



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 44

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, February 25, 2005

Pages 1561 - 1590

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Hon. Brendan Bell
(Yellowknife South)
*Minister of Resources, Wildlife
and Economic Development*

Mr. Bill Braden
(Great Slave)

Hon. Charles Dent
(Frame Lake)
*Government House Leader
Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment
Minister of Justice
Minister responsible for the
Status of Women*

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Hon. Joe Handley
(Weledeh)
*Premier
Minister of the Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Minister responsible for
Intergovernmental Affairs
Minister responsible for the
NWT Power Corporation*

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. David Krutko
(Mackenzie-Delta)
*Minister responsible for the
NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for the
Workers' Compensation Board*

Ms. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
*Minister of Transportation
Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs
Minister responsible for Youth*

Mr. Robert McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger
(Thebacha)
*Minister of Health and Social Services
Minister responsible for Persons with
Disabilities
Minister responsible for Seniors*

Mr. Calvin Pokiak
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

Hon. Floyd Roland
(Inuvik Boot Lake)
*Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance
Chairman of the Financial
Management Board
Minister of Public Works and
Services
Minister responsible for the
Public Utilities Board*

Mr. Robert Villeneuve
(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Mr. Henry Zoe
(North Slave)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk
Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees
Mr. Dave Inch

Assistant Clerk
Mr. Darrin Ouellette

Law Clerks
Ms. Katherine R. Peterson, Q.C.
Ms. Karen Lajoie

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1561
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1561
96-15(3) - FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	1561
97-15(3) - MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE	1561
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1562
MR. ZOE ON HISTORIC JOURNEY OF THE TLICHO PEOPLE	1562
MR. MENICOCHÉ ON DAY CARE IN NAHENDÉH	1562
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CULTURAL ENHANCEMENT COMMISSION	1562
MR. POKIAK ON LACK OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES	1563
MR. RAMSAY ON ADDITIONAL POLICING RESOURCES	1563
MR. BRADEN ON OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD	1564
MS. LEE ON DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RESOURCES, WILDLIFE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	1564
MR. HAWKINS ON MULTI-YEAR FUNDING FOR NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS	1564
MR. VILLENEUVE ON PROTECTION OF THE NORTHERN ENVIRONMENT	1565
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1565
ORAL QUESTIONS	1566, 1577
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1580
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1580
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1580
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1590
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1590

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, February 25, 2005****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Minister's Statement 96-15(3): Federal Support For Community Infrastructure

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with my colleagues details of recent commitments by the federal government that will support community governments and their infrastructure needs. The signing of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Agreement between our government and the federal government, along with announcements regarding the allocation of \$5 billion in federal gas tax revenue funding under Canada's new deal for cities and communities, are welcome news in the Northwest Territories.

The municipal rural infrastructure fund will provide an investment of \$16 million in infrastructure funding to the communities of the Northwest Territories over the next four years.

---Applause

This funding is a positive movement for both the federal and territorial governments to help address the needs of our communities in the areas of water, wastewater and solid waste. As a result, this will help improve the quality of life for our residents. I would like to take this opportunity to share with Members some of the highlights of the agreement.

The municipal rural infrastructure fund will be allocated on the basis of 55 percent to the non-tax-based communities and 45 percent to the tax-based communities, which is consistent with the previous Canada-NWT infrastructure fund.

---Applause

The federal contribution of \$16 million will be matched by our government, along with an additional \$7 million from the tax-based communities. The federal budget address earlier this week committed to renewing the municipal and rural infrastructure fund when the current five-year program has ended.

In addition, earlier this week, Canada announced how it plans to allocate the \$5 billion in gas tax revenue funding among all provinces and territories. The federal government will provide the Northwest Territories with a targeted amount equal to 0.75 percent of the total funding available. This will result in new infrastructure funding for

Northwest Territories community governments of \$37.5 million over the five-year period beginning in 2005.

---Applause

Northwest Territories communities will receive \$4.5 million in 2005-06 and 2006-07. That amount will increase to \$6 million in 2007-08 and jump to \$7.5 million in 2008-09. The program will reach its ongoing stable funding base of \$15 million annually in 2009-10.

---Applause

I am pleased to report that MACA officials began discussions yesterday with Infrastructure Canada towards negotiating the bilateral agreement with Canada for allocation of the funding to the Northwest Territories communities.

The allocation of the federal gas tax revenue reflects the efforts and lobbying of the three territories, who took a pan-territorial approach to the federal government's new deal for cities and communities. In partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, we supported a funding allocation that reflects those unique needs and pressures of northern and remote communities.

We are all acutely aware of the infrastructure deficit facing Northwest Territories community governments and the department is aggressively exploring options to assist communities to identify and leverage funding for community infrastructure. We welcome the infusion of additional funding for community infrastructure by the federal government because it supplements the limited own-source revenues to which community governments have access. Both of these recent commitments by the federal government are positive steps that will certainly assist our government and community governments to address current needs and shortfalls in infrastructure. I look forward to continuing work with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities on implementing these two commitments in a manner that is fair, transparent and meets the needs of community governments. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 97-15(3): Minister Absent From The House

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Michael Miltenberger will be absent from the House today to attend the Canadian Northwest Fetal Alcohol Spectrum

Disorder Partnership Ministers' meeting in Victoria. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Historic Journey Of The Tlicho People

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on August 22, 1921, with the signing of Treaty 11 by Chief Monfwi in Fort Rae, my people started on an historic journey to find and define their place in Canada. We've recently marked some very important milestones of this journey, including the signing of the Tlicho agreement and passing of legislation in this House and the House of Commons.

Last year, this Assembly passed the Tlicho Community Government Act and I hope we will be passing another milestone later today. Mr. Speaker, a lot of work, a lot of time and a lot of sacrifices went into getting the agreement and legislation developed and in place. The pride that the Tlicho people have can be measured by the number of Tlicho citizens with us here today in the gallery.

The Tlicho agreement is modelled for a future self-government agreement between First Nations and Canada. Mr. Speaker, I don't have time in this forum to thank everyone who worked on making these agreements a reality. I would, however, like to recognize the fathers, mothers, husbands, wives and children who made the best of the situation whenever their loved ones were away from home working for their people. We owe them a lot of debt and gratitude and thanks for all the missed birthdays, anniversaries and graduations.

I would also like to recognize those elders who did not live to see this agreement come to pass. You are in our thoughts and prayers on this joyous occasion, and your spirit and guidance got us to where we are today.

Whenever Tlicho people get together for special occasions, we dance. There will be some dancing going on today to celebrate the conclusion of the debate on the Tlicho Government Agency Act, as the last part of the puzzle.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you and my colleagues in this Assembly for your support of the aspiration of the Tlicho people. It shows that consensus government can work.

It is a new day for my people, Mr. Speaker. We have authority over our own affairs. We have the ability to protect our language, culture, heritage and environment. We are ensuring the future for our children and grandchildren as a distinct society within a cultural mosaic that is Canada. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Day Care In Nahendeh

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided).

Today I would like to talk about day care options in the communities that I represent in Nahendeh. In Fort Simpson there are adequate options available to organizations and private businesses that may wish to rent space to provide day care services. The question that day care operators in Fort Simpson have is related to the adequacy of the subsidy of each child and the amount available from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for renovations and purchasing new equipment.

The department will have to seriously look at the level of subsidy and other supports that are provided to day care operators in larger centres to ensure the long-term viability of this operation.

Mr. Speaker, the other side of the picture for day care in Nahendeh are the situations in the smaller communities that I represent. Simply put, there are no facilities in these smaller communities for anyone to set up a day care facility. In these communities, Mr. Speaker, we must rely on Granny to provide these day care services.

---Laughter

This is the available workforce, so we need to adjust our systems that regulate the provision of day care to allow communities to use the resources and people that are available to them. Whatever happens out of any new day care funding that may come from the federal government, it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we adjust our programs to meet the day care needs of the parents at the community level. Day care solutions made in Yellowknife, based on southern Canadian best practices, may not work in the NWT's smaller communities. We need solutions that meet the needs of parents and keep the children safe and happy.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we need flexibility on the part of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to make this happen. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Legislative Assembly Cultural Enhancement Commission

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will speak extra loudly today. Mr. Speaker, earlier, this Legislative Assembly announced the appointment of the first members of our new Cultural Enhancement Commission, which I have the honour of chairing, as Deputy Speaker of this House.

As Members know, the Legislative Assembly was built prior to the division of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and, of course, it was reflective of the NWT at the time. Following division, during the 14th Assembly, there was some concern about how representative the building was of the cultures of the new NWT and there was a general recognition of a need for a more coordinated approach to cultural enhancement.

This includes things that we usually think of, like art work and displays of traditional crafts, but also involves things like the landscaping around the building and the impression that people get as they come in the front entrance. Of all buildings in the Northwest Territories, the Legislative Assembly needs to be representative of our people and cultures. NWT residents from any community should be able to see some reflection of themselves in this building and surroundings, where we make decisions on their behalf everyday.

Every year, thousands of tourists visit the Legislative Assembly. We need to take advantage of this opportunity to share our values and diverse cultures with people from all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, the building and surroundings also impact us as Members. I am sure all of us can recall the first time we walked through the door as newly-elected MLAs and the awe and sense of responsibility that we felt. I am also sure that, from time to time, all of us who represent constituencies outside of the capital have welcomed the reminders of home and our constituents that are placed in various locations throughout the building.

Mr. Speaker, we often take our public buildings for granted. We might notice generally the feeling we get when we come in the door, but we rarely consider the thought and small details that go into creating those impressions. They don't happen by accident; they take planning and that is why I believe that we are making a very positive step by establishing the Cultural Enhancement Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with the newly-appointed commission members. They are Mr. Gerald Antoine, from Fort Simpson; Ms. Annie Felix, from Tuktoyaktuk; Ms. Beverly Masuzumi, from Fort Good Hope; Ms. Colleen McDonald, from Yellowknife; Mr. Sonny McDonald, from Fort Smith; and, Mr. George Tuccaro, from Yellowknife.

This is a very strong and knowledgeable group, who will represent the people and the cultures of the Northwest Territories very well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Lack Of Pre-employment Training Opportunities In Small Communities

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being Education Week, I would like to wish all educators, parents and students success this week and through the end of the school year.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, February 21, 2005, I was fortunate to attend the opening of the Akaitcho Technical and Trade Centre in Yellowknife. Although I did not have the time to tour the facilities that afternoon, a quick visual look at the classrooms was very impressive.

Mr. Speaker, larger centres, such as Yellowknife, are fortunate to have corporate sponsorship in donations to facilities such as the Akaitcho Trades and Technical

Centre and the Kimberlite Trade and Technical Centre, Mr. Speaker.

I raise this issue, Mr. Speaker, because in smaller communities we do not have the facilities for pre-employment trades for our students. In the Beaufort-Delta there is a mobile introduction to trades training that is offered to the communities of Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk, where an instructor travels to these communities to offer, as an example, carpentry.

Mr. Speaker, this is good for communities with road access, but what about communities such as Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Holman? How are they being served for opportunities for introduction to carpentry, electrical and other trades, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, in order for our students to prepare for college or university, or the workforce, it is important schools in smaller communities have facilities such as Akaitcho and Kimberlite trades and technical centres.

Mr. Speaker, I know this government does not have enough funds for capital infrastructure to build facilities in smaller communities, but we should allow all students outside of our large centres a chance for pre-employment trade, when or however this government addresses the needs of smaller communities, to have proper facilities so that they can be exposed to pre-employment trades in preparation for college or university.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, seeing government and industry cannot build trade centres in every community, maybe they could provide some funding for students to travel and take advantage of trade centres outside of their communities, maybe once a week each year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Additional Policing Resources

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to use my Member's statement today to clarify some recent comments I made in regard to the \$1.4 million in additional funding for the 10 new RCMP officer positions throughout the Northwest Territories.

According to the Government of Northwest Territories and the Department of Justice, two new traffic positions are headed to Hay River and one to Yellowknife. I didn't want to downplay the importance of traffic positions or where they were to be located but, according to the RCMP in Hay River, there are no new traffic positions coming to Hay River. If the Department of Justice is insisting that there is -- and I know the Finance Minister had it in his budget address that they are coming -- are they or aren't they going to Hay River?

What I was hoping to do was draw some attention to the fact that drugs are our biggest problem and, in my mind, our greatest social ill. Families are being destroyed and ripped apart by the ravages of drug addicts. Crack and cocaine are ruining many beautiful young people and

adults in our territory. When I saw that we had found additional money and were looking to fund 10 new RCMP positions throughout the Northwest Territories, obviously I had some concern over what these new resources were going to go for. In my mind, more of it should go to combat drugs that are coming into the Territories.

The only thing I saw in the Finance Minister's budget address, with any reference to drugs, was a dog and handler that was to be located in Yellowknife. I had some questions about the fact that it was here in Yellowknife, which is at the end of the road system. A large portion of drugs entering the Territories are being driven here. Why couldn't we look at putting the dog and handler in Fort Providence at the ferry, or at the weigh scales in Enterprise?

We need more police officers; that's a fact. We should also find some additional funding for dedicated drug dogs to help us tackle the drug problem. Traffic positions are obviously important and I don't deny that, but I have to question if we're doing enough to get the drugs off our streets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Good statement.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Operational Review Of The Workers' Compensation Board

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the year 2000, a legislative review panel was appointed to recommend changes to the Workers' Compensation Act and the Safety Act of the Northwest Territories. In 2002, the panel's report, called "Act Now," was received by the Ministers for the WCB both here and in Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that after all that time and that profile and expense, that this report was never tabled in this House. The terms of reference provided for a legislative review, and that panel was to also present the views heard by the stakeholders during a very wide-ranging consultation.

There were some 85 recommendations in the Act Now report and the principal recommendation, the number one direction that this panel gave us, Mr. Speaker, was to engage in an operational review of the WCB. Commitments were made to have that done, but we have yet to see anything, Mr. Speaker. The system was seen on an operational view by many, Mr. Speaker, to be an adversarial system between the WCB and injured workers. A feeling was often expressed that the system was not there to work on behalf of injured workers, but rather to protect the bottom line and the fund of the WCB. Workers often felt that they were not treated with respect and, Mr. Speaker, ran into areas of difficulty with medical interpretations, rulings that contradicted medical opinions, things that left injured workers perplexed, Mr. Speaker, and on a never-ending treadmill with the appeals process.

Mr. Speaker, our WCB, in many areas, is a very progressive organization. I am very impressed with the work that it does on behalf of youth and worker safety training and the smoking initiative. But there continues to be, Mr. Speaker, a chronic need for addressing the

problems of claims implementation and our appeals mechanism in the WCB. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Division Of The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to once again register my concern with the fact that the division of RWED will result in the creation of 28 new jobs at a cost of \$2.8 million every year. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the department needed to streamline and separate their mandates between exploring resources to protecting the environment. But that didn't give the government the right to reproduce themselves 28 more little positions in offices. Mr. Speaker, I don't accept the Minister's position that this had to be done in order to better respond to the work of preparing for the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, for example. I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, there just has to be more prudent things to do to prepare, than to create more government jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this was an \$80 million department that split into two, and surely they could have done this from within. Mr. Speaker, people out there are asking where the resources are for all the people up and down the valley who want a forum to speak about their worries and concerns about the pipeline development. There are other priority items that have been chronically under-funded within the mandate of this department, Mr. Speaker. That is, I have to wonder what the tourism industry could have done with \$2.7 million in extra funding on a yearly basis.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Members and Cabinet know how frustrating it is for the Members on this side to hear the government saying over and over that they can't pay for this and that, and they have to cut funding to social agencies. They can't fund indoor facilities in Nahanni Butte or Kakisa...

---Applause

...or many, many places.

Yet when they want to reproduce themselves, it's no problem. Three million dollars every year in perpetuity. Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Minister and Cabinet have their priorities straight and I need to state that again very clearly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly glad to finally see the Cotton Ball Club has taken their cotton balls out of their ears today. There were lots of cotton balls there. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to talk about multi-year funding once again. I brought this issue to the floor of the

House back in October last year, and I'm bringing it again because of the news article in today's Yellowknifer regarding stabilized funding needed for non-profit groups. Mr. Speaker, there's one quote out of this that I think is critical to emphasize before I continue, which talks about the struggling NGOs and volunteer organizations. It's based, in large part, on how they're funded, not the funding. It's about how they're funded, not their funding; I say again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government tabled, almost three years ago, a social agenda and it talked about multi-year funding for NGOs, Mr. Speaker. It's time we live up to that commitment and promise made to these organizations, Mr. Speaker. How much more time must go by before we address the need we identified that would make their life better?

Mr. Speaker, we need to support them. We support them and I know I support them, Mr. Speaker, so let's start working like a family and let's start working like a business and let's make their life a little better.

Mr. Speaker, NGOs are the heart and soul of our community, yet we make them struggle year after year, funding application after funding application. In my experience, we've never cut anybody off, yet it's a key role of this government to create hot air and administrative paperwork for these organizations that's not necessary. Mr. Speaker, NGOs do what they do best and it certainly isn't providing paperwork for government just because we want more paperwork, Mr. Speaker. Let's uncuff these NGOs. Let's take them out of that hamster wheel of administration, on and on and on. Their purpose is to serve the people, not to serve paperwork.

Mr. Speaker, it's time we start dealing with this. This would take a serious amount of stress off those organizations. It would take away the duress because they're waiting for the 11th-hour phone call to finally get the word that their funding is coming. Mr. Speaker, they cannot do long-term planning because they have staff they can only promise a job to until March 31st every year.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I'm going to say that this government must live up to its commitment it made and, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions at the appropriate time for the Premier to deal with this issue finally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Protection Of The Northern Environment

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to talk about our delicate and diversified northern environment. Mr. Speaker, as everyone is well aware, the next step in the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol Agreement has been met with some opposition and question as to the validity and the expectations from all the parties and partners involved.

Mr. Speaker, this agreement and the implications of the agreement will have a direct effect on us all. I'd like to mention something a constituent, who is an

environmentalist in his own right, mentioned to me with respect to the protection and the acknowledgement of how delicate our northern environment really is. He could not stress more the need for all residents to realize the delicacy and intricacy of our northern environment and he emphasized the need for information sharing on this topic, because we are always on the front page of the briefings that global climate change agencies and watchdogs review every day.

My friend also made the analogy that we, in the NWT, are like a large piece of litmus paper for the rest of the world when it comes to environmental infractions. By this he means that when any environmental infractions do take place, be it here or anywhere in the world, the effects are not only immediately noticeable in the northern hemisphere, but also long term and, sadly, irreversible in many cases.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to let the residents of the NWT, industry, government, tourists, everyone know that when we're out on the land, keep this important thought in mind, because what you do in this very delicate and intricate northern environment North of 60 or anywhere in the northern hemisphere will remain with us for a long time. So when you're out there, do good. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Dallas Stelmack and Matthew Lakusta, both Grade 8 students from the Diamond Jenness Secondary School in Hay River who have served in the House as Pages this week. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to recognize two Pages from Fort Providence who were with us for the duration of this week, Murina Sabourin and Rebecca Landry. I want to thank them for coming over to help us out. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to recognize two Pages from Tu Nedhe, Nicole Abel and Olga Aviugana, who have done a lot of good work here this week and hopefully we'll have them back again some time. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would also like to extend a thank you to all the Pages who served us this week in the House. Especially I'd like to mention two from my constituency, Johnathan Williams and Reiss Kruger, who have been here and have done a great job for us this week. Thank you to all the Pages who have been here this week.

---Applause

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the placement of remand inmates in cells here in Yellowknife as opposed to Hay River, I would like to ask the Minister if the reason for that is because the Yellowknife correctional centre has empty beds and empty cells that need to be filled here in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can accommodate the prisoners who would be housed in the remand facility in Hay River in the North Slave Correctional Centre. There is room for them. We don't have to move them here. This is being undertaken as a cost-savings measure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, besides there being room, what else is better about putting the inmates in remand in Yellowknife rather than Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of better, I don't know if it's a question of it being a better setting. The issue is really one of having two facilities when we can accommodate the prisoners with one. That's where the savings are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this change in operations results in a loss of 5.5 positions in Hay River. Mr. Speaker, with the recent review of the North Slave Correctional Centre, is it not true that there is a human resource plan to look at adding more positions for corrections officers in Yellowknife while taking 5.5 out of the South Slave? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say whether there's going to be any positions added to the North Slave Correctional Centre or whether a request will come forward for additional staff. I haven't seen the human resources plan. I know the department has been working on one with the assistance of an individual from British Columbia, but I haven't yet been provided with that report if it has been finished. There have been some recommendations by corrections officers who have worked for the federal system out of Fenbrook Institution in Ontario. They did recommend that we increase some staffing in some areas, but we haven't responded to that one. We have been waiting to see what the final human resources plan will look like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that over building infrastructure in Yellowknife should not constitute losses in the regions and other communities.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister's commitment that he will not be taking 5.5 positions out of my community and adding corrections positions in Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 482-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that we're not talking about adding. Even if we were talking about adding positions in the North Slave Correctional Centre, it is not in the remand part of the facility. I'm not aware that there have been any concerns about staffing in that area, and my understanding is that the vacancy in beds could be filled up without there having to be an increase in the numbers of staff. At this point, the two are not the same. If we're talking about an increase in staff in the facility as it stands,

it would be the same as an increase in the overall staffing at South Mackenzie Correctional Centre in the general correctional officer area. We're not talking about changing staff in the remand section. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my statement today, I'd like to ask questions to the Minister of RWED. Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing a lot in the news and during our budget session where we have not been able to fund everything that we need to. I really do believe that for the people out there, they don't really care if we have 28 more positions in RWED or wherever else. What makes the difference to them is what's happening in their communities and to facilities that are breaking down. We have places with no indoor gyms, we're closing facilities, and I just heard now that there is a very valuable program in Yellowknife that's under the axe. So I'd like to know from the Minister how he can justify creating 20 new jobs and say that's necessary for Mackenzie Valley pipeline development readiness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not saying 20 jobs because of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. I'm not saying 28 jobs, as the Member indicated in her statement. It's 23 additional jobs. We've got a heated economy. We had to do something about our mandates in terms of economic development and environmental stewardship. These are critical priorities of this government. They have been well discussed and debated, as our Legislature set out to create the strategic plan. Certainly that's where I was taking my direction, Mr. Speaker.

I want to also indicate that of those 23 jobs, one additional position is not because of the split. It's a position in Hay River to help the south-of-the-lake region better handle some of the increased tourism traffic we're expecting. Also, three of the positions are energy policy positions that didn't exist before the split, because we feel we have a void or a vacuum in terms of a macro-energy policy on the part of this government. So those are the numbers.

In terms of other priorities and our limited resources, I would certainly acknowledge that there are other priorities. We do have limited resources. That's the environment we operate in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, this department, before a split, runs with an \$80 million budget. That's a lot of money. Everybody here knows there are always vacancies in any department. There is a lot of room for the Minister to manoeuvre; 20 or 30 percent vacancies. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is already aware and he has already stated that there will be hardly any funding for individuals or small NGOs to take part in the Mackenzie Valley review process. Most of the government funding goes to other levels of governments and huge organizations. How can he justify even creating 20 new jobs on this when he can't meet the needs of other more important areas within his mandate? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, the environment is very important to us, as is the economy. I think it's important that we ensure that the resources are there for us to meet the needs of all NWT residents in this regard. I'd like to also indicate to the Member that when we looked at the breadth of responsibility in this one department, RWED, and compared it to other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, British Columbia has six different departments to handle this breadth; in Alberta, it's seven; Saskatchewan has four; Manitoba has eight; Ontario has eight; Newfoundland has five. We were dealing with one department for all of these mandates and, quite honestly, we didn't feel we were effectively organized and were afraid that some balls would be dropped and some very important things would be missed, especially with the magnitude of development on our doorstep, Mr. Speaker. So that really was the prime motivation.

Let's also keep in mind that we're hopeful we'll have devolution in the next couple of years. We've got to be a devolution-ready organization. I don't think we're there yet. We have something now that will provide us the framework. I think there's a lot more work to do and I don't think it is going to get done adequately with one department handling the lion's share of that responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all governments across the country are bigger than ourselves. But we are smaller than the rest of them, as well. We're only 40,000 people and, Mr. Speaker, most of the positions that are being created are senior management positions. They are not going to add to the people on the ground who need to be in contact with communities to do the work. In the end, I really don't think it's going to make a difference in a way that people want to see it. It really, Mr. Speaker, was done to minimize the pain in reorganization and I think the Minister dropped the

ball in terms of looking at the big picture. We have schools that are cracking...

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question, Ms. Lee?

MS. LEE: Would the Minister revisit this issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No. More than half of the positions are regional positions. Yes, there are some superintendents, five superintendents. But more than half these positions are in regions to help us deal with the clients in need, both on the environment side and the economic development side. I know the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development hears this message loud and clear as it travels. I've been with them on the road, I've been in these communities and we are hearing that we are not meeting the needs of our communities and we're not able to meet regional needs in terms of preparing people for development and ensuring that we are providing that leadership and that environmental stewardship, Mr. Speaker. I think great initiatives are underway now. The Protected Areas Strategy is certainly something that we've needed for some time. I'm happy that this government has been able to fund this. It's been a long time coming. We're working on cleaning up contaminated sites. We're doing a lot of good work, but simply, to be quite honest, we needed additional resources in some areas in order for us to meet the demand. That's what we've done here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all the resources he had, the Minister still hasn't got the beverage recycling plant off the ground, he hasn't brought in the Wildlife Act that's been in the works for 10 years, and people are crying in the public media saying we want to take part in having a say about what's going to happen to us with this development. All the Minister is doing is creating government positions in offices. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister not revisit this and see how the money could be better spent in making a difference in people's lives? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 483-15(3): Costs Of Dividing The Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if the Member is making the argument for me, but the fact that the Wildlife Act is taking a long time and the beverage container recovery plan is underway but won't be rolled out in every community for April 1st, I think speaks to our capacity as a government in some regard. I

don't want to put it all there, Mr. Speaker. We're moving forward on these initiatives, but quite clearly we have been under resourced. Yes, we do need to work to ensure the federal government steps up to fund its responsibility in terms of helping interveners through this GRPEA. I don't deny that and we're certainly willing to go to the federal government and insist that they live up to their obligations. But to suggest that our government is not receiving resources from development currently, not receiving the lion's share of the revenues, is the one that should have to fit the bill for interventions across the board I think is misguided, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 484-15(3): Operational Review Of The WCB

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board and they have to do with the program of legislative changes undertaken in the last Assembly. Mr. Speaker, there was a second phase of legislative review that was committed to. In fact, the most recent report of the WCB says that the second phase of the legislative review will focus on outstanding aspects not addressed in phase one. The research developments and consultations on these issues will be undertaken throughout 2004. Mr. Speaker, that has passed. I'm not aware of anything that's before us now in terms of more legislative amendments or work to be done on the WCB. Could the Minister please advise the House what the status is of work to be done on the outstanding aspects of the Act now report? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 484-15(3): Operational Review Of The WCB

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are working on phase two legislation. There is draft legislation that is being developed and I am working with my counterpart in Nunavut. Because we have a joint board here, we have to share the information. I just concluded a meeting on January 25th in Iqaluit with my counterpart, Mr. Akasuk, from Nunavut, on the basis that we have to go forward with the legislation jointly because we have shared the same legislative authority and it has to proceed. We are reviewing that legislation jointly between the two territories and we are hoping to have something ready by the fall so we can bring it forward to our counterparts. Because of the sensitivity between the two legislatures, and because of the situation that happened last time under phase one where the legislation was passed in this House and then was given to the Nunavut government, they felt that they didn't really have any ability to change that legislation once it was produced. This time we're hoping to come forward jointly with the new phase two legislation into the respective legislatures at the same time, so that we can both have a process of debate through the committee process and also to ensure that if there are any changes from either side, that it will be done independently of each other instead of having to rubberstamp something that comes forward. So we are working on it. We are proceeding with phase two legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 484-15(3): Operational Review Of The WCB

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the primary recommendation of the Act Now report was that an operational review be undertaken of the WCB. This was reflecting the concerns and comments of many injured workers who have difficulty with the claims implementation area and, I believe, not a few employers who also had issues there. Is this government, this WCB, going to undertake any action at all under that very significant recommendation to have an operational review of the WCB? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 484-15(3): Operational Review Of The WCB

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I stated, we are working closely with our partners in Nunavut with this legislation and we are looking to ensure that the phase two recommendations are proceeding. A lot of that does have to deal with ensuring we have a system of how to deal with appeals, and how to ensure clients are dealt with fairly. I think through the changes and the input from myself and my counterpart from Nunavut, we've had these discussions on making some major changes, but also ensuring that we have a transparent system that works for both jurisdictions, and also realizing that, at the end of the day, it's the clients that we want to ensure the positive changes we do make are in good standing with the people we're there to serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 484-15(3): Operational Review Of The WCB

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure the Minister understands the difference between a legislative review, which is partly what we've undertaken, and an operational review, which is to say that once we've created the rules and the platform for how a job is to be done, how is the job actually implemented and undertaken. This is where many injured workers have come to me and other MLAs, to say that the way the WCB performs in this area for some workers, not all, but for some, puts them on an endless treadmill of appeals and frustration. When are we going to undertake an operational review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 484-15(3): Operational Review Of The WCB

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the legislation that I talk about in regard to the draft legislation does address the issue of the appeals process. We realize there are some concerns in that area and in order to make it work better, we have to make those changes. So we are addressing the area of the appeals because of concerns, but we're also trying to have a transparent system through the new legislation to

ensure that when people come forward and they have an appeal, that the appeal is being heard and that we've responded to it without having legislation that is overlapping between the authority of the government's counsel or the Appeals Tribunal. So we're ensuring that those two functions operate in a clearer manner than they are right now because if the legislation has originated from this, it does have some overlap and we are trying to resolve that through the proposal that is coming forward; to look at the new legislation under phase two to ensure that we have a system that works. With regard to the Appeals Tribunal and the roles that they have in regard to the governance council, the Appeals Tribunal should ensure that they don't have these overlapping authorities where they are bumping into each other. I think that is the area that I and my counterpart in Nunavut are looking at to ensure that we make these changes so that we avoid these kinds of inconveniences to the people that are going through the appeals process.

So this is an opportunity for us to look at that and, with regard to the Members on the other side, once we have more meat on the bone with regard to figuring out what's in that legislation and we have something that is solid, I will bring it forward to the Members so they can have a chance to look at that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 484-5(3): Operational Review of the WCB

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the public report called Act Now, which spurred these initial changes, was presented to the Ministers almost three years ago now, but has yet to be tabled in this House. Will this Minister table this report for the record in this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 484-15(3): Operational Review of the WCB

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to ask a question to the Minister of Public Works and Services. Just recently the Village of Fort Simpson met and they forwarded me a concern that the department is looking at shutting down the Deh Cho Hall, formerly known as the La Pointe Hall. The village is concerned that it's scheduled for 2006, based on an evaluation report. What is this report, Mr. Speaker, and when can we see this report? Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that facility is one that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment uses to deliver its programs in that community and region. What was done and undertaken was a review through the fire marshal's office and, on that recommendation, we've moved in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that, perhaps the Minister can correct me if I'm wrong, that was a report about four or five years ago. I'm not too sure how old that report is, but I believe some conditions have changed there. Does this report also speak about a relocation plan? Does that report speak to that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the initial work was done as far back as about 2002, when the fire marshal was looking at that facility. There is a meeting coming up on Monday, between Public Works and Services and Education, Culture and Employment, to review what the necessary steps will have to be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that there's a meeting coming up to discuss the life of the building and what the department plans to do. It has come up several times in constituency meetings that I've had in Fort Simpson, Mr. Speaker. People are concerned about maintaining the building. It's about 10,000 square feet and it's a future training facility; that's what people would like to see. Can the Minister and can this government look at ways of maintaining this building? Even though government has to move out, do they have to demolish this building? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, based on the recommendations we received and the code upgrades that have been required, we'd have to do a cost-benefit analysis. That's why the direction has been, at this point, to look at relocating, and that's what the meeting is going to be about; to see what needs to be done to make sure that the department can continue to operate in the community and in the region.

With respect to the facility ongoing, again, we haven't identified the cost of doing a total upgrade on that to see if it is a usable space. The government's initial move, looking at the preliminary reports, was to look at alternative space. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the general feeling in Fort Simpson is that, if we undertake a good comprehensive review or a good foundation analysis of this building, you'll find that it will probably stand for another 100 years. So that's the concern, Mr. Speaker. Will the government and will the Minister have a real good look at this building and not demolish it, because we can certainly use a facility of that size in Fort Simpson? Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 485-15(3): Closure of La Pointe Hall In Fort Simpson

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we can't commit to continue using the facility unless we get the okay from the fire marshal's office. So with the fire marshal's recommendation, the facility can't be used beyond 2006. That's why we've undertaken this next step, working with Education, Culture and Employment, and we can look at the reports to see what options might be out there. But with the preliminary work that has been done, this avenue was chosen because it's the most cost-effective way to move. Thank you.

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

Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice and it's in regard to the \$1.4 million in additional funding for 10 new RCMP officer positions in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister say for me today where exactly these new positions are located? I know in Minister Roland's budget address it outlined four different communities. Maybe the Minister has a breakdown for us where these positions are located. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The positions on the highway patrol unit are two for Hay River and one for Yellowknife. The other positions, as I understand it, there would be about six positions that would go between Rae and Yellowknife and some other communities. But I believe the Member is most interested in the highway positions. I'd just like to make sure that the Member knows that the RCMP officers who would be dedicated to highway patrols would also have cross-training and specific training in drug interdiction. So there is training that is provided to highway patrol officers to

ensure that they are able to work on the highway system to watch for drugs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the deficit that I last heard was that we needed 26 new RCMP officers in the territory. This funding only addresses 10 of them. I know drugs are a huge issue here in the Northwest Territories. What are the Minister and this government going to do to try to secure additional funding so that we can fill the other 16 positions by this time next year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, with the positions that we have in this year's budget and what was in last year's budget, we are only going to be six positions short of what the RCMP asked for. I told the standing committee, when I appeared in front of them, that it was my intention to put the request forward as part of the business plan for next year, to follow through on delivering those RCMP officers in the next budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has the Minister given any thought to maybe requesting of the RCMP to develop some type of drug taskforce here in the Northwest Territories to try to curb the amount of drugs that are coming into our territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I meet with the RCMP, drugs are certainly an issue that we talk about. I think it's important to remember that there is a section in the RCMP that deals with drug trafficking and they are federally-funded positions. I have been working with Chief Superintendent Summerfield to pressure the federal government to make sure that all of those positions are filled and active in the Northwest Territories, and I will continue to make the point with the RCMP that we do need to be very vigilant on drugs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted the Minister to confirm for me that there are indeed two new positions going into Hay River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 486-15(3): Additional Policing Resources

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As recently as last week I had that confirmed to me by the RCMP from headquarters here. So as far as I know, it may have changed in the last week, but I doubt it. I believe that the traffic unit will be increased by two officers based in Hay River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again to ask questions about multi-year funding and my questions will be directed to the Premier of our government. Mr. Speaker, it's my opinion that multi-year funding could be the hallmark of this Assembly instead of oil and gas and hydro. So with that question with regard to multi-year funding, is it a position or a policy of this government to create instability or uncertainty amongst our volunteers or in the NGO sector, or at the very least is it a position of our government, although maybe not written, to support our volunteer or NGO sector? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I've heard about two or three questions there. I'll let the Premier answer one. Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'll answer the last question. Yes, it is the policy of our government to support non-government organizations within the mandate that we give them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for being very clear on your support, Mr. Premier. Mr. Speaker, I believe that these NGOs provide the frontline service that our government does not provide. Does this Premier have a position in this government that these NGOs provide a significant role to the social fabric of the Northwest Territories that the government is not offering in basic service? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, there may be some cases where NGOs are offering a service that we do not offer. In most cases, I would look at it as the NGOs enhancing the programs and services that we offer by dealing with it in a more specific way, often regionally or by community or simply in terms of the mandate doing it in a more detailed way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next question for the Premier of our government truly is a straightforward one; maybe we'll get a direct answer on this one. Mr. Speaker, in June of 2002 we had our government table the action plan for a social agenda. Where is this government's action plan to addressing the need for multi-year funding to address the starving stability that's out there for NGOs and volunteer organizations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm not really sure what starving stability is or isn't.

---Laughter

But, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the issue of multi-year funding, our government has and continues to negotiate for multi-year funding with non-government organizations. We have done that, we're doing it and we'll continue to do that. Mr. Speaker, I have to say though that every multi-year funding agreement is subject to the appropriation being passed in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a heavy booklet here that's double sided. There are 40 line items a page and there are about 10 pages here of groups that we make go through hoops and wringers every year to sign up for their funding, and they only get the phone call at the 11th hour on year-to-year funding. They have to do proposal after proposal every year. This creates instability and they can't hire workers. My question for the Premier is will he look at addressing the problem with multi-year funding, as outlined in the social agenda tabled in this House in June of 2002, and address this problem immediately? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 487-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, even if non-government organizations have multi-year funding agreements, they still have to annually account for the money that has been given to them. We still have the right and responsibility to change the mandate or change the contract that we may have with them. Mr. Speaker, this House votes the budget every year. We can't have multi-year agreements that go beyond the authority of this House. So, Mr. Speaker, they will continue to have to account for the money. If some NGOs are frustrated because they are applying for money every year, then they should talk to the appropriate Minister about negotiating a multi-year funding agreement so they don't have to put in a new application every time. But they will have to account for their money each year, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to direct my questions to the Minister of Justice with respect to the remand centre and the Dene K'onia closure and the proposed changes that the Justice department is going to be undertaking come April 1st. Many of these changes are going to be directly affecting my constituents, which utilize many of the services that are offered south of the lake today. I just want to point the Minister's attention to one of the policies, in Justice establishment policy 82, where the mandate clearly states that shall carry out in a manner, which respects community and aboriginal values and encourages communities to assume increasing responsibilities. That's a mandate that's stated right in the Justice establishment policy, Mr. Speaker.

On top of that, there are a couple of principles that should be noted also. Principle number four, an effective justice system is one that is sanctioned by the community it serves. Principle number five, community involvement can lead to the development of a justice system, which is accepted by the communities it services, which meets the needs and aspirations of the community it serves, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to ask the Minister how is this department's proposed changes in the upcoming fiscal year, if it doesn't contradict, blatantly contradict these principles and the mandate of the Justice department establishment policies, how can the Justice Minister say that it's right? Tell me. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government stands committed to regional involvement with communities or regional and community involvement in the justice process, and that's why we have community

justice committees. That's why we're adding funding for the community justice committees to be involved in justice. We are also committed because we support the courts to travel to each and every community to conduct the courts as they are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about Dene K'onia, I don't disagree that we have tremendous programming and tremendous staff resources there, but, Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks we've had one, sometimes two young inmates from south of the lake. Spending \$1.5 million a year for that number of inmates is not a good expenditure of taxpayer dollars. We can't afford to keep two facilities in operation in the Northwest Territories with the numbers of people that we have in custody. So we have to take a look at rationalizing that expenditure somehow.

Very few people from any single community south of the lake are housed in the remand facility in Hay River. This doesn't mean that if somebody is sentenced to jail from that region that they wouldn't wind up in the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, but the average length of time in remand is 31 days. So after that period of time, the inmate would likely be housed in a facility that is close to their family and relatives. But again, it's a matter of saving money. That's \$400,000, more or less, that we can save, plus or minus \$5,000 or \$10,000 we think. That's still a significant amount of money. So between the two, we propose savings of \$2 million and that isn't something that is easy to ignore. Those are big savings and if we actually do have the money for that kind of expenditure, then we should take a look at where that fits into the priorities of Members of this House and priorities of government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think one of the priorities of this government is servicing and good justice for our youth, Mr. Speaker. Just one point on the community justice committees. I know that this government has cut a lot of community justice coordinator positions also, with this new rolling out of this new fiscal responsibility. I just wanted to make the Minister aware that the many years that, for instance, the Dene K'onia has been in operation, when they have had 30 to 40 kids in their custody, with a \$2.2 million budget, they still managed to come way under budget. If that isn't efficient or effective work, I don't know what is.

The government organization policy also states that equitable distribution of socioeconomic employment benefits of government activity, throughout the Northwest Territories, through decentralization, will permit the organizations to provide programs and services effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how effective a program can get if you are...Through the last five years, the program has saved well over \$3 million in effective budgeting. How can the Minister say that this is not an effective and efficient organization? I just want him to point...

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve, I heard a question there. We will let the Minister answer.

Further Return To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I never, at any time, said that the facility was not being run effectively and efficiently. What I did say was that if we are going to have the number of young people that we have in custody, which is a very small number, we can't afford to operate two facilities. It doesn't matter how effectively or efficiently they are being operated, it's still costing way more than is necessary to spend.

We need to rationalize the number of facilities because we don't have the number of kids that are being kept. This isn't something that is new just to us. This is happening all across Canada. Facilities are being closed because we don't see as many young kids incarcerated as we used to. That is good news. It is good news because those community justice committees are being more active, they are diverting more kids and they are keeping kids out of custody. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the unforeseen cost overruns that we are going to run into here is retraining a lot of the staff that are going to be taking care of these kids here in Yellowknife. Just to go back to the mandate of the Justice establishment policy, the mandate will be carried out in a manner which respects community and aboriginal values and encourages communities to assume increasing responsibilities. I don't know how far away you can sway from that through these proposed changes. That is way out to lunch there, as far as I am concerned, with the whole Justice savings and the reasons they are closing the Dene K'onia and the remand centre. It just doesn't make sense, according to the mandate of the Justice department. When is this Minister going to make a commitment for those employees that are all going to be affected by these changes? When is this Justice Minister going to give them peace of mind and say you've got jobs that are coming down the line? We know there are cuts in the whole Justice department, there is a restructuring, but you will still retain a position in the Justice department. Is the Minister willing to make that commitment? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't make that commitment. The budget that we have brought forward obviously involves the layoffs of staff in order to meet our fiscal target. I can't guarantee that people who have received layoff notices are going to keep their jobs in the public service.

We didn't issue any layoff notices to people who work in the remand facility in Hay River. Not one layoff notice was issued there, because none of the folks are getting laid

off. They will be absorbed into the staff at South Mackenzie Correctional Centre. The staff at Dene K'onia...It is unfortunate, but if we close the facility, yes, we don't have jobs that are necessarily available for all of them.

All of the employees have been offered government-wide hiring priority, not just at Justice, but in other departments they have opportunities for positions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that just the fact that they are given government priority in positions is really any kind of peace of mind for anybody. That just goes along the lines of affirmative action. That's just a loosely termed excuse, as far as I'm concerned, with the whole department. I just want to ask the Minister, does his department foresee any training initiative or cultural enhancement initiatives, that they are going to have to undertake with this whole new restructuring of the young offenders and the remand? As far as Dene K'onia goes, there are many people.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I will let the Minister answer that question. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 488-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the people who work at Dene K'onia have a lot of good skills that could be used in the system, and I have no doubt that they would be qualified for some of the positions in Yellowknife. If they are interested in transferring to Yellowknife and taking those positions, I am sure that they would be offered some of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, it seems like this entire decision, with respect to the justice system, has all been based on cost savings. I have to say again today, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe those numbers. The \$400,000; how that number was arrived at and how it was calculated is just not sound math or calculation in my opinion.

Mr. Speaker, I want an in-depth analysis of how much this is actually going to save. Because that is what we have narrowed it down to. This is only about saving money, this is not about fairness or decentralized services or serving people close to where they live. This is only about money. So let's talk about money.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, when we look at how the Minister calculated this \$400,000 savings to shut down the remand, it was based on 5.5 positions of casual employees at \$76,000 per position. Surely we have attendance records, we have payroll records to go back on. I want to know what the exact numbers are. I don't want to take a nice round number like 76 and multiply it by 5.5 and say that is what we are saving. The Minister, even today, is using words like, give or take, \$10,000 here, \$10,000 there. He used words like, we think. I don't care about we think. I want to know what we know. Surely we have enough historical data...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: ...to come up with a real number on what these savings look like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My figures are based on historical data. However, we could get two or three more remand customers next year, or two or three less, so the numbers will change. They won't be exact over the next year. The numbers that have been presented to the Member are in fact based on historical evaluations. We took the logs from South Mackenzie Correctional Centre and looked at how many times inmates have been in and out for remand or in and out for appearances in court, and used those numbers.

Yes, there has been an in-depth look, but I can't predict exactly how many people we are going to have next year. This is based on historical data. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is absolutely right. He cannot predict, but I think it is very interesting that information that came from his department indicates that the Department of Justice does not anticipate any increase in crime as a result of the pipeline or any major resource development.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know which newspaper the Minister reads or which news broadcast he listens to, and I would like to suggest to you that he may not have a crystal ball, but I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure out there is going to be a greater demand on our justice services of the next little while.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I know he can't predict the future, but I still do not believe these numbers and, Mr. Speaker, even the \$18,000 that is supposed to be allocated for transportation, who actually pays for the transportation of the inmates to Yellowknife, back and forth now for court appearances? Who pays that bill? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The RCMP are responsible for prisoner transportation in the Northwest Territories. Our agreement with the RCMP is that the NWT government pays 70 percent of the cost of the contract, and the federal government pays 30 percent of the cost of that contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So based on historical information of the number of remand clients that are now located in Hay River, the Minister is telling me that 70 percent of the cost of transportation does not exceed \$18,000, based on historical use of that service. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are saying is that we think that the transportation of people on remand can be accommodated for very close to that number. Again I am saying it is plus or minus. If we have a few more or a few less, it will change. Yes, based on historical data, that number is pretty close to what is expected. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So, Mr. Speaker, if I were to get the numbers of the inmates in remand in Hay River for the last year and then take the 2.1 times to reappear and go back in court, and multiply it by 70 percent, the Minister is going to tell us in the House today that that is not going to exceed \$18,000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 489-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are some variables here too. Mrs. Groenewegen a few days ago gave an example which involved using scheduled aircraft. If all of the Hay River remand prisoners were to use scheduled aircraft with RCMP escorts to appear 2.18 times in front of a judge, then the number would be in the area of \$20,000.

However, the RCMP plane also has to be factored into that. There is a significant reduction in cost if the RCMP

plane is used for transporting prisoners. I can say that every time I have seen the plane in Hay River, it has had somebody that has been escorted back or is getting on.

The RMCP also factors into that. Even if we were to use scheduled transportation and factor in the cost of the matron for supervision in the cells, yes, we are talking within 10 percent of the number that we have.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral question. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue asking questions to the Premier, in regard to multi-year funding.

Mr. Speaker, I was concerned that the Premier may have implied in one way or the other that we should be accountable for that money. If that was the case, I am going to go back to Hansard and see if he was implying it. Because I think that that is a point of privilege and in no way would I imply in any way that we should not be accountable for our multi-year funding.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about how these NGOs are being funded. I am talking about making their life easier. I am talking about stabilization of that problem.

Mr. Speaker, would the Premier be willing to go back and look into this problem for say any organization over 10 years that our government has been funding on multi-year agreements that get renewed year to year; that they have to put a new proposal in year-to-year funding, over and over and over again? Would he look at switching them and negotiating a mandate to switch them from three to five-year agreements, to make their life easier? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we deal with a lot of NGOs, who have a lot of different mandates. Most of them are ongoing, but some of them do sunset from time to time. All that has to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, if there are NGOs out there who have been filing and filling out applications every year, filing these with the government and then repeating the process next year and want to talk about multi-year funding, they simply have to go to the appropriate Minister and negotiate that. We are open to that, we do it all the time.

Again, I say, they still have to account for the money on an annual basis; no question about that. Second is that whatever agreement we come to on a multi-year basis is subject by a vote by this House on our appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what the Premier just said, but the other day we were talking about multi-year agreements with the Finance Minister with regard to the City of Yellowknife. The MACA Minister told me the FAA Act handcuffs us for these types of discussions. I am not really sure I am getting a clear answer from three different Ministers.

Mr. Speaker, we can negotiate with these things. Let's open up the door, let's create a one-window approach. Who would this Premier suggest for all of these organizations to approach, yes, with the proviso, that the money is voted on in this House? Who would the Premier suggest that we should be approaching to create multi-year agreements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, any NGO or municipal government or anyone who wants to enter into a multi-year funding arrangement with our government would have to approach the appropriate Minister. If it is a municipality, you would go to the Minister of MACA; if it's one that's doing work on the social agenda areas, you would go to Education or Justice or Housing or whoever is appropriate. Mr. Speaker, they would have to come back to whichever Minister is responsible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this could be a hallmark of this government. We talk endlessly about hydro, the big plans of the future and whatnot. Well, let's talk about the people who will be here after these diamond mines are gone, after these oil and gas things are gone; let's talk about them. They are the ones underpinning our society.

This is just whitewashing the issue. Will the Premier take responsibility and say we are going to make it a mandate of this government to solve this problem? We are going to open the doors, we are not just going to send them here, send them there -- like I said yesterday on other issues -- let's deal with it. Will he say my office is open, we are going to solve this problem. Will the Premier take that responsibility and deal with the problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have a difficult time and I certainly want to read Hansard to figure out what the problem is. If an NGO or anyone we fund has an issue with the agreement that they have, the contract they have, they would go to the appropriate Minister.

I don't know that there is a big problem that covers everybody, because we do consider multi-year funding, as I have said before, but it is all subject to the appropriation in the House. I don't understand what the big problem is. Individual agencies though go to the appropriate Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

MR. HAWKINS: I almost called a point of order on myself.

--Laughter

Almost. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what to say. If I were to nail the Premier's feet down, he would still out dance me. He would still out dance me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have people telling me their organizations are struggling because they put application after application in every year and they are waiting for the certainty at the 11th hour of March 31st.

Mr. Speaker, this government can shift with the times. This government can work with these organizations. This government has that mandate. We can address it. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier say today that he will work on this problem for creating the certainty that the NGOs are saying they want stabilized, clear funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Premier, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 490-15(3): Multi-Year Funding For Non-Government Organizations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everybody wants stabilized funding. Right from the pipeline companies, to our government, to the federal government; everybody does.

That is a reality that we all have to deal with. We all have to be accountable for our money. I will say it again, Mr. Speaker. If a specific agency, Mr. Speaker, has a problem with filling out applications year after year, they should talk to the appropriate Minister, whichever one is responsible for that mandate, and talk about multi-year funding. We have multi-year funding agreements in place, we have some that are under negotiation. I don't know which one the Member is referring to, but if there are one or two or five who are feeling they can't do it, then talk to the Minister.

Again I will say, Mr. Speaker, everything we do is subject to a vote in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 491-15(3): Mackenzie Gas Project Intervener Funding

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions for Mr. Bell, the Minister of what we now call RWED and is soon to be a couple of other departments.

It is in the area of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline project and funding and support for organizations, regional governments, to help prepare for this pipeline.

In Wednesday's federal budget, Mr. Speaker, the federal government put \$150 million on the table over the next four years to increase federal and regional capacity to respond efficiently and effectively to environmental and regulatory applications associated with the pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I brought to the Assembly the extreme shortfall in funding and support to NGOs and community governments, and this may be part of the answer. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us, is this \$150 million that the federal government has on the table going to be accessible to interveners and to parties that came up short in the last round of funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 491-15(3): Mackenzie Gas Project Intervener Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's a very good question and certainly one on the minds of a number of parties who have made application to intervene before the JRP environmental assessment. In the coming days, weeks and months, we'll know more about the criteria the federal government plans to attach to this money. As I have indicated previously, we have heard from many disgruntled groups who feel that phase one and phase two of the funding that's been available through DIAND has been inadequate and they haven't been able to access it. So hopefully, and I know it's what the Member is hoping as well, this money can respond to that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 491-15(3): Mackenzie Gas Project Intervener Funding

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess one of the characteristics of federal budgets is large ideas and large blocks are introduced. The devil is in the detail. Given where we are now, just a few days out of the announcement, would the Minister undertake to lobby the federal government to make sure that a substantial portion of this is available to northern NGOs and communities, perhaps even our own government, to help us respond efficiently and effectively to applications? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 491-15(3): Mackenzie Gas Project Intervener Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In short, yes. I think we are also going to be setting about a plan to better understand the federal government's intentions on ensuring a sustainable environment and the \$3 billion in new funding that was announced in that regard. Again, we have to know what that means for the Territories. The Minister of MACA, Mr. McLeod, has recently written several letters to federal officials making the case for communities in this territory who need help in

order to be ready for this development, who need help in developing capacity. As a government, we will continue to press the case with our federal counterparts. I give the Member that assurance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 491-15(3): Mackenzie Gas Project Intervener Funding

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As almost always is the case with this kind of thing, time is of the essence. The regulatory process has a number of triggers and deadlines built into it. What kind of priority is the Minister going to be putting on securing this funding and working with our partners and other NGOs in communities to help get this money in place just as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 491-15(3): Mackenzie Gas Project Intervener Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is of highest priority. Our Joint Cabinet/AOC Pipeline Planning Committee has discussed how we had better approach the federal government in a number of areas, including how we might help to get money to mitigate some of the social impacts. There are a whole range of areas. This is of highest priority for that committee, of highest priority for this government, and we will certainly continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The time for oral questions has expired. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to extend question period.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We go back to item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice in follow-up to the discussion that we were having on the last set of questions. Mr. Speaker, I just really question the quality of information that the Minister is being provided by his department, because I still do not believe that the \$18,000 that is being indicated for travel is sufficient to accommodate the inmates that will be in remand that will need to be transported back and forth. Mr. Speaker, if I can have access to the kinds of statistics that I need and I can put a case together that that number is, in fact, wrong and that these savings and these initiatives are based on supposed savings which are incorrect, will the Minister reconsider the closure of the remand facility? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The magnitude of the numbers is, I am sure, relatively close to what the exact numbers are going to be. Whether we are saving, \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000, there is a significant savings to close this facility. So even if my numbers were wrong, they are not wrong by that amount. The amount of money that's in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, is \$400,000 less than what it would take to keep that section of the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre open. That's what the department has given up. So whether the department is exactly right in the numbers that have been presented or is off by a factor of \$2,000, \$3,000 or \$4,000, isn't really the salient issue here. We have given up \$400,000. We can't continue with the operation of that facility without that \$400,000; we have given it up in this budget. So the budget that's before the House is giving up that amount of money. We are satisfied that it's relatively close to that amount that we can save through shutting it down. So, again, it's not an issue of whether it's \$18,000 for transportation. The issue is how much money are we going to save? We are saying we can save \$400,000, Mr. Speaker. We believe that that's the magnitude of the savings.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the department can save \$400,000. It is not free to look after remand inmates in Yellowknife versus Hay River. You have to include the human resource costs too. It's not just the cost of transportation. Before we were talking about a 10 percent variance on \$18,000, now we are talking about maybe it's \$300,000, or maybe it's \$400,000. You know, this decision to restructure Justice has been premised on a certain amount of cost savings and if that is not the cost savings, then the decision should be reconsidered. Does the Minister agree? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am satisfied that the magnitude of savings are there. We are going to take \$400,000 less in this year's budget. That's what we are talking about. Even if the department was wrong by \$50,000, and I don't think they are, I just picked the \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000 just out of the air. Even if those are the numbers, it will be plus or minus over the \$400,000 that we are going to save. It may not be exactly \$400,000.

The Member asked about human resources costs. The cost to supervise an inmate at the North Slave Correctional Centre is \$38.57 a day. At the South Mackenzie, it's \$156.49. Why the difference? We have economies of scale in the larger facilities, so it's cheaper per inmate.

In an earlier question, the Member had asked whether or not I thought there would be more cost for somebody to be housed at the North Slave Correctional Centre and I said maybe the cost of food might be an incremental cost. In fact, the per diems, including food, clothing and recreational expenses, are less at the North Slave Correctional Centre than they are at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre. Again, it's because of the size of the operation and the economies of scale. So there are other savings that we haven't even started to talk about here, Mr. Speaker. We are comfortable that give or take \$400,000...Will it be \$400,000 on the penny? No, it might be a little more or it might be a little less. But the department has given up, in this budget, \$400,000 and we are comfortable that we can provide the same operation with that reduced funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister said he had picked a number out of the air and I think that's exactly what he's doing on these savings and these reduction initiatives. He's picking a number out of the air and so is his department. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he is so confident of his numbers and the projected savings, would he not then agree to a conservative investment, not some big, full-blown extensive review, in an independent opinion to verify these numbers that he's so confident of? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any money in the budget to do that. I have given up, in this budget, the \$400,000. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is in the budget that's before the House, we have reduced the expenditures by \$400,000 and have said in order to achieve this reduction, we have to close the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre remand unit. Mr. Speaker, we will function this year with \$400,000 less. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know exactly how the Minister thinks he can make these projections, except based on historic data. I am saying that I will be quiet and I will go away on this issue, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister would agree to have an independent person look at this projected savings, which I say is a supposed savings. I don't believe it's there. If he will agree to that today in the House, I will await the answer of an independent assessment of these projected savings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 492-15(3): Closure Of The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre Remand Unit

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not inclined to agree to that right now, but it is something...I will double check the figures myself and endeavour to show the Member where we can demonstrate the savings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the Dene K'onia and the \$1.5 million I believe the Minister said that it costs to operate the Dene K'onia, Mr. Speaker, he keeps referring, and so have other Members of the government kept referring, to a number of one. I believe that that open custody young offenders facility in Hay River can accommodate eight young people. He says there has recently only been one young offender accommodated there. I am going to ask the Minister is he going to stand by that number today in the House on the record? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Mr. Villeneuve was asking about services to his communities, he was referring to inmates from the South Slave region. I was referring to the number of inmates in the facility from the South Slave region. That, in the past couple of weeks, has been one or two. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarity, the Minister is not talking about one or two from Hay River. He's talking about one or two from the entire South Slave region and going back, again, you can't just use one day as a snapshot, he's saying that going back historically there has only been one or two young offenders in that facility from the South Slave region. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously numbers have fluctuated. Within the last year, the numbers have been quite reduced. It's in the order of an average of between one and three, depending on the week. The numbers I reported were for the last couple of

weeks. So, of course, it has fluctuated. The numbers that have been in Dene K'onia since March last year have ranged as high as six or seven at times, but they haven't all been from the South Slave. A good number of the clients, probably a majority of the clients from the past year, have probably been from regions north of the lake. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister not agree that that is not unusual in terms of the territorial facilities that we have, such as River Ridge Territorial Treatment Centre and the Arctic Tern facility in Inuvik? As territorial facilities, it's not unusual for there to be a group of people from the various regions. I understand why the Minister is making the point when he is referring to South Slave numbers, because he's being asked by South Slave Members. In the context of the territorial facilities, is it not common to have people from all regions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is common to have people from all regions, especially as we have reduced the numbers of facilities across the Territories. I guess the only point is that, on occasion, Members have made the point that we need to provide services close to home, as Mr. Villeneuve was doing. If we are going to follow that, then we have to take a look at what's closest to home for people from Inuvik as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I still think it's a red herring and it's a cheap way of making a case, to keep referring to one or two young offenders in the facility down there when it has been almost at capacity for quite some time now, to justify a \$1.5 million savings and keep referring to one or two. It's just to throw it out there in a way that creates a misconception and it's just a red herring. In fact, that facility has been well utilized in the past year and I would like the Minister to admit that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 493-15(3): Capacity Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, that facility has been the only facility that's had male young offenders in it since March of this past year, so March 2004. The reason for doing that, Mr. Speaker, was to ensure that we placed all of the open custody young offenders in the one facility as a means of saving some money. We can't close the facility in Yellowknife, it's a dual facility, half of it is for secure custody and the other

half is open custody, we can't achieve the same level of savings. We did reduce the costs over the course of the last year by not utilizing the open custody section at the North Slave facility. So all of our open custody inmates have been kept at the Dene K'onia. At the end of the day, we can achieve a bigger savings by shutting down the one facility completely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 69-15(3): Consumption Of Alcohol

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on February 11, 2005, regarding consumption of alcohol.

The GNWT does not directly track consumption of alcoholic beverages by Northwest Territories residents. The Northwest Territories Liquor Commission tracks sales of alcoholic beverages made by liquor outlets in the Northwest Territories. The data provided is for the 2003-04 fiscal year, the latest complete fiscal year for which data is available.

Total sales of alcoholic beverages in the Northwest Territories were 388,000 litres of spirits, 261,000 litres of wine, 3.582 million litres of beer, and 208,000 litres of coolers, for a total of 4.439 million litres.

Total sales of alcoholic beverages for the Sahtu region, based on sales from the Norman Wells liquor stores, were 20,000 litres of spirits, 6,000 litres of wine, 179,000 litres of beer, and 7,000 litres of coolers, for a total of 212,000 litres.

The total net revenues from the sale of alcoholic beverages were \$988,000 from the Sahtu region and \$19.871 million for the Northwest Territories as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 8, returns to written questions. 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. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 114-15(3): Response To Petitions 1-15(3) And 3-15(3)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in response to Petition 1-15(3) and Petition 3-15(3). I hereby table those documents in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. 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 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act; Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act; Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006; Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005; Committee Report 9-15(3), Standing Committee on

Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates; Committee Report 10-15(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates; Committee Report 11-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates; Committee Report 12-15(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2003 General Election; Minister's Statement 86-15(3), Northern Strategy; Minister's Statement 88-15(3), Update on Oil and Gas Development in the NWT; Minister's Statement 89-15(3), Community Leaders' Conference Report: Preparing for the Pipeline; Minister's Statement 90-15(3), Social Impacts of the Mackenzie Gas Project; Minister's Statement 91-15(3), Preparing for the Mackenzie Gas Project; and, Tabled Document 108-15(3), Nation Building: Framework for a Northern Strategy, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of items on the agenda before us today. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Bill 15 and Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, 2005-2006.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we wish to consider Bill 15 first and then Bill 19.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will do that right after we have a break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Welcome back, committee. We will go to the departmental estimates of Transportation. We will go to the Minister to provide the opening comments. Is that agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Mr. Minister, please proceed with your opening comments.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Members It is my pleasure this afternoon to present for your consideration the Department of Transportation's main estimates for 2005-06. The department's proposed budget for 2005-06 contains an operations and maintenance budget, excluding amortization, of \$54 million. This is an increase of .8 percent over last year's main estimates. The department's proposed 2005-06 capital program is \$51.4 million. This is an increase of 7.6 percent over last year's main estimates. I would note that almost half of the

capital program, \$21.3 million, consists of contributions from the Government of Canada.

To help the government manage its fiscal position, the Department of Transportation has identified \$1.1 million in expenditure reductions. By internal reorganization and the re-assignment of duties and responsibilities, the department has managed to reduce its staff requirements by six full-time positions. It has also scaled back its financial contributions to the community marine and local access road programs. At the Fort Providence and Dempster Highway ferry crossings, the department has revised its seasonal freeze-up procedures to save money on fuel and the physical wear and tear on the ferries.

We have taken these restraint measures to cut back on the costs of operation with, I believe, the least inconvenience or disruption to the public.

While the Department of Transportation has had to find ways of reducing its costs, it has been successful in searching out additional sources of funding, mainly from the federal government, that will go towards badly needed capital improvements in our transportation infrastructure. As the committee members know, the Mackenzie gas project will put huge new demands on the territorial transportation system. At the same time, work will also begin during the 2005-06 fiscal year on the construction of the third Snap Lake diamond mine. The new capital funding comes just at the right time to help meet the demands of these resource development projects.

All of the equipment, material and supplies needed for the Mackenzie gas project will have to move over our transportation system. I am pleased to advise the committee that the proponents of the Mackenzie gas project and the Department of Transportation are already working to plan the transportation logistics and have the transportation system ready for the heavy traffic the project is expected to generate.

With Transport Canada and the territorial Bureau of Statistics, the Department of Transportation is studying the long-term implications for the transportation system of a growing hydrocarbon energy industry. The Department of Transportation needs to plan for the demands on the transportation system that will come once the pipeline is built.

The main estimates for 2005-06 allocate a capital construction budget of \$40 million to the highways program. With the help of 50/50 cost-sharing contributions from the Canada strategic infrastructure fund, the department has scheduled \$32 million in reconstruction projects on highways No. 1, No. 3, No. 4, No. 7 and No. 8 as well as the Mackenzie Valley winter road.

I look forward in the 2005-06 fiscal year to the completion of the reconstruction and paving of Highway No. 3 between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife. This will come as a great relief to everyone who has ever travelled it and especially to the growing number of people who drive daily between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife.

Aside from reconstruction, the department's capital program also includes \$8 million in projects aimed at preserving the highway infrastructure. The highway system is aging and the lifecycle repair or replacement for many of its capital structures, culverts, large and small bridges, are passed or coming due. These expenditures

are necessary to keep our highways in good operating condition and maintaining the value of the public's long-term investment in the highway system.

The last revision of the department's Highway Strategy was completed in November of 2000. In 2005-06, the department will update the Highway Strategy to take into account the developments over the past five years and to give special attention to the seasonal and all-weather highway connections to the smaller communities.

As I have previously announced, as of the end of this fiscal year, the Department of Transportation will no longer deliver the Community Airport Radio Station, CARS, program on behalf of NAV Canada. The department and NAV Canada have been working to make an orderly transfer of the CARS program to a private sector contractor. The transition is proceeding well and the CARS service will convert to private sector delivery on April 1, 2005, without disruption to the air carriers to the communities they serve.

Since the terrorist attacks of 2001, transportation security has become a high priority concern as never before. Almost immediately at airports, passengers and their hand carried luggage were subject to more rigorous and intrusive inspections. The Department of Transportation had to make renovations at the Yellowknife Airport to accommodate the new security inspection procedures.

The regulations of the new Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, CATSA, now require that all checked baggage accompanying passenger flights must be inspected for explosives. The new explosives detection equipment must be installed and operational at the Yellowknife Airport by January 1, 2006. In addition to the security requirements, the Department of Transportation decided that it made sense to renovate for the projected growth in passenger traffic moving through the terminal building. Therefore, an extensive, three-year renovation project has begun at the Yellowknife Airport that will meet the terminal's security requirements as well as its future traffic requirements.

The new concern with transportation security is not limited to the air mode. The Department of Transportation has been working with its provincial, state and territorial counterparts to establish new security standards and procedures for the issuance, storage, retrieval and exchange of motor vehicle records and documents. The Council of Ministers responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety have formally agreed on new international standards and protocols for the administration and control of motor vehicle records across North America. The Department of Transportation will introduce a new territorial driver's licence during the 2005-06 fiscal year. The main estimates provide a one-time cost of \$700,000 for the purchase of new equipment and \$300,000 for implementing the more secure administrative procedures.

Very briefly, these are the highlights of the Department of Transportation's main estimates for 2005-06. The committee can see that the main estimates include a good many projects and initiatives that the department expects to accomplish over the next fiscal year.

In closing, we expect 2005-06 to be another year of growth in the traffic at our airports and on our highways. Over the past decade, the traffic carried by our transportation system has grown significantly. Keeping the system in

good repair while meeting the demands of heavier traffic is the department's greatest challenge. Based on the department's past performance, I have every confidence that the Department of Transportation is equal to that challenge. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister McLeod. I will go to the chairperson of Governance and Economic Development for the standing committee's comments. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Transportation and his staff on January 17, 2005, to review the Department of Transportation's draft main estimates for 2005-2006.

The Department of Transportation's mandate is to provide for the safe, accessible and reliable movement of people and goods throughout the Northwest Territories.

Deh Cho Bridge Corporation

The Deh Cho Bridge is being built through a public/private partnership arrangement between the GNWT and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation will raise the capital, design, build, operate and maintain the Deh Cho Bridge. The Government of the Northwest Territories will pay the corporation for the bridge over a 35-year period, largely from toll revenues collected from the traffic crossing the bridge and savings from discontinued ferry operations and winter road construction.

The Deh Cho Bridge Act authorizes the Minister of Transportation on behalf of the government to enter into a concession agreement. The concession agreement gives the concessionaire, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, the right to operate a section of the public highway for 35 years. The concession agreement is also a private business deal between the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the government.

The committee is uncertain how many of the agreement's details will be released publicly. This concerns the committee because the cost of the Deh Cho Bridge may exceed the current estimate of \$57 million. Some estimates indicate bids could go as high as \$75 million. A tender package for the bridge has yet to be developed. The price of raw steel has also risen substantially since the project was proposed.

A significant cost increase to construct the bridge could impact and increase the bridge tolls the GNWT has to collect to pay for the bridge. An increase to the tolls may mean communities north of the bridge may have to pay more for goods and services than current prices, that are already high due to transportation costs.

Transparency and accountability must be maintained in this and any future public/private partnerships.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that it be given the opportunity to review the concession agreement before it is finalized;

And further, that the government declare a maximum dollar figure, above which it will reconsider its involvement in the project.

Airport Development

Mr. Chairman, traffic is increasing at the major airports in the Northwest Territories. NAV Canada data shows that there has been an overall seven percent increase in aircraft arrivals and departures. This means that just under half-a-million passengers traveled through NWT terminal buildings. In the future, DOT anticipates an overall further three percent increase in airport traffic.

In order to accommodate this growth, the Yellowknife Airport may have to expand. However, land is at a premium and there is only a small land reserve to the west of the airport on which it can expand. Otherwise, the airport is bordered by a highway, a lake and valuable infrastructure.

Moreover, private corporations, the city and the federal government all have an interest in the land immediately adjacent to the airport, and not all of this development is conducive to airport activities.

This committee feels that it would be unfortunate if the airport were prevented from expanding because of a land shortage. Not only could this adversely affect the economic growth of territorial industries like tourism, but it could also force the GNWT to pay millions of dollars by having to relocate the airport to a larger area.

The committee recommends that the Department of Transportation exercise caution and work with the City of Yellowknife to protect the interests and the future needs of the Yellowknife Airport.

Runway Extension Research

The Japanese spent an estimated \$16 million last year in the Northwest Territories. However, the NWT is not the only place in the world from which to view the aurora borealis. The NWT is going to have to be competitive with other circumpolar destinations if it wants to continue to reap the benefits of Japanese tourism. Fairbanks and Whitehorse can accommodate direct flights from Japan, but the Yellowknife Airport cannot.

Extending the runway in order to accommodate circumpolar flights was looked at as part of the Yellowknife Airport development plan. Although the existing runway currently meets the needs of the carriers, extending the runway could be very advantageous to tourism by allowing direct flights to land from Japan or anywhere else in the world.

The committee is very interested in the potential of this initiative and will be reviewing the work and research on expanding the airport runway.

Combined Services Building

DOT is building the combined services building in order to amalgamate several of the activities that the department undertakes. The committee commends the Department of Transportation for this amalgamation, but believes that the department could go one step further by combining the DOT yard with the combined services building. It is located in close proximity to the highway and, therefore, convenient to house highway equipment.

In order to preserve resources and the limited land at the airport, the committee would like to encourage DOT to consider co-locating their highway and airports buildings.

Community Aerodrome Radio Station Program

At the end of this fiscal year, the Department of Transportation will no longer deliver CARS, the community airport radio services, on behalf of NAV Canada. The department has worked with NAV Canada to orderly transfer the CARS program to a private sector contractor. CARS will convert to private sector delivery on April 1, 2005.

When the Department of Transportation operated the CARS program, it provided air navigation services at 17 airports and accounted for more than 30 full-time jobs at the community level in the NWT.

The committee recommends that the Department of Transportation work closely with NAV Canada and the new contractor to ensure services continue to be delivered at a high level and that northern contractors and northern employees are used to continue to carry out the work.

Highways Chipseal Overlay Project

The Department has a \$3 million a year budget for their highway chipseal overlay project. With that \$3 million, DOT maintains and rehabilitates existing chipseals.

The committee is unsure of the value of repairing chipseal when road widening, ditching and culverts are needed. On Highway No. 6 out of Fort Resolution, for instance, the highway is narrow and heaving and there are no ditches. This section of road does not have any chipseal overlay to repair. Reconstruction dollars are what is required in order to undertake improvements to protect the safety of the cultural camps, schools and residents that use this road everyday. In the interest of public safety, highways should always be built with budgets attached to them for maintenance and repair.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Department of Transportation revisit their chipseal overlay project and look at diverting these funds to much needed highway reconstruction projects. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. At this point in time, we'll ask the Minister if he wishes to bring in witnesses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort in the witnesses? Thank you. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just perhaps I could suggest that before we go to general comments on Bill 19, Department of Transportation, that we consider Bill 15 and see if we can't conclude that and then resume with the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Okay. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I'd like to ask if the Minister responsible for Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, wishes to introduce the bill.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to speak to Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act. This bill was developed in consultation with the Tlicho Treaty 11 Council team and is the final piece of territorial legislation required to ratify the Tlicho agreement. It follows the Settlement Act passed by the 14th Assembly in October 2003 and the Tlicho Community Government Act passed by our government in June 2004.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Tlicho, GNWT and federal negotiating teams that have enabled us to arrive at this final stage of the legislative process.

Before I speak to this bill specifically, I would like to share a few comments on the Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement as a whole.

The Tlicho agreement is the first agreement in the Northwest Territories to combine land, resources and self-government in a single agreement. It materializes the vision held by Chief Monfwi at the signing of Treaty 11 in 1921 and has set a new standard for land and self-government agreements across the country.

The Tlicho agreement provides certainty for all levels of government and industry with respect to lands, resources, governance and jurisdiction. It also leaves room for self-government to evolve over time. The implementation of this agreement will increase the political and economic stability of our territory and mark the beginning of a strong economic future for the Tlicho region, the Northwest Territories and all Canadians.

The Tlicho people have invested over a decade of hard work and millions of dollars to get to where we are today. Their commitment came one step closer to fruition in December when the federal Tlicho bill received third reading. I was happy to hear that Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and a large delegation of elders and chiefs were able to be in the House of Commons when the Tlicho bill received third reading. It was indeed an historic moment -- and one that was celebrated, not only by those on Parliament Hill, but by Tlicho people back home in their communities -- as they watched and cheered the vote from their homes, their work and their schools.

Most recently, the federal bill received third reading in the Senate and was given Royal Assent. I was honoured to appear before both the House of Commons and Senate standing committees to express the GNWT's support for the rapid passage of the Tlicho bill. The Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, which is before you now, is our final step. The act provides for the establishment of an agency to deliver education, health and social services to all residents living in Tlicho communities or on Tlicho lands.

In accordance with the Tlicho Intergovernmental Services Agreement, the agency will continue to perform the functions of the existing Dogrib Community Services Board. This includes the duties of the Dogrib Divisional Education Council under the Education Act, which is to deliver the K to 12 education program consistent with the standards established by the GNWT. The new agency will also perform the functions of a board of management under the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act. In summary, the model will continue to build upon the integrated delivery of health, education and social services.

In addition, the agency may, with the consent of the GNWT, perform a variety of additional roles assigned or delegated to it by the Tlicho government or by the Government of Canada. The GNWT may assign additional responsibilities to the agency in consultation with the other parties.

The model that has been incorporated in the Tlicho Community Services Agency recognizes the advantages of using one system to deliver core programs to all people living in Tlicho communities or on Tlicho lands. The agency will be composed of five members. Four members will be selected by the Tlicho community governments, which will be elected by all community residents. The Government of the Northwest Territories will appoint the fifth member, who will also be the chairperson. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will be the political point of contact between the Tlicho government and the GNWT for matters related to the new agency. The departments of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment will continue to have the primary role in working with staff on day-to-day operational matters.

Already, the Tlicho have been active in creating social and education programs to better meet their needs. This includes a scholarship program to assist students who will become the future professionals and leaders in the Tlicho government. The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council funded an Addictions Strategy that has already produced 20 trained addictions counsellors to serve residents in Tlicho.

The establishment of the Tlicho Community Services Agency is a testimony to how public and aboriginal governments can, and will, work in collaboration to ensure the interests and rights of all people are protected. It provides that practical arrangements can be made within the context of self-government to meet the interests of all residents of the Northwest Territories. It is an example of true partnership.

I urge all of you to approve the Tlicho Community Services Agency Act as soon as possible and in doing so embark on a new era for the Tlicho nation, residents of the Northwest Territories and Canada. At this time I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. I will now call on Ms. Lee, the chairperson for the standing committee that oversaw the bill. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted its public review of Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, on December 10th, 2004. The committee would like to thank the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill. Bill 15 is the last of three pieces of NWT legislation needed to implement the Tlicho agreement. The bill will create a new agency which will replace the Dogrib Community Services Board and assume the responsibility for delivering education, health and social services to residents of the Tlicho region. Bill 15 is based on both the Tlicho agreement itself and the 10-year Intergovernmental Services Agreement entered into by the GNWT, the Tlicho and Canada in August 2003.

Mr. Chairman, committee members asked the Minister several questions about what, if any, changes to operations and accountability would come about as a result of this arrangement. The Minister advised that it is unlikely that residents will notice changes immediately, apart from the board members themselves who, with the exception of the chair, will be appointed by the four community governments. As the Minister put it, "I don't think we will see any immediate change if we were to go into the classroom or into the hospital or into the community. I think the kind of change we're going to see is probably a new sense of self-esteem, of pride, and so on, that people are delivering their own services, that they have self-government."

The committee understands that changes to program and service delivery may happen gradually, as over time the agency has an opportunity to build its capacity to take on additional responsibilities, and as the Tlicho government considers its own legislation. GNWT legislation and standards will continue to apply, and the GNWT will continue to be accountable for reporting on results and statistics, as it is currently for other health boards and education authorities. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will have the lead responsibility for the agency; however, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and the Minister of Health and Social Services will have responsibilities and authorities similar to those under existing legislation and will continue to be the contacts on day-to-day matters. The first recourse for a resident with concerns about the agency would be to the board, and then if the issues could not be worked out at that level, to the Minister.

Members also questioned the Minister on whether the new agency will cost the GNWT any more than the existing board. The Minister advised that the only additional cost will be the GNWT's share of the expense for the cultural coordinator, which amounts to \$60,000. The cultural coordinator is a new position with the responsibility of advising the three parties to the Tlicho agreement on how to use their respective powers in ways that respect and promote Tlicho language, culture and way of life. It was agreed that the GNWT, Tlicho government and Canada would share equally in the cost of this position, which will be jointly appointed by the parties. The committee noted that the Intergovernmental Services Agreement provides that the Tlicho Community Services Agency will be funded at levels comparable to other GNWT agencies delivering similar programs and services.

Members also asked several questions about the transition process. The committee was generally satisfied, from the Minister's responses, that reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the transition from the Dogrib Community Services Board to the new agency will be as soon as possible, with minimal or no disruptions to programs and services.

Mr. Chair, the committee's review of Bill 15 provided an opportunity for Members to discuss and reflect on the significance of the new relationships we are embarking on with the Tlicho agreement and what the future may look like 10, 20 or 100 years from now. As can only be expected with the first self-government agreement in the NWT, there are many unknowns. How will it work when the Tlicho government begins making its own laws in areas of shared jurisdiction with this Legislative Assembly? What will happen if the parties decide not to

renew the intergovernmental services agreement when it expires in 10 years? Will other NWT aboriginal groups negotiate similar arrangements, or will we see different models in each region? What will this mean for the role of the GNWT in the future?

The reality that there are many questions that today do not have answers cannot prevent us from going forward. After all, this is not the first time as a territory that we have ventured into the unknown. We need only recall the division of Nunavut and the NWT less than five years ago as an example.

The committee is satisfied that the parties have made all possible efforts to provide clarity about their respective obligations, to set out processes to resolve issues and conflicts that may arise in the future and, most importantly, to ensure that Tlicho residents continue to receive programs and services without disruption. The agreement is filled with review, consultation and dispute resolution provisions to this end. We must all recognize, however, that not everything can be foreseen, and that ultimately it is not clauses in an agreement, but rather the ongoing good faith of the parties and their determination to make self-government a success that will make or break this new relationship. In the committee's view, the hard work of the parties in arriving at the Intergovernmental Services Agreement and this bill demonstrates that we are off to a good start.

Mr. Chair, the committee would like to take the opportunity to wish the first board members and employees of the Tlicho Community Services Agency a smooth start-up, and success in fulfilling their responsibilities to Tlicho residents.

This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 15. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 15, Tlicho Community Agency Services Act, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I would now like to open it up for general comments on Bill 15. General comments. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I will be speaking in support of Bill 15. As I said earlier today in my Member's statement, it has been a long journey for the Tlicho people to get here. This bill is the final piece of legislation needed for our agreement to come into effect. It is the part that lays out how health, social services and education will be delivered in the Tlicho region. These are core programs that have a tremendous impact on everyone's wellbeing, personal growth and ability to take advantage of opportunities life brings. It's very significant that they are now being put back into our own hands after so many years.

Mr. Chairman, our elders, leaders and negotiators have come up with a very thoughtful and wise approach, that will allow us to take over and expand these important programs gradually as we build our capacity. I guess you could say, Mr. Chairman, for now we will have the same car, but what will change is that we will be the ones in the driver's seat. In a few years, we may want to trade it in for a new model, and that will be our decision. Our people's access to services will not be disrupted in any way, but I

think, as the decision-making power changes hands, they will start to see more of the Tlicho values reflected in their everyday dealings with the new agency. At the same time, they are assured of the same funding and standards as everywhere else in the Territories.

Mr. Chairman, the children of the today are going to grow up in a very different world than I and my peers did, or that our elders did. They won't be dealing with a lack of cultural understanding or outright racism in the education, health and social services systems that we experienced. The Intergovernmental Services Agreement provides for a cultural coordinator who will advise the Tlicho government, the GNWT and Canada on how they can use their respective powers in ways that respect and promote Tlicho language and culture. This will be a very key role, Mr. Chairman. Fifteen or 20 years ago it was not something I would have imagined was even possible.

The children of today will never see the Tlicho people as depending on an outside government to tell us what to do. I hope that they will grow up proud and taking for granted their entitlement to govern themselves according to the Tlicho ways, and to have their language and culture reflected in programs and services. The sky is really the limit for this generation, and I hope they realize that.

Mr. Chairman, I don't think we can say enough thanks to the elders, leaders and negotiators who put their heart into their agreement and legislation for us. So I would like to express my appreciation to them once again. I would also like to thank all the Tlicho who would have liked to have been here in the gallery to witness this historic occasion. I'm looking forward to celebrating with them in the near future, and to the rest of the Tlicho people as we pass yet another milestone. I also want to thank the Minister and the government for bringing this bill forward, and the Standing Committee on Social Programs for their supportive comments.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to sharing with all other Tlicho people the work of implementing the agreement and showing the rest of the Northwest Territories and Canada what we can achieve and how far we can go as self-governing people. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. My apologies, Mr. Zoe. I was going to ask the Premier if he would like to bring in some witnesses. It must be Friday afternoon, or thank God it's Friday afternoon. Mr. Premier, please, your witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms could you please escort in the witnesses.

Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Please, for the record, if you could introduce your witnesses. Thank you.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me are Bob McLeod, the deputy minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Sharla Carroll, the director of policy, legislation and communications; and our legal counsel, Martin Goldney, from the Department of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Any further general comments? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a general comment. I will first start off by saying that I am in support of this and I will be voting in favour of this bill.

Just for the sake of the public of course, there are concerns. Of course, we are establishing a new education board and health board. Maybe if the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs could outline how the agreement would work. For example, if there is incompatibility in the sense of a standard, the GNWT would like to move forward with a different standard, if the Minister could give us an example on how that type of relationship in those standards would work.

There are questions out there on the street as to how that works. It would be good to hear from our Premier to give a simple, yet clear-cut example on the compatibility of those things. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the new agency being created through this legislation basically takes on the same services and programs that are offered through the Dogrib Community Services Board.

Mr. Chairman, as an agency it has, through the Tlicho government, the authority to be able to make changes to any laws with regard to the mandate of the agency. Before they would make those changes, they would have to consult with the GNWT. They would also have to assume responsibility for any incremental costs. If for some reason GNWT considered that the proposed law would make it difficult for us to operate, we would consult with the agency and the Tlicho government to determine what course of action would have to be taken. This could result in either the GNWT or the Tlicho amending their laws to ensure that the laws could operate side by side. A specific example might be around the number of days of instruction in a year in a school system. That is stipulated in our Education Act. If the Tlicho government were to want to change it, either make it less or more, they would have to consult with us and we would then have to determine whether it was possible to do that given the reasons, and any incremental costs from it would be borne by the Tlicho government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. In that regard, picking up on the small example again, to help drive forward an ultimate clarity on this. If the Tlicho people wanted to, for example, change the days of school or the number of hours the students had to attend school, does that change once it's acknowledged, whether it's agreed upon in the long run, once it's established in that area? Does that force the territorial side to adopt that rule, or just formally acknowledge that they have agreed? For example, the Tlicho people go to school less, again receiving the same quality of education, that's not the question, we would acknowledge that difference, but we don't have to

implement it territory-wide. Could you clarify that just for that sense? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, Tlicho laws apply only to Tlicho citizens. At a practical level, we don't want to operate two different systems in a small community. I would hope that we would be able to come to an arrangement where we would have one arrangement for all of the people who live in that particular community. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, just one last question. It has been raised at committee level, the question of being able to teach in the Tlicho language as the primary language. If the Minister could provide clarity on their ability to provide teachings or instruction; again, not questioning the quality of education that they are teaching, but in the context and the delivery vehicle of how they are teaching. If the Minister could comment in that regard. If the Tlicho people would want to proceed with teaching it in their language, do they have that ability? Are there any restrictions? Do they have to consult with us and to what grade levels would that affect? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Education Act provides, as a provision, that the language of instruction can be in an aboriginal language; in Tlicho, in this case, from kindergarten to Grade 3. If the Tlicho wanted to go beyond that, then they would have to consult with us and we would attempt to negotiate an arrangement that is fair to everyone. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one last comment, not a question. I wish to again reaffirm my support and I will be voting in favour of this. At this time I wish to acknowledge, I have been told through my friends in Ottawa, that the Premier/Minister of Aboriginal Affairs did a great job in front of both committees, of the House of Commons as well as the Senate. This emphasized that he charged this issue forward. I have heard it firsthand from witnesses in the gallery, who watched him at play. In other words, the Senators and the MPs didn't have a chance with Joe in the chair. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you very much, but I think there are a lot of people who did a lot of great work on this; much, much more than I did. I appreciate the compliment as well though. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, speak in favour of Bill 15. It has been my privilege to have voted for all three bills that this Assembly agreed to pass, to enable this claim to happen.

As we have come through many years of negotiating and back and forth, and we have the legislation, of course now the work will begin. It might be the end of a process, but it is the beginning of the real work of putting this to work for the Tlicho people. As my colleague from North Slave said, restoring authorities and responsibilities that had always been with the Tlicho people.

I certainly consider that it was not something that was given back or gifted, they were always there. We are just going through a transition. Along with those responsibilities, of course, will come a new mandate and mantle of self-governance. These things are not easy and I wish the Tlicho people every good wish in making this work. It is now up to them to prove that after all these years they have something that will indeed make a difference in their lives today and in the future.

Mr. Chairman, in the committee's work and in going through my understanding and comprehension of this bill, it has become more and more evident that this new legislation and the new relationship between the Tlicho people and this Assembly changes somewhat. I have been working at trying to make sure that they understand the nature of those changes in terms of this Assembly's responsibility to pass budgets, for instance, to support and uphold the laws and the regulations and the policies that we have that will continue through our relationship.

So I wanted to just put a couple of questions in this area to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps in the area of the relationship this Assembly now has or will soon have with the Tlicho people. What will have changed in the way this Assembly operates and in our accountabilities to the Tlicho people? Does anything change there and, if so, in what way? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there won't be any immediate noticeable change that we will see in terms of the program delivery and the quality of the service. I think it will continue for the time being. The Tlicho government has agreed that they do not want to take over new responsibilities or draw down any responsibilities for 10 years. So it will continue much as it is now. The biggest change that will result from this legislation will be the new agency. There will be some consequential amendments to some of our legislation, the Financial Administration Act, Public Service Act, in the access to information section of the privacy act because board employees will be public servants with the exception of the director who even now is not a public servant. There are those kinds of changes to legislation. But on a practical level in terms of delivery of services and the kind of service that is developed, I don't see where there will be any changes. There is also a provision, Mr. Chairman, that the Tlicho can take on more responsibilities in the cultural area, for example, or they may on languages of instruction or operations. So those kinds of things may happen gradually, but generally we will see a continuation of the same kind of delivery of service by the new agency as we have up to now through the Dogrib Community Services Board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, will our accountabilities out of this Assembly be altered in any way? Perhaps I can phrase the question this way; that if I was a Tlicho citizen and I had a difficulty with the way in which a GNWT service was being provided, where would I go? Would I go to this new community services board and expect to get satisfaction there? Would I go to my MLA? Would I go to the Minister responsible for whatever program and so on? I'm just trying to seek that difference or that clarification and to make sure that I understand what my job is here as a part of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If someone had concerns with regard to the quality of service or questions about the service or programs delivered by the Tlicho Community Services Agency, of course they would go to a board member or they would go to the chairman of the board or they could go to the director if they wanted to. If they felt that this was a matter that they wanted to bring up to the GNWT, the contact person in the legislation is the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. So that would be their first point of contact and then, of course, they would be referred to a specific Minister or department that has responsibility. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Right now, Mr. Chairman, we're engaged in the annual budget review and, of course, through this is the opportunity to hold to account Ministers for various programs and for results to date and for what they hope to achieve in the future. This is something that I take as a very significant part of my responsibility as an MLA, and that's why it's going to take three weeks, maybe four weeks, to go through this budget. We want to make sure we do it carefully. Will my ability to hold the government to account be diminished or changed in any way because of this agreement as it relates to the performance of the GNWT in Tlicho regions? Is it something that I'm going to perhaps be expected to say well, hands off, that's not your job anymore, Mr. Braden, there's another relationship going on there. Have my duties changed in any way? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no there won't be a change. The GNWT is obligated to provide the funding at the same level as we have in the past. The agency is subject to the same reporting requirements as any of our boards and agencies under the Financial Administration Act. So I think the accountability is going to remain the same as it is now, just through a new agency. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. I think that's all for now and thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm proud to sit here today to be discussing the Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, which is one more step away from the self-reliance of the Tlicho people who are achieving significant milestones at every corner they come to. They are kind of groundbreaking in terms of the self-government model, and it's something that people and chiefs in my riding aspire to and tend to look to the Tlicho to pave the way and be a model for us. I just wanted to say in my comment, that I'll be speaking for the passage of this legislation in third reading, and I, too, would like to congratulate all the chiefs, the grand chief, all the negotiators involved and many of the background workers that worked so hard to get this agreement with the Government of Canada and, indeed, with the Government of the Northwest Territories, as well. It's something that takes a lot of hard work and a lot of agreement, and I just wanted to pat everybody on the back that was involved in this and to say once again that when it's the Deh Cho First Nations' turn, I look forward to the day that we can tea dance as well. Other than that, I would like to say, at this time, congratulations to all the Tlicho people and all the Territories. I wish them a great future. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. There wasn't a question. I'll go to Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in terms of general comments and to the legislation, I would like to say that I'll be voting in favour of this legislation today. I would also like to congratulate the Tlicho people. I think that as a non-beneficiary or a non-member of a claimant group in the Northwest Territories, I will say that one of the things I enjoy most about the North is to watch history in the making and unique opportunities seized upon here in the North that are not opportunities that are available to people anywhere else in Canada. It makes it very exciting to be part of and to observe and to contribute wherever we can. I know that there is a certain amount of apprehension when things change, and I am sure the Tlicho people will proceed with due diligence and care for themselves and for the future of their people. I am also sure there will be some growing pains and some interesting turns in the road, but I have absolute confidence they will rise to all of the challenges and this will be the beginning of a new era for them. With that, I wish them all the best. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to be asking any questions. I would, though, like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Tlicho people on this, the final piece of legislation, to launch their self-government into action.

All the time I have watched them since I have arrived in the North, I have noticed that the Tlicho leadership, the families and communities have got a powerful history of supporting education and learning. I think that shows in the success that we see of young people in that region. The Tlicho have consistently put their organization's money into scholarships and other supports for students. I am sure that is why we see so many young Tlicho people

in post-secondary studies. It's a disproportionate number in comparison with other peoples of the North.

With this legislation, the Tlicho are going to have a successful organization to the community services board. I am sure that the community services board can claim some of the credit for the success rates that we are seeing in the Tlicho region. I am also pleased to see in the new act, in the new community services agency, that there will be continued involvement for communities through the communities overseeing the schools through an organization like the DEAs. Again, I think community involvement in the administration of schools helps to build the community sense of the importance of schooling and helps to ensure that the community leaders are seen as supporting schooling.

I think this is a good step that is being taken. Mr. Zoe, I would like to applaud the Tlicho leadership and negotiators for all the time and dedication that has gone into this. It's a job well done. Congratulations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. McLeod.

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Being a beneficiary of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, I would like to congratulate the people of the Tlicho. I have gone through the excitement of having an agreement signed. I saw the Gwich'in one signed. My family are beneficiaries of the Gwich'in Final Agreement. So there is a bit of uncertainty, but as the other groups have shown, once the Tlicho have their agreement in place, they will do themselves proud. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree we go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Bill 15, interpretation, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We are on page 6, clause 3, establishment and organization.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 8, clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 9, clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10, clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Powers, duties and functions, clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 11, clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 12, clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Financial matters, clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 13, clause 16.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Inspection, clause 17.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 14, administration, clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 15, clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 16, clause 20.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Dissolution, clause 22.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 17, regulations, clause 23.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Transitional and savings provisions, clause 24.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 18, commencement, clause 26.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 19, clause 27.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 20, clause 28.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 29.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Now we will go back to the preamble of the bill, which is on page 4. Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act. To the preamble. To the bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does committee agree that Bill 15 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Bill 15 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

---Applause

Thank you very much to our witnesses, Ms. Carroll, Mr. Goldney, and Mr. McLeod.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Menicoche, you have to move instead of wish.

---Laughter

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, and Committee Report 11-15(3) and would like to report that Bill 15 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe. The motion is in order. There is a motion on the floor, it is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Monday, February 28th, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 17, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act
 - Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006
 - Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005

- Committee Report 9-15(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 10-15(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 11-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 12-15(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2003 General Election

- Minister's Statement 86-15(3), Northern Strategy

- Minister's Statement 88-15(3), Update on Oil and Gas Development in the NWT

- Minister's Statement 89-15(3), Community Leaders' Conference Report: Preparing for the Pipeline

- Minister's Statement 90-15(3), Social Impacts of the Mackenzie Gas Project

- Minister's Statement 91-15(3), Preparations for the Mackenzie Gas Project

- Tabled Document 108-15(3), Nation Building: Framework for a Northern Strategy

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Act

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 28, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:41 p.m.