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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, March 4, 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, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 103-15(3): Condolences To The Families Of Alberta RCMP Officers**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I speak to an event that reminds us of the dangers facing those who put their lives on the line to make our communities safer. Yesterday, four RCMP officers were shot and killed while investigating a suspected marijuana grow operation near Rochfort Bridge, Alberta.

This serious and tragic event has touched all of us, especially the officers' colleagues here in the Northwest Territories who are represented in this House this morning by Inspector Greg Morrow and Inspector Roch Fortin of "G" division. It also reminds us of the thanks we owe to those RCMP officers in our northern communities and across Canada who risk their lives to protect the public.

On behalf of the government, Members of the Assembly and the people of the Northwest Territories, I offer heartfelt sympathies to the friends and families of the officers who lost their lives yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that Members rise and observe a moment of silence to remember the fallen officers.

----Moment of Silence

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. I am sure I can speak on behalf of all Members in the House in joining you in passing on our condolences to the families and to the force as well. It is indeed a sad day for the history of Canada when something that terrible happens. It reminds us how close to home it can actually happen. I am sure I can speak on behalf of all Members in passing on our condolences.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Condolences To Families Of Slain RCMP Officers**

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to share my sadness and shock at the tragic events that occurred in the tiny community of Mayerthorpe, Alberta. I express

heartfelt sadness at the loss to the families and to the force of the RCMP and to all peacekeepers across Canada. Watching and listening to this horrible story yesterday, brought to mind events that happened in this community, Mr. Speaker. It seems a long, long time ago now. But the events of the Giant Mine tragedy were so much like what Mayerthorpe is experiencing today. It is something that goes right to the heart and the soul of a community.

Mr. Speaker, the consequences of what happened yesterday will no doubt take many, many different forms and shapes over the weeks and months to come. As legislators and lawmakers, I hope we can engage in that to our fullest ability, but for today the message I want to send from me and from this Legislature and this community is to the families of the slain officers and to the community. I wish them all the very best in the days and weeks to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Condolences To Families Of Slain RCMP Officers

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Range Lake, I, too, would like to take a moment this day to pay respect to the four RCMP officers killed in the line of duty yesterday in Alberta. Mr. Speaker, this is a very sad and tragic event in Canadian history and I hope that the families and colleagues of the four officers who so bravely gave their lives and service to their country find some comfort in knowing that the whole nation shares their loss and sadness this day and we are sending along our prayers and deepest sympathies. This is certainly a reminder how these officers put their lives on the line every time they report for work.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to send special well wishes and condolences to the RCMP "G" division district in the North to the commanding officer, Everett Summerfield, and Inspector Morrow and Inspector Fortin in the gallery, and all men and women in uniform in the North who give us safety, who give their service and who do such a great job in looking after the safety and well-being of our people. I think it is a day for us to all remember how important their work is and how grateful we are for those people who do that job for us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Member's Statement On 90th Birthday Wishes To Mrs. Mary Kendi

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I, too, on behalf of myself personally, my family, the people of Weledeh and the people of the Northwest Territories, want to express my condolences to the families and colleagues across Canada to the officers who were killed on duty. I want, Mr. Speaker, though to go beyond that and make a statement on something because I think it is important. These officers want us to carry on with the good things that go on in this world and make it a better place to live and to be.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this occasion to switch a little bit here and say that I want to wish a person a happy birthday on her 90th birthday. Mrs. Mary Kendi from Aklavik is celebrating her 90th birthday today.

---Applause

I want to take time to admire Mrs. Kendi for her commitment to her family, her community and her culture. Mary has proven herself over and over again, with her kind generosity to many visitors to Aklavik. She has made many people feel welcome to her home and has never been afraid to show her true identity. In fact, I could say, Mr. Speaker, that Mrs. Kendi is someone, even at her age, who attended practically all, if not every meeting that I have ever been at, she has been there and she is certainly ready to speak on behalf of her community.

Mrs. Kendi has been called upon, from time to time over the past few decades, to identify works of clothing from the Gwich'in heritage and many museums and has been inspirational in keeping our traditional languages alive. Her contribution to the Gwich'in culture has benefited all of us in the Territories. I want to take this time to wish Mary Kendi a very happy 90th birthday and to thank her for all that she has done for those around her and also to wish her good health and happiness. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Transfer Of Social Housing To ECE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, mahsi cho. I, too, would like to say briefly that my condolences go out to all the loved ones involved in the loss of the RCMP officers in the line of duty. At this time I would like to say a special thank you to all the RCMP officers that serve us in the North. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

I would beg the Speaker's indulgence and I would also like to present my Member's statement. I am very concerned with the transfer of the responsibility of social housing from the NWT Housing Corporation to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I am yet to be convinced that this is a necessary program of refinement. It took us 30 years to get to where we are today in delivering housing programs at the community level. It is not perfect, but it works for the majority of clients and the NWT Housing Corporation.

The question for me now is how badly things will get screwed up before they get better. With apologies to Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this initiative is on a four-year mission to blindly go where no man has gone before.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, any time there is a fundamental shift in the way government delivers programs and services to residents, there are problems. Issues like new people trying to deliver programs they are not familiar with, employees from the NWT Housing Corporation having to adapt to the corporate culture of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and just general confusion of which department will be responsible for which programs, will all combine to cause problems for residents trying to access the social housing network.

For this year, Mr. Speaker, the plan is to continue with the status quo. The local housing authorities will deliver social housing programs on behalf of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The funding to deliver these programs will be transferred from ECE to the Housing Corporation and will flow to the local housing authorities in the same way it always has.

However, Mr. Speaker, I am concerned with how social housing will be delivered in 2006-07. How will my constituents be treated? Will there be sudden changes in program eligibility? Will income thresholds be calculated differently? How will income support workers be involved? If support workers are involved, will social housing clients even want to deal with them? Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues, for allowing me to conclude my Member's statement.

These questions and many more, Mr. Speaker, will need to be answered in the coming months. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will have to roll out any changes to the way social housing is delivered in a measured manner over a period of time, so that people can adjust in a timely manner.

Public consultation is another issue that needs to be addressed, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to see the department blindly going ahead and implementing new social housing and income security policies without input from the people who access the system. I will be following up with the Minister of ECE in the weeks to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Before we go on I would just like to draw your attention to the gallery for one of our Members here. Robert McLeod has his wife, Judy, and daughter Kimberly, in the gallery. Also with them is Donovan Avery and Richard Ross, Jr. They have to leave right away because they are here representing Inuvik in the curling playdowns.

---Applause

Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Condolences To Fallen RCMP

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I, too, wish to express my condolences to the fallen RCMP and their families. Mr. Speaker, it's not too much to ask, as this Assembly has done, to take a moment in silence as we truly express our concern for what has happened.

Mr. Speaker, there is no way I can express in such a way to say the RCMP are truly a pillar in our communities. There is a connection in every way. They represent role models to the young, they keep us safe at night, and they protect our families.

Mr. Speaker, I will say in closing that the RCMP truly are a symbol of Canada in the importance of upholding our laws and as lawmakers we have to ensure that our RCMP, as well as all our enforcement agencies, are enabled with proper tools to do their jobs. Every day they are in the line of fire and yesterday was a sad reminder that they go out there to protect us and sometimes put themselves in front of that line of fire and we have to make sure that we do our jobs to support them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Northern Strategy

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to send our condolences to the RCMP families and their loved ones. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the Northern Strategy as, unfortunately, I was unable to participate in the debate during Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to inform this government of my support for the Northern Strategy and its goals and objectives. This has been a long journey for the people of the Northwest Territories in our struggle to take our rightful place in Canada and be recognized for our contribution. Without an agreement, Mr. Speaker, protecting our resources and revenues expected from the diamond mines and oil and gas, we will always be dependant on the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is about time we left the nest and built our own. The Northern Strategy is our ticket to independence and the right for the people of the Northwest Territories to one day become self-sufficient, self-reliant and a healthy, viable territory. We have the commitment from the Prime Minister to move forward with the Northern Strategy. The commitment is one thing, Mr. Speaker, but there will still be a lot of hard work, determination and focus needed to get everything signed, sealed and delivered.

I say this, Mr. Speaker, because I speak firsthand of how we, as Inuvialuit, rejoiced when the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was signed and sealed. We are still working on getting it delivered. This government must recognize the importance of the Northern Strategy and concentrate on arriving at a deal for resource revenue sharing and devolution, rather than worrying about changing the name of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the time is now and it is the responsibility of this government to take advantage of this small window of opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On Origin Of Hockey In Deline

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, on behalf of the Sahtu region, want to send our condolences to the families of the RCMP members who were killed; especially when in our small communities they become like family members.

I would like to do my Member's statement, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that today is an historical day for hockey in the Northwest Territories. In 1825, Sir John Franklin wrote in his journal about hockey being played on Great Bear Lake. Mr. Speaker, do we know that the birthplace of one of our past-time sports, hockey, was played in Deline on the largest hockey rink in Canada?

Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing or planning to do to recognize the historical significance in Canadian hockey? We in the Sahtu, especially in Deline, are looking for support for tourism. Why hasn't this government laced up its skates and teamed up with the community of Deline to be recognized as an historical spot in Canada?

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, we need our government to be on our side, to get in the game with the Sahtu people of the Northwest Territories and to get out there with the rest of Canada and hit the facts hard. Hockey Night in Canada began in Deline in 1825 under the moonlight, stars and northern lights of Great Bear Lake. Mr. Speaker, the community of Deline is celebrating this historical event by hosting a weekend of fun and strengthening their friendships through planned events this weekend. Mr. Speaker, the community of Deline has future stars in many sports and we must get on the same side and have our top three lines from this government to tic-tac-toe through the game and score the big goal for the Northwest Territories in hockey.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have witnessed the fancy stick handling by the Ministers during the last few weeks on that side, and I believe that that skill could be used in an effort to utilize in the rightful place to call Hockey Night in Canada at Great Bear Lake. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Effect Of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder On Adults

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to offer my condolences this morning; I think especially to the mothers of these young men. I have two sons myself that are probably about the same age as a couple of these young RCMP officers who died. We do

what we can do to protect our children, but these are very honourable callings to take up the job to protect the public and the public safety, and I certainly do send out condolences to the families and especially the mothers of these young men today.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, specifically as it affects adults. Mr. Speaker, FASD was identified as a medical condition in 1973. We know that in provinces or territories with high levels of alcohol consumption, FASD is widespread. FASD is a lifelong condition. Mr. Speaker, a child with FASD becomes an adult with FASD. Adults that have FASD often behave in socially inappropriate ways, are unable to hold down a job and frequently have problems with the law. In many cases, they are labelled as troublemakers or bad people, when in fact they have a disability and require support to be successful contributing members of society.

The unfortunate reality, Mr. Speaker, is that FASD often goes undiagnosed. Without the diagnosis, individuals do not qualify for medical or financial support that they would otherwise be entitled to as would anyone with a mental health illness. We spend thousands of dollars putting people through the justice system, yet we fail to provide a diagnostic team to properly assess individuals with FASD.

Mr. Speaker, the diagnosis of FASD is a collaborative effort by professionals in a variety of fields. To date there is no available information of the numbers of people with FASD in the Northwest Territories because of the lack of a complete diagnostic team and screening tools. How do we know, Mr. Speaker, whom to help and what type of help they require and the amount of money to spend on FASD if we don't know the numbers?

Mr. Speaker, adults suffering from FASD have a variety of needs for special supports and services to give them a chance to live a productive life with their families and within their communities. If we are going to make a final diagnosis of this condition and offer the proper support, Mr. Speaker, then we need to have a team in place for that purpose. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Kam Lake Access Road

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, on behalf of my family and the constituents of Kam Lake, wish to offer condolences to the fallen RCMP members who lost their lives near Mayerthorpe yesterday.

In 2003, the last year when statistics are available, the weigh scale in Enterprise saw 176 million litres of diesel oil and nearly 34 million kilograms of ammonium nitrate, which is a prime component in making explosives, go through. As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of these dangerous goods were either destined for Yellowknife or for the diamond mines further north.

At all hours of the day and night, including those times when children are walking to and from school, these trucks, heavily laden with dangerous goods, rumble past or through the residential areas of Yellowknife, many on their way to the Kam Lake Industrial Park. The sheer volume of dangerous goods going through the residential

areas of Yellowknife and the potential for accidents or spills is more than enough reason to advance the building of the Kam Lake access road.

Airport Road in Yellowknife is seeing a tremendous amount of heavy truck traffic. We certainly need to put an emphasis on public safety. The number of reported spills of dangerous goods in the Northwest Territories has increased sharply, from six in 2001, to 22 in 2002, and 25 reported in 2003. Despite the increase in the amount of dangerous goods being transported, the number of ticket situations has decreased. To date, the city of Yellowknife has fortunately been able to avoid a large spill or accident. We cannot continue to rely on luck, Mr. Speaker. We have to ensure that this access road is built, and many in the community see it as an essential piece of public infrastructure that will address the issue of public safety. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken in the House on several occasions about the Kam Lake access road and the need to address public safety and I will continue to do so, until the road does become a reality. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement On Condolences To Families Of Slain RCMP Officers

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the news that we heard yesterday about the senseless killing of the four RCMP officers in Northern Alberta, I just want to offer my condolences, and also from my constituents, to the families, friends and co-workers of these four brave men who were killed in the line of duty.

Mr. Speaker, we have said a lot of things in this House over the last couple of days about the services offered to us by the RCMP. I am sure that my colleagues would join me in saying that we support and appreciate the work that they do and I hope that they do their jobs under the safest circumstances possible.

We do a lot of complaining about the safety of our communities. It is not only in the hands of the police, Mr. Speaker, it is also in the hands of the community and our community leaders to help the RCMP to make sure that our communities remain crime-free so that we can avoid the tragedy like the one in Northern Alberta.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I hope we can all learn something from this tragedy and volunteer to help our RCMP and our local police when our help is asked for. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my executive assistant, Sue Tkachuk, in the gallery and with her, it gives me great pleasure to introduce two special guests, my grandsons, Logan and Cordell Gagnier.

---Applause

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Honourable Brendan Bell, the Minister of RWED, just with respect to the new trapping initiatives that he mentioned earlier this week in a Minister's statement of support to the traditional economy. I am just not too familiar with how it is going to be rolled out. Is that new initiative beginning April 1st? Perhaps the Minister can detail that for me, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These programs that we set up some couple of years back, I believe two years now running, continue on. What we are seeing is an increased uptake and an increase in the level of trapping. I think that much of it has to do with the prices that these furs are fetching at auction. The market has been particularly good. The Asia Pacific market is opening up for our furs, along with the traditional interest we have seen from the European trading area. So this is all good news for our trappers. I think in addition, anecdotally, we have noticed that people who are working in mines and have two weeks on and two weeks off are able in their down time to pursue these traditional activities, and that's certainly something we support. But our programs are ongoing and we do facilitate and help trappers get their furs to market and we also provide them with a grubstake amount the beginning of the season to get them back in action for the next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm totally in support of initiatives put forward by RWED with respect to this, because on my last trip home to Fort Simpson there were lot of young trappers who were out there and they are doing it on their own. So is there a contact person in Fort Simpson or even in Fort Liard that this program will be rolled out with, or a contact person to talk to? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The renewable resource officers in each community are responsible for the administration of the program. They work with local trappers to ensure that they're there to take in furs as trappers come off the traplines and then get the furs to market for those trappers, and also providing them with their advances and their bonus if the fur comes

in at a level that warrants a bonus and we're fairly certain that it will fetch a high price at market. So it's the renewable resource officers. I'll certainly provide contact information for the Member, but I know that at the beginning of each season one of the tasks and one of the roles for the RRO is to go out and meet with various community organizations and ensure that we advertise the program and talk about the program so that everybody knows about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Minister can detail for me if there is assistance in terms of purchasing trapping products or equipment such as snowmobiles and traps. Is that part of the new program that is going to be rolled out? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The grubstake program that's available at the beginning of the season for trappers who harvested a certain number of pelts the previous year -- I can't remember exactly what the number is, but I think it's around 20 -- those who have met that threshold are eligible for the grubstake amount of money and I think it's in the neighbourhood of \$5,000 to help them get their equipment up and ready for the season. So if they want to do repairs to their snow machine or purchase additional traps, that's what that money can be used for. We have had a program in past years in order to comply with the agreement on humane trapping, that we signed with a number of countries. We had provided replacement traps for those who brought in traps that were no longer considered humane and I can certainly check and see if that is ongoing, but I think most of those traps are out of commission now. We've done that replacement. I'm sure we've spent over \$1 million replacing traps across the Northwest Territories for people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Does the support to the traditional economy have room for something like getting that certain age group between 50 and 65 out there assisting the young people learning how to trap? Was that program designed with that thought in mind, or is there a way we can do that, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 540-15(3): Support For Trapping Activities

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I certainly think that that's a great idea and it's one that we have used in the past to take an on-the-land program where we've had elders work

with youth in the community, usually through the schools and usually through support from the RWED office, to take young people out trapping and make sure that they understand and learn the skills so that there's some transfer of that traditional knowledge down to the next generation. I think that that's certainly the way forward for this program. I think the positive sign is that there seems to be more interest in trapping. It is becoming more lucrative. I think that bodes well for the future. We'll continue to work with youth in communities to ensure that this kind of programming is available. I think it's certainly a good idea. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to offend the Minister of Justice today, but I have no questions for him at this time.

---Laughter

---Applause

My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I spoke in my Member's statement about FASD. I think that the Minister is probably aware that we have some fairly major issues with FASD on a fairly broad-ranging scale of severity and of disability. I don't believe though we have really quantified the problems sufficiently in the Northwest Territories and I do think that a lot of the people who are having difficulty with our education system and with our justice system are people who are undiagnosed as having FASD. I'd like to ask the Minister what is available right now in the Northwest Territories in terms of a screening tool and team with the qualifications necessary to identify this very pervasive condition. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised a very key issue as we talk about FASD. If you accept, as we do, the Health Canada statistics that nine out of every 1,000 children born is affected with FASD and if you extrapolate that back a number of decades, then it is very clear to see that FASD is not a child's disease. It's a lifelong issue and that the population in the society we have, there are, by those statistical estimates, hundreds if not thousands of undiagnosed people in our society. Not only here, but in every jurisdiction.

We are members of the Canada Northwest Partnership. We're setting up a new research centre out of UBC with a satellite office in Calgary. There are screening capacities available, but screening is just a very preliminary first step. The actual assessment needs very specialized skills like a pediatric dysmorphologist, a psychiatric neurologist or neuro psychiatrist; sorry, or is it neuro psychologist? ...it's a neuro psychologist, I believe, among other things. So it

is a team effort, as the Member said. It requires a family assessment and not just an individual assessment. We have some capacity on the screening side for any kind of assessments that are basically done on a case-by-case basis at this point, and I agree with the Member that the whole area of the diagnosis and service to adults is, as of yet, an unaddressed area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know it's difficult to diagnose, but if it can be shown that an adult does suffer from FASD, are there any specific supports or is it recognized as a disability for the accompanying supports in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at present we have services for adults the same as we have a characterization on it. It is a special need that is not clearly defined, but, once again, if an adult is diagnosed or assessed with FASD, then it's a case-by-case basis at this point. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a listing of supports available to persons with disabilities, is FASD listed as a disability for those purposes? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to check, but I don't think so.

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

Supplementary To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think so either and I think there are a lot of adults out there that are in need of special support related to FASD. I'd like to ask the Minister what he's going to do to address that deficiency. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 541-15(3): Availability Of Screening Tools For FASD

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are doing a lot of things with the homeless, with services to adults, with the services we buy, our contract for facilities such as the Salvation Army for people that are having difficulty. At this point we know that there's a significant number of the population that require those services. So there are already some services there. The specific diagnosis of the individuals needing those services has yet to be clearly done in a more specific way so that it is clear what the individuals may be personally dealing with. So we're going to continue to work on trying to do diagnosis. We're going to continue to work at services for homeless services to adults, and over time hopefully we'll come up with an easier and more efficient and effective way to do assessments. So then we can get a clear understanding of why the people that are there requiring those services do require those services. Thank you.

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

Question 542-15(3): Condominium Legislation On Capital Reserves

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't disappoint the Minister of Justice this morning, I do have a question for him, but it is in the area of consumer protection legislation, which comes under this department, Mr. Speaker. As our housing market across the Northwest Territories matures and diversifies, many more people are going into condominium kind of situations and there is a Condominium Act in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. One particularly important part of this process is the issue of whether a condominium corporation is required to have a capital reserve fund to help pay for improvements and up-fits in a facility as it ages. The question that I have for the Minister in this area of consumer protection is whether our condominium legislation addresses that or how does our condominium legislation address the issue of capital reserve funds? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 542-15(3): Condominium Legislation On Capital Reserves

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member raised this issue with me some time ago and in taking a look at the Condominium Act, I had to agree that it looked like there might be some area that we were not looking at. So I've asked the department to compare our Condominium Act with those acts across Canada. I think the area that we might be somewhat lacking in is whether or not the reserve fund is considered to be adequate. That's the area that I think they're going to have to examine; whether or not we should insist, like Alberta does, that there be an independent review by an auditor as to whether or not the assumptions underlying the reserve fund are accurate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 542-15(3): Condominium Legislation On Capital Reserves

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. I'll look forward to at least that assessment. Can the Minister give any indication at this time of the number of condominium corporations in the Northwest Territories? Is this something that affects a large number of residents in the NWT? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 542-15(3): Condominium Legislation On Capital Reserves

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of the exact number of condominium corporations in operation right now. It is, though, I know a relatively small number. Condominiums are a fairly new method of housing in the Northwest Territories and that's one of the other reasons, as we start to see more and more of them, that we need to take a look at our act and make sure that we are protecting the consumers adequately.

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

Supplementary To Question 542-15(3): Condominium Legislation On Capital Reserves

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in connection with this particular issue then, is the Minister prepared to look at the Condominium Act in its entirety to see if it is, indeed, up to standards and a modern piece of legislation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 542-15(3): Condominium Legislation On Capital Reserves

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now the stage we are at is trying to decide how much of the act we need to open up. We are taking a look at our act in comparison to other acts across Canada to get a sense of where we might be lacking or where there might be room to go to the public and say is this an area that you want us to look at. So I've been discussing with the department just what the approach would be, whether we're going to do a full-blown public consultation of the whole act or if we would just narrow its scope to the areas where we've had highlighted now that there may be problems. So I can't answer the question as to what level of consultation there will be and exactly what part of the act will be open at this point. I would certainly welcome the Member's advice on that issue. Thank you.

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

Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Transportation and they go back to my Member's statement where I mentioned the fact that in 2003, the last year statistics were available, 176 million litres of diesel oil and 34 million kilograms of ammonium nitrate went through Enterprise and most of it comes through Yellowknife on its way north

to the diamond mines. I wanted to ask the Minister today how many inspectors are exclusively dedicated to this and whether those personnel have changed in number or expertise over the past several years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have 10 officers that deal with dangerous goods in the Northwest Territories located at various scale operations in Fort Liard, Inuvik and Enterprise. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask the Minister why the number of tickets issued have decreased when the amount of dangerous goods being transported on our road system has steadily increased? Why are tickets going down and dangerous goods going up? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to be able to say that it was totally through good enforcement activities and compliance and a good relationship with the trucking industry, but there are also indications that the levels of traffic in the area of dangerous goods have decreased as a result of the Diavik Mine being completed and also the Miramar Con Mine ceasing production. So we had some reductions in terms of the dangerous goods traffic that was going through in the year 2004. We expect it to pick up again this year.

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

Supplementary To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister why we are seeing the increase in spills. We had six in 2001, 22 in 2002, and 25 in 2003 and the number of spills keep going up. I wanted to ask the Minister if he could explain the relationship between the Department of Transportation and the Department of RWED when dangerous goods are spilled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a coincidence I guess that I'll be tabling the dangerous goods report today, as in the report it shows that we have a reduction in the number of spills. This

report indicates that in 2004 we had 16 spills reported and responsibilities in the area of dangerous goods falls across a number of different departments and also the federal government. If it is on the truck on the road, there is a responsibility under our act for the Department of Transportation. If it is in a tank in the community, then it belongs to the community government and I guess also MACA. If it's spilt on the ground, then it's RWED's responsibility. So there are a number of jurisdictions involved and we try to work to coordinate all of these. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister, if his department has this information, advise on what types of dangerous goods and the sizes of loads that are going through the streets of Yellowknife? I brought up the issue of public safety. Does his department have that type of information on the amount of dangerous goods traveling through the streets of Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 543-15(3): Inspectors For Transportation Of Dangerous Goods

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I can't say with any great certainty if we have the actual numbers that flow through the city of Yellowknife. I'd have to check to see if we have that information. I'm sure we have some indicators. Our information is gathered at the weigh scales and it's at those locations that the trucks are inspected and checked for safety and for what their contents are and if they are following all the regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to following up and if we have that information, I will certainly provide it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the status of schools in the Sahtu region. Mr. Speaker, Chief Albert Wright School was built in 1970. Two years ago, they had a serious incident where some of the walls in the school were cracking. The permafrost underneath the building was shifting and they did some work on there and ventilation was a problem. They reported some rotten walls on the foundation. I would ask the Minister if he could give an update on the scheduled repairs to Chief Albert Wright School in Tulita. How soon can the community members expect a new school and have the repairs on the thermostat fixed? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Member's last question, I would have to check with my colleague, the Minister of Public Works, to find out if the thermostat has been fixed yet.

---Laughter

I haven't got that information with me. In terms of the schedule, the planning is proceeding, as I understand it. The whole process of locating the site for the school has proceeded over the course of the winter and the community has been involved in approving that site so that now we can start to prepare. The expectation is that construction will start to take place within the next fiscal year and the school should be ready for occupancy in 2007.

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

Supplementary To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Speaker, regarding Chief T'Selihye, it was reported in News/North that the students heard a big thump and walls were cracking between the old school and new school. In some reports, you can put a hand in between the buildings and feel the outside. I want to ask the Minister of Education about the status of Chief T'Selihye School in Fort Good Hope. I understand the engineer's report has been out. What repairs will be done to the school this year? There are 167 students in that school, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; the engineer's report is out. The engineers are confident that the school is safe. It is not in any danger of a situation developing that would be unsafe for the students or the staff in the building. We are going to have to do more work this summer to assess just what sorts of repairs need to be undertaken. It appears that one of the biggest problems was that when the addition was added, they didn't put an expansion joint between the two parts of the school. So they are moving at different rates, the two parts. How that is going to be handled, we don't know yet. More work will be done this summer on the piles to determine what is likely to develop in terms of movement of those piles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The budget shows the repairs for some work in Fort Good Hope on Chief T'Selihye at \$15,000. I wonder if the Minister can expand on what type of repairs can be done for \$15,000 in the school with so little money. Maybe the school should be replaced instead in 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The \$15,000 was in the budget for planning money for the renovations to the school. With the situation that's happened this winter, we are likely going to have to find out for sure what's happening with the piles before we determine at what rate we move forward with the renovation or replacement. So that \$15,000 now will probably be used to study the situation more. If it proves that we need to spend some money for short-term repairs, then we will have to find the money to do that. At this point, that money was in the budget before the issue with the crack at the school and thus before determining that the two parts of the school are moving at different rates. So we will investigate, determine what the problem is and whether or not there needs to be short-term repair or if we can continue with planning for the replacement of that structure. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister if he would also give an update regarding Colville Lake. I understand Colville Lake school is not slated until 2007-08. They don't have any running water there in the school. The recreation facility/storage room in Colville Lake is also the same room as their washroom. What can the Minister do in terms of telling the people in Colville Lake when they can expect to have a decent school with running water and a proper washroom?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I would just like to remind Members that their oral questions are supposed to stay on one topic. However, I will allow the Minister to respond. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 544-15(3): Status Of Schools In The Sahtu Region

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the Member that Education is working with Municipal and Community Affairs to try to schedule the addition of water to the school at the same time that MACA works with the community to get water treatment into that community. So we are hoping that the planning will be this year and we will be able to move fairly quickly by next year to address the water issue and to address the space issue. There needs to be an addition to accommodate the high school in particular in that community. Thank you.

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

Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the week, I brought forward a concern about the arrears process with the Housing Corporation and the fact that there isn't consistency in the policy. The Minister

clearly stated that if you were in public housing and you had arrears, they would make a plan so that you could pay back those arrears, so you wouldn't be kicked out. I was trying to put the spotlight on the issue that if you had arrears and you aren't in social housing but you qualify for social housing...If you qualify for social housing and you can only pay market rate, it's going to put you in a pickle to pay those arrears back.

Would the Minister be willing to look at this policy to make sure, for those people who qualify for social housing and have arrears but are not in social housing, that there is a consistent policy on how we collect our arrears? This question does not ignore those arrears. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The policy is clear that if you were a former tenant and were evicted for not paying your rent and you do have arrears, the way you get back into social housing is you have to pay your arrears or attempt to pay those arrears, so you can get back on the waiting list to get back into social housing. You have to realize that in most of our local housing authorities, there is a waiting list to try to get into housing. To be fair, those people who have been evicted for not paying their rent, there is a process for them to get back on but the key is they have to pay down those arrears before they will be put on that list to get back into housing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am still very concerned with this issue because I feel we are discriminating against those who are in most need. We are discriminating against them because they owe some money. I want them to pay the money back, but if they are prime candidates for social housing, they obviously are not prime candidates for market rent. Mr. Speaker, if they can't pay market rent and we are forcing them to pay market rent, how are we ever going to get our arrears back? It's perplexing. It's like trying to push a rope. We are not going to get the money back. What we need is a clear, consistent...

MR. SPEAKER: Your question, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: That being said, would the Minister investigate a policy where we do not discriminate against people? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to realize that we have to be fair to all tenants. We can't have a loophole for one group of tenants. You were evicted for a reason. There is a reason

that you got kicked out of housing. In order to get back into public housing, you can't skip the queue by jumping in front of the line. We have people on waiting lists who want to get into public housing who are in just as much need as the person who got kicked out. If you didn't have a problem the first time, you wouldn't have been evicted. There is a way to get people back into social housing or public housing and that is to pay off those arrears and then they will be put back on the list. Then they will have the opportunity to get back into public housing.

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

Supplementary To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are still missing the point on this issue, Mr. Speaker. I have a constituent out there who is in public housing right now. I can tell you if he wasn't in public housing, his arrears as they were a few months ago, which were \$2,000 or \$3,000...This is a single guy with four kids and I can't imagine him paying market rent forever. When he qualifies for public housing, he wouldn't get in on this system. So how would he be able to afford to get into public housing if he has to pay his arrears? I think the policy is truly discriminating...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins, do you have a question?

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I do. Is the Minister willing to talk about this to make sure that this policy is consistent, fair and doesn't discriminate against people?

MR. SPEAKER: I didn't hear a question there, Mr. Hawkins. It was more or less a statement. Did you want to rephrase that, Mr. Hawkins?

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would this Minister look into that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to sit down with the Member and work with the person he's talking about and see if there is a way we can work it through. You talk about being fair, but you have to realize that people presently are trying to get the opportunity to get into public housing. We have people on the waiting list who are trying to get in, but the people who were already there, were evicted and now are trying to find a way to get back in. The whole idea is to be fair to all tenants, regardless of whether they are on a waiting list. There are ways to work it out, but the key is you have to pay down those rental arrears to be able to get back into public housing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not a question of not being fair. No one is suggesting that anyone needs to jump ahead of the queue. There is a priority system that they go forward with. We can't even

get them on the list to get them in the priority system. So, Mr. Speaker, that's the question I need the Minister to answer. Will he look at the system to make sure we can get them on that list? If they are in desperate need, they need to be on that list. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 545-15(3): Review Of Social Housing Policy For Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we have been getting direction from this House to do a better job on our collections and we are doing that by ensuring that people with arrears work out arrangements and have a payback plan with the local authority to pay off those arrears. For those individuals who have been evicted from public housing, it's clear; if you want to get back into public housing, you have to pay down those arrears before you will be put back on the list.

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

Question 546-15(3): Update On Kam Lake Access Road

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some more questions for the Minister of Transportation. I think the Minister and Cabinet are going to think I took the palmistry course at Aurora College, but honestly I am not a fortune teller and I didn't know the Minister was going to be tabling the 2004 report later today.

---Laughter

I wanted to ask the Minister today for an update on where the Department of Transportation is at with the City of Yellowknife in getting the Kam Lake access road into the industrial park further along. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 546-15(3): Update On Kam Lake Access Road

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess you could say we are not much further along than the last time the Member asked this question. We've had some discussion with the city. The city has, along with our Department of Transportation, agreed that we should be drafting and signing a memorandum of understanding. The city has taken the time to put its first draft together. We are at the stage where we are now reviewing the document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Bell, as the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and they relate to the recently-tabled document, a management plan for the Bathurst Caribou herd. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the

Minister where this plan goes from here. It is phrased in here as a recommendation of the planning committee. The question that I have for the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is what obligation is on the department to adopt this recommended plan? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are going to sit down now and talk to the planning committee that put this document together about the next steps forward in terms of public consultation. Obviously we have had many discussions. The groups involved with the planning committee are those charged with management of the herd, but there are many more stakeholders who have an interest in the management of caribou and need to be consulted. We need to have that discussion with them prior to anything taking place in terms of changes to the plan or, as I have indicated before, adoption of the plan. None of that will take place until we've had discussions in consultation with stakeholders. Only then, if there is some agreement amongst those stakeholders about how we move forward, are we discussing options at that point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear about the public and stakeholder response. I think one of the things that is reasonably standard and conventional with this kind of thing is a peer review at the scientific and the professional level. Will this plan be subjected to that kind of scrutiny? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Member can provide me with more clarification by what he means by peer review. As we go out to consult with stakeholders, many, through that consultation, will have a chance to weigh in on the recommendations, discuss the potential ethicality, or lack thereof, as they see it, of some of some of the options. If he's referring to technical experts, academics, scientists or other hunters, I am not exactly sure. But there will be a broad-based consultation on this and I think that's what the Member is looking for. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has pretty much outlined the area that I had in my questioning; that is, technical professionals in wildlife

management from other jurisdictions. I can certainly confirm that that is where I would like this to go. Mr. Speaker, a particular stakeholder concern has been with those commercial stakeholders, including outfitters, who are potentially put into a very tenuous position with some of these recommendations, one of which has seen them put out of business if herds get to a dangerously low level. Mr. Speaker, would implementation of this plan include backup plans or default plans or assistance for these commercial organizations if, indeed, they have faced a shutdown? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We haven't had any of that type of discussion because we are really not there yet. I want to give the assurance to everybody out there listening, we are not talking at this point about a reduction in tags. So I think it's premature to start talking about what we do if the industry fails. We are not there. I want to give that assurance. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister provide some information about when he anticipates this public and stakeholder consultation will proceed and when we may see some finalization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 547-15(3): Adoption Of Plan To Manage Bathurst Caribou Herd

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. RWED has agreed to organize this consultative process, which should, we think, with current timelines, culminate in a forum to be held in May of this year. At that point, we will have solicited public input and feedback. The planning committee has asked for that feedback to happen by the end of April. So we think in May we can provide that, have that forum in May of 2005 and then have a discussion around what we do next. If the report is not already posted on the web site, it will be very shortly so that everyone can have easy access even if they are from outside the jurisdiction. Only at that point will we be discussing harvest levels and having some more information in terms of the strength of the herd and the monitoring we've been doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to continue talking about the concerns of arrears with my favourite Housing Minister, the Honourable David Krutko. Mr. Speaker, if a person in market housing is being kicked out because they can't afford to live there anymore, and obviously they owe arrears because that is what we are

talking about, and they owe arrears so they can't be put on the list, as the Minister clearly says, then where do they go if they are being kicked out of market housing and they can't get on the list for social housing? Where do they go? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, if the tenant is in public housing and they have arrears, they know, if they have been given an eviction notice, that they have six to eight weeks to respond to that notice. In between that time, they can go to the local housing authority and work out a payback plan where they commit themselves to pay back their arrears over a period of time through an arrangement they work out with the authority. If they commit themselves to that arrangement, and they pay on the time they say they are going to pay, they can remain there. But if they break that agreement and they do not continue to pay and the arrears continue to go up, they would have to go through the eviction process. If they are already there, there is a process that can work them through their arrears payback plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister was absolutely right on his answer, but that was not the answer to the question I was asking. I am saying that you are in market housing, you are renting from the private industry and you are being kicked out because you can't afford to live there anymore and you are not paying your costs. So you are in private housing, not public housing, not social housing owned by the authorities. I am talking about private housing, you are being kicked out. In the past, you owed arrears to the Housing Corporation. This is what I am talking about; you can't even get on the list. So where does a person go if they can't even get on the list for public housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, as the Member mentioned, the individual he is talking about is in the private housing market; they are not in public housing. As the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, we are only responsible for public housing that are in our stock which includes some 2,300 units. So if the individual is talking about someone who is in the private market; sorry, we are not responsible for those individuals in the private market, only it is those individuals who are in public housing.

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

Supplementary To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At least we agree that we are now talking about private housing out there in the private market. Mr. Speaker, that person in the private housing in the private market has a history and owes arrears in the past to our social housing side. Now, let's agree to that point. Now, they owe arrears from the past dealings. Where do they go if they are being kicked out of private housing initiatives? Where do they go now because they can't qualify for public or social housing? So where do they go now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, again, it is a confusing question because, like I stated, the Housing Corporation deals with clients in public housing. Those are our clients. But if someone wants to get into public housing, they have to be in good standing. If they go from one community with arrears and move to another community, there is an agreement between all of our local housing authorities, the 23 authorities that we have, that if you go from one authority to another authority with your arrears, in order to get into that other community, you have to work out those arrears before you can get back into public housing. Again, the Member is talking about an individual who is in the private sector who is trying to get into public housing. Again, it holds true that, if you are going to go from a private housing market, there are arrangements there where if you have arrears in that market and you are trying to get into public housing, those have to be worked out before you can get into public housing.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am trying to avoid names of places, but it may make it simpler. Mr. Speaker, you rent out of one of Urbco's Garden Apartments right now in the public market and you are being kicked out of that. Maybe in the past, maybe you were from Fort McPherson, for example, just to pick a place, and you were in social housing. You had arrears but you moved to the city and you got an apartment in Urbco, like I said. But Urbco has now kicked you out, like I said, and you can't go to social housing and you can't qualify. Would the Minister look into making this policy fair and not discriminatory? This way, we will be able to get arrears back if we get people into housing they can afford and into a stable environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 548-15(3): Qualifications For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The policy, as it sits, has been worked on for a number of years. It is clear and we have arrangements for people who have arrears to work them off. Again, if you move from Fort McPherson with the arrears and went to

Yellowknife, got into the private housing market and then tried to get into social housing; sorry, you can't skip that queue. You still have the arrears in Fort McPherson that you have to pay off before you can get back into public housing. So if the Member can understand the notion that if you have arrears with one authority, we can't just skip the queue and move to another community and figure we are going to write off those arrears. We don't do that. But we do have a policy that allows the system for people to pay off those arrears, work their way back into public housing so that they can get on the list and get back into public housing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

MR. ZOE: Thank you. I hope my answers aren't like the ones that have been given to my colleague. Mr. Speaker, if I may, maybe I can kill two birds with one stone. My question is going to be for the Minister of Justice, who is also the Minister of Education. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about crack cocaine and the programs that are being provided here in Yellowknife, which is called the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program. My question to the Minister is, in the larger centres, they have programs like DARE, like in Yellowknife. Could I ask the Minister, in the smaller communities, what is the RCMP doing in terms of this type of program that is being offered in Yellowknife, in the smaller communities such as Gameti, Wekweti or Wha Ti? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The formal program DARE isn't offered in the smallest communities. The resources aren't there to do it, but, when the RCMP visits schools, and they often visit schools on community visits, they take the opportunity to talk to young people about making the right choices. That is certainly something that comes up. It is not a formal program, but it is something that is discussed. The other thing is that the school curriculum itself includes dealing with making the right choices starting as early as kindergarten. Kindergarten and Grade 1 is entirely focused on just that: making healthy choices. In grades 2 to 9, it gets stronger in the message. That is also where young people are exposed to the dangers of drugs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

MR. ZOE: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated that they don't offer the DARE program in the smaller communities, but a similar program or when the RCMP are visiting the smaller communities, they do, occasionally, as he said, visit the schools to talk in general about drugs. But, Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the

RCMP would make this into a regular program and go into the various schools on a scheduled basis, so that the students at the various schools could really understand the ugly reality of drugs in general. I wonder if the Minister would undertake to see if these kind of scheduled RCMP visits to schools could happen within the smaller communities. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is really interested in making sure that kids are well educated in how to make healthy choices. If the Members will remember, earlier this week the Minister of MACA, along with the Minister of Health and Social Services and myself kicked off the program just about healthy choices. We will certainly continue to enforce the need for more education and active living. The Member has raised a good point. Certainly, in my meeting with the chief superintendent in a couple of weeks, I will raise the issue with him and see if there isn't some way that we can expand the formal program DARE to more locales across the Northwest Territories.

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

Supplementary To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason why I am questioning the Minister and requesting this type of service for the small communities is that I don't believe that the good work that the RCMP is doing is not what the Minister is indicating. I believe that the smaller communities may be occasionally visited by the RCMP, but not on a regular basis. They don't thoroughly talk specifically about this problem we have with drugs. That is real. I would like to ask the Minister if he can provide for me, my riding and maybe other smaller communities also, statistics in regard to how many times the police have gone into our small schools to talk about drugs. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can certainly provide the Member with a listing of recent visits to communities. I will endeavour to ask the RCMP for the numbers of times that they have been into the schools for conversation. I expect that every time they are in a school that is one of the issues that they address. I think it is important to remember, as I said, that we have other initiatives. We have the Esteem Team that goes around to talk to kids about the issues like this and making healthy choices. This government isn't taking just one approach; we are taking a number of approaches. But in answer to the Member's question, yes, I will work with the RCMP to deliver that information.

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

Supplementary To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to get a commitment from the Minister if he could, after he talks with the RCMP officials, implement my request as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 549-15(3): Expansion Of RCMP DARE Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have already committed to discuss the issue with the RCMP. There may be some cost implications that I might have to deal with, but I will certainly let the Member know the results of my discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 550-15(3): Impact Of Resource Development On Trapping

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, trapping is important for our life in the Sahtu. In the late 1980s, the trapping industry was pulling in over \$5 million. In the year 2002, it is barely breaking the \$1 million mark. Mr. Speaker, trappers are being affected by the oil and gas activities. Now they propose the Mackenzie gas pipeline. I understand that the Government of the Northwest Territories is the intervener at the hearings. I would like to ask the Minister of RWED, as being the lead in the oil and gas industry, what is he doing to consult with the trappers in terms of the pipeline? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 550-15(3): Impact Of Resource Development On Trapping

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think our most effective tools for consulting with trappers and people who use this activity for their sustenance is our renewable resource personnel in the regions and in the communities. I have had discussions in the Member's riding on our most recent trip to Norman Wells with the regional office. They were certainly encouraged. Obviously the price of furs; this winter we have had indicated that numbers were up and things were looking good. But they have ongoing discussions with trappers in terms of discussing their needs, their thoughts on the season and the kinds of service that we can provide. We will continue to do that, and we will certainly be advocates for this industry in the upcoming interventions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 550-15(3): Impact Of Resource Development On Trapping

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is correct in terms of his department doing as much as it can in terms of the regional trappers. This is our lifestyle for the trappers. This lifestyle is going to be

impacted by the pipeline. I want to ask if the Minister of RWED and the government know the impacts on trappers in regard to the pipeline. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 550-15(3): Impact Of Resource Development On Trapping

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are very aware and believe that with development come some negative impacts and implications. I think that is why we were so enthusiastic in our support for the Protected Areas Strategy and that action plan. Together with the federal government and with industry, we recognize there is a need to protect areas that have been identified by communities as culturally or environmentally sensitive. That is one of the good approaches I think we are taking as a government and as a territory, to make sure that where there are very important areas to the people, communities and trappers, we make sure that there is either a limited development in that area or no development at all. That really comes down to the call of the community. We will continue to work with communities on this basis. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 550-15(3): Impact Of Resource Development On Trapping

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, thank you to the Minister. However, sometimes the call of the community falls on deaf ears by oil companies where an oil company in Colville Lake had run over some traps in that area even though the community probably wasn't informed. The Minister of MACA gathered all of the leaders in November to hear what the leaders want to say about the oil and gas. I would like to ask the Minister of MACA, does he have any plans for the same, specifically for trappers in the Sahtu or any other regions to organize a regional meeting with trappers to discuss the impacts of oil and gas on their land? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 550-15(3): Impact Of Resource Development On Trapping

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think we have had a discussion about a specific forum only for the trapping industry at this point, but we have been involved in financially supporting and helping a group through our regional staff and have provided money to a group that was interested in conducting an oil and gas workshop in the region. We have been talking about prospective dates. I don't have the latest information at my fingertips in terms of the dates that we have identified, but we are obviously providing support already to that and will continue to do so. I will pass on the thoughts to the region that we need to ensure that the interests of trappers are included in this type of forum because, as the Member points out, this is critical. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Chair recognizes Mr. Menicoche for oral questions.

Question 551-15(3): Taxation On Aboriginal Education Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment with regard to the issue of aboriginal education and taxation. I believe the Minister assured us that he did write on behalf of the NWT residents and the majority of the aboriginal population with respect to taxation. Maybe if I can just get the Minister's assurance that that has been done. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 551-15(3): Taxation On Aboriginal Education Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes. When we heard that the CRA was planning to tax student grants to aboriginal people, the Minister of Finance and I jointly signed a letter pointing out that this would be counterproductive and encouraged them to reconsider their decision.

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

Supplementary To Question 551-15(3): Taxation On Aboriginal Education Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That has great implications, because I am of the understanding that the GNWT receives money from the federal government for aboriginal education. Perhaps just briefly, without getting into too much debate, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister can explain or detail the terms of that contract. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 551-15(3): Taxation On Aboriginal Education Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, the Government of the Northwest Territories does not receive money exclusively for aboriginal education. The only program that we have where there is something like that is that we administer, on behalf of the federal government, the University and College Entrance Program, which is designed for status and Inuit people only, according to the federal government. They give us a certain block of money. Once that block is gone, that's all that there is for that program. That is the only program we have where money is specifically identified for education for aboriginal people. The balance of the money that this government gets is all through our Formula Financing Agreement with Canada and negotiated through the Department of Finance.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for oral questions has expired; however, I will allow you one more supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 551-15(3): Taxation On Aboriginal Education Funding

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just with respect to that certain block that the Minister identified, I think one of the big issues we have here, Mr. Speaker, is

we now have some aboriginal students from our communities who live down south. Are they eligible to access that special funding that is set aside for aboriginal students? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 551-15(3): Taxation On Aboriginal Education Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have to follow the guidelines set out by the federal government for the program. I can tell Members we are nowhere near satisfying the demand. I believe this year we had a waiting list of people who did not get any funding through the program because there was not enough money in the program to address all of the requests. The other problem with the program is it will not provide funding to Metis people. That's something I have consistently written to the federal Minister and demanded that they reconsider their approach to this program, but I have not been successful yet. Would somebody who lived down south qualify for the program? It's unlikely because we run out of money for northern residents before that sort of consideration could happen.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Time for oral questions has expired. The Chair will recognize the honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. We will return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Pokiak.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my nephew Hank Pokiak who just walked in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I am in receipt of Return to Written Question 70-15(3) asked by Mr. Hawkins to the Honourable Joseph Handley on February 11, 2005, regarding Teacher Education Program graduates.

I am also in receipt of Return to Written Question 71-15(3) asked by Mr. Yakeleya to the Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Health and Social Services on February 15, 2005, regarding health services in the Sahtu.

I am also in receipt of Return to Written Question 75-15(3) asked by Mr. Yakeleya to Honourable Joseph Handley, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, on February 18, 2005, regarding land claims within municipal boundaries.

Return To Written Question 70-15(3): Teacher Education Program Graduates

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Hawkins on February 11, 2005, regarding Teacher Education Program graduates.

1. How many northern Teacher Education Program students have completed education programs since the Premier's office made the commitment to hire all students who have successfully completed the Teacher Education Program?

Between 2001 and 2004, 31 students have completed a Diploma in Teaching from the Aurora College Teacher Education Program.

2. Of the graduates, how many are currently employed as teachers in the North?

Ten out of the 31 TEP graduates since 2001 are currently employed as teachers in the NWT.

The current employment status of the remaining TEP graduates since 2001 is as follows:

- eight TEP graduates are currently attending university on a full-time basis;
 - three are working in education-related fields in the NWT
 - six are employed as special needs assistants, education assistants or substitute teachers in the NWT;
 - two have other employment in the NWT;
 - one is teaching in Alberta;
 - and, regrettably, one is deceased.
3. Further, will the Premier please explain, in detail, what the incentives are that he referred to in the united Hansard, pages 2604 to 2605, on February 10, 2005, to encourage education authorities to hire northern graduates?

The Northern Graduate Program that was established in 2001 provides incentives to education authorities to hire northern teachers. In the first years of the program, each divisional education council that hired a northern graduate teacher received the incentive of \$30,000 per year, regardless of the number of northern graduates hired. As a result, there was no financial incentive for an authority to hire more than one graduate each year.

4. What does the Premier mean when he commented on increasing these incentives to address this problem?

In response to question three, I have described the review of incentives carried out in 2004 that resulted in increased payments to those education authorities that hire more than one northern graduate in any year. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will continue to monitor the results of this program to determine what impact this change in funding allocation has had.

Return To Written Question 71-15(3): Health Services In The Sahtu

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on February 15, 2005, regarding health services in the Sahtu.

Provide a detailed list of what service will continue to be provided by the Yellowknife and Inuvik offices respectively once the Sahtu Health Authority is fully operational.

The services currently available will continue after the Sahtu authority is operational. In the NWT, health and social services are provided through a primary community care approach. This is a team-based, client-focused approach, where services are provided as close to the client as possible. Depending on the level and type of service required, services are accessed in the individual's home community, at the regional level or the territorial level. A fully operational Sahtu health and social services authority will not impact service delivery.

Primary care services are provided at the community level. These services include First Aid, CPR, well-adult and public health clinics, prenatal and postnatal assessments, limited radiology and lab procedures, such as blood and urine analysis, assessment and treatment of common illnesses, follow-up, aftercare and home support, child and family services, early childhood intervention, public education, screening and assessment, and counselling supporting. Sahtu residents will continue receiving these services in their home communities.

Regional support services include general practitioners, scheduled medical travel, inpatient hospital services, radiology and lab procedures, rehabilitation services, case management and supervision, coordination of health protection, promotion and prevention activities, palliative care, psychiatric crisis services, group home, support and independent living services. Residents will continue to access these services through referrals from the health centres to another health and social services professional who is visiting the community, or the Yellowknife/Stanton or Inuvik authorities.

Territorial support services include specialized procedures and services, some specialized surgeries, intensive care, psychiatric care, coordination of out-of-territory medical services, and specialized treatment and facilities. These services are provided by Stanton Territorial Hospital or through the Capital Health Authority. Residents will continue to access these services through referral by the community or regional centre.

As the Member is aware, the 2005-2006 Main Estimates include the formation of a public health unit in the Sahtu.

A more extensive outline of community, regional and territorial services can be found in the document Integrated Services Delivery Model for the NWT Health and Social Services System - A Plain Language Summary, released by the Department of Health and Social Services in March 2004. The document is available on request or on the department's web site at www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca

Return To Written Question 75-15(3): Land Claims Within Municipal Boundaries

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Mr. Yakeleya on February 18, 2005, regarding land claims within municipal boundaries.

The GNWT has entered into negotiations framework agreements with Canada and the aboriginal groups in unsettled claim areas in the NWT. These framework agreements guide parties in Deh Cho process

negotiations, Akaitcho process negotiations and Northwest Territory Metis Nation process negotiations. Framework agreements identify a number of subjects that, over the course of negotiations, will apply or present issues within community boundaries.

These three sets of negotiations are in the early stages of developing agreements-in-principle. Over the course of negotiations leading to an agreement-in-principle, and ultimately final agreements, the GNWT will keep local governments informed of developments at these negotiations as well as seeking their views on matters that will directly affect them.

In addition, the GNWT has entered into interim measures agreements with these aboriginal groups. These interim measures are designed to provide comfort to the aboriginal group in that, while negotiations are ongoing, the GNWT will consult with them on certain matters that are also potential subjects for negotiations. For example, the GNWT consults with these aboriginal groups prior to issuing new forest management authorizations or when considering selling or leasing Commissioner's lands in their territory. 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. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 119-15(3): Transportation Of Dangerous Goods Act (1990) 2004 Annual Report

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act 2004 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. 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 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; and, 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, 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. The Speaker has indicated the

items on our agenda for Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Madam Chair, the committee wishes to consider Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, specifically with the Department of Justice.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole back to order. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. With your indulgence and committee's, I would like to recognize two people in the gallery who have joined us this afternoon. They are constituents of mine in Great Slave. Fifty years ago tomorrow, Madam Chair, Tom and Muriel Eagle got married. They are planning a celebration or one is being planned for them for tomorrow. I am very pleased to welcome them to the Assembly and appreciate this opportunity to recognize them and wish them many, many more years. Thank you, Madam Chair.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. I would also like to say happy wedding anniversary and I sure hope that party tomorrow wasn't a surprise.

---Laughter

We are on main estimates consideration for the Department of Justice. If the committee agrees, I will ask Mr. Dent if he would proceed with the opening remarks for the Department of Justice. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the 2005-06 Department of Justice main estimates. These estimates offer details on how the department will allocate its resources to meet its mandate of administering justice, including corrections and policing, in the Northwest Territories.

The 2005-06 operational budget for the department is \$79.8 million. This is an increase of .58 percent of approximately \$460,000 from last year's main estimates. This increase will help make our communities safer and improve access to legal aid services.

Seventy percent of our total budget will be spent on law enforcement, community justice and corrections. The department has six main areas of activity.

Services to government: The department provides legislative drafting and legal counsel to all GNWT departments. It is, in effect, the government's law firm.

We are also implementing the Protection Against Family Violence Act. This work will include monitoring the impact of the legislation providing ongoing training to community workers and distributing public information to people all

over the NWT. There is \$9 million budgeted for services to government.

Law enforcement: The RCMP delivers policing services in the NWT under contract. This year, 10 new RCMP positions will be created. This is in addition to the 12 positions added in the past two years. The funding will add six officers who will be assigned to detachments in Rae, Fort Providence, Yellowknife and Tuktoyaktuk. Three officers will form a traffic unit, and two of those positions will be based in Hay River. The final positions will be a full profile police dog and handler. We have budgeted \$24.3 million for law enforcement activities.

Legal aid services: To improve public access to legal aid services, a dedicated Family Law Legal Aid Services Clinic has been opened. The main estimates include new funding in the legal aid services budget to support the ongoing operation of the new clinic. The Legal Services Board is responsible for the Court Worker Program, public legal education and for ensuring that all eligible NWT residents receive legal services. The GNWT and the federal government together provide \$4.5 million for legal aid services.

Courts: NWT courts are impartial, timely and accessible. The total budget of \$7.9 million includes operating the Justice of the Peace Court, Territorial Court, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, along with the court libraries and court reporters.

Community justice and corrections: The department has budgeted \$31.1 million for adult and young offender facilities, probation and parole services, custodial placement programs like wilderness camps and the cultural programs that help in the rehabilitation of offenders. This money also funds programs that help prevent crime within communities through increased community participation, that support victims' initiatives, and that support community justice needs.

Services to the public: The total of \$3 million includes funding for public services like the coroner's office, the public trustee, the rental office, legal registries and the Maintenance Enforcement Program.

Those are the key points of the 2005-06 Department of Justice main estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I will now ask the Standing Committee on Social Programs for their comments on the review of the Department of Justice main estimates. I will start that with Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on January 18, 2005, to review the main estimates for the Department of Justice.

The committee noted expenditures of \$79.803 million for operations expenses and \$1.78 million to be spent on capital projects, of which \$1.092 million is to be spent on preliminary work on a new standalone courthouse for Yellowknife.

A wide-ranging discussion on a number of issues, including proposed employee layoffs and shutdowns of facilities and services took place. The committee has the following comments on the 2005-2006 Main Estimates.

NWT Courts Building In Yellowknife

During the review of the business plans in September, the committee was advised that the department was looking at a partnership and leaseback arrangement with the Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut on a shared building.

This was presented to committee in the form of an information item and was provided to let committee know there would be a substantial increase in operations expense related to future years' lease costs. The estimate was approximately \$43 million over the lease period.

Since September, and the city's refusal to consider the Gerry Murphy Arena site as a potential location, the department and the WCB have been unable to find a location that met the needs of both organizations.

The department has now proposed to build a \$41 million standalone NWT law courts building on the NWT capital site between the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and the Legislative Assembly.

All of the information provided to committee to date has indicated that having the government of the NWT build and pay for the NWT law courts building is the cheapest option that is available. The department has stated it will cost more to renovate the existing facility and the functionality and ability to expand in the future also call into question whether renovating is a viable option.

There will be considerable backlash in the rest of the Northwest Territories to the construction of a new NWT law courts building in Yellowknife. This is understandable, particularly in light of recent announcements of closures in Hay River.

The committee has the same reservations as other NWT residents but are forced to look beyond the sentiment of "just another big building for Yellowknife" or "there are people without houses - how can we even consider building a new \$41 million courthouse?"

The department has proposed to spend \$1.092 million on preliminary work related to the construction of a NWT law courts building in Yellowknife in 2005-06. The decision to build the courthouse is an unpalatable one for many northerners. These people will be looking for more information on the reasons we need a new courthouse and information on the costing exercise that has led the government to conclude that building their own standalone NWT courts building is the best option. Information will also have to be provided on the scope, size and facilities that will be included in a new standalone courthouse.

The committee wants to see the department come up with a solid communication plan on the need for a new courthouse so that interested members of the public have access to the relevant information on which the government is basing its decisions.

This issue has been referred to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for their input. Thank you.

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

Court Registries In Hay River And Inuvik

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee, upon re-examination of the information presented during the business planning process, and in examining information provided to committee as a result of the public uproar over the planned closures, recommended that both registries remain open.

The major reason that committee decided to recommend the Inuvik and Hay River registries remain open has to do with administration of justice in the regions.

In the case of Hay River, it makes no sense to have a resident Territorial Court judge without the necessary support staff to make sure she can function effectively.

In the case of Inuvik, the closure of the court registry would eliminate the chance of a resident Territorial Court judge ever being appointed there. The committee strongly recommends that the judicial vacancy on the Territorial Court be filled with the understanding and contractual requirement that the new judge will reside in Inuvik.

Members could not accept the argument that it was difficult to staff the positions in Inuvik as a reason to close the registry and delete the positions. We do not delete nurse or social worker positions we cannot fill, so why would we delete court registry positions?

The committee cannot argue that it would be cheaper to consolidate all justice activities in Yellowknife. Members are prepared to accept that, in some cases, there is a cost to getting justice closer to the people.

Members of the committee worked to ensure that the court registries in Hay River and Inuvik were not closed. There is a concern that the construction of a new courts facility in Yellowknife, one that would be overbuilt to meet future requirements, would mean that the department would consider proposing consolidating court registries in Yellowknife again. The Standing Committee on Social Programs would oppose any such move.

RCMP Staffing And Resource Development

The committee remains concerned the Department of Justice has not prioritized the need for forward planning to meet the resource requirements of the RCMP to deal with the impact of resource development and the construction of the pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley.

Members of the committee who attended the December 2004 community preparedness workshop in Inuvik noted that even the proponents of the Mackenzie gas pipeline acknowledged the need for greater policing in the affected communities.

Committee members will be looking for evidence of forward planning in cooperation with the RCMP in the 2006-2009 Business Plan review next fall.

Human Resource Practices And Morale - North Slave Correctional Centre

From all feedback to date, Madam Chair, the Members note that the situation at the North Slave Correctional Centre appears to be improving.

The report on the human resource practices at the centre clearly showed there was disconnect between senior

management and staff. The recommendations and actions to date are steps in the right direction, and the department is to be commended for accepting and acting on the report.

Committee looks forward to a further briefing on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report this spring, Madam Chair. Now I would like to turn it over to Mr. Braden, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

Remand Unit At The South Mackenzie Correctional Centre

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee has difficulty accepting the department's rationale and anticipated cost-savings associated with the closure of the remand unit at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre.

Members could not reconcile how the shifting of the responsibility for remand prisoners to the RCMP cells in Hay River would result in any significant cost-savings. The RCMP will have to expend resources to guard and transport remand prisoners. Just because this expense will be hidden within the larger overall contribution made to the RCMP to provide law enforcement services to the residents of the Northwest Territories does not mean we will not be on the hook for the expense. It just means the expense will no longer show on the GNWT's books.

Another area of concern for committee members was the issue of how much time would the handling of remand prisoners take away from the RCMP's ability to provide community patrol services in the South Slave.

In cases where the RCMP plane was not available to transport prisoners to court dates in Yellowknife, an RCMP officer would have to escort a prisoner on a commercial flight. Is taking RCMP officers out of the community a progressive step, considering the considerable investment this department has made in increasing the number of RCMP in Hay River? Committee members also see a need for an increased police presence in Hay River once pipeline construction begins, and have trouble supporting any actions that could possibly reduce their presence in the community.

The majority of members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, with the concurrence of their counterparts on the Accountability and Oversight committee, recommended to the department during the main estimates review, that the funding for the operation of the remand unit at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre in the amount of \$400,000 be reinstated.

The Financial Management Board has refused to reconsider its position and the remand unit remains on the chopping block.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that funding for the remand unit at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre be reinstated in the 2005-2006 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice. Madam Chair, I will now turn to Ms. Lee, our committee chair, to continue the report.

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

Dene K'onia Young Offender Facility In Hay River

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee regrets the circumstances that have led to the announced closure of the Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility in Hay River.

Changes in federal legislation have meant a significant decrease in the number of young offenders who receive custodial sentences. We simply cannot justify keeping two male young offender facilities open in the Northwest Territories. Other jurisdictions in Canada have found themselves in the same circumstances and have come to the same conclusion that facilities must be closed.

The usage of the Dene K'onia facility for young offenders is over but that does not mean that the facility cannot be used for another purpose. The committee understands that the Department of Health and Social Services is examining the facility to see if it could be adapted for its purposes. The committee has also heard of a number of community-driven proposals of what to do with the facility. A community-driven solution for the long-term usage of the Dene K'onia facility would be the preferred option for committee members.

Committee members would appreciate being kept informed as proposals to use the Dene K'onia facility work their way through the system.

Investment In Community Justice Programs And Facilities In The Regions

Some members of the committee have expressed concerns that the cuts to the justice program adversely affect those living in the regions and that any new funding for community justice programs does not go far enough in dealing with the needs of the community.

For the number of people incarcerated in our justice system to decrease, some Members see the need to involve communities more in the administration and application of justice. Custodial institutions in larger centres are not the preferred model of justice.

Members will be monitoring whether the layoffs of regional community justice coordinators have a negative effect on the operations of community justice committees over the next business planning cycle.

Residential Tenancies Act

The Residential Tenancies Act is outdated and totally unable to deal with the realities of a rental market in an overheated economy. It is time for the department to renew this legislation for the benefit of renters and landlords alike.

The standing committee understands that the Minister is nearly ready to begin consultation on the need for new legislation and looks forward to further information and timelines prior to the end of the budget session.

Madam Chair, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs review of the budget for the Department of Justice.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Does the committee agree that we should ask the Minister if he would like to bring witnesses into the House?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Dent, if you would like to please invite your witnesses in. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he would please escort the witnesses to the table.

Mr. Dent, would you please introduce your witnesses, for the record?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today I have the deputy minister, Mr. Don Cooper; and, the director of finance, Ms. Kim Schofield.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. General comments. Are there any general comments on the Department of Justice?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yesterday we had quite a good debate on a number of aspects of justice and the administration of justice in the Territories. Our motion, Madam Chair, had a focus and a purpose on it in that it sought to encourage the government to do more to enable communities to be more involved and to take greater responsibility in the administration and in the sentencing, the accountability on the part of the offender and hopefully the restoration of that person back into the good books of the community, if you will.

The aspect of this that has intrigued me for some time, Madam Chair, is the notion that our conventional system of justice whereby an alleged offender is first of all apprehended by police officers or some other authority that they may or may not know or have much connection with. Then they go through a series of procedures with lawyers, with prosecutors and other people in the justice system, again that they probably don't know and in the case of our smaller communities, people who fly in for a few hours or maybe a day or two every few weeks or months. A judge, in the same circumstances, may not even be from their region, let alone from the community. A sentence may be rendered that takes them out of their region, puts them into a facility with no connection with the offender's real life and then after a time they are put back in with the expectation that they have served their penalty, if you will. They may have undergone some treatment or some program to help them along. Then at the end of the day they go back into their community, and quite likely, Mr. Chairman, into the same circumstances that probably resulted in them offending in the first place.

This is where if -- again, my own notion -- anyone is to be able to change their behaviour or their lifestyle, they have to take responsibility for what they do. When our court system isolates an offender and a victim, separates them, then there is no chance for responsibility to be addressed for the offences to be dealt with at that face-to-face level. I really don't see how we are going to be able to be effective. Certainly now, and in the past, I don't think it has much going for it and I just can't see it continuing in the future. That is why I think that anything that we can do

to bring the administration and the implementation of justice to the community level, would probably be one of the most progressive things we can do.

We had a discussion on some aspects of this in our debate yesterday, but I would like to continue exploring this. Certainly with Mr. Cooper's experience on the frontlines of justice here for many years, I would really appreciate the Minister's and the deputy's comments to this notion of mine, that community-based justice is probably something that would do us better than what we are doing now. Am I on the right track with that, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think the Member would find any different opinion from Mr. Cooper or me, that justice delivered at the community level is better justice. I think what we would say, and Mr. Cooper advises me, that the community involvement in the Northwest Territories is already higher than what you would find anywhere else in Canada.

We have, across the Northwest Territories, 30 active community justice committees, where we are seeing them do exactly what the Member is recommending. They are taking administration of justice to the residents of that community and we are quite satisfied that they are doing it well. One of the reasons that we looked to find a way to increase the funding for community justice committees was just that. We have a number of committees that are very active and are finding themselves hard pressed to continue to deliver the level of service they are within the funding that was available, so we were under some pressure to increase it.

That is one of the reasons that we have managed to find the extra \$240,000 to make available to those in this budget before you. We have a number of other things that we have done. We have accessed innovation funds from the federal government through the agreement for legal aid that allows us to ensure that lawyers get out ahead of the court party, to visit communities and talk to people who will be appearing in front of a judge at a subsequent date. We are trying to improve on the delivery of justice in the communities by making sure that it isn't all the same day, that the accused doesn't just meet their lawyer and then in a matter of a half-an-hour later, appear in front of the judge. We are trying to make sure that there is a chance for consultation.

The Member talked about facilities. We put a lot of emphasis in the North on trying to make sure that where offenders are sentenced to facilitates, that they are respectful and reflective of the culture of the North. We have a lot of people working in those facilities who are well versed in programming to address the cultural needs and spiritual underpinnings of northern society. We think that we are doing a fairly good job right now. There is always room for improvement, and I certainly can't disagree with the Member when he says that the best justice is that delivered closest to home. That is why we are working at strengthening the community justice committees and why we continue to support on-the-land camps as one method of providing service.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the discussion on this area. Mr. Chairman, a couple aspects of it that I might go to; the news, that compared to any other jurisdiction, we are busier on this front than most parts of Canada is impressive. I would like to see if the department could supply at some time or make public or make more public, any kind of report or assessment or snapshot on the level, the amount and the nature of these committees.

Just to give one example, perhaps in a given community, it doesn't matter which one, what percentage of applicable offences would be referred to a community justice committee and what percentage would go through the conventional court system. It is my understanding that police have some jurisdiction and in some cases even the offender has some discretion into whether to choose the community justice system or the court system. Just getting some sense of how active we are, what are the trends in terms of acceptance and effectiveness of the community system? If there are existing reports and they have already been presented to the committee, I apologize. Perhaps I just need to be reminded.

The one other question that I put on this issue, Mr. Chairman, the Minister advised that the proposed budget puts an additional \$240,000 into this program and I am just wondering if we have found or made it a priority to inject more money in, would there be a corresponding increase in activity. Is it largely a matter of funding that is potentially holding us back, or are there other things we need to factor in here? Those are the two things that I leave on the table. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point we are just in the process of beginning to start to get the statistics on the activities of the community justice committees. We have only recently been able to provide all communities with that \$20,000 in extra funding for them to hire a part-time coordinator. Many of them didn't have the resources before or even the ability to collect the statistics of what they were doing themselves. That was one of the reasons for looking at this as a needed investment.

Now the committees have someone or should have someone available who can start to collect some of those statistics and provide us with some more information. It is a difficult area for us to get information in. If somebody is diverted, then they are totally out of the criminal justice system, so there isn't a record that sort of matches to help us offset. That is the whole purpose; to keep people who can be diverted totally out of the justice system so they don't have a record, it doesn't show up, it's not something that is tracked in that way; the same formal way that it normally happens in the justice system.

So getting the detailed stats that the Member has asked about will be difficult, but we are going to be able to start to collect information on what types of cases are before the committees and how many diversions they are actually involved in. As the Member pointed out, there's a whole set of circumstances that have to be met for a person to move into a diversion. The accused themselves have to admit to the guilt. So they have to agree that this is an offence that they have committed and that they are prepared to work with the community to resolve the issue.

The RCMP, of course, have to agree that it should go that way and, depending on the offence, it could involve some consultations with the victim and the Crown. So there has to be a whole group that agrees that this is the right way to proceed. But when you get that situation, typically the whole process can then take place within the community.

Would more money help? That's a difficult question to answer right now, too. As the committees develop more and more, as they become more and more active, there will likely be demands for more money. At this point we think that we can meet the demand within the budget that we have proposed. So we were starting to hear from some of the committees that were being very active, that they did need more money and this was the response. So we will have to keep our eyes and ears open on this and be prepared to respond further. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have Mr. Menicoche next.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just reflecting over the past year-and-a-half, and justice certainly does play a big role in the Nahendeh riding, which I represent. We have six communities in my riding and it's a huge ground to cover, especially when we're talking about law enforcement. There is a lot of moving around for the members, fall-time and springtime is rather difficult because of breakup and freeze-up. Particularly in Fort Simpson and the communities that they service, one of the biggest issues this year was they were cutting one member and we fought it hard, Mr. Chair. We tried to keep that position, and perhaps the Minister can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think what happened with that position was that we never actually lost the position, I think we just didn't fill it. If the Minister could confirm that to me.

I can see rather quickly too, especially with the development that is planned for our region with the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline, Mr. Chair, things are starting to pick up in the region. Recently I was in Fort Simpson, last Friday, in fact, and we had the Minister of Transportation there and they had traffic counters in and around Fort Simpson. At first face it looks like traffic volumes have doubled over last year, from 600 trucks up to 1,800 trucks and it's no wonder my honourable colleague from the Sahtu is getting bounced around on the roads because things are picking up. We didn't expect that. We thought perhaps when the construction of the Mackenzie gas pipeline is planned, that the increase in traffic and the increase in the population of transients, et cetera, would happen then. But I am reminded that it happens before these developments actually happen. Directors and people wishing to take advantage of the opportunities will be coming out of the woodwork. The carpetbaggers start to come out of the woodwork and they're making their way north, Mr. Chairman, because things are already stretching. Transient centres are being called for and it's because of what is happening out there and it is a reality and it begins today.

Another thing that impacted the riding was that we lost our original justice coordinator, only because it was explained to me the role of the justice coordinator was to get the community justice circles going and underway. In fact, that's what happened, but now we've removed the community justice coordinator, but we're left with a void, Mr. Chair, because what's happening is that there is nobody there, there is no intermediary between the

justice, which is the RCMP and the courts and the community justice circles. Someone has to physically organize these meetings and get them to the meeting, create the agenda for the meetings and that gap is gone now. So I'm not too sure how helpful that is to the region. So it kind of hampers the whole concept of the community justice system. So that's something that we really have to be aware of and do something to mitigate that. I know there's a little bit of a budget for the community justice circles, but I'm not too sure if the department has done an assessment recently to say because we removed the community justice coordinator, what impact is the whole concept, the whole goal, the whole objective of the program. Can it still function without this regional coordinator role?

Another thing I wish to speak on is the Prevention Against Family Violence Act. It is something that was a long time coming, and I think it has got to be rolled out a lot better because it's still not being used out there. It changes the definition of who remains in the home and people aren't aware of that because there are wives or female spouses being abused, as well as husbands or male spouses. They're being abused too and, according to the act, they are entitled to maintain and run the home if it is indeed the woman that is the abuser. So I don't know if it is clear out in the communities. I know in the larger centres there are special interest groups that lobby on behalf of this and make these changes or this new legislation, as well as proceedings too, Mr. Chair.

As we get back to the RCMP in the communities, in the smaller communities, particularly in Wrigley, Mr. Chair, was that when I went there they've always wanted a nurse and they say okay, well, we'll get an RCMP officer. So I say okay, well that should be easy enough and they say can we get an RCMP member back there. But because of what's happening in the world and a few incidences, I am with the department when they came back with their response and they tell me that we can't just get one RCMP officer, you need two. So we need two RCMP officers for each community and only then, at that time, will the Department of Health and Social Services look at nurses. It's something that is needed. Wrigley is one of the few communities that has a declining population, and one of the reasons is that the young people are leaving with their old people to take care of them in places like Fort Simpson or Providence or even in Yellowknife. It's no wonder that the population is declining, but the need is still there for nurses, because I just got a recent inquiry.

Our senior and elderly population in the communities are old, Mr. Chair, they are very old. Some of them are even 90 years old and they are still living in the communities, and I would like to applaud them for having the stamina to be able to get around and keep their houses going. But when they get sick, Mr. Chair, they get really sick and just with that alone, that's why people would like to see a nurse. They want them properly diagnosed, because oftentimes they get misdiagnosed at that age. But just the whole ratio of RCMP to nurses; and we certainly want them happy, that's for sure. But if there's a way to create a presence in the community, I would like to urge the department to look at that.

I think what the Department of Health and Social Services does, particularly around Fort Simpson and Wrigley, is that during freeze-up and breakup, what they do is they actually send a staff member in for that month that the required service is not accessible by road, only by air,

because the night-time is a real concern. If justice can have a really good look at going in there and doing a two or three-week stint during these periods, Mr. Chair, I think that would go a long ways in showing the community that yes, Justice cares, that they'll show a presence and acknowledge that things will happen in the night that we just can't get to and control.

So those are some of the things that the riding I represent is faced with today. The same concerns, too, are for the RCMP members in Fort Liard, Mr. Chair. The members there are doing their job the best they can with the absence of a secretary, is the way that they put it. The members are spending a lot of time on their paperwork and the community feels that it is not making them responsive enough in the communities, that they're making a presence in the communities or traveling the highway around Fort Liard. The stats are there that, because of the recent development, there was an increase in the social pressures. There's more drinking and there are harder drugs in that community and the RCMP have been very busy doing the border controls, because that's a burden for so many communities. Just that extra burden of doing extra paperwork really does take a lot away from the community.

I see my time is up, Mr. Chair, so I'll just end on that note. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I have Mr. Pokiak next.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of quick general comments. With regard to law enforcement again, as the Minister knows, yesterday we had...(inaudible)...a justice team, and again I would like to reiterate, Mr. Chairman, that a student liaison officer by the RCMP in Yellowknife schools is unthinkable. Like I said yesterday, Mr. Chairman, Sachs Harbour is a community that requires a presence in their community.

Having said that, I'll go on to my next general comment with regard to legal aid services. It's good to see -- well, I hope it is -- that the law services office is open here in Yellowknife. It has been a long time coming for Yellowknife. But from what I understand, Mr. Chairman, is that it might be a little too small on office space. I don't know if that is true or not, but that is what I have been hearing.

I'd like to talk about the court services first, Mr. Chairman. In the main estimates we're looking at a new courthouse for Yellowknife, and it's astounding the amount of money that we can spend on courts. We're talking up to \$41 million, Mr. Chairman, with regard to a new courthouse in Yellowknife over the next few years. With that amount of money, Mr. Chairman, I think we could do a lot of preventative maintenance for our people in the Territories. We could have more houses, like we talked about earlier, Mr. Chairman. Just on that note, Mr. Chairman, I will not support the spending of \$41 million for a courthouse in Yellowknife when it comes down to voting on that issue. Just to be on notice, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the young offenders, Mr. Chairman, with regard to wilderness camps and cultural programs. I think it is going to work in smaller communities. I know one instance in Tuktoyaktuk where the justice committee, at one time, talked about trying to open up a similar program to that for a wilderness camp

program for young offenders. The problem is that with the liability and the costs, they just can't afford something like that, especially for the interested couple that is willing to take the young offenders out for programs to understand the Inuvialuit way of life. Those are just general comments right now, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. I have Mrs. Groenewegen next.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have been looking forward to this opportunity to speak to the Department of Justice budget during this budget session. I don't think, Mr. Chairman, that anybody will be surprised that as a Member representing Hay River I'm not happy with this budget. We're all politicians and I honestly cannot imagine what was going through Minister Dent's mind when his department brought forward cuts and reduction initiatives that would be so impacting on one community, on one region in the South Slave, and would see job losses of 5.5 positions at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, 12 full-time positions at Dene K'onia, 10 casual employees who are pretty much full-time at Dene K'onia, and then, as well, the anticipated seven jobs at the court registries, which has, thankfully, been reversed and dealt with.

Mr. Chairman, all of these three closures, the combined number of losses of jobs, the multiplier effect which you could apply to that and the impact in one community and really when you look at the entire budget of this government, in fact there was no community and no department that I'm aware of that was as significantly impacted as the Department of Justice.

One of the things I found curious in the Minister's opening comments today when he talked about the overall budget, in fact, of the Department of Justice, actually going up and I don't know exactly how you reconcile that to the target for reductions that were anticipated, but at some point I would like the Minister to respond to that. So from a whole number of vantages, this action that is proposed to play out in Hay River and in the South Slave region is not acceptable government, in my opinion. The government has a policy of decentralization of services and all three of these initiatives, unfortunately, saw closure of facilities in a region, creates loss of jobs, loss of services and all of them resulted in this service being offered and consolidated in Yellowknife, which I think is particularly unpalatable. Hay River, I think, would not have taken the same position if any of these positions would have been decentralized further out in the South Slave region, but in fact they are all being pulled right back into Yellowknife; certainly nothing against Yellowknife's good fortunes. We hear the words overheated and we can all see, as we move about in the capital, that this particular community at this time is doing very well. I don't think that we, as a government, need to add and contribute to that by killing and squashing programs and services in our regions and in our smaller communities. I don't think that that's an acceptable way of doing business.

So I have been raising questions over the course of the last few weeks with the Minister and I have been getting answers and I know it's been complex and complicated and even difficult to follow for people, because a lot of the decision was based on numbers, which I have taken the position are arguable. I don't accept the numbers that were put forward by the Department of Justice, and the Minister has gone on record indicating that these

reductions were done solely on the basis of economics. It wasn't about better service, it wasn't about providing a different service. I don't think anybody has argued that the services that were provided in Hay River and in the South Slave were not good. I think that when you look at the facilities that are impacted, Dene K'onia, you see the statistics on the long service of the employees and the training that the employees have there. You look at how they performed within the budgets that they were allocated over the years, and they were certainly very efficient. You look at the quality of the programs that they delivered in terms of the results that they had with the young people who were put in their charge and their care, and you see positive results there. You look at the infrastructure in terms of the building, and you see something that has had investment made into it over the years. I believe that Public Works and Services has even recently been down to Hay River and assessed that building.

When you look at the remand facilities in Hay River, there are six remand beds and the statistics that I have received indicate that those six remand beds have an average occupancy over the past year of 5.9. So, essentially, the uptake was 100 percent on the remand facilities in the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre. So something else other than good planning and good management is driving these initiatives. It's bad management, it's bad politics. I just can't think of a single good thing to say about what's being done here, except for the Minister indicating that it helped meet his targets to reduce his budget for the Department of Justice.

As a result of the questions that I asked, I suppose, the Audit Bureau took a look at the savings that were projected and forecast by the closure of these facilities, and the Minister and the Finance Minister were kind enough to provide Members with a briefing on that. That did not go anyway towards convincing me that these numbers are sound. When the Minister is answering questions in the House, Mr. Chairman, it was kind of on this give or take, kind of loose parameters on the numbers. Well, I think the Audit Bureau's report has only borne out the fact that the department did not delve into the historical data that was available to come up with more accurate numbers.

One of the areas that I have been particularly amazed by is the assertion that when you relocate remand prisoners from the South Slave and Hay River to Yellowknife, that in fact it was only going to require an estimated \$18,000 to transport these inmates to and from court appearances in their communities. I don't think there was a proper assessment done on what it was going to take for manpower to escort these prisoners. I think that sometimes it's RCMP, sometimes it's corrections officers. It depends on the risk involved with the inmate that's being transported.

We keep hearing reference to the RCMP plane. That is not something that travels and moves about at no cost. I think that the \$18,000 is incorrect and I believe that the Audit Bureau made reference to that. It says the estimated incremental cost of \$18,000 was not supported by any historical data. Although it's not clear in the initial business plan submission, this amount has recently been referred to as a travel cost for individuals from Hay River to the North Slave Correctional Centre. Our review indicated that there were too many variables and too little information to form a reasonable estimate. Yet these are the numbers

that we have heard defended over and over again in this House. This is just in one area.

As to the projected savings of \$400,000 overall by relocating the remand inmates to Yellowknife, I think we've kind of discovered that's not really an accurate number either. I guess I was confused to as to how we were to realize that savings immediately in the next fiscal year, given the fact that we were only going to reduce the positions by attrition. As I've indicated in this House before, government jobs in Hay River are very valued and people tend to stay in them for a long time. It isn't like you can just leave one government job at one department and just walk down the street and apply for any number of vacancies that might exist in another department. That's not the case in Hay River. When people get a government job in Hay River, they tend to hang on to it for a long time, because they're kind of scarce and there doesn't tend to be that many opportunities to become involved in the public service there.

I think that the principle or premise on which this savings was based, that it was going to be by attrition, I think was confusing at least, and certainly the Audit Bureau indicated as well that perhaps the savings weren't really \$400,000, maybe it was something more like \$267,000. But there happens to be a vacant position at the South Mackenzie Correction Centre right now, so that contributes to some realized savings right away.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess my time is up. I'll stop there for now to give other Members a chance, but I'll ask to be put back on the list again. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I have Mr. Hawkins next.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to talk about a couple areas, no specific questions at this time. I wish to reaffirm a couple areas. The first one is simply the Minister made note of legal aid and the improvements of legal aid services in our community. I really believe that was something that finally we got the Minister to be able to put dollars behind. He knew it was a problem, this side of the Assembly knew it was a problem, and I was willing to go toe-to-toe as long as it took, to at least get that need recognized and I was really glad to see it came in last year's supplementary during May and into the fall. The issue at hand is that we are addressing those needs. Even yesterday it was noted by the Minister in oral questions regarding trying to fill those positions. The fact is it's being addressed now and it's good to see that it's being supported for the long term. Without that basic access to justice, I think our people are put into jeopardy and I think it's important that the support mechanisms such as legal aid are there to support people, especially in their time of need.

I'm just going to speak briefly again on a couple other areas, as well. I'm going to speak in the area of the courthouse and the RCMP and our drug problems here in the Northwest Territories. As far as the courthouse coming forward, I look forward to seeing this initiative in detail. At this time I am in support of a new courthouse. I truly believe that a courthouse is yet another one of our pillars of society here, and the Northwest Territories is in no different case than anywhere else in Canada. That needs that clear pillar to show people that we are here for them and your society is here to protect you in the most fair way. I think, like government, that pillar of society needs to

be continually recognized. The problems, as I understand them right now, are the incompatibility with the present courthouse and hopefully this new institution will address some of those needs. However, of course, this does not go with carte blanche support. We will always be concerned on the overall end cost of this facility, so I will be making sure I have input in the long run to make sure that it's kept within a good dollar figure. Again, supporting the pillar of our society, but these things can't come at any cost. There will be support behind that initiative.

As far as the RCMP are noted in this year's opening comments, I wish to affirm the good thing, the presence of the RCMP in our community is a much needed item. Especially in the sense where we're getting a lot more drug trafficking problems up here in the Northwest Territories, which is not unusual due to the circumstances and we need the forces to fight this. With more disposable money draws this type of attention. We need those support people to be able to keep us safe in our communities and to make sure that we're catching those bad people who are creating a mess to society.

At this time I just only had a few comments and, Mr. Chairman, I will bow out at this time. I may be back later though.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a lot of interest too I've read in the Minister's opening marks with regard to this important department. I find it very interesting that the operations budget for the department has increased this year from last year, as stated in his presentation, by \$460,000. I guess I will save some specific questions for later on in terms of the reason why there are increases in the operations budget and we're making some cuts in other areas. The increase is \$460,000 from last year's main estimate. This increase is to help our communities become safer and provide improved access to legal aid services. I have some questions around there. Who is it really serving?

Also, the amount of money that's being spent on law enforcement, community justice and corrections, in there it says 70 percent of the total budget is spent on those three areas. Again, I want to look at the numbers in more specific detail in terms of law enforcement where most of the communities that have a huge population have a lot of law enforcement officers in their communities, community justice and in the correction facilities. I'll save those comments for later in terms of how this is really coming out in terms of at the end of the day it really is a numbers game, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the one issue I guess I'd like to comment on, and I'll ask the Minister later on again; is in regard to the Wilderness Camps Program. If we're not being successful in any of the regions or there's no uptake on some of the wilderness camps programs, is there something within his department to initiate those camp programs? I know Tl'oondih has a good successful program, because I spoke with some of the people in Fort McPherson and I've been to that facility. According to the people in Fort McPherson, they had a successful program. Why are we not using more and more people? Some of that could be similar to the Sahtu region. Why are we investing so much money in facilities in Yellowknife? There are huge facilities here.

Regarding young offenders, I know there are some people who need to be put into those institutions, there's no doubt about it, but there are a lot of them who could stay in the community or stay in the region. With the high cost of living, people can go hunt and fish for the elders, provide food, wood. Let them do their time out there. Why are we cutting back in the regions? Get it back to the regions.

I guess that's why I have a difficult time supporting the initiative on the new courthouse building. Forty-one million dollars can do a lot for a people in the communities. We have a facility here in Yellowknife. I don't really understand, and it's hard to tell that to the people in the small communities, that we plan to spend \$41 million in Yellowknife so that we can have a nice courthouse and say it's ours. Let's have some nice camps and some nice facilities on the land and in the bush in our communities. Put policing in those 11 communities that I spoke about yesterday in my Member's statement about putting the police officers in those 11 communities. How about some programs there? Do some preventative programs. I know there is an aboriginal policing recruitment and aboriginal policing initiatives, but I don't see that there's enough there. It's way too low. It's just too low.

So, Mr. Chairman, those are just my comments for now, and again I would bring some more specific questions to the Minister and his officials in terms of the budget that they're presenting before us. I think now is the time the Justice Minister made some radical changes in the communities. We've been doing this for how many years? It's like we're spinning our wheels in some areas. I think it's time to go back to the basics. Some of those programs do work in the communities. Support them and initiate them. That's all I have to say, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Dent, would you like to comment?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should probably go back to Mr. Menicoche because I haven't been offered the occasion to respond for a number of Members. I can't disagree with Mr. Menicoche that the RCMP in his region have a big area to cover with the six communities, and I certainly heard the Members yesterday talking about the need for more police services in communities that don't have any services right now. As the information that I have with me here indicates, there are eight RCMP positions in Fort Simpson and four in Fort Liard. I don't know if any of them are vacant at the moment, but that's the approved contingent, according to the notes that I have with me in the House.

The Member has called for us, along with other Members, to increase the number of communities that have detachments of RCMP, and I've committed to discussing with the RCMP what approaches there might be in working with the RCMP to get some pricing. We're hoping that there are going to be some alternatives that we can talk about, because the RCMP are saying that we can't open a new detachment with just two members; it has to take three to get the safety issue dealt with. So we're talking about a significant increase in numbers. But there may be some other options that we can examine, and the Member suggested perhaps longer stays in communities as one option. Perhaps increasing the numbers of RCMP in the relief units so we could increase the number of visits and so on. It's an issue I'm going to have to deal with the RCMP and Members on to try and come to some resolution.

Mr. Menicoche also talked about the concern about support or liaison with the RCMP, between the RCMP and community justice committees. One of the purposes for us funding the part-time coordinator in every community was to provide just that facility. If communities find that their committee is not working, we still have some resources available through the department and a resource person available to help communities get things back on track. We haven't given up all the resources and we do still maintain some ability to improve or to work with communities to make sure their community justice committees are supported.

The Member also talked about the Protection Against Family Violence Act. I want to make it perfectly clear to everybody: that act is not in force. The Protection Against Family Violence Act is not in force as of today. It will come into force on April 1st and only on April 1st because, at this point, we do not have the designates trained so the act can actually be put into place. That's one of the reasons that you haven't seen public advertising about it. We don't want to confuse people to make them think that it's available when it's not. The whole program is set to kick off by April 1st, with a public relations campaign that will make sure that people in communities are aware that now this act is available to them. The designates will receive their training next week and there will be further training that is undertaken and then, beginning in April, we will have people who will travel to the communities to make sure there is greater awareness and to further train people who might be involved in application of the Protection Against Family Violence Act.

Mr. Pokiak brought up the issue of the Family Law Clinic and wondered about the level of standing. I'm pleased to announce that as of today we are fully staffed in the family law area. We have five lawyers practicing through the Legal Services Board, four in Yellowknife and one in Inuvik. Family law; sorry, I'm corrected. The question was whether or not they have enough space. As far as I'm aware, I've heard nothing from the Legal Services Board to indicate that the space is not adequate.

I understand or have heard that the Member has, in the past, expressed his concern about the expenditure of money that's proposed for a new courthouse, and I just want to assure the Member that this is an issue that's been...I have letters going back almost 10 years from judges that have pointed out the concerns about the space being inadequate, that there are security issues and that they don't feel it's something that can be withstood. The problem we face is that Public Works has, on more than two occasions now, in consultation with other experts, told us that there is no reasonable way to renovate the facility we have. So either one way or the other, we are looking at new space. The advice we have received is that this is the most economic way to deal with it.

Mr. Pokiak also talked about wilderness camps and the issue of liability insurance being too costly for new camps to get set up. Part of the problem is that in terms of operation, the revenue source or the revenue stream for anybody who sets up a new camp is difficult, because we can't force people to go to a camp. They have to want to go. We can make the offer, but they have to be ready for a temporary release from prison. So unless they are in that position and then request to go to a camp, we can't get them to go. So it's difficult for operators to know just what sort of revenue stream they could get. If there was a

better uptake on the numbers going into camps, then it would be easier for operators to know whether or not they could afford liability insurance.

I think it's more of a revenue issue. General liability insurance is actually covered by the department for the operator. So it's really an issue of the level of revenue.

Mrs. Groenewegen raised a number of issues around the proposed closures in her community. Like Mr. Yakeleya asked how the department budget could go up and still have reductions, the department was, like all departments, every department has to go through the reduction exercise. We would bring forward the reductions for consideration by FMB. So we proposed them there. Then they came off of the department's budgets before any new initiatives were included. For instance, one of the new initiatives that we had included \$1.489 million for additional RCMP. So in spite of the reductions to the budgets in some areas, we did get increases for forced growth and some new initiatives like adding RCMP to the budget. So that is where you would see that there might be an increase to the budget, even though we had to go through reductions.

The issue around the cuts to Hay River was an issue where I can't disagree with the Member that it was a huge number of cuts to one community in comparison to what other communities were seeing through the reduction exercise. It was a situation where in Justice, when we looked at what we could do to reduce expenditures and have the least impact on the service delivery, it was unfortunate that most of the reductions came up in that community. It wasn't something that we were particularly pleased about. It was an issue that we were tasked, at the direction of Members, with finding \$20 million in reductions. So we brought those to the table.

The Member has raised the issue of the review by the Audit Bureau and whether or not that supports the figures I have been using in the House. I guess we will have to take different positions on that review as well. The way I read the review, it says the methodology and underlying assumptions were reasonable, the assumptions that lead to us figuring out what the reductions would be. It does say that if we had laid off the 5.5 people, that the reductions of \$400,000 would have been realized, but because we chose to try to deal with the reductions in a humane manner by not laying people off, but by waiting for positions to be reduced through attrition, the Audit Bureau says we will not achieve the full level of savings in the first year. It does indicate that the level of savings will be achieved. In fact, it says in their report the level of savings will probably be in the area of \$500,000 a year as those positions are eliminated.

Mr. Hawkins talked about legal and, again, we are fully staffed as of today.

Mr. Yakeleya, too, raised the issue of wilderness camps and he says there is a difficulty getting them started in the region and more people should be put in these facilities. I don't disagree with the Member. I think we should be able to get more people into these facilities, but we can't. We can't tell people they have to go to them. We can't say you need to go out on the land. For them to go out on the land, they have to be finished their sentence, ready for temporary absence, approved for a temporary absence and then they have to agree that they want to go out on an on-the-land camp. So they can't go initially. When they

are first sentenced to custody, you can't immediately send them to a camp. The only way that would happen is through a diversion, if they were to divert through a community justice committee, there might be an opportunity to look at a community solution like that. Before they would be approved for a camp program, they would have to do at least one-sixth of their sentence in a facility. Then they would be judged as ready for the TA.

So it's not a question of the department not being supportive of facilities in the regions. The problem is we have more spaces right now available for inmates to go to on-the-land camps than we can fill. If more of them are made available, it would just mean that each of the operators will be getting less money because we pay by the number of spaces that are taken up in the programs.

So one of the things we have started to do is promote the camps. We are looking to provide incentives to inmates. We are increasing the incentives for them to attend the camps. We are starting to promote them much more actively in the facilities and we are hoping to drive up the usage. If we can do that, I think there would be a good argument to see more camps developed in more regions, so that's what we are going to try to do, but we have to build up the demand before we can increase the supply. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I have general comments to make, but I can wait until Monday. I am advised that, due to other schedules, we should report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee, are you making a motion to report progress?

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought I did that, so I will do it again. I move that we report progress.

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

---Carried

The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress. I would like to thank Minister Dent, Mr. Cooper and Kim Schofield.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, and Committee Report 11-15(3) would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Before we go to orders of the day, I would like to thank all our Pages who served us this week in the House.

---Applause

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Monday, March 7th, 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, 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

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 7, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

