislation, and the way they conduct their courts? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we just finished a one-week training program for the Justices of the Peace. We recently increased the hourly per diem for them. That was something that was done before they even asked for it. So we think we are being responsive. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that the government is being responsive too. So it is good move and I welcome that. Easter is coming up so maybe the Easter Bunny will come. I want to just say that. However, I have some other questions but I will wait until we move on further, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is good to hear that the honorariums for the JPs have gone up. For my information, what is the criteria that the department uses for selecting their Justices of the Peace for the various communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Perhaps I could ask Mr. Cooper to do it please?

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

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The eligibility requirements for becoming a Justice of the Peace are set out in the Justice of the Peace Act. I believe they involve being of the age of majority, a Canadian Citizen, no prior criminal record, and all interested parties are at liberty to apply to the Justice of the Peace Review Committee, which is comprised of one judge, and I believe someone from the Bar, and a layperson, and they make recommendations for appointments as JPs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How much weight and consideration in the selection of these Justices of the Peace is given to community consultation and such for who the people select as their JP? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent, thank you. Mr. Cooper.

MR. COOPER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can say that the practice had been for the previous Chief Judge to actually contact community leaders, and to canvas their views with respect to the suitability of a perspective candidate. So it was done rather more informally in the past. The views of the community have, my understanding is, always been taken into account. Bearing in mind that neither the department or the Minister has any direct involvement, or has had in this process of selecting JPs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Cooper. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Taking that into consideration, I am assuming that in some

communities where a lot of community members aren't really pleased with some of the works of the JP, not to discredit any of the JPs we have, but I know it is probably an issue that has been brought up before. What are the steps that community members can take if they feel that they have a petition or something of that matter going around the community that they want a new JP selected? Perhaps there are reasons beyond the JP's control, but I know residency is usually a high priority for a lot of community members. What is the Minister's take on that subject? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the situation where a community is concerned about the suitability of a JP, they should probably write to the Chief Judge and outline their concerns.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: That is sufficient. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Registries and court services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$10.013 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-25, community justice and corrections, operations expense, total operations expense, \$32.554 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The breakdown for \$7 million under other expenses, please. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Travel and transportation is \$865,000; material and supplies, \$1.666 million; purchased services, \$277,000; utilities, \$1.268 million; contract services, \$1.709 million; fees and payments, \$389,000; other expenses, \$756,000.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like some breakdown on the contract services for \$1.7 million and for the \$1.66 million under materials and supplies and the breakdown for the other expenses.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Contract services include contracts with wilderness camps, the Salvation Army, elders' contract and contracts with doctors and dentists. The other expenses include the maintenance chargeback for facilities to Public Works and Services, as well as furniture and equipment for the facilities. Materials and supplies includes food and supplies for the correctional facilities, office supplies, medical supplies for the correctional facilities and inmate clothing and correctional officer uniforms.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you very much. My last question on that item is, is it possible for the Minister to give us the dollar

figures for different contracts under contract services that he had outlined? How much for wilderness? How much for the Salvation Army? And how much for the third item? Actually, I just want those two items. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of that detail we're going to have to give the Member at a later time. The wilderness camps apparently is about \$1.2 million, but we don't have the detail of the others. We'll have to get back to the Member with the balance of that information.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's fine. I hope to get that as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: We'll get the Member that information.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister in light of Ms. Lee's question in regard to the wilderness camps. You have \$1.2 million. Has that been allocated already or are those dollars that will be allocated? I know there are some existing wilderness camps in the Northwest Territories and there are some that are being looked at right now in terms of the RFP that went out last month. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We pay the operators an amount of money per day per inmate that they have in their custody. So that is the budget that we expect to spend. The monies aren't actually allocated specifically to different camps because it really does depend on how many clients they have.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm really glad that the healing society is going to do the pilot project and I hope that someday we get a chance to look at that project once it's up and running and get the feedback from inmates to see how successful it will be. I guess the other part of the success of this pilot project is, once the clients, inmates, finish the project and get back into the communities and reintegrate we'll see how successful it's going to be because I'm crossing my fingers on this, that it be a successful program because we certainly need those people back into our communities in a good way. I guess the emphasis also is going to be looked upon as they're okay in the program, they're okay in the bush up there, it's time for them to come back into the community and reintegrate back into the community. Has there been some, I guess there would have to be some discussion, is there funding allocated to programs back in the community that would welcome these people back into the communities, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Often people going back into communities go back under supervision orders. So our people in the parole system will be working with them. The goal is to have a case management approach with other caregivers in the community around people as they go back. We're trying to improve on the ties between Justice and the other departments in order to facilitate that. There will be also often contact with members of the Community Justice Committee, either formally or informally, to try and help provide some supervision as people move back into the community.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I was in Tulita and I did serve on the justice committee. I know the struggles and aspirations of how to keep it going and keep the community informed as much as possible. Again, I cross my fingers on this pilot project that the community justice programs and the other programs that are in the communities have the support of this department and they can look at a smooth integration of the people back into the communities. I will always advocate for these wilderness camps to be as close as possible to the communities because I think out there in the bush the people that were hoping to serve there, that's the best way to get them back into society here. In terms of the wilderness camps, I know you don't allocate to specific regions, you allocate on proposals and I hope that my region, at least, someone has submitted a proposal to have a wilderness camp. I know I'm not too up to date on that, however, in saying that you have a facility here that was built a couple years ago down the road here in Yellowknife. It's a huge facility. I haven't looked at it yet. I hope that facility also helps our people. I made a visit to the YCC jail here and I talked to some of the inmates from the Sahtu region and I asked them a question. Would you like to spend your time here or in the bush? They always answered with we want to spend some time in the bush. I got to see and I know people who spend time in the bush and they could really benefit themselves and the communities in a lot of good ways that can be used for their time.

I'm not going to slam the previous government of the building over there. That's none of my doing. But I want to support that, in terms of getting people who I see have an elders program in there to really strongly put that elders program in there as one of the priorities in that facility. Use it to the max. It's there. It's waiting to be used. I don't have very much to say about it. I think I want to see how best we can use it. I hope I'm not encouraging our people to use it because it's a nice facility, I've heard. I haven't seen it yet. To deter them from going in there and look at more of the wilderness camps in the regions, at least. They'll have a hard time in the bush, but that's good for them. Let them work it out and use their muscles and use their minds. That's what the old timers were saying. Make them work. Make them think. I think that's something I just wanted to comment on, Mr. Chairman, is that I hope some emphasis will be given to the wilderness camps over the facility here in Yellowknife.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent, would you like to comment?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree wholeheartedly with the Member that it would be great if we could get more people into wilderness camps. The problem isn't not having enough camps, it's getting enough people to say that they want to go to the camps. We are anxious to see more of the inmates take the opportunity and do encourage it. But we can't force them. We try and make it attractive to get into the camps, but there are limits. The inmate has to be suitable for that sort of placement. They have to have dealt with their issues while incarcerated and be ready for that sort of placement, then they have to want to go. If we can get people in that situation, then we're fairly confident that we've got some good camps available for them.

I think the Ti'oondih operation is certainly something that we're looking to see if it can be successful. We think that it will be and we're hoping that after we run the pilot project and have a look at the assessment that it will prove its use and that we will be able to see more of our clients going back to their home communities through a facility like that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Just a last comment here. I went to see the inmates from the Sahtu region at YCC. All 10 of them said they want to go. They want to go, they're willing to go, but they're not being forced to. I guess it's the process of how to get them to those camps. They all said yes, we want to go.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just make this brief. I want to ask the Minister if he can provide me and maybe some other Members with the number of wilderness camps that are in operation in conjunction with the justice committee's program, how many clients have gone through the camps, the number of days they've spent in the camps, eligibility requirements. I'm pretty sure they all qualify, but I know they have to have probably, like, six months remaining in their sentences and what not. Just some of that information in regard to these camps. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have two camps in operation right now. In 2003-2004 so far there have been 3,407 bed days between the camps. So the daily average would be 12 inmates, and as of the middle of March there were 12 in the camps.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Villeneuve. Thank you. Community justice and corrections, operations expense, total operations expense, \$32.554 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-27, community justice and corrections, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$1.494 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Information item, active positions. Question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-29, details of work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-31, total department, \$1.514 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 7-32, revenues recoveries and transfer payments, total revenues, \$10.416 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Now can we turn back to page 7-7, Justice, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$79.973 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Go to CAP-15, Justice, services to government, total services to government, \$90,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Public legal services, total public legal services, \$400,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Registries and court services, total registries and court services, \$155,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Community justice and corrections, total department, \$645,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does the committee agree that consideration of the department's estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): At this time I'd like to thank Mr. Dent and his staff for coming in. Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to move that we report progress. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise to report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I call the House back to order. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005; Committee Report 3-15(3); and Committee Report 2-15(3) and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. 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 Accountability and Oversight committee at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and a meeting of the Board of Management at 11:00 a.m. on Monday morning.

Orders of the day for Monday, March 29th:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 5, Tlicho Community Government Act
- Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Payroll Tax Act, 1993
And the Income Tax Act

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: This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 29, 2004, at 1:30 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:25 p.m.