



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

4th Session

Day 37

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Monday, February 27, 2006

Pages 1369 - 1412

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Paul Delorey
(Hay River North)

Hon. Brendan Bell
(Yellowknife South)
Minister of Justice
Minister of Industry, Tourism
and Investment

Mr. Bill Braden
(Great Slave)

Hon. Charles Dent
(Frame Lake)
Government House Leader
Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment
Minister responsible for the
Status of Women
Minister responsible for the
Workers' Compensation Board

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen
(Hay River South)

Hon. Joe Handley
(Weledeh)
Premier
Minister of the Executive
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Minister responsible for
Intergovernmental Affairs
Minister responsible for the
Intergovernmental Forum

Mr. Robert Hawkins
(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. David Krutko
(Mackenzie-Delta)
Minister responsible for the
NWT Housing Corporation
Minister responsible for the
NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Ms. Sandy Lee
(Range Lake)

Hon. Michael McLeod
(Deh Cho)
Minister of Transportation
Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs
Minister responsible for the
Public Utilities Board
Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Robert McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Kevin Menicoche
(Nahendeh)

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

Mr. Calvin Pokiak
(Nunakput)

Mr. David Ramsay
(Kam Lake)

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

Mr. Robert Villeneuve
(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Norman Yakeleya
(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk
Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees
Mr. Andrew Stewart

Assistant Clerk
Mr. Darrin Ouellette

Law Clerks
Mr. Glen Boyd
Ms. Kelly Payne

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1369
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1369
83-15(4) - TOURISM 2010: A TOURISM PLAN	1369
84-15(4) - MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE	1369
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS.....	1369
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON HISTORY OF HEALTH CARE IN HAY RIVER.....	1369
MR. RAMSAY ON GNWT FISCAL MANAGEMENT	1370
MR. MENICOCHÉ ON BALANCING ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND STEWARDSHIP.....	1370
MR. LAFFERTY ON CULTURALLY RELEVANT PROGRAMMING IN TLICHO SCHOOLS	1371
HON. DAVID KRUTKO ON GRAND OPENING OF SAM AREY CURLING RINK IN AKLAVIK	1371
MR. YAKELEYA ON "GUTS AND GLORY" BOOK LAUNCH	1372
MS. LEE ON CONVERTIBLE WORKFORCE HOUSING INITIATIVE	1372
MR. BRADEN ON WCB ASSESSMENT RATES FOR QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS	1373
MR. VILLENEUVE ON DENINU KUE OLD-TIMERS HOCKEY TOURNAMENT	1373
MR. HAWKINS ON GNWT HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES	1373
MR. POKIAK ON MEDICAL TRAVEL GROUND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES	1374
MR. ROBERT MCLEOD ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON RESOURCE ROYALTIES.....	1374
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1374
ORAL QUESTIONS	1375
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1383
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS.....	1383
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1384
NOTICES OF MOTION.....	1384
16-15(4) - RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF ELDERS' KNOWLEDGE.....	1384
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1385
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.....	1410
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1410

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 27, 2006****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 83-15(4): Tourism 2010: A Tourism Plan**

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the vision of a diversified Northwest Territories economy -- providing all residents with opportunities and choices -- is one most often focussed on tourism.

The tourism industry has potential in the NWT to offer economic diversity and the development of viable and sustainable small business ventures in almost every NWT community.

While various organizations and businesses may have a role in support and developing the tourism industry, the government has a unique role: to take a holistic approach, incorporating the areas of general support, infrastructure development and territory-wide investment.

In its 2004 strategic plan, the 15th Assembly of the Northwest Territories identified the expansion of the NWT tourism sector as one of its key priorities.

Mr. Speaker, Tourism 2010: A Tourism Plan for the Northwest Territories outlines the investment and steps that this government will be undertaking to address this priority.

From 2006-2010, the Government of the Northwest Territories, through its Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, proposes to invest an additional \$1 million annually over and above existing tourism-related spending.

This funding is intended to leverage an additional investment of \$2 million per year from private and public sector partners, supporting the overall goal to increase total tourist spending in the NWT tourism sector to \$145 million annually by the year 2010.

The Tourism 2010 plan identifies five key investment areas where our government and our partners propose to invest up to \$15 million over five years. Investment will focus on: marketing, product development, infrastructure, human resource training, and research and planning.

Our plan includes additional marketing funds for NWT tourism and supports and promotes links between tourism

and sectors; most notably, the additional economy and the arts sectors.

The plan anticipates significant expenditures in regional product development and development of new regional attractions.

It will provide for valuable "tourism lures" in more remote locations targeting at least one new attraction per region.

It will allow for more NWT businesses and residents to benefit from opportunities in the tourism sector.

It will result in increased revenues for tourism and small business operators in communities. It will increase the number of tourism-based businesses in the communities and regions.

The plan, Mr. Speaker, will provide for training for NWT hospitality workers enabling the NWT to more effectively compete in the global tourism marketplace.

It will result in up-to-date information on industry trends and activity levels to guide industry planning and marketing.

Mr. Speaker, Tourism 2010 is a long-term commitment to developing tourism in the Northwest Territories. Investments outlined in this plan will generate returns well beyond the five-year focus of this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate point today, I will table the Tourism 2010 - A Tourism Plan for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 84-15(4): Minister Absent From The House

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Michael Miltenberger will be absent from the House today to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers of Health meeting in Toronto.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On History Of Health Care In Hay River**

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Hay River is again experiencing, or should I say

still experiencing, a physician shortage. This is probably the worst outlook that we have had in terms of prospective recruits to fill the five funded positions for physicians than we've had in a long time.

Mr. Speaker, today, and maybe in the next few days, I am going to be talking about health care in Hay River, and today I would like to give a little background perspective in terms of the history of health care in Hay River.

In 1948, a young bible college graduate and his bride made their trek to Hay River. Ken and Sarah Gaetz wanted to start a church. In a small frontier town like Hay River in the late 1940s, you didn't show up, rent a hall and tell people to come to your church. No, instead they looked around for needs in the community. For awhile, Ken Gaetz was a Boy Scout leader and then he drove a garbage wagon. He did whatever needed to be done to help out and, in the process, he got to know the town and its people.

In those days, the government didn't have a nursing station let alone a hospital, so in the Old Town, Ken Gaetz set up a nursing station and recruited a nurse. Eventually he recruited a doctor who married the nurse, and that's another whole story.

Ken Gaetz and his fledgling nursing station and his little church were affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. It became known throughout the Pentecostal Church network across Canada of the work of this young couple in the North. A man by the name of H.H. Williams passed away in southern Ontario and his estate directed a gift to the health care effort in the Hay River, Northwest Territories. With that seed money, the hospital was built. More doctors and more nurses came over the years and Ken Gaetz became the administrator of that hospital. Concurrently with the work in Hay River, Ken Gaetz visited smaller communities up and down the Mackenzie Valley. There, the mission built homes and churches in these small communities.

When doctors and nurses were recruited by the Pentecostal Sub-Arctic Mission, they came to Hay River knowing that the mission would provide them with accommodation, and only a portion of the pay that they were normally entitled to and the bulk of their earnings would go to support the workers and the churches in the smaller communities. In exchange, the doctors and nurses would have an opportunity to travel throughout the North while offering their professional services in Hay River.

They would visit and support the mission stations and this successfully continued for many years. In 1975, the Government of the Northwest Territories built a hospital in Hay River. The hospital was then contracted to the mission to then operate.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my history of health care in Hay River with that, but tomorrow I am going to continue on and explain that maybe there is something we are missing here in terms of what we need to give people as a vision if we want to get them to come to the North. Maybe it is more than a job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On GNWT Fiscal Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The topic I would like to discuss today is one that is very timely seeing as we are within a few days of passing the 2006-07 appropriations act. Over the past few weeks and months, I continue to be amazed at just how irrelevant our whole budgeting process really is. I will have much more to say about this when Bill 19 comes before the House.

In the fall, we -- and I am speaking of Regular Members -- got wind of a \$30 million corporate tax shortfall that the government was faced with. Instead of asking Regular Members or consulting them on what may be the best approach to cut spending, the government and Finance Minister set out to ask departments to reduce budgets by one percent. Why this approach was chosen is anyone's best guess. What it did was send deputy ministers scrambling, looking at their department's operations and making what, in my estimation, were Mickey Mouse reductions. The best approach would have been consultation with Regular Members on picking some tangible targets for reduction. All departments cannot be treated the same. Some have some room for reduction while others have ample room which gets me to the reason I am so upset with how it is that this government can just seem to find money on a whim. Case in point: \$525,000 for caribou management and, just on Friday, this House learned of another \$450,000 that FMBS just happened to discover in its operation. The \$450,000 might end up being the best \$450,000 we have ever spent, but again, Regular Members are the last to know what is going on.

I think the actions of this government on consultation leave much to be desired. Where are these pockets of money the Minister is finding? How much slush is really out there? Why go through reductions if you can just pull together \$1 million overnight? Mr. Speaker, something just isn't right here. The more I see, the more angry I am getting. Mr. Speaker, I am a very patient man. However, my patience is wearing very thin when it comes to the way that this government is handling our spending and totally ignoring the fact that we are a consensus government. It seems to me that actions lately by this government would suggest that they believe they are beyond reproach.

Mr. Speaker, the cavalier attitude cannot be allowed to continue. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Balancing Aboriginal Economic Development Opportunities And Stewardship

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week, Minister McLeod and I had the honour to participate in the Deh Cho economic development conference forum in Hay River where I shared some of my thoughts with the delegates, and I would like to share some of these thoughts here today.

This economic development opportunity that is facing us today, namely the Mackenzie Valley gas project, is probably going to be the biggest single event that will impact our generation in the Mackenzie Valley.

In the past, the land took care of us. We hunted for our food. It sustained us. We trapped for our clothing. It sustained us. We gathered for our shelter. It sustained us. We also looked to the land for spirituality and it sustained us. Today, much has changed but the land still takes care of us through natural resources, economic development opportunities. In a way, the land still provides food, clothing and shelter.

Self-sufficiency means that we need little from others. We, as a people, must provide for ourselves. Once, many of our people used to live year round in the bush needing very little. This is our primary objective: to be self-sufficient once again.

I want to tell you a story I heard from a constituent. It was about two brothers who asked an elder what he thought about potential economic activity. When the first brother asked, the elder replied, what was your experience with your previous opportunities? The brother replied, it was awful. People were not working together. They didn't evaluate the impacts, made decisions without long-term consequences. The elder replied, this opportunity will probably be the same. The second brother asked days later. The elder replied, and what was your experience? The brother said, it was excellent. People had jobs. Communities grew. The people worked together to protect the land. The elder replied, this opportunity will probably be the same. Our elders work hard to try to give us all that we needed. The situation, although not perfect, has improved considerably since our elders signed a treaty. Today, socializing is also a business opportunity. As aboriginal businesspeople, we need to get out there. We need to reach out as much as we can. Our wealth is our lands, and we must respect it. We must make sure these lands are healthy when we pass it down to our next generation. We must have balance. It is not enough to say no to development. We must have an alternative. We owe it to ourselves, our ancestors and our youth. Every government needs an economy. If our communities with fixed economies continue to deteriorate for...

MR. SPEAKER: Your time for your Member's statement has expired, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Culturally Relevant Programming In Tlicho Schools

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Mr. Speaker, my statement today is regarding the Edzo Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School. They are having a celebration and he spoke of strong like two people, and we are still following his statement. (Translation ends)

We are celebrating a great Tlicho leader, the namesake of our school, today. Chief Jimmy Bruneau was a visionary. His words and ideas are quoted in Tlicho and throughout

the North, Mr. Speaker. When opening a Tlicho school in Edzo, he spoke of the need for our youth to be strong like two people, to be proficient in a Tlicho culture as well as the modern world.

Mr. Speaker, the schools in the Tlicho region are recognized across the North for their culturally responsive teaching. They are often asked to host or mentor other schools and organizations, demonstrating how cultural programming can be truly integrated into our educational programming. Why, just this past week, Chief Jimmy Bruneau hosted the Yellowknife Rotary Club's exchange program to experience from around the world to their school's trapline and out for the afternoon on the land. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, Elizabeth Mackenzie School had all of its students out on a camp on Russell Lake. This week, the high schools experienced a winter camping and trapping on Marion village once again, hosting a school from Vancouver, Mr. Speaker. These are just some of the many activities that are part of the day-to-day activities in our Tlicho schools.

We are doing our best to live up to Chief Jimmy Bruneau's vision to raise our children to be strong like two people. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this type of programming is very expensive. The schools in the Tlicho region have to write numerous proposals each year for outside funding to supplement the funding they receive for culture programs from this government. The benefit of culturally relevant programs, Mr. Speaker, is documented. Any kind of educational experience that relates to life for young people has been proven to be beneficial. This year, we are expecting about 40 graduates in our Tlicho schools. Two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Yellowknife Centre spoke of a need for relevant programming in schools for northern students. I would like to reiterate the importance of delivering the programming in the schools, as well. Later, I will have questions for the Minister of ECE. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Grand Opening Of Sam Arey Curling Rink In Aklavik

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to travel back to my constituency this weekend to go to Aklavik for the grand opening of the Sam Arey Curling Rink which was a long time coming.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, the \$1.2 million curling rink was constructed by a local contractor, A.C. Contracting of Aklavik, Andrew Charlie. I would like to thank Andrew and his crew for doing a great job. It is a beautiful building and for the many people that showed up for the opening, we had quite the crowd. I also would like to take this time to thank the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, my favourite department, the Department of Public Works and Services, and also the Hamlet of Aklavik in regards to the many people that have worked on this project over the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great time had by all. I also had the opportunity to test out the ice along with my colleague from Inuvik Twin Lakes, who was my skip. It was his privilege to be able to yell at me as the Minister to sweep, sweep, sweep, which I heard all weekend.

---Laughter

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I also would like to thank the many people for showing up. I would like to thank the community, again, for their patience in waiting for two years for us to get back to curling in the community of Aklavik. I look forward for great curling over the years. Hopefully, we will see some great athletes as we know the Koe family who originates from Aklavik have participated in the Scotts and the Brier. I encourage all the younger people to get involved and also to be able to strive to be at the Brier and the Scotts in the future.

With that, Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank the people of Aklavik and also the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Members' statements. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On "Guts And Glory" Book Launch

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, I had the opportunity to witness a launching of a book called, Guts and Glory, by Sally Manning, on the success, I guess they call it, of his people from up in Inuvik and up where there are successful skaters up in the Gwich'in, the Beaufort-Delta and the Yukon.

We played hockey yesterday, Mr. Speaker, against the MLAs and media. I think they should have had a second book called, Guts to Glory, Part 2, for us here in that little event. However, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this event recognizes the contribution of arctic skiers in the Northwest Territories that represented Canada, the North, the people, schools and communities. Sharon and Shirley Firth, along with many other skiers, were recognized in this book here where the Department of MACA that, I think, had some dealings with in terms of recognizing these skiers in terms of support in this launching here and also with Outcrop, the northern publisher.

Mr. Speaker, the book tells a story of a territorial experimental ski training program called a test, that had seen that there is a lot of talent in the North. We had it here in the Northwest Territories that saw a young group of aboriginal kids that had a lot of talent, guts and glory that took this program, brought it up North by European skiers, coaches. Father Mouchet was one of them that put them in a program that they developed throughout the years of the ski life and put them in school. Mr. Krutko is well aware of these skiers. People on this side know about some of these skiers. It talks about the success in the name of the first twins, Lennies, Allens, that made it through this program here. It is a worthwhile program. It was a good launch. I would certainly support everybody to buy the book, From Guts to Glory. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Convertible Workforce Housing Initiative

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to try again to reiterate my concerns regarding the government's plan for buying and converting used trailers. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that this government is going deeper and deeper into this relationship without a plan for a detailed cost and benefit analysis on hard facts and figures by a third party. I am concerned that this government has circumvented a competitive process to find the best housing deal to come out of the pipeline development.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that this government has not demanded or received a concrete and comprehensive long-term training program that would produce ticketed aboriginal and northern workers whose tickets would be transferable and marketable to other projects and industries.

I am concerned that this government has not demanded or received a specific northern training program or facilities for building or converting these units in our communities, whether they be in Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Hay River or wherever, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned that there is not a specific and well thought out pre-plan on how we are going to develop and deliver 1,420 lots in our communities. This would require specific negotiations and agreements with our aboriginal, regional and municipal counterparts and one that should be settled prior to getting into this deal, not after.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that this project foresees almost \$62 million to \$70 million to come from private sector buyers. This is an enormously huge and uncontrollable variable that has had questionable record. The latest example being the Housing Corporation's market housing initiative.

Mr. Speaker, this government has had trouble renting 22 new mobile homes in two years. Twelve of them still sit empty. How does this government plan to sell 25 percent? That is 355 of 1,420 units. What about the question of market interruption in places like Inuvik, Norman Wells and perhaps Fort Simpson and Fort Smith? If this is such a deal, why don't we let the private sector handle the projects from the beginning to the end?

Mr. Speaker, most importantly, I am very concerned that this government is assuming more liability for this project than the federal government, Imperial Oil or the trailer company, all of whom, without a doubt, have much deeper pockets than we do. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that this government is going to spend all of their political influence and currency lobbying...Mr. Speaker, thank you. I think I will just end it there.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have been a very strong advocate for the interests of the injured worker and the treatment they get from the WCB. Of late, Mr. Speaker, issues have also come up regarding the other significant stakeholder group in the workers' compensation system, and that is the employers, restaurant owners and franchise restaurant owners, especially those based in Yellowknife. For three years now, they have been hit with a maximum of 25 percent assessment increase.

Mr. Speaker, subclass 76 now charges \$2.93 per \$100 of payroll. That is at least double every other equivalent WCB in Canada for that category. It is more than \$1 above the average WCB assessment across all of the NWT and Yukon. Let's just take a moment and compare it to that much safer occupation of oil well drilling which gets assessed at about 50 cents less than a franchise restaurant owner. What is going wrong, Mr. Speaker?

Injuries have been costly in this category, but some business owners, especially these franchise owners, argue that they are taking a real hit from the more careless operators in this category against their own unblemished safety record.

Mr. Speaker, they are asking for their own category, claiming WCB rates are among many costs of business here in Yellowknife that are becoming unaffordable. What aggravates this whole situation, Mr. Speaker, is the response, or really we should say the lack of response from the WCB. These business owners have been trying for almost three years to get some response and only grudgingly it seems in the last few weeks has anything been forthcoming.

While these business owners may not get entirely what they want or expect, at least, Mr. Speaker, they deserve a courteous, professional, timely and thorough response from the WCB. They haven't been getting it. The corporate culture of the WCB, as I have experienced over several years on behalf of injured workers, is arrogant, aloof and closed door, Mr. Speaker. This cannot be sustained.

One major Yellowknife employer wrote me recently. "I was amazed that they were locked down tighter than the diamond sorting plants. In fact, you can't even use the washroom without getting a security pass. We watch in disbelief over the past years that this department has grown to an enormous size." Mr. Speaker, what is going wrong at the WCB? Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Deninu Kue Old-Timers Hockey Tournament

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, I just want to say thank you to all the sponsors, participants and organizers, especially all of the community members of Deninu Kue who put together a successful old-timers tournament over the past weekend.

It was nice to see many friends from the surrounding communities of Fort Smith, Hay River, Kakisa and Fort Providence come to Deninu Kue to take part in this first annual old-timers hockey tournament.

Mr. Speaker, these types of events bring a community together not just to ensure that the tournament can be successful, but, more importantly, to build pride amongst the general population in themselves so people can proudly pat each other on the back and say that they did it together.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this is only the beginning of something that will be ongoing for our community, getting organized on an idea, inviting friends to participate, having fun, making new friends and celebrating the successes. This was accomplished last weekend, Mr. Speaker. I say to my constituents, congratulations. Keep up the good work toward community cooperation and camaraderie. I look forward to participating in similar upcoming community events. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On GNWT Human Resource Practices And Procedures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is about putting the human in human resources. Staff costs for many employers comprise up to 50 percent of the total office expense. This fact alone should prove the importance of hiring excellent people and having excellent processes to hire them.

The GNWT has difficulty attracting qualified people. The application process needs to be a little more humane. Perhaps there is something inherent in our hiring practice that shuts certain people out. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicates that labour market statistics show that pockets of the labour force are being underemployed in underutilized areas that are relevant to their training and experience. Statistical studies show that main groups in areas of women, visible minorities, people with disabilities and aboriginals are being targeted. The last two groups are categories of particular concern. Less than half of those people with disabilities who are willing and able to be employed are for aboriginal people. Unemployment is over 33 percent across this country. We need to alter negative trends. That requires educational opportunities and various other strategies from different departments. This includes Human Resources. Maybe the GNWT Human Resources needs to consider some fresh new ideas. Let's be innovative. Let's go back to the days when we acknowledged a receipt of someone's resume. Let's send them a letter to say, hey, we got it. It is in the mix. Mr. Speaker, by putting little steps in the vat, people feel like they are not sending their resume into the abyss hoping for luck that week. What about posting some sample resumes on our web site to let people know what we are looking for and demonstrate this in writing? It is difficult to write a resume to an application when you are a little nervous doing this. Mr. Speaker, we can expand the interview process by giving some details. It is very daunting when you walk into a room and you are sat down in front of three people

you may have never met and then all of a sudden forced to answer questions. It is a bit of a scary process.

Mr. Speaker, equivalencies are often a complaint we hear in the MLA's office where there is sometimes confusion on how they are truly demonstrated. Mr. Speaker, I explained all of this about trying to take away our conveyor belt method of hiring people. It is just about, again, putting the human side to the human resources again. As we all know, the GNWT is no longer the employer of choice. So let's start moving in the 21st century to show that we are progressive and professional. Let's start trying to attract those people.

Mr. Speaker, all of these suggestions are just ideas. I am hoping to get some good responses from the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Medical Travel Ground Transportation Policies

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about the patients travelling for medical reasons to urban centres. Last week, the interim CEO of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Authority was interviewed by CBC Radio regarding transportation for out-of-town patients.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the Stanton Territorial Hospital Authority has a contract with Vital Abel Boarding Home and a local cab company to transport out-of-town patients. My understanding is that the cab company is utilized at 4:30 p.m. The CEO mentioned that only low-risk patients will be transported by the cab company to the boarding home or hospital after 4:30. There are a number of questions that could arise for the Stanton Territorial Hospital, Mr. Speaker. What constitutes a low-risk patient? How will the cab company know what a low-risk patient is? Are the cab drivers prepared for any emergency? Mr. Speaker, what makes it more frustrating is a low-risk patient is considered as part of the general public. Therefore, they can travel by the local cab company. All patients should be treated as patients, not as the general public. They should be treated with respect and dignity because, after all, they are patients and they are human beings.

Mr. Speaker, another interesting question is whether the boarding home and the cab drivers have the necessary skills to respond to any emergencies to the patient being transported to the boarding home or the medical centre and counter of changing their medical condition.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the contract between the Stanton Territorial Hospital Authority and the boarding home and the local cab company require they have at least a standard First Aid certificate. If the contractors don't have this, they should be required to take the standard First Aid course and become certified to react to any emergencies. In closing, Mr. Speaker, a recent tragedy has occurred whereby an out-of-town patient has died. Will it happen again? Maybe, but let's hope not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Federal Government's Position On Resource Royalties

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thoroughly enjoyed yelling at the Housing Minister.

---Laughter

I am sure he is used to it.

Mr. Speaker, the more I understand and read on the amount of money that is going out of the NWT in royalties, the more upset I am starting to become and I think the more upset the people of the NWT are starting to become.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: A recent article in the Edmonton Journal makes a good point. Some of the money that is leaving the Territories, and Ottawa's so-called justification for this money leaving the Territories saying that they pay us more in transfer payments than we get in royalties, that is pretty lame, as far as I'm concerned. We are part of Canada. It is their obligation to look after us like they look after the rest of Canada. Saying that they are giving us more in transfer payments, I think, Mr. Speaker, is a pretty poor excuse. Saying that they don't want another Alberta with their big heritage fund and them keeping a part of their royalties also stinks. It is a pretty lame excuse, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to be another Alberta. We want to be the Northwest Territories. We want to be able to keep what is rightfully ours.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this is a subject that I am going to be pushing a lot more because a lot of people in the Territories live in poverty, even though they are working, because of the high cost of living. You can make \$50,000 a year and you are considered living in poverty with the high cost of living. That is something that we have to be concerned with, Mr. Speaker. We can't allow this. We don't have a heritage fund. We should have a trust fund. All this money in royalties leaving the Northwest Territories. How much do we have in our trust fund? I bet it is a big fat zero.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to have some questions for Mr. Handley on his meeting with the Prime Minister. Hopefully, we can start doing something to get our royalties because, Mr. Speaker, it is really starting to upset me that we are losing so much bloody money and we have nothing to show for it. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize today both the chair of NWT Tourism, Robin Witherspoon, and the executive director, David Grindlay, who are here today for the kick-off of

Tourism 2010 - A Tourism Plan for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oral questions. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 470-15(4): Canol Heritage Trail

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of ITI in regards to the Canol Heritage Trail. Would he give me, in the House, an update as to the progression of promoting the Canol Heritage Trail and the wonderful opportunities that exist there? Could the Minister do that for me? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 470-15(4): Canol Heritage Trail

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The development of the Canol Trail Park is one that is very important to our government, I think very important to the people of the Sahtu, and has great potential as a tourism lure going forward. For a number of years now, we have identified funds in the budget. We have been trying to put together a working group to advance the project. I have to acknowledge that we haven't made a lot of headway. The difficult part, of course, is finding the money and we've done that. There is quite a bit of money identified in this year's budget, if Members will know, from our discussion the other day in Committee of the Whole. We have kicked off discussions again. We are bringing the parties together. It is going to be very important for us and something that we prepare now in the coming months to deliver on. It is very important for us to get out there and spend this money effectively and, in fact, develop this wonderful tourism attraction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 470-15(4): Canol Heritage Trail

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of bringing these people together to form this committee, can the Minister inform me in terms of the involvement from our community members in the Sahtu, like Norman Wells and Tulita, in terms of having the committee come together, because I believe the Canol Heritage Trail has some impact on the Sahtu Dene/Metis land claim? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 470-15(4): Canol Heritage Trail

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a commitment arising from the land claim and, of course, the federal government and our government take it very seriously. As I've said, there has been money identified in recognition of the priority that it is. Operationally, we've had difficulty in moving forward, in having the committee

generate the work we need it to do. But I think we're on the right foot now. I just saw an e-mail the other day with the superintendent requesting that the parties get back together and kick this off. In the next year we'd like to be able to have done our work and work with the committee so that we can take the formal steps that we need to take to establish the park in our Territorial Parks Act regulations. But we think that will probably take up to a year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 470-15(4): Canol Heritage Trail

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister in terms of the Canol Heritage Trail proposal in terms of his department's support. I appreciate the Minister indicating the e-mail from the superintendent to get things moving now with the Canol Heritage Trail. Would the Minister in terms of having ongoing programs or services to the Canol Heritage Trail in terms of establishing it similar to, a park similar to approximately a band or something in that area in terms of having this park re-establish the Northwest Territories as a major focal point for tourism in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 470-15(4): Canol Heritage Trail

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We think it can be a focal point and exactly the nature of the park, the amount of tourism it can handle each year, the amount of infrastructure is all up for discussion. Of course, in the Government of the Northwest Territories agreement, the Government of Canada with the Sahtu Dene/Metis claim, the nature of the park is laid out, but the plan is not formalized. So there are a number of steps moving forward that we have to deliver on now, but I think this discussion with this committee will help us to do that. But we do have to have some discussion. We know the land is set aside for this purpose, about the amount of traffic that we want to see in the region, that we can accommodate in the region, and the nature of the attraction. But I think all of this discussion is now moving ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 471-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my questions this morning are for Mr. Dent as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board for Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister advise, Mr. Speaker, whether the board of governors of the WCB will be considering the issue of fairness to restaurant owners and their lopsided rate structure, Mr. Speaker?

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

Return To Question 471-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the governance council is made up of small business owners, employer representatives and workers themselves. So the stakeholders are the ones who make up the governance council and they are the ones who run the WCB. Mr. Braden has asked whether or not they will consider these complaints by the quick service restaurants. I'm advised that the governance council did consider them at their meeting last week and that the chair has offered to meet with the quick service restaurant owners in Yellowknife this week to discuss the outcome of that meeting. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 471-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, why has it taken three years? This group of businesspeople represent quite a number of employees, quite a large chunk of assessment revenue for the Northwest Territories. Why has it taken three years and, of late, fairly vigorous intervention by several MLAs to get the WCB to begin to take their interest seriously? Why has it taken so long?

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

Further Return To Question 471-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that would be a great question for the governance council to answer, but I understand that there has been no formal communication. There was no formal communication three years ago asking for an explanation of this, is what I've been advised. I've talked to the governance council about this. It hasn't been something that's come up. The people who are on the governance council are the people who are available to business owners to call and they could have very well put that question to them earlier. I think that what is perhaps happening is the answers that are being received are not the ones that people want to hear. That may be the situation that we're looking at, rather than having not communicated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 471-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

MR. BRADEN: You know, Mr. Speaker, it may well be that once some good communication has been established and some understandings are out there that there will be an agreement on what's fair and where everybody can go. But, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has just sort of posed the next and the most obvious question. What then are the opportunities that the WCB provides to stakeholders, like business owners, who are paying for this system, to be taken before the WCB and to have themselves held accountable? Why does it take, or does it take some informal gathering or connection with a member of the board to have a problem heard? Is there

no regular way for the employers to be heard before the WCB and to hold that board of governors accountable? Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 471-15(4): WCB Assessment Rates For Quick Service Restaurants

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, all that it takes is a formal letter asking for an opportunity to discuss an issue, and the WCB holds public meetings every time they have a board meeting. So there have been public meetings advertised in the paper that have been held in Yellowknife and other communities across the North that business owners and workers could have showed up at to bring their issues to the attention of the governance council if they so wished. So those are the opportunities that are there. I think that hopefully we will see that the governance council will continue to look for other opportunities to increase the ways in which they can communicate with their stakeholders. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 472-15(4): Tlicho Cultural And Language Funding

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) My Member's statement was regarding the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School and the statement that he made about strong like two people. (Translation ends)

...program that includes northern aboriginal language, cultural, traditional skills, land claims, and the history of the North. I'd like to ask the Minister of ECE what kind of funding arrangement is in place with the current Tlicho Community Services Agency to deliver cultural and language programming in the Tlicho region. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 472-15(4): Tlicho Cultural And Language Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the breakdown in dollars for each individual region. In this year's budget, we're proposing \$7.5 million that will be spent across the Northwest Territories for aboriginal language and culture. The way in which that is broken out by education authority is based on the number of aboriginal children in each DEC, and it's pretty much done on...It's based on a formula, so a big part of the allocation is by student. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 472-15(4): Tlicho Cultural And Language Funding

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next question is, how does the current funding reflect the rising cost of fuel that's been here in the North, the high cost of fuel, and the high cost of equipment needed to effectively run these types of cultural programs? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 472-15(4): Tlicho Cultural And Language Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past two years there's been approximately an eight percent increase in the amount of money in the program across the Northwest Territories. Whether or not that reflects the cost of fuel in this year, I can't say for sure. It probably doesn't, based on how much fuel has gone up. But I'm not sure exactly how much of the proportion of that funding would have to go for fuel. So each of the divisional education councils are going to approach this differently and in some cases it may be adequate for the increases and in other cases it won't. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 472-15(4): Tlicho Cultural And Language Funding

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister identified that the high cost of fuel, he's not sure if it's part of the eight percent increase, but I'd like to highlight that. I guess the question to the department is, is the department willing to work directly with the schools to identify ways to alleviate the high cost to deliver these effective cultural programming to promote even more cultural programs? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 472-15(4): Tlicho Cultural And Language Funding

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened to the Member's statement today with great interest because he's absolutely right that the students who do the best in our system are those who are immersed in their own language and culture. He is right that we hold up the schools in the Tlicho region as examples for others across the Territories to look at when we talk about success. So, yes, we'd be happy to work with all of our partners in all of the regions to see what we could do to improve our efforts to immerse our students in the aboriginal languages and cultures. Thank you.

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

Question 473-15(4): Delays In Construction Of Senior Housing Units In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. Hay River was happy to learn of an allocation quite some time ago for \$1.8 million to build 12 seniors' units in Hay River, six duplexes. It's been a bit of a convoluted trail to get to these units, but some time in November 2005, seniors were expecting to be able to move into these units. It's now the end of February. There's been postponements and delays on a fairly consistent basis. There are seniors who are living in temporary accommodation right now, waiting to move into these units. I'd like to ask the Minister for an update on when these units are going to be ready for seniors to move into them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 473-15(4): Delays In Construction Of Senior Housing Units In Hay River

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we were hoping to have them completed at the end of this month, but it looks like it's a little behind schedule, so we're hoping to have them opened here shortly. But the dates I had is they were supposed to be open February 28th. Again, we're probably looking at another couple weeks, but I will get that information back to the Member.

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

Supplementary To Question 473-15(4): Delays In Construction Of Senior Housing Units In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm fairly familiar with the initial delays. There was a change in contractor at some point, but since the second set of contracts were awarded until now, can the Minister just tell us briefly what would be the nature of the problems that were encountered that would have resulted in another six-month delay? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 473-15(4): Delays In Construction Of Senior Housing Units In Hay River

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did run into some problems with the project earlier on in regard to doing inspections, and finally the work wasn't done enough to par that we had to go back and basically cancel the contract, bring another contractor in to complete the work, and that's why we're a little bit behind schedule. Again, we're hoping to have the units completed. The information I had it was supposed to be completed by the 28th of February, but if it's not, I will check and get the information back to the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 473-15(4): Delays In Construction Of Senior Housing Units In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation and the LHO have a fairly good idea at this point in time who the 12 candidates are who are moving into these units. Are they taking and making efforts to communicate with them while they're in this period? Some of them are in limbo, out of their own homes, kind of camping from friend to friend and neighbour to neighbour. Will the Minister commit that the local housing authority or the Housing Corporation will be in contact with those individuals to keep them apprised of what's going on and perhaps even offer them some assistance in the interim? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 473-15(4): Delays In Construction Of Senior Housing Units In Hay River

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'll attempt to check with our Hay River office and also headquarters to make sure that we try to accommodate these people knowing that there was a delay here. Hopefully we can work it out. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 474-15(4): Justice Committee Funding

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Just to follow up on my Member's statement last week. I just wanted to ask the Minister of Justice a quick question on the review that the justice committee was going to be conducting for justice committees and the allocation of funding across the NWT. I just want to ask the Justice Minister, what is the status of this review today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 474-15(4): Justice Committee Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The review is underway and I'm expecting that in the next couple of months we'll be able to come forward and talk about our findings. We have a lot of data, some of which I believe we've shared with the Member. We can talk a lot about the various different communities and the meetings that they're having, the work that they're doing; talk about whether or not they have a full or a part-time coordinator. So we've done quite a bit of research into this, but I think we have to make some conclusions and arrive at some conclusions as to why some committees are more successful than others. We are funding them in a number of ways. There's some special project funding available for those communities that want to take on additional activities because diversion is what I think we tend to think of, but there are also aftercare initiatives and prevention of crime initiatives. So there are a number of different ways these committees can access money, but we'll know more in the next couple of months. I should also add that much of the work that we're doing was driven by the motion in the House that the Member put forward, I think it's almost a year ago now, and appreciate his support and his advocacy in this area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 474-15(4): Justice Committee Funding

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister, when this review does roll out, is there going to be anything in next year's business plan that's going to be taking a lot of recommendations, I guess their own department recommendations, into how they can reallocate some of that money and assure that the communities that are really actively and fully participating in the justice committee work are getting the support mechanisms and the financial arrangements in place that allow them to keep building on that capacity at the community level? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 474-15(4): Justice Committee Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated, we have a base level of funding for all communities. I think it's \$20,000 available to every community, but some communities have levered additional federal money, and also others have applied for special project funding and been successful. I know that two of the communities the Member is responsible for have accessed some special project funding, but I think we're going to have a look at adequacy and look at how our funding is targeted. We do want to make sure that those who are working hard and pushing forward a number of initiatives have the resources they need. But, having said that, I don't want to diminish that base level of support for all communities. We're trying to encourage those who haven't been as active to get more active, because we think that this is a vital part of our programming. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 474-15(4): Justice Committee Funding

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I guess just one point. Some communities with small populations, like Kakisa for example, the crime rate is very low; very minimal. But they get the same amount of base funding as one of my communities where we have high youth crime rates, and justice committees are really busy and they do a lot of really good work in the community to address the community justice initiatives and carry out the program. It's a very successful program, mind you, Mr. Speaker, but the fact remains that the justice coordinators are severely overworked and the committees are severely overbooked and under funded. I just don't think it's up to the justice committee, justice coordinators, to scramble and find additional funding from the federal government or anything. I think it should be on the Justice department to assist them to find that extra funding. Give them the ideas of where they can get that money. Is there any avenue for that kind of support mechanism, just information sharing-wise? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 474-15(4): Justice Committee Funding

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, there is, and I think Members know that even the federal money that is flowed to five of the communities in the North who have accessed that comes through our department. I know we've done quite a bit of work in ensuring that money was accessible and available. Mr. Speaker, let me say that I don't think the answer is to look at what I consider a relatively low level of base support for all communities when I talk about \$20,000. To look at that money and talk about reducing that for some communities that aren't very active, I think we want to encourage them to be more active and I don't think \$20,000 is, on the whole, a lot of money. But I think what we need to do is look at adequacy, look at the level of activity in some of our more active committees, and ensure that we are there to help them access more funds, because I think that will be the

answer. I await the conclusions, look forward to working with the committee, and again thank the Member for his work in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 475-15(4): GNWT Fiscal Management

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance and it gets back to my Member's statement and the fact that it seems that lately money does grow on trees. The Minister has mentioned they found money in various pockets within FMBS and we've also heard lately of the \$525,000 for caribou management. I'm just wondering, I'd like to ask the Finance Minister how he can rationalize finding this money and spending it when just a few short months ago he sent every department scurrying around trying to go through a one percent reduction exercise? I'd like to hear from the Minister how he can rationalize that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 475-15(4): GNWT Fiscal Management

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of budget reduction scenarios is one that every government would face from time to time, and preferably not face at all. Unfortunately, our situation was, as the Member pointed out, reasons of lower corporate tax income affected us and we had to send departments back to look for some savings for the '05-06 year, as well as the business planning process. For departments, when they come up with new initiatives, if they don't have it from within their existing budget allocation, they would come back to FMB and request the funds and FMB would review those and see if, in fact, their proposal had enough in it to proceed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 475-15(4): GNWT Fiscal Management

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been my contention all along that I think this is a flaw in our budgeting process; that when this government wants to go through a reduction exercise, it doesn't have to come and consult with Regular Members on where those reductions should take place, and I think that's something that's flawed in our system. I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance, the \$450,000 that's being spent, I'd like to ask him, that contract was sole sourced to an American company. I'm wondering if there was a Canadian company that could have done the work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 475-15(4): GNWT Fiscal Management

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the money that was allocated for the work to deal with our human resource situation was found from within the organization. Number two, the contract was sole sourced, as I stated, under the review of HR and the fact

is this company is tied to the operations of PeopleSoft, which makes sense that we work with them since it is that program that we are having to fix to make sure we can do our jobs properly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 475-15(4): GNWT Fiscal Management

MR. RAMSAY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's very, very odd that FMBS can just all of a sudden find \$450,000 to sole source a contract to an American company; very strange. I'd like to ask the Finance Minister, you know, if we hadn't asked the questions the other day, when was this government going to let Regular Members know that this work was being done and what it costs? The Finance Minister himself, the other day, seemed surprised. I think he said \$150,000 then his staff had to advise him that it was \$450,000. He himself was surprised at the amount, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 475-15(4): GNWT Fiscal Management

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the timing of when information is forwarded to Members is one following through our process. For example, if departments find money from within their organizations, then if the required reporting schedule is anything over \$250,000 for intra-department transfers is recorded and tabled in this House. So that type of information is provided at that time. If we're seeking larger amounts of money, then it's through the FMB process, which requires the approval and then goes on the supplementary appropriation, then that's the way Members would deal with that, as well, through this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 476-15(4): Highway No. 1 And No. 7 Improvement Plans

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are with regard to our Tourism Strategy; however, I'd like to speak to the Minister of Transportation, though. The transportation systems are very important to the development of any part of our economy, to which tourism is one. But we're looking at continuing to push for chipseal for Highway No. 1 and No. 7. Does the Minister have any plans in the capital plan to be looking at this type of initiative, Mr. Speaker?

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

Return To Question 476-15(4): Highway No. 1 And No. 7 Improvement Plans

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a portion of highway one that's already chipsealed; up to the Fort Simpson-Providence junction. We continue to provide replacement on those sections of that section of road. There is no plan for further chipsealing of Highway No. 1 from the Providence-

Simpson junction onward, and also we have no plans to do any chipsealing on Highway No. 7. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 476-15(4): Highway No. 1 And No. 7 Improvement Plans

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The other question was, is it at least in the five-year capital plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 476-15(4): Highway No. 1 And No. 7 Improvement Plans

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now capital plan for Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 1 north of the Fort Simpson-Providence junction is to do some major reconstruction in those areas, along with the improvement of drainage and some realignment, minor realignment of that road to ensure that we have a firm base to be able to deal with all the resource development impact that we're expecting over the next while. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 476-15(4): Highway No. 1 And No. 7 Improvement Plans

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think one of the best ways to capture more tourists for the NWT is by word of mouth. Over the past few years, tours have been complaining about the condition of the road. I know that we're going to spend millions on upgrading it, but will we see in our lifetime any attempt to chipseal the roads, Highway No. 1 and No. 7 towards Fort Simpson on to complete the Deh Cho trail? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I don't know if that's asking the Minister's personal opinion or not. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 476-15(4): Highway No. 1 And No. 7 Improvement Plans

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that depends on how long the Member expects to be around.

---Laughter

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, we can fully understand that the Member is very interested in seeing chipseal as part of the capital plans for Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 1. It is in our plan right now to do the first phase of this project, to improve the drainage, improve the foundation. We could not do any of the chipseal until we can improve those areas. We need to have a firm foundation. We did try some pilot projects in the Liard area which did not hold. The terrain, the makeup of the soil was not suitable for that. We have to look at ways that we can improve that. We'd like to be able to do the chipseal. We have been talking to the pipeline proponent about legacy projects. We have been talking to them about improving the safety and reliability of the road and that includes chipseal.

However, until we can find the additional dollars that we need for investment, we can't commit to that. Our dollars right now that are committed for the next fall is for reconstruction of those roads to ensure that we have safety, but they will continue to be gravel roads. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 477-15(4): Human Resource Practices

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for Mr. Roland and everything in my Member's statement today talked about a helping hand approach, not a hand-out technique. So, Mr. Speaker, it's time we share the opportunities before us to everyone. My question to the Minister is, our Human Resources department has now been created. What type of initiatives are being undertaken at this time so we can ensure that we attract and retain qualified work forces in the examples I provided earlier today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 477-15(4): Human Resource Practices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the whole area of human resources and how we attract qualified people covers a very broad area. Is it the manner of how we advertise the equivalencies or what's required? That's been an issue that's been brought up on probably countless times in this forum, about whether we're requiring too many specifics or we're being too broad, to general, and, in fact, are we writing a job description to fit an individual? Those are some of the issues that we've had to deal with and why we've gone towards the human resource service centre process, so that we can be more consistent in how we do that and, as well, how we deal with those who would apply for jobs in the territory. So I think we've started to bring things together and then hopefully time will tell if, in fact, we're following the right path and ensuring we're getting the job done right. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 477-15(4): Human Resource Practices

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the opportunity is before us. We have an opportunity to stop giving people a fish and we have an opportunity to start teaching them how to do it on their own. What I mean by that is we can show them where that secret spot of going to create your own opportunities for you. I know we have territorial employees that help people write resumes. I know we have people who go out of their way to ensure that when they write the equivalencies, they take the extra step to ensure their experience and knowledge gets on paper, but, Mr. Speaker, the ideas I have suggested out there about posting resume samples on the web, interview coaching and maybe even acknowledging resumes have gone into the abyss of human resources. Mr. Speaker, those are the types of

examples. Would the Minister consider those examples seriously so we can start help serving our people and putting the human side into human resources again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 477-15(4): Human Resource Practices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, putting the human side into human resources is something we are trying to do already. As the Member stated, we already do a lot of things to try to make people as comfortable as possible, provide the information. Is putting a link on the web site one of the things we can do? It's a possibility. Adding one more piece to what we do provide. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 477-15(4): Human Resource Practices

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that was a yes, but I will wait until I reread the transcripts. Mr. Speaker, equivalencies are a problem and I think the Minister knows that very well. So one of the problems I see is that northerners have trouble maybe articulating that, not in all cases but I want to ensure that we get northerners who have ample experience, who are qualified individuals, who are committed to the North, who want to stay here but want to work. I want to ensure that we give them the best opportunity rather than just automatically hiring someone with a degree from Calgary, Toronto or who knows where. I am talking about opportunity for local people who have experience and can bring their wherewithal to the job through these opportunities. Can the Minister look at opportunities where we can put examples and help people with their equivalence and experience to bring that forward on their resumes through our hiring practice? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 477-15(4): Human Resource Practices

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we already do a fair bit in this area of trying to ensure northerners have the opportunity to apply on the jobs and provide that they do have equivalencies, and we've made that allocation through years of trying to ensure northerners are able to take on the jobs that the government does have. So we do have and have implemented many things to try to encourage northerners to put their names forward and we will look at continuing to evolve in this area to ensure we are doing what we can. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, what we need to have are qualified people doing the right job. If we don't have that, we will continue to run into other problem areas of not getting the job done right and causing more problems. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 478-15(4): Community Emergency Preparedness

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to change gears a little bit and ask questions of the Minister of MACA. During our debate of the budget, I asked questions about government's readiness to deal with any potential catastrophic disasters that might befall the Territories. I don't want to sound negative, but we have seen situations around the world where all communication systems fail and we have to get to the basics and not everyone is able to do that; assuming, for example, there are no telephone lines. We have been experiencing lots of power outages and if everything shuts down for a few hours and we are dealing with minus 40 degree temperatures, I tell you I am not sure if everybody is ready to get to the basics. I asked these questions of MACA and I was kind of looked at, and maybe it's just my feeling, but why are you being so morbid.

I would just like to highlight the seriousness of this issue and ask the Minister when he's planning on giving us the information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 478-15(4): Community Emergency Preparedness

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what information the Member is requesting. We had indicated that we would provide a briefing to committee if there was a desire for us to do so. The emergency plans that we have rest with each community and municipality. The community governments have their own plans for emergency preparedness. The territorial government coordinates the territorial emergency measures plan and the actions on emergencies that are broader than one community. Any plans that are done within the municipality are with the community government. That includes emergency generators, if there are facilities that require them, then the building owners usually take that responsibility on. If there is communications that need to be dealt with, then we, as government, if it affects more than one community, we work together with the different agencies to try to deal with that. We have a territorial-wide committee that deals with emergencies. We meet on a regular basis. We also have staff that deal with emergencies and we have a partnership arrangement with the RCMP in search and rescue, if it's emergency based. So there are a number of things we have, Mr. Speaker. I have offered that to the committee and I still continue to have that offer on the table. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 478-15(4): Community Emergency Preparedness

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate that there are EMR staff and we do have funding and there is coordination required, but I don't believe that any of those organizations are ready for cases where there is no means of communication. If something happened and we had a power outage for a very long time and there is no telephone service and people don't know what the

problem is, and I don't think there is readily available information or people-friendly information. There is no information...We can't call 911. Well, actually 911 wouldn't work if the telephone goes down. I was looking for the Minister to make a commitment to work with all the communities and the Territories to notch up the level of readiness further to contemplate situations where we have catastrophic failure of communication and people should have basic information readily available at their fingertips. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 478-15(4): Community Emergency Preparedness

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what that means, "notch up the readiness" of the communities. Each community in the Northwest Territories has an emergency plan. Each community in the Northwest Territories reviews the plans; it's required we review the plans on an ongoing basis. Our department provides support to the communities to ensure that the plan is complete, to ensure the details that are required in the plan are worked out. We provide the backup staff; we provide the backup to the communities in a case of emergency. If there are other concerns such as communication if the power goes out, the phones still work because the land lines certainly work. The concern would have to be a lot more clearer for me to work towards ramping up or ensuring that there's more. I am not sure what else can be done that the Member is raising as a concern. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 478-15(4): Community Emergency Preparedness

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If he keeps going like this, I am likely to take back all the compliments I have given him through this session, Mr. Speaker. I don't understand what there is for him not to understand. We've had an experience in Tuktoyaktuk where the whole town was...not the whole town, but much of it was under water. It was flooded. We've had tsunamis in Thailand. We had a hurricane situation in New Orleans. We could experience situations where all of our communication links could go down and I am telling you that people do not know what to do. Let me ask this specific question to the Minister: Would the Minister, if you would be listening to me, would the Minister make a commitment to ask his staff -- and I know that he has staff that looks at this -- would they contact all the municipal emergency response organizations and see if they are ready and how are they ready to respond to catastrophic crisis situations, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 478-15(4): Community Emergency Preparedness

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I apologize if the Member thought I wasn't listening. I was trying to ask my colleagues when Tuk ever flooded. I think maybe we were referring to Fort McPherson when we had some concern over flooding last spring. Mr. Speaker, again I want to assure the Member that we do talk to the communities.

We talk to them on a regular basis. Each community has an emergency plan. If she's asking to go back and make sure every community has an emergency plan, I guess we could do that, but we do that already. We have emergency plans in each community and it outlines who is the lead contact, who would be in charge of the community, who declares emergency measures in the community, where people would go in case of an emergency, and which vehicles would be used and who would be contacted to evacuate the community. I am not sure what else we can do. She's asking me to go back and check. Okay, we'll go back and check, but we do that anyway as part of our routine operations, but I am not sure where we go with this. Each community has their plan; each community follows their plans. In the case of Tuktoyaktuk where we had a storm, in the case of Fort McPherson where we had concern over fire, and in Tulita over smoke, and Fort McPherson where we had a flood, the plans were followed and they worked well. I am not sure where else we go with it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

AN HON. MEMBER: Emergency statement, Sandy?

--Laughter

Question 479-15(4): Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement before, the more money that I see leaving the Northwest Territories and the number of dollars I have seen leaving in the past, the more upset I am starting to become. I think it's feeling that the leadership across the NWT has to share. In talking to the Premier and listening to some of the comments he made, I know he shares the same concern. The Premier just came back from a meeting with the new Prime Minister, so I would like to ask the Premier if he had any preliminary discussions yet with Mr. Harper on when we might be able to see a resource revenue sharing deal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 479-15(4): Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly had discussions with the Prime Minister about resource revenue sharing. I did outline to him the concerns that we have with the amount of revenues that are flowing out of the Northwest Territories from non-renewable resource development. I thanked him for his comments that he had provided to me on paper during the election and he reaffirmed that those were certainly as solid today as they were the day that he wrote them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 479-15(4): Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Premier for that. You know, we have a lot of money leaving the Northwest Territories and if the pipeline goes ahead, there's going to be potentially \$750 million a day leaving the Territories. They think by giving us \$500 million for a social impact fund over 10 years, it's going to keep us happy. That's one day flow plus some change. So the question I would like to ask the Premier is, do we have a timeline as to when we can expect these negotiations to start? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 479-15(4): Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't have a specific timeline, Mr. Speaker. While I was in Ottawa, I met with both with the Minister for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Honourable Jim Prentice, and also with the Prime Minister. Both of them expressed support for our position on resource revenue sharing and reaffirmed that we should be the primary beneficiaries of the revenues, but these were introductory meetings, initial meetings. It was too early to begin talking about specific timelines. Mr. Speaker, I can say that Minister Prentice, at the meeting with him on Friday, committed to coming to the Northwest Territories before the end of March to further discussions on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 479-15(4): Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I think of all the money that's leaving the Northwest Territories... We want a highway for the NWT, \$750 million. There's so much that we can help to fund if we get part of our resource revenue sharing. I would like to ask the Minister, with the minority government in Ottawa, how confident is this government that we may have some sort of agreement-in-principle in place if we have another election soon? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 479-15(4): Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think I can safely say that right now, we have agreement-in-principle verbally on resource revenue sharing. The federal Minister and the Prime Minister both hold the same position that I do: the North should be the primary beneficiary of resource revenues. Mr. Speaker, as a minority government, there is always a question mark on the life of the government, whether it will last a full term or not. There is that kind of uncertainty. Mr. Speaker, I think the federal Prime Minister and Minister are aware of it and are willing to work with us on it. As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of DIAND has committed to coming to the Northwest Territories in March to have further discussions on this and other matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Oral questions. Written questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 34-15(4): Subcategory Assessment Rates

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question to the WCB Minister, Honourable Charles Dent.

1. The WCB has been increasing the rate of subcategory 76 to the maximum or near maximum for four years straight. WCB claims this is due to high claim costs in the subcategory. What steps has the WCB taken in the past four years to correct the high claim costs offenders in this subcategory?
2. What specific reasons does the WCB have for not creating a merit-based assessment program for all participants in subcategory 76?
3. How are subcategory placements decided? What are the specific criteria methodology for placing one type of business into any specific subcategory?
4. What appeal process is in place if a particular business feels it is not correctly placed into the right subcategory?
5. Can the WCB please outline the appeal process that participants have for their specific annual assessment?
6. What process is there to review the subcategories where the assessment rate in certain subcategories hit maximum increase or near maximum increase for three to four years?
7. What mechanisms are in place to share the cost of increasing claims across the subcategories? How does this process get triggered?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lee. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return To Written Question 22-15(4): EDAP Program

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a provisional Return to Written Question 22-15(4) asked by Mr. Robert McLeod on February 6, 2006, to the Honourable David Krutko, Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, regarding the Expanded Downpayment Assistance Program, EDAP.

Many Beaufort-Delta region communities have small populations and a limited number of EDAP clients. Even though client names would not be released, it is possible that client identities could be deduced in some instances. As I have mentioned in my returns to Oral Questions 17-15(4) and 61-15(4), the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is very concerned with protecting the private and personal information of its clients. I would like to take some additional time to ensure that the information released would not violate privacy considerations.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to provide an answer to this question no later than Monday, March 6, 2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 23-15(4): Agency Nurses In The North

Mr. Speaker I am in receipt of Return to Written Question 23-15(4) asked by Mr. Yakeleya on February 6, 2006, to the Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Health and Social Services, regarding agency nurses in the North.

- 1) Can the Minister provide a list of numbers of 2004-2005 agency nurses in the North and what is projected for 2006-2007?

In 2004-2005, the GNWT employed 53 agency nurses and spent \$580,632.58 on agency fees. As of November 2005, \$354,037 had been spent for 40 nurses.

The Department of Health and Social Services projects that it will spend approximately \$300,000 to \$500,000 in agency fees in 2006-2007.

Corporate human resources and the regional authorities are working to use the internal GNWT nurse relief pool more effectively. However, there will continue to be times when agency nurses will be used in order to avoid closures of community health centres.

- 2) Can the Minister provide a breakdown of agency nurses in the regions in the year of 2004-2005?

In 2004-2005, the breakdown of agency nurses in the regions was:

Twenty-four agency nurses were used in the Inuvik authority. Eighteen agency nurses were used in the Sahtu authority. Two agency nurses were used in the Yellowknife authority. Two agency nurses were used in the Fort Smith authority. Seven agency nurses were used in the Deh Cho authority.

- 3) Can the Minister provide the average stay in the role as nurses in the regions?

In 2004-2005, the average length of individual contracts for agency nurses was: agency nurses stayed an average of 32 days in the Inuvik authority. Agency nurses stayed an average of 23 days in the Sahtu authority. Agency nurses stayed an average of 12 days in the Yellowknife authority. Agency nurses stayed an average of 23 days in the Fort Smith authority. Agency nurses stayed an average of 19 days in the Deh Cho authority.

- 4) Can the Minister provide an outline of reducing the role of agency nurses in the regions?

Human Resources and the regional authorities are developing an internal relief pool of qualified nurses. As of January 2006, approximately 23 nurses were trained and have started to provide relief services at community health centres.

Human Resources and the regional authorities have also implemented a Community Health Nurse Development Program. This program is a competency-based, on-the-job, development program designed to provide northern nurses with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to

provide nursing services at community health centres. This is a two-year development program

To date, two aboriginal registered nurses are enrolled in the program in Deline, Norman Wells, Fort McPherson and Fort Resolution. An additional position is being advertised in Aklavik. The department, authorities and corporate human resources will identify other locations for development opportunities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Returns to written questions. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 11: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 99-15(4): Tourism 2010 - A Tourism Plan For The Northwest Territories

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Tourism 2010 - A Tourism Plan for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Tabled Document 100-15(4): Caribou Harvesting Identification Graphic

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of public education, I am tabling a document, actually a note sent to me last week by the Premier, the Honourable Joe Handley, during my questioning during caribou harvesting regulations. The issue at the time, Mr. Speaker, was how to tell the difference between a bull and a cow caribou. I find that Mr. Handley's drawing based on his extensive experience is very instructive for people like me and, yet, Mr. Speaker, I believe the document is still suitable for legislative and family viewing. Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 12: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 16-15(4): Recognizing The Value Of Elders' Knowledge

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 2nd, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the government establish standards for paying elders for their traditional knowledge comparable to fees paid to other expert consultants; and further, that the government implement measures to ensure that payments to elders are not clawed back from their pensions. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18, Committee Reports 5, 6 and 7. By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 9-15(4), Committee of the Whole may sit beyond the hour of adjournment until it is prepared to report, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 16: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The committee wishes to review the Department of Executive and the Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Very good. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will commence with that after lunch. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are going to now consider the Department of Executive. I would like to ask Premier Handley if he would like to deliver his opening comments. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2006-2007 Main Estimates for the Department of the Executive.

The 2005-2006 Main Estimates have been restated from \$8.946 million to \$10.423 million. The difference is due to three main adjustments: the transfer of the responsibility for devolution and resource revenue sharing negotiations from the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; the transfer of the Bureau of Statistics from the Department of Finance; and the transfer of Intergovernmental Affairs to the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

The transfers were part of a broader reorganization plan to improve the effectiveness of coordination of government. As a critical priority for this government, the responsibilities for devolution were transferred to the Executive to facilitate the interdepartmental coordination that will be of the utmost importance over the next year to ensure that the best deal for the Northwest Territories is realized.

The strategic planning branch will provide strategic advice on matters that have government-wide implications, help update and implement the government's strategic plan and ensure that we have current, consistent and accurate statistical information.

For 2006-2007, the Department of Executive is requesting a budget of \$13.197 million, which represents a 26.62 percent, or \$2.774 million, increase from the restated 2005-2006 Main Estimates.

Improving Planning And Coordination In Government

Following advice from Members of the House as well as local and regional leaders, the Executive is leading an initiative to improve planning and coordinating functions of government in order to provide for more efficient and effective delivery of government services to the public.

This initiative, which has been developed in consultation with committees of the Legislative Assembly, includes improving our government's regional operations. Given the economic, political and social changes in our communities, we must ensure our government, and the programs and services we provide, are easily accessible to the public. To assist in this goal, our government is proposing the creation of five new regional superintendent positions.

To fulfill its mandate to provide improved planning and coordination in government, the Executive is asking for new funding in the amount of \$2.182 million.

Other Increases - Forced Growth

The Executive is also requesting approval for the \$754,000 in forced growth increases as follows:

- \$546,000 related to the salary increases resulting from the Collective Agreement,
- \$25,000 for other O and M forced growth increases, and
- \$55,000 related to the extension of devolution and resource revenue sharing negotiations.

It is important the Commissioner's office has the resources to do the job effectively. It is proposed that an increase of \$100,000 be made for the improved administration and operation of the Commissioner's office.

The Executive is also requesting \$28,000 in increased core funding to the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association as a result of increased compensation and benefits requirements consistent with those offered to the public service.

Other Initiatives

Finally, the Executive is seeking an increase of \$150,000 for a grant-in-kind for band council subsidized office leases in the communities of Tulita, Fort McPherson, Fort Resolution, Fort Providence and Deline. This is a non-cash requirement and will be offset by a similar increase to grant-in-kind revenue in the Department of Public Works and Services.

Madam Chair, I am now prepared to answer any questions committee members may have. Thank you. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier Handley. At this time, I would like to ask the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, Mr. Robert Hawkins, if you would please read the committee's response to the main estimates for the Department of Executive. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Members of the Accountability and Oversight committee had an opportunity to meet with the Premier on September 20, 2005, to review the draft business plan for the Department of the Executive.

Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget for the Executive since the committee reviewed the draft business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$13.197 million in operations expense for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates and budget-planning cycle.

Socio-Economic Impact Fund

On July 18, 2005, the Government of Canada announced their intent to establish a \$500 million socio-economic impact fund to mitigate the impacts of the Mackenzie gas project on communities located along the proposed pipeline route. This fund came about as a result of a collaborative effort between regional aboriginal leaders and the GNWT to encourage the federal government to acknowledge the costs, both social and economic, that NWT communities face as a result of the pipeline construction.

The 2006-2007 budget includes funding for a new senior advisor position to coordinate GNWT involvement with the socio-economic impact fund. The standing committee has significant concerns about the socio-economic impact fund and does not support the new position at this time.

The committee believes it is premature to propose this position in the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates. Although the fund was announced in July, federal legislation to enable the money to flow was not passed prior to dissolution of Parliament. There is no guarantee that the new Conservative government will follow through with this agreement. In response to questions put to the Conservative Party about its support for the fund and its willingness to pass the necessary legislation as quickly as possible, the Conservative leader declared support for "the general principles and objectives of the socio-economic impact fund." Members are not convinced that enabling legislation will be passed imminently. So although Members see merit in the GNWT having a seat at the table that would see the fund distributed, they see no urgency and, therefore, recommend that government refrain from creating a socio-economic impact senior advisor position until such time as there is parliamentary assurance.

The committee is also opposed to the GNWT taking on administrative costs to oversee the allocation of the SIF and certainly does not support funding a new position to coordinate GNWT involvement in that context. It is the committee's position that all administrative costs should be borne by the federal government and included in the Socio-Economic Impact Fund Agreement.

When, and if, the SIF goes ahead, it will not flow through the Government of the Northwest Territories. Nonetheless, Members agree with the government that it is in the interest of NWT residents for the GNWT to be at the table. The GNWT has an important role to assist with

the coordination and effective use of all funding intended to mitigate the negative impacts of development, irrespective of its source. The GNWT also has a level of expertise to lend to the process.

However, the committee feels very strongly that the case could and should be made to the federal government that the SIF must include a contribution to the GNWT for reasonable administrative costs. The fund is ample enough that the committee sees no reason it add a financial burden to the GNWT.

Finally, committee believes it is excessive to create a position that will exclusively oversee one single federal fund, especially since funding will not flow through the GNWT. Members see this as inefficient use of scarce resources. The GNWT is faced with fiscal restraint. Legislators are being forced to make difficult decisions about how to best use scarce resources. Managers are being asked to make do with less. The creation of this position, as presented in the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates, is not acceptable. The work could be done by current GNWT employees. The GNWT already has eight staff at the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office in Hay River, whose mandate is to focus on government-wide coordination, planning and strategy formulation, to maximize the benefits and to mitigate the adverse impacts of the development of the proposed Mackenzie gas project. Moreover, the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates proposes four new regional superintendents for the Department of the Executive. Committee members consider these new positions well placed to be the local liaison between the GNWT and the regions on the SIF rollout.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that the government delete the proposed socio-economic impact fund senior advisor position.

Extraordinary Funding Initiatives And Impacts On GNWT Responsibilities

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, along with counterparts on the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, notes that there are an increasing number of new or extraordinary funds becoming available to regions and communities for a variety of programs and projects, worth a considerable sum of money. The SIF is worth \$500 million over 10 years. The federal gas tax will flow \$37.5 million to community governments for new infrastructure funding over a five-year period beginning in 2005. The municipal and rural infrastructure fund will provide joint federal-territorial community infrastructure funding of \$32 million over five years, \$16 million from the federal government and \$16 million from the GNWT, while tax-based communities are expected to contribute another \$7 million. The community capacity building initiative includes \$35 million to communities, as a result of the Northern Strategy agreement.

Irrespective of the source of the funds, or their criteria, communities' decisions to make use the funds available to them will impact upon the responsibilities and priorities of the GNWT. As communities and regions begin to access these funds, identify their priorities and move forward with projects, the committee perceives a need for the GNWT to

have a clear position on how the choices made by the communities will affect GNWT responsibilities.

Rather than creating a new position exclusively to oversee the SIF, the committee suggests it would be a better use of resources for the new regional superintendents of the Executive to coordinate all extraordinary funds, to ensure there are no competing interests, duplication or downloading of responsibilities.

Resource Development Impacts

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight takes very seriously the responsibility of the GNWT to ensure that all residents of the NWT are prepared to take advantage of opportunities presented by economic development, and that adverse social impacts of development are mitigated in all communities. The committee is concerned that the socio-economic impact fund only addresses the needs of regions directly along the proposed pipeline route. Committee points out that the impacts of large-scale development are felt throughout the territory, including smaller communities that are not directly on the proposed route. The same is true of the larger centres: Hay River, Fort Smith and Yellowknife. Committee urgently reminds the GNWT of its responsibility to all NWT communities.

Coordinating Role For Government-Wide Initiatives

During the review of the 2006-2009 Draft Business Plan, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight noted that the Department of the Executive was taking on increasing responsibility for coordinating government-wide initiatives. The committee suggested it would be preferable that the department whose mandate makes them best suited takes lead responsibility to coordinate initiatives that involve more than one department. For example, the committee recommended that MACA would be better suited to take the lead for Canada Games 2007, because of its mandate for sports and recreation. Similarly, the responsibility for International Polar Year should rest with a department with expertise in the area of research and the environment, for example, the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

The committee recommended that the Executive review its coordinating role in government-wide initiatives very carefully and consider if a program department with expertise specific to the initiative could take the lead for inter-departmental coordination.

At the root of the recommendation was the concern that as government units that provide services to government, such as the Executive, take on increasing responsibility, there is need for additional resources. The cost of government administration is growing at an alarming rate and the committee sees a need to be cautious. As legislators, we must ensure that any new central administrative initiatives, such as the coordination of a government-wide initiative, are looked at very critically to consider if there are already existing resources available to take the lead.

Since that time, the government has embarked on an initiative to improve planning and coordination in government. Committee is generally pleased with the initiative to date. However, as this work moves ahead, committee members caution the government that unwarranted administrative growth will not be supported.

Duplication Of Mandates And Activities - Executive And The Ministry Of Aboriginal Affairs

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has been concerned for some time now about the duplication of mandates and activities of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of the Executive, particularly the office of intergovernmental affairs and strategic planning. One year ago, during the review of the 2005-2006 Draft Main Estimates, the committee recommended that the Premier undertake an internal review of the two departments to identify where duplication exists and to come forward with options to address this.

The committee acknowledges that considerable work has been initiated to improve the planning and coordinating functions of government, including the plan to move the intergovernmental functions from the Executive into the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The committee supports this organizational change and hopes that this will lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness in government-to-government negotiations. While implementing this initiative, the committee again urges the government to keep in mind there is a need to keep public service growth in check.

Finally, some Members caution that as we move forward to a new era of intergovernmental relationships in a self-government political environment, the significant relationship between the GNWT and aboriginal governments must continue to be reflected in the GNWT structure. Madam Chair, that's all I have at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will ask Premier Handley if he would like to bring witnesses to the table.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I would, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier Handley. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he would please escort the witnesses to the table and we will commence with the Department of Executive.

Premier Handley, for the record, could you please introduce your delegation?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me are Bob McLeod, deputy minister for the Executive; and, Carl Bird, director of corporate services for the Executive. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier Handley. I will now ask the Members if they have any general comments. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to welcome the Premier and his staff here with us this afternoon. General comments on the Department of Executive. I would like to first start off with this SIF position, the new position that is proposed. I sound like a broken record again, but I have mentioned this a number of times. This strategic investment by the federal government, the \$500 million over 10 years earmarked for

communities along the pipeline route doesn't do anything for 70 percent of the population of the Northwest Territories, and those are the people who live in Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Smith. If we want to continue to call ourselves a public government and a true public government, I don't think we would have let that happen. Again, I don't want to say that the communities don't deserve the \$500 million. They deserve that and then some. What I am getting at is impacts from resource development are going to happen in the population centres, Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith. I lived through the resource activity here in the past 10 years with the diamond mines that have opened up north of Yellowknife. Most certainly, all you have to do is walk downtown Yellowknife and you can notice the change. The dynamic is completely different now than it was 10 or 12 years ago prior to a diamond mine opening on our back door.

In looking at resource development, who is going to help out the city of Yellowknife, or the town of Hay River, or Fort Smith, for that matter? We have to try...that is obviously why we need a resource revenue deal and devolution and more control from Ottawa. I am very much looking forward to that day; but in the interim, I don't see how we can manage without that. I don't understand the necessity for this position, the SIF position. To me, it makes absolutely no sense. The Government of the Northwest Territories is not going to administer the \$500 million. It is going right over top of our heads directly to the communities. We are not going to see 10 cents of that money flow through the Government of the Northwest Territories. I am of the opinion that a firm guideline or policy that is put in place to communities on how this money can be spent is all that is needed. We don't need to hire somebody to give us a policy or some guidelines. I will leave that one there.

The other thing I wanted to mention as I find it really interesting how the Executive is requesting \$28,000 in increased funding to the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association. I don't deny that they should get an increase, but how we could just pick these two and ignore the requests coming in every day from other NGOs and other people out there that are requesting some money because the cost of living is going up and everything is costing NGOs more money, and how we can, in good conscience, single out two of them and give them increased funding without looking at the whole picture is beyond me. Again, I think all the power to the Status of Women Council and Native Women's Association for getting the increase, but where is the increase for the other NGOs? That is a very big question that certainly has to be answered.

The other thing I wanted to mention, and I am happy with the way things are laid out in terms of the reorganization, that was a long time coming. I would like to thank the Premier and his department for taking a look at that.

One other thing that I want to bring up, and I guess I can get to it in detail, but the government has spent a lot of money in the Department of Executive in the past on the Visual Identity Program. This is a very interesting one, Madam Chair. I would like to know, going back to 2003, what it cost the Government of the Northwest Territories to come up with this Visual Identity Program. How come, if you look across the Government of the Northwest Territories across the web sites that are being developed, the amount of money that is being spent on these web

sites and they are not even following the Visual Identity Program. It just does not make any sense. I am going to ask some specific questions just to prepare the Minister and his staff on this. It is like building a house and not putting any doors on it. What are we doing with the Visual Identity Program? Where is it at right now and where is it going? Those are certainly some questions that the Minister can look forward to. I will leave it there, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): If I could ask Members to please turn to page 2-17, activity summary, Commissioner's office, operations expenditure summary, \$287,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 2-18 and 19, information item, Commissioner's office, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 2-21, activity summary, Ministers' offices, operations expenditure summary, \$3.956 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 2-23, activity summary, Ministers' offices, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$173,000. Contributions, total contributions, \$542,000. Total of grants and contributions, \$715,000. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, as my colleague Mr. Ramsay mentioned a few minutes ago, we are looking more and more specifically at how we are assisting our partners, the non-government organizations, other agencies that we do business with, Madam Chair, through direct contracts, service contracts, and in a couple of rare cases, through long-term core funding. Now, the two organizations that are named specifically in these pages here are the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories and the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories. Both organizations do a terrific job in their constituencies, I believe, Madam Chair, and have long been associated with the GNWT. In relation to the grants and contributions made to these two organizations at least, has there been any increment applied for the coming fiscal year in relation to salaries and benefits? It has been demonstrated amply, Madam Chair, that those organizations that we have relied on to help us out, we are not providing them with, what I call, a sustaining increment to help them stay competitive and to attract more people. How are we doing with the Native Women's Association and the Status of Women Council, Madam Chair?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me just say that the Status of Women Council is not an NGO. It is a statutory organization through our government. It differs from an NGO, Madam Chair. We

recognize it as such and we do include in here an amount of \$15,000 for forced growth increases for the Status of Women that is primarily, if not totally, salaries and benefits.

Madam Chair, I might also explain, while the Native Women's Association is not a statutory creation by the GNWT, its mandate is very similar to the Status of Women Council, and we have given it the same benefits because of its mandate. As Members may recall, in 2005 we did a review of our funding for various organizations and did come up with two categories; one being those that are statutory creations of the government and those that are clearly NGOs. In the case of the Status of Women and the Native Women's Association, we recognize them in that sense and do provide for forced growth increases. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the information. In terms of percentage, the Premier indicated that \$15,000 was included in the Status of Women Council's contribution. Is there a direct correlation there to an increase or increment in salaries and benefits? If so, how much are we adding to the pay package there, Madam Chair?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, yes, there is a direct relationship. This is a three percent increase for the Status of Women and for the Native Women's Association. This represents the same increase in pay package as government employees receive as part of the Collective Agreement. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are there any other agencies or organizations, Madam Chair, that the Executive does rely on to deliver any services and, if so, are there any built-in measurements for increasing their salary components as we recognize with the two women's organizations, Madam Chair?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, these are the only two organizations within the Executive that qualify as category one. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, perhaps I am asking an opinion here. Check me if I am, but would the Minister agree that, with the Executive's oversight responsibility for all departments, does the Executive then have a lead for deciding whether the department organizations that we do have business with...The departments of Health and Education are two departments that especially utilize arm's length organizations to deliver our services. Is it up to the Executive to set that policy and decide whether or not we are going to make those increments available, Madam Chair?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The study that was done on whether organizations qualified as category one, basically statutory creations, or category two which would be simply non-government organizations, was a study that was done by the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Madam Chair, we would continue to take advice from the Financial Management Board Secretariat in similar kinds of studies in the future.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to speak in support of the issues being brought up here about the need for NGOs to have in consideration of their funding for some kind of a built-in forced growth mechanism. Madam Chair, I appreciate that the Status Council and the Native Women's Association might be different agents and they are not technically NGOs. Good on them for being able to achieve a three percent increase which is not a large amount, and which is in line with automatic forced growth increased spending that we get in front of us to approve with respect to our government employees every year. These forced growth, whether they arise out of the Collective Agreement or whatever, those are even questioned. We automatically approve those every year in the budget. I would like to ask the Premier to give the idea of building in some forced growth increase for some of the major NGOs a serious thought and if he could take it to FMBS to review that.

I think what we should remember here is that some of these key NGOs, and they are everywhere. They are in many places. Some of them are very well established. Some of them provide services that I think the government feels are best left with these groups, but they do provide essential frontline services that are integral to running of our communities and allowing the people to access these valuable programs, whether they be -- I could only think of Yellowknife examples -- but whether it be YWCA or the Seniors' Association or women's centre. There are lots of organizations that are actually delivering some real key programs that would cost a lot more for the GNWT to deliver if they had to do it themselves. They have to compete for the same workforce. They could only hire and keep some of these key personnel at a low cost for so long. I do appreciate that. There might be questions raised about how far do we go? Do we start funding increments for the NWT Darts Association or something? I don't want to pick on the Darts Association, but we will need to do some category and analyzing about some of where do we fit in these categories. I think that this is an important issue that should have the attention of the Premier and this government to see how where do we go from here if we continue to cap the funding of some of these key organizations that provide essential services in our communities. Unless we do something as a government, we might find ourselves having these programs transferred back to the GNWT. I don't think that is where we want to head to when we are talking always about empowering our communities, supporting our NGOs and in so many ways they are real important partners to delivering public programs and services.

I tell you, this is right up there. It is a very important issue in all communities that we visited. It is an issue that

Minister Miltenberger and other Ministers have committed to in terms of looking at multi-year funding and looking at some sort of built-in mechanism for forced growth funding possibilities. I want to look at this Status of Women Council and the NWT Native Women's Association funding increased as a positive step. It is good on them that they got that. I think that we should look at the second tier of organizations out there who provide similar services that they be looked at for forced growth increases. I think this is a very dire situation that needs the attention of the Premier and this government.

I just want to state that in support of what is being spoken about here and ask the Premier if he would look at looking at this further and see if we can build up a second category of organizations that could come under this umbrella. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would be happy to review with the Members at some point at their leisure, the report that was done by the Financial Management Board Secretariat which identified those that were eligible through statutory obligations for forced growth increases and those that were NGOs that were not. Madam Chair, we certainly don't want to destroy the viability of some of the NGOs who provide good service, but there are some NGOs that we work with and receive good service from who are quite large. If we were to simply provide all of the NGOs that we work with with forced growth increases, it could be very expensive. Madam Chair, I would be happy to sit down with the committee and go through that review again. If there are some that Members feel we should reconsider, then I am open to reconsidering them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps we can put that on the AOC agenda to review the report, but I just want to put on the record that I think that that is not to say that I accept the boundaries being set and looking at this issue from the point of view of who is technically NGO and who is not and thereby excluding or making just those two organizations that we are looking at here as the only ones that are eligible.

I think we do the same for many...We provide funding for many different governments and organizations, NGOs and all sorts of issues. I think that it is inadequate for us that we don't have a set policy right now on how do we show that we value the work that the NGOs provide and that we understand that they have to contend with everyday cost of living and inflation area pressures. It is not to say that we have to keep on increasing the funding, but it is simply saying...and I think there should be a government policy that recognizes the reality of cost of doing business that keeps going up. If we do value some of the programs that these NGOs are delivering on our behalf, some of them are very essential to the well being of our residents in all communities, then we have to step up to the plate and see what kinds of things we can do to help them with that, rather than trying to say that, on the basis of this study or that study, we have found a way to distinguish them from those who are able to get incremental increases from this government. As long as the Premier and the government

is willing to approach this issue with the attitude of trying to fix it rather than trying to defend what is in place now, then I would be happy to work with the AOC committee to see how we could come to improve this situation as we haven't now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The study that I am referring to that lays out which organizations we provide core funding to and so on is included what we call the third-party accountability framework. That does, in effect, create a policy, but I am certainly open to reviewing, if you feel there are some inadequacies in that framework, but that is currently our policy. That is one that we developed about a year ago, I believe. I would be happy to sit down with AOC and review it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier Handley. For the benefit of those Members joining us, we are on page 2-23, Ministers' offices. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I am going to follow along the same lines as my colleagues on these questions. The \$28,000 in increased core funding for the Status of Women Council and Native Women's Association, I can understand that was done, as the Premier put it in his opening comments, to be consistent with those offered to the public service, but I have been here for...This is the third budget I have gone through. I don't remember there being an increase even though there were increases to the UNW's Collective Agreement. Each year for the past three years, I don't ever remember an increase in the funding to these two organizations until this year. Is that a direct result of that third-party accountability framework that the Premier speaks of? If that is the case, are we going to be for an increase every year hereafter? What type of precedent are we setting by doing this? I think that there might be a number of NGOs lining up on our doorstep to try to get some funding that they have been demanding from the government as long as I can remember. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Member has a good point. That is exactly why we did the third-party accountability framework, so we would have some control, some policy direction in terms of which organizations we would fund and which we would not. So, Madam Chair, I think it would be bordering on irresponsible for us to create an organization through statutes and then not provide it with the funding to be able to continue to provide a reasonable level of service. That is the issue that we had to face. Madam Chair, I think the third-party accountability framework will give us the kind of controls that the Member is referring to.

Before we had the third-party accountability framework, we really didn't have any guidelines. Any increases, if there were increases to the organizations, we funded them from within. Eventually, we ran out of the capacity to be able to continue to do that in a fair way. So, Madam Chair, I am very comfortable, now that we have a framework, we have a policy, we have a way of controlling this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Prior to the implementation of this third-party accountability framework, we were being irresponsible, then, to an organization that, by statute, we had to look after? Were we being irresponsible then? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We were doing it on an ad hoc basis. I would say we were bordering on being irresponsible if we continued along that line and didn't build in some policy framework that provided some guidance on when and how and to whom we would provide support. We can't run a government on an ad hoc basis and claim to be responsible. So, Madam Chair, when we find these kinds of weaknesses, we want to fix them. I think the third-party accountability framework does that. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair and colleagues. A question to Premier Handley, Madam Chair, in terms of the statutory organizations such as the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association, because they have similar mandates and the Native Women's Organization is not a statutory organization, it is an NGO. I wanted to ask the Premier, Madam Chair, how many organizations with NGOS may in the future fall under this type of similar arrangement? Are there any future ones that will fall under and say this one is a statutory organization? This one has similar mandates, so, yes, we could...It is almost discretionary because there is a grey area here that I am lead to believe, anyhow, in terms of how the funding is justified in terms of the increase. It is not black and white, I guess. Madam Chair, I am a little bit confused on the funding. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Native Women's Association is the only one. This was a Cabinet decision. The Member is correct that they are not technically a statutory creation. Given that they have a mandate that is very similar to that of the Status of Women, it was felt that it would be unfair to provide one with increases and not the other. Within the terms of the accountability framework, Cabinet reviewed this and made the decision that the Native Women's Association should be treated the same way as the Council of the Status of Women. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Premier, for the clarification. Madam Chair, I wanted to ask the Premier, in terms of the funding arrangements we have been talking about, is there any type of strategy that the department is going to look at in terms of keeping some good people with these two organizations because of the forced growth, because there's oil and gas exploration, mining exploration, there's jobs that are going

to be coming up that are going to maybe be taking good employees from these two organizations. I guess what's the incentives? I know you are doing this within this project here to keep good workers in these two organizations. Is there any type of strategy in terms of I guess it's going to be a real challenge I guess to keep the workers in these organizations in light of what's going to be coming down the tube. So I just wanted to ask the Minister that question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, the decisions on staffing and who they will retain or not retain are going to be decisions that are largely in the hands of the board of directors for each of these organizations. By providing forced growth increases, we'll certainly help them to keep their good staff. We have also signed multi-year agreements with each of these organizations to give them some certainty that the staff may need in order to continue to work there. I believe the multi-year agreements run through to 2009 with both these organizations. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 2-23, activity summary, Ministers' offices, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$173,000, contributions, total contributions, \$542,000, total grants and contributions, \$715,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 2-24 and 25, information item, Ministers' offices, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. 2-27, activity summary, executive offices, operations expenditure summary, \$6.596 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I had a number of questions surrounding the Visual Identity Program. This is where it would show up under corporate communications I do believe. I'm just wondering, the first question I'd have is whether or not the Premier or the Minister responsible for the Department of the Executive is aware that 10 out of the 13 sites, and I'm talking about various departmental web sites, violate the Visual Identity Program as set out. I know the government's spent a tremendous amount of money putting this Visual Identity Program together for the departments and I guess the first question I'd have is, who is enforcing the Visual Identity Program? It would seem to me that nobody is enforcing it and departments are allowed to go out and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on web sites without any adherence to the program. What I'd like to hear from the Minister responsible for the program is, who is going to police this and why do you even have a program, why spend, and I would like to ask the question, too, how much this actually cost to put together? How come nobody is policing the thing? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't know the exact number of sites that are violating it, but I expect there are some. Madam Chair, the policing of the

Visual Identity Program is done under the direction of the deputy minister, headed up by our communications person. There is an Informatics Policy Committee; it's a deputy minister level committee that is working at trying to get all of the departments, all of their sites, all of us as a government to be in line with our Visual Identity Policy. Madam Chair, I know over the years there's always some that are not following it 100 percent, but we're working at that. It is being policed through the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd suggest that it's not being policed if in fact the program was brought in in the fall of 2003 and since the fall of 2003, like I said, hundreds of thousands of dollars has been spent on web sites that don't follow the program. Even the GNWT's homepage, Madam Chair, does not follow the Visual Identity Program, and I think it's something we have to pay attention to. In my mind, what I'd really like to see happen is there be some kind of uniformity, some type of, you know, if somebody goes on the web site and looks for the GNWT, they find our homepage and then each department doesn't have the latitude to go out and do whatever they want willy-nilly. They have to follow a format; they have to follow some guidelines in setting up a web site so that we have some uniformity and so that we have some direction. This just has not been allowed to happen. Every department seems to go about things their own way, do whatever they want and spend taxpayers' dollars doing that and, by doing that, not following the program that we have set up. So again, I'd like to just say that somebody has to be policing this and maybe it's time that somebody pulled the reins in on the departments and said this is the way you're going to do it; take it or leave it. That's what ultimately has to happen. I think the Premier has to put his foot down; the department has to put their foot down and force departments to tow the line, follow the line because right now it's haphazard at best. Like I said, 10 out of 13 of the sites violate the VIP. Our own homepage violates it. Let's do something about it. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member has a good point. I have to say that I agree with him that we should have all of our departments and all their activities fall into the Visual Identity Program. I don't quarrel with that at all. I will remind all of the deputies, because they all have to work with us on this, that it is their responsibility to make sure that within their departments we are being consistent. We will do that through the Informatics Policy Committee and certainly don't have the resources to go out and hire a policeman to go out and monitor each of them, but I think if each deputy is to be responsible we can do that. We will likely also need the support from the TSC to ensure that we are being consistent. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Premier has gotten the point and I'll leave it with him to try to address. Like I said, ultimately, I'd like to see some uniformity and some direction by the government so that

every department has the same type of interface on their webpage so that residents and visitors alike aren't all over the map when it comes to dealing with each department's own individual likes and dislikes on a web site. That would seem to me to be the best way to go about it. But again, I want to thank the Premier for acknowledging that it is a problem and that he'll try to correct it.

Committee Motion 30-15(4): Recommendation To Remove The Socio-Economic Impact Fund Senior Advisor Position, Carried

We are on page 2-27, Madam Chair? I'd like to move that this committee recommends that the government remove the funding associated with proposed socio-economic impact fund senior advisor position.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Your motion is in order and I'll just wait for the motion to be circulated.

Okay, the motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know this is an issue we've beat around like a piñata the last little while and it's, at the very least, I think, what this motion tries to get across to the government, this \$500 million isn't coming into government coffers of the GNWT, it's going directly to communities, and at the very least I think the federal government has an obligation and a responsibility to pay for this position. The Government of the Northwest Territories shouldn't be paying for a new senior advisor position to deal with this funding. That cost should be borne by DIAND and the federal government, not the GNWT. For that reason alone, I think that's why I support the motion. I think we should put the onus back on the federal government where the money is coming from and get them to pay for the position. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Yes, I would speak in favour of the motion. Given that this social impact fund, as I understand it, is subject to at least two things out of our control, one of the decisions to go ahead with the pipeline and then the other is the actual sign-off of this at the federal government level. I understand that the new Conservative government is onside with this, but we're still a couple of steps away from realizing this and I think we're also some time away, I would think at least another year away. So I do not see the practicality of bringing in this position now, and I think, as Mr. Ramsay has stated as well, if this is a task associated with getting good mileage out of the socio-economic impact fund, then why can't the cost of this be funded from within the fund itself? Part of the devolution deal we're going to get, right? Okay, that's it, Madam Chair. That's my comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I too will support this motion mainly because I think it's when were down the road before we can actually get that SIF, and also because we do have an office in Hay River that's going to cater to oil and gas. So at this point in time, Madam Chair, just for the record, I will support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Activity summary, executive offices, operations expenditure summary, \$6.596 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Madam Chair, I wanted to ask the Premier here in terms under provides strategic advice on matters that have government-wide implications in terms of has the Premier in his discussions with the other departments, Ministers, looked at a model similar to Nunavut where they have the traditional Inuit knowledge as an important part of their government and they actually formed some type of an advisory council with the elders of Nunavut to be part of their government's structure in their territory? Is there any type of discussion that may come out of this government in terms of our seniors or elders in the Northwest Territories that could follow some form of lead, I guess, or follow some form of model that the Nunavut government has structured in their place? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Our government has not looked at that. Years ago, though, probably three or four governments ago, I remember an exercise that was undertaken to look at it and when an estimate was done of the cost of creating an elders' council, then the decision was made to not go that route. It's not just the cost of bringing together people, but it's also the cost of implementing the recommendations and following through. It could become very expensive. Instead, Madam Chair, what we have done is we have gone the route of the Circle of Northern Leaders, as well as encouragement to all of us to get out to the communities and consult. So we have things like the pre-budget consultation process; we have the Circle of Northern Leaders; we have our travel to the communities and many other forums where we have input. But, Madam Chair, on the notion of the Circle of Northern Leaders, we haven't looked at that. I will take a look at how it is working in Nunavut, though, and get more information. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Handley is correct, Madam Chair. When the Premier says that there's other avenues in course because of our budget and the situation where it does become a costly exercise implementing any type of traditional council or advisory council and I certainly will look forward to Mr. Handley's report after he does have some in-depth study on the Nunavut model and see how there's other avenues that we could involve elders, seniors who can be involved in our decision-making process. The Northern Strategy is one; the Circle of Northern Leaders is another. Certainly

when the Ministers do come to our community or region, they do sit and talk with the elders. So I'm looking more, I guess, in a sense of an advisory council formalized, and again, you get into the cost factors. I'd certainly like to see some form of recognition is given to, maybe just once a year, just to see the elders, two from every region, just sit down with them on some government-wide, general-wide initiative direction in terms of how they see things in the future. They can give advice on the land, on the air, on issues such as the caribou or whatever. I know that the Ministers are doing that also, but it will be good for our government to involve elders at some point. It might be once a year to sit with the elders to get advice and direction. So they are very valuable, their traditional knowledge is very important and it would be good that this government supports this type of idea. So I guess that's what I wanted to ask the Premier. I'm not too sure if I can have him commit to do something, but he said he'll look at the idea and I would like to see if he could bring this idea forward to say it is a worthwhile exercise because we are following some of our tradition in the North here. So I think it would be a good thing. However, the Ministers know more about this type of work that they have to do and sometimes I'm not provided with all the details that it costs to get something like this going. So I want to leave that there, Madam Chair.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, I made a commitment I would get more information on the Nunavut experience and how that's unfolding. I think we would want, as MLAs, to look very carefully at the creation of another body because it very easily could evolve into a senate and then all the trappings that go with that. It's just something that we want to look at very carefully. Meeting once a year with elders, that may be a possibility and it's something that we could discuss. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that will be a good start if we had some forum where we could meet with the elders at least once a year. I think that's a start. Those are the things that we have to look out for, and, as Mr. Handley has pointed out, it may lead up to a senate type. I'm not too sure where this goes, but that's part of the evolution of the Northwest Territories and I think that's in the future. So even to have a meeting once a year with the elders, I think that's a big, big step that I think the Premier will be thanked and will be very appreciated by the elders in the North about this type of move here. So it's a good suggestion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Just to the committee members, when you're asking questions and speaking, I'm having difficulty understanding your hand signals. Some of you go like this and I don't know if that means stop, I'm finished, or if that means I have another question. So sometimes I think I give you the floor again and you really don't want it. So if you want to speak again, if you don't want to speak again maybe you can just go like this and I'll know you're finished, because then we don't waste the time of giving you the floor again if you don't really want it and you just have to try and think of something intelligent to say. So thank you for that, if you could do that. Executive offices, operations expenditure summary. Mr. McLeod.

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Premier is well aware, I've spoken in the last little while here about my strong feelings on the resource revenue sharing and how I feel we're losing out big time here. I know the Premier shares some of the same feelings towards this, but my questions would be on the office of devolution. I'd like to know what the actual duties of this office are. Who does the actual negotiating on behalf of the GNWT? How many people are in this office, and if it would be possible to get a list of the workers in the office and a brief description of their duties, that would be really helpful to me because this is a subject now that I think leadership in the NWT is going to have to get very passionate about, because the longer we take, the more we lose and with the uncertainty of a minority government, we may be having another election in a little while and then we're back to square one again. I just want to be assured that we're not always going to be ending up back in square one with the changes in the federal government, especially with a minority government, and I'd like to make sure that this is something that we keep right on the front burner, on the front page, because this is something that we really need to have to start putting up a fight for here in the NWT because we're losing big time and the more I get educated on the numbers and the potential numbers we could lose, the amount of money we've already had go to Ottawa, the more and more that it's beginning to upset me. I'd like the leadership in the whole of the NWT to feel the same way. That way we can passionately go after what's rightfully ours. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, there are two parallel processes moving here. One is devolution and the other is resource revenue sharing. The devolution is the transfer of responsibility and authority for those province-like responsibilities that the federal government, through DIAND, currently hold. Just on devolution itself, we're not that far apart. There are five outstanding items and they are all negotiable. We have a small staff who are responsible for doing the background work on the negotiation of those, and I'll ask Mr. McLeod in a minute to explain what they do, but we also have a lead negotiator, a fellow by the name of Hal Gerein who leads our negotiations; that's devolution.

On resource revenue sharing, Madam Chair, that's a separate process. It's linked together, but we could negotiate resource revenue sharing without necessarily taking on all the trappings of a province. So, Madam Chair, I have the same concern that the Member does, that there's a lot of money leaking out in the form of non-renewable resource revenues from this territory everyday and we're losing it. So we need to move ahead, in my view, quickly on resource revenue sharing as the first, most urgent requirement. Madam Chair, I have proposed to the federal government that we move quickly on that one, that we not necessarily have to wait for devolution in order to have our share of resource revenues. I would not want to take devolution without resource revenues, but I could take resource revenues without devolution. So, Madam Chair, we are moving quickly, as quickly as we can. I don't want to get into all the detail of where we're at, but I can say that the Prime Minister and the Minister at DIAND are very much on the same page, in my view, as we are at this time. I hope to see some progress fairly quickly on the resource revenue sharing side. Madam

Chair, I'll ask Bob McLeod just to explain how many people are in the devolution section and what their roles are. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now in our devolution division we have four positions, two of which are filled, two of which are vacant. We have an executive director that leads the division and we have an assistant negotiator, a devolution negotiator and an expert policy advisor. I should advise that we approach devolution now on a government-wide basis. We work with a deputy minister level committee on devolution. Several departments have positions that deal with devolution and we coordinate all of the different functions. When devolution negotiations were going full boar, we had a number of committees, interdepartmental committees, all dealing with different aspects of devolution ranging from human resources, programs side, the actual facilities, the lands, all of the different IT equipment that had to be made available. So it's quite a coordinating function that they do. The executive director is the lead to make sure all of these different events are coordinated. The devolution negotiator works very closely with our contract negotiator in doing the actual negotiations. The assistant negotiator and expert policy advisor do a lot of the background work and we also have to make sure that the devolution deputies are updated, as well as Cabinet. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bob McLeod. Mr. Robert McLeod.

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks to the Premier for his reply and to Mr. McLeod. I didn't think the two were linked together. I'm glad the Premier explained that to me because devolution, as far as my understanding, would take a little longer, but the point I'm trying to make is that the resource revenue sharing deal is something that we need to push. I understand the devolution talks would be a little slower, but, as the Premier stated, we have money leaving the territory every day and still we continue to negotiate. I mean, I'd kind of like to know as a last point in question is where are these negotiations at? Are we negotiating right now? We've been hearing talk of negotiating for an awful long time and talk and talk, and I'm not sure how much talk back and forth there should be. But it should, as far as I'm concerned, be a fairly simple process. Our resources, you pay us the royalties and I'm of the opinion that it's time we started seeing some results. I'd like to know from the Premier, are the negotiations ongoing even with the changes in the government? Have they always been ongoing, or is it something that's negotiated between the Premier and the Prime Minister in power at the moment and the Prime Minister previous? So that's what I would like to know, is if the Premier himself is negotiating on our behalf with the Prime Ministers of the country, or is it negotiations that have been taking place behind closed door?

I am glad that the Premier mentioned the two, the devolution and the resource revenue sharing, and I'd never linked the two. I always thought that we've got to get the resource revenue sharing part on the go, like, quickly because it is starting to be something that concerns me a great deal to have all the money leaving the NWT all the time. So there's, I believe, a couple of

questions in there for Premier Handley. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Robert McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Madam Chair, the negotiations have been stalled since early last summer, I believe it was in June. There have not been negotiations since then. Our experience was that the negotiators were getting further and further apart and we're not making progress. So it stalled at that time. Since then, our two staff have been doing background research work and waiting for political direction. With the change of government, it was necessary to meet again with the federal government to get clear direction. The Minister of DIAND, on Friday, committed to coming here in March, so this issue is between the Minister and myself as Premier, at this point. If we can't resolve it at the political level, then there will at last be clear direction to our negotiators of how they should proceed. So, Madam Chair, I look forward to the Minister coming here and moving this one ahead quickly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. One other issue that is really quite bothersome is the fact that the Department of Finance -- and I know we are on the Executive, but I am getting to where I am going -- lost the Bureau of Statistics to the Executive and I think that's a great move from a government-wide perspective. I think it belongs in the Department of Executive. It never belonged in the Department of Finance. They do a tremendous amount of good work for the Government of the Northwest Territories and I am glad it's where it's at now. The problem I have is, because the Bureau of Statistics was removed from the Department of Finance, all of a sudden we get this macroeconomic policy division in the Department of Finance when it would seem to me if the government is really interested in strengthening strategic planning and socio-economic analysis, it would only do the right thing and allow the Bureau of Statistics, all the Department of Executive, whether it's strategic planning, Bureau of Stats, allow them to do that work.

I have a great deal of difficulty accepting the fact that the Department of Finance was allowed to replace the Bureau of Statistics with this macroeconomic planning division; three PYs. I don't know if it even needs to be three PYs, but if we could get a couple of people, just for starters, why don't we get one or two people and put them in the Department of Executive, put them in the Bureau of Statistics, under the leadership of Mr. Stewart and we can get some good work done there?

I am wondering where the stewardship is going to come from in the Department of Finance. I know the Finance Minister is very capable, but he's not there everyday and he's not directing the charges. If we are going to get any of this work done and it's going to be done effectively, I think we have to try to take those positions from Finance and maybe put one or two of them, for starters, where they belong and that's in the Department of Executive. If you want to coordinate the approach and you want to put it together, I think that's the best step you could take. Again, we are piecemealing it by allowing the Department of Finance come back to us asking for three PYs for a macro socio-economic policy. It just doesn't make sense to me. I would like to maybe get the Premier's take on that

coordination and how it could best be dealt with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The decision was made to put the macroeconomic section in Finance mainly because of the fiscal characteristic of macroeconomics. In the old days, or up until now, we basically get a grant. We get money from the federal government and we just manage expenditures. We really don't need to have a macroeconomic section. But when, as a government, we evolve more and more with province-like responsibilities, with resource revenues, then we will not only look at how we spend our money but we are also looking at how the money is invested, what's happening to global markets, what's the best way of us dealing with things like trust funds, heritage funds, with taxation policies. There are a whole host of things that fit into macroeconomics.

So, Madam Chair...Sorry, Mr. Chair, at this time, it's our decision to place it in Finance. We may, at some point, want to revisit that. At this time, after reviewing it, it was Cabinet and Financial Management Board's decision that that probably rightfully belongs more in Finance, although one could argue that it should be in the Executive, or in ITI, or wherever else. Because of the fiscal importance of it, we chose to put it there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Premier Handley. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I am going to lose the argument again today. I lost it last week when I tried to move a motion to pull the \$491,000 out of the Department of Finance. I guess I am just going to have to take a different mindset on this. I believe if you are going to go through a process of coordinating government functions and go down that road, this shouldn't have been allowed to happen. Again, I get back to the coincidence. Is it a coincidence that the Bureau of Stats moved out of Finance one day and, all of a sudden, they want to replace it with something else? We can't miss that interpretation. That's the interpretation that I get. I am not saying that the work doesn't need to get done. Somebody, obviously, has been doing it for a number of years. We don't produce 14 percent of the world's total production of diamonds; we don't have a pipeline from Norman Wells without some of that macro socio-economic policy work getting done somewhere. I know the Finance Minister told me the other day that it has been getting done. Since 1999, it's been getting done in house.

Again, I just want to state again, for the record, that if you are looking at true coordination, that division or the new policy division belongs in the Department of Executive and it belongs under the heading of the Bureau of Statistics and it fits nicely in there. It doesn't belong in Finance, in my mind, but I guess I am outnumbered on that one. That's my feeling on it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Chairman.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's macroeconomics, not macro socio-economics, first of all. It's just macroeconomics. It is very fiscally embodied in terms of its main responsibility.

The fact that we put it into Finance and Finance had lost the Bureau of Statistics, that is just coincidence. I can tell you there is no advantage in doing that to balance out numbers in some way. There was no thinking like that. It was simply that our feeling was that the macroeconomics piece belonged primarily in Finance.

Now it has been done piecemeal and we've had consultants. With our diamond markets, with oil and gas coming, with other minerals, with resource revenue sharing arrangements hopefully being achieved within the next little while, it's very important that we do more than just manage our expenditures and negotiate a formula for how many dollars we get from the federal government. Our government is evolving to the point where we need to have that macroeconomics unit.

Putting it in with the Bureau of Statistics could work. The difficulty there is that the Bureau of Statistics basically has a responsibility to the whole government, all departments, to collect good statistical information and draw some conclusions from that information, but not do a lot of policy interpretation on that. That's up to each department to do their own policy decisions, whether it's Health, Education, Transportation or whatever it may be. So giving them the authority to collect the statistics and do that extrapolation and then, at that same time, asking that same body to do the conclusion to it would be compromising the role of the Bureau of Statistics and may not fit that well. But, Mr. Chairman, these are things that we can debate. However, it works, we are all one together; we have to work together. I think it would be worthwhile, if we haven't done that yet, is to have a presentation to the committee at some time on the parameters of macroeconomics; maybe do the same thing with the role of the Bureau of Statistics, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Premier for that. I don't want to keep this going much longer and the Premier said himself, if each department is doing its own policy, then why do we need a macroeconomic policy division in Finance? If the responsibility is with each various department, then why do we need three new PYs in Finance? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: When I say each department is doing its own, I am saying, for example, that the Department of Health would look at the health statistics from the bureau and see what the statistics are on addictions and treatment, and then they would create a policy around our services in that area. That's the kind of policy they would be undertaking. When it comes to a macroeconomics policy, there is no one except Finance who are doing that in a comprehensive way. Even, as I said, Mr. Chairman, it hasn't been that comprehensive now. It hasn't been a big issue, but it is becoming a big issue for us. We do need one department that is going to take the lead on it. We looked at it and it was our decision to place it in Finance and certainly, depending on how effective it is there, we would be open to reviewing that with the committees in future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Page 2-27, activity summary, executive offices, operations expenditure summary, \$6.596 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-28 and 2-29, activity summary, executive offices, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$150,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Contributions, 2-30, total contributions, \$500,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$650,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-32 and 2-33, information item, executive offices, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-34 and 2-35, activity summary, Public Utilities Board, operations expenditure summary, \$336,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-36 and 2-37, information item, Public Utilities Board, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-38 and 2-39, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.022 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question about the new regional superintendent positions that are going to be coming on stream, with regard to this new position for the socio-economic impact fund, I don't know. Again, just getting back to what some of my colleagues are saying about building more bureaucracy for regions to deal with, it just seems more cumbersome than efficient. I just want to know if these regional superintendent positions going out to the various regions, what kind of interdepartmental authority are they going to have over the Mackenzie gas office in Hay River with respect to any decisions that are going to be rolling out with this socio-economic impact fund? At the end of the day, who is going to make the final decision on where that money goes along with the band councils and everything like that? How does the whole Mackenzie Valley pipeline office play an integral part in that whole intergovernmental working relationship with the economic fund? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, these five positions will have the authority to pull together the

superintendents they need to meet with and, from there, on to coordinate the efforts of the department within the region. We have a ministerial form of government where the superintendent will report to a deputy minister, to a Minister, to the Premier. As we have experienced the last number of years as we become more and more busy, is each department tends to operate somewhat in a stovepipe independent of every other one. We need to coordinate more, so people in the communities can hear the voice of government. The regional superintendent for the Executive will be that voice. You need to talk to one person about how does the housing program, the education program, how does it all fit together and who do they speak to? That's the person they go to. That individual will be able to call together the superintendents as it needs, work out a compromise on the particular issues or deal on the issue, provide clarification to the public. If there is difficulty, then those individuals each report to the secretary to Cabinet who reports to me, and then we have a streamlined way of resolving the differences or the difficulties we are running into.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say again that more than anything else, this is the concern and criticism I have heard from people in the communities about our government. It's too fractured and we need to have this coordination, particularly as we get busy with oil and gas, hydro and all the other economic activities we are experiencing now. We need to be streamlined. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. It's good to be streamlined. I believe that's a necessity anyway out in the regions. Without people hearing the voice of government, I think the government has to hear the voice of the people more often than it does today into finding some resolutions to a lot of the issues boiling over because this whole socio-economic fund that's apparently not there yet, but being talked about today. I know there's going to be lots of questions about who is going to get what, how much, and how they are going to be able to spend it. All these questions still have to be ironed out before the socio-economic agreement rolls out. I just wanted to get a good understanding of if and when this socio-economic impact fund does become a reality for northerners, who is going to have the final say? I know there is going to be consultations with boards, NGOs and First Nations, but at the end of the day, who is going to have the signing authority? Who is going to write the cheque and who's going to be able to cash it? Is it going to be the GNWT, or is it going to be the aboriginal governments, or is it going to be the regional superintendents or the federal government? Who, at the end of the day, is going to be able to spend that money? In some of the instances, the decision to spend it one way is really going to be close to another consensus on spending it a different way. Who is going to ultimately call that shot? Is there going to be some kind of a special socio-economic development initiatives committee drawn up in every region? I just want to know and I think the people would want to know when that money does come available to them. How much are they going to be allowed to tap into? Who is going to be able to have the final say in how they spend that money and who is going to say when they are allowed to spend that money? Where is all that going to come from? Is it going to come from the Department of Executive, DIAND or the aboriginal governments in a forum of all three

governments working together? How is that going to work? I just want a basic understanding of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There will be a territorial legal entity created as a not-for-profit body that will be managed by a board made up of representation from the federal government, the territorial government and the regional aboriginal organizations. That body is the one that will receive the money. Then, at the regional level, there will be regional committees made up of the territorial government and the aboriginal communities or representatives. The aboriginal representation will outnumber the territorial for sure, and it is that body that will determine how the money allocated to the regions is going to be distributed and spent. There is an accountability requirement by that regional committee on spending the money and reporting back on what it's used for.

Mr. Chairman, the regional aboriginal organizations have already come up with a formula on how the money that comes will be distributed between each of the regions. They have a formula for that.

This is the proposal that was worked out before the change in federal government. I know the current federal government, of course, has the authority and the right and responsibility to change that if they chose to, but the creation of a territorial legal entity, the creation of regional committees was a decision made jointly by representatives of the federal government, our government and the aboriginal organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the regional representation is great. Putting together all these legal entities, NGOs on an interim basis, I guess they would be, just for distribution and allocation of these dollars, just get down to the dollars that were allocated for the socio-economic fund and how they were split up into the three regions of the Deh Cho, the Sahtu and the Gwich'in/Inuvialuit. I am just wondering, since it's not finalized with the federal government, what about the other regions in the NWT like the Akaitcho, the Tlicho and the Thebacha regions, and even the reserve? These are regions who are going to be significantly impacted, too, socially, probably in a larger degree than a lot of the communities in the valley that are really tiny. Sure, they will grow by about 100 percent, I am sure, in a lot of instances. There will be a lot of pipeline people, a lot of socio-economic impacts happening even here in Yellowknife, probably in Res and Smith. People will be moving there and moving to Hay River and living all over the NWT. I just don't think that the impact that is going to be realized across the NWT...The impact may be in Smith or the Akaitcho region is going to be taking a backseat on the immediate impacts that is going to be happening up and down the valley. To me, it just doesn't seem fair that we are excluding pretty much half of the NWT in saying that you guys aren't entitled to any of this impact benefit dollars or funding because you are not in the immediate impact zone.

As far as I am concerned, the whole NWT is the impact zone for any major project of that magnitude that happens here in the NWT. We are all impacted just as much as anywhere else from north to south and east to west.

So with this new government coming into power, I am wondering if there are going to be any amendments to include the NWT, or is there any other impact agreements that might be coming down the line that might assist the Akaitcho Territory and the Tlicho Territory to mitigate some of those impacts and to deal with them at the same pace as Fort Good Hope and Fort Simpson and those other places? Is there going to be money available for that? I know there was about \$15,000 last year that was given to measure socio-economic impacts in the regions. I thought \$15,000; what is that? For the Thebacha or Akaitcho regions, that was just really nothing. What kind of an expert can you get to do any kind of work for \$15,000 for maybe a couple of weeks' work? A couple of days with prices these days.

I am just wondering if the Minister could tell us if there are any other avenues that the government is going to be seeking on behalf of these other regions to help them mitigate the big impacts that they are going to be feeling, too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, let me say that the process being followed here is very similar to what we did when we negotiated as a government and as aboriginal organizations with diamond mines. Except in that case, each of the impacted communities or regions negotiated socio-economic impact mitigation funding within their access and benefit agreement. So if you go to the Tlicho, you would find something to deal with the socio-economic issues and the same with the Akaitcho and Lutselk'e and so on.

In this case, what has happened is the communities along the valley have negotiated what is basically a joint socio-economic mitigation agreement that is for everybody. Then they will include in their access and benefit agreements terms on employment, on contracting, on other issues. So it is very similar to what we did with the diamond mines. In the same way, the Gwich'in, for example, did not benefit from an access or benefits agreements on diamond mines. Those communities that are not on the pipeline don't get the direct benefit. So the Member asked a good question. How do we deal with the impacts for everybody else, whether it's in Yellowknife, or in Behchoko, or Fort Resolution, or anywhere? How do we deal with that? That is where we negotiate resource revenues. Typically, in any government, we would collect the resource revenues and we would use those for mitigating the negative impact of the development. We would use those for enhancing our infrastructure, for increasing our training facilities and so on.

In a short answer, Mr. Chairman, it is resource revenues that are used across the Territories on an equitable basis for everybody, no matter if you live on the pipeline or not. You get access to the benefit from resource revenues. That's the second piece. This first piece is just for along the valley.

Mr. Chairman, I am confident we are going to be successful in getting a fair resource revenue sharing

arrangement. The Prime Minister said we should be the primary beneficiaries. That's the money we allocate all across the Territories to help people no matter which community they live in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Page 2-39, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, \$\$2.022 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-40 and 2-41, information item, regional operations, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-42.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-43.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Return to page 2-13, program summary, operations expenditure summary, \$13.197 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that we have concluded the Department of Executive?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): I would like to thank the Premier and his staff for coming down. I will ask Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out. Thank you.

Does committee agree to take a 15-minute break before we go on to Aboriginal Affairs?

----SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): I call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are now into Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. At this time, I would like to ask the Premier if he has any opening comments.

Introduction

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity today to present the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations 2006-2007 Main Estimates.

For 2006-2007, the department is requesting a budget of \$7.328 million which represents a 4.36 percent, or \$334,000, decrease from the restated 2005-2006 Main Estimates.

During the review of the 2005-2006 Draft Main Estimates, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommended that the Premier undertake an internal review of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Executive to identify areas of duplication. We met with Regular Members on several occasions over the past few months to look at options for improving the overall coordination and reducing overlap between the Department of Executive and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

In an effort to acknowledge the changing reality of intergovernmental relations between the GNWT and emerging aboriginal governments, the intergovernmental relations function has been moved to the newly named Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. The department will now be responsible for all federal-provincial-territorial-aboriginal intergovernmental relations. The reorganization also included moving the responsibilities of the devolution division to the Department of Executive.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations has been charged with streamlining and improving how we, as a government, do business with our aboriginal partner governments, and improving our intergovernmental relations will be top priority. The expanded mandate of the department allows this government to build upon and enhance intergovernmental working relationships, with a particular focus on those with existing and emerging aboriginal governments.

Of course, the new department will still continue to protect, develop and promote the interests of the GNWT and the residents of the Northwest Territories by negotiating and monitoring the implementation of land, resource and self-government agreements. We will keep producing mandates to provide instructions for negotiations and will continue to develop legislation to ratify agreements as they become finalized. Communications will play a key role during this transition period and it will ensure that the department makes every effort to keep various audiences informed about all its functions.

Every effort was made to ensure that the revised mandates of the departments of Executive and Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations would not result in increased costs to this government. Despite the expanded mandate of the department, no new positions were added to the organization.

The 2005-2006 Main Estimates have been restated from \$8.198 million to \$7.662 million reflecting an increase of \$937,000 for the transfer of Intergovernmental Relations and a decrease of \$1.473 million for the transfer of the budget for the Devolution Secretariat to the Executive.

Budgetary Requirements

The 2006-2007 Main Estimates shows a reduction of \$334,000 due to the following factors:

Reductions

- In response to the one percent cost reduction exercise, the department has reduced its budget by \$109,000. This reduction will be achieved through the ongoing management of vacancies and reduced spending in other expenses, such as travel and contracted services.
- The department is requesting less money to participate in lands, resources and self-government negotiations for 2006-2009 than the amount of funding that is sunsetting. The net result is a decrease of \$73,000.
- A \$196,000 base transfer was made to the Department of Executive to assist with the costs of

improving the planning and coordination functions in government.

- \$355,000 was sunsetted, representing the funds allocated to the department for 2005-2006 to develop and implement a Northern Strategy.
- We concur with the standing committee that it is important to hold land, resource and self-government negotiating sessions where they matter most, which is in communities impacted by such negotiations. The department has decreased its travel budget by \$102,000 and is committed to strengthen its lobbying efforts with the other parties to hold as many negotiating sessions as possible in the North.

Additions

However, despite best efforts to keep costs in check, there are some unavoidable forced growth increases reflected in the department's budget request. These increases total \$438,000 and include:

- \$421,000 related to the salary increase resulting from the new Collective Agreement;
- \$9,000 for TSC/communication chargeback rate increases.

I would like to thank Members for their continued collaboration, advice and input on the departmental reorganization. I would now be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Members of the Accountability and Oversight committee had an opportunity to meet with the Premier on September 20, 2005, to review the draft business plan for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget for the ministry since the committee reviewed the draft business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the ministry is proposing to spend \$7.328 million in operations expense for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

Members also made note of the transfer of the intergovernmental function from the Executive to the ministry and the transfer of the devolution function out of the ministry into the Executive.

Committee members offer the following comments on issues arising out of the review of the 2006-2007 Draft Main Estimates and budget-planning cycle.

Holding GNWT Negotiations In Regions

During the review of the 2006-2009 Draft Business Plan, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight voiced its long-standing frustration that land claims and self-government negotiations often occur thousands of miles from the communities that are central to the negotiations. The land and communities are, after all, the essence of the negotiations, and committee members feel that negotiations should take place where these negotiations matter most. Although the committee

understands that there are logistical reasons that negotiating tables cannot be moved permanently to the regions, the committee would like to see negotiations held in the relevant regions, as much as possible.

Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends that, whenever possible, the GNWT should actively seek to hold self-government and land claim negotiations in the relevant regions and to report back to the committee on progress during the next business planning cycle.

Core Principles And Objectives

The committee was pleased to note during the review of the 2006-2009 Draft Business Plan that the ministry has turned its attention to the important issue of how to ensure territory-wide standards are maintained in the self-government political environment.

The committee points out the importance of ensuring standards are protected within the public tendering processes so as to protect the interests of all companies that do business inside the Northwest Territories, to ensure that taxpayers receive the best value for their money for public procurement and to ensure the rule of law is maintained in public government. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. At this time, I would like to ask if the Premier would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Sergeant-at-Arms, if you are around here, bring in the witnesses.

Mr. Premier, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me are Gabriela Sparling, deputy minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations; and, Richard Robertson, chief financial officer of the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Premier. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the vision of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations talks about a partnership with the Canadian federation. I would just like a brief plan in terms of...He talked earlier about devolution and resource revenue sharing in terms of his vision of this department. How do we fit into the full partnership of Confederation in Canada? What does that sentence mean to be a full partner in Confederation? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Does committee agree that we will go right to the Minister to answer the question? Right now, we are in general comments

AN HON. MEMBER: Good chairman!

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree? Mr. Yakeleya, you can make more general comments, if you have them. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I apologize. Good chairman. I apologize to the Premier and the chair. Thanks for keeping me on track. This question will come up again when we go through detail.

Mr. Chairman, I will have some questions in terms of our full participation or partnership in the Canadian Federation. I believe the Premier has some strategy on how to get there. Resource revenue sharing is certainly the biggest one. Devolution, well, we've been doing that for the last number of years and the Premier sometimes needs to be reminded on the number of years we have been dealing with devolution. I suppose I am more interested in our strategy as a small territory. We have some partnerships within the provinces of Canada and hopefully one day we will have some significant impacts on the Constitution and have some authority, I would say, in terms of province responsibilities and authority. To have that type of leverage, it would be in the Federation of Canada here. Of course, we have ongoing negotiations with several communities on self-government to a point where the Tlicho now is implementing their self-government land claim agreement. I am very curious as to the future of the Northwest Territories. We have these different models of self-government being negotiated. They want to have different jurisdictions, almost state-like authority that, when we negotiate these self-government agreements and models, the territorial government will have a role to play. To what extent I am not too sure, the extent of the authority they will have, the role. I believe that it could be something like where the federal government now has a role in Canada with each province assuming some responsibility. I am going to make that presumption that would happen in the Northwest Territories, also that each jurisdiction will have some authority of its own and then the other territorial-wide authority will devolve to this government here because we are such a small province. I think that might be a way of looking at it.

I guess I'm just looking at it in terms of long-term visioning and long-term planning in terms of these negotiations. It might be 10 or 15 years from now. I will ask the Premier that question in terms of long-term vision and planning, how he sees these negotiations playing itself out in the type of authority that the communities are negotiating. Are we, as a territorial government, supporting the aboriginal governments, supporting our own government? What road do we see ourselves in? Some of the communities still have a different view as how the inherent right to self-government is interpreted and how we interpret it. How important is our relationship with the communities? Those types of questions I will wait until later on.

The other one there is how we are funding and how we are looking after our aboriginal organizations. Those questions will come up in detail, so I want to say that to the Premier. Those would be my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Handley. Oh, we are in opening comments. Okay. Are there any other comments? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I would just like to make a general comment on page 3 of 3, under the department requesting this money to participate in lands and resource self-government.

We have seen a historical event just recently with the new Tlicho government and self-government agreement being settled in the North here. It has been highly recognized in the North and also throughout Canada. Along with that, within that jurisdiction, I guess the Tlicho is now in power and also has the lawmaking on the 39,000 square kilometres of land that has been identified. Also, there are similar agreements with the Sahtu, the Inuvialuit and other land claim settlements that they have their own lawmaking powers thus creating community governance and capacity building in the communities along in the regions and also the communities to make their own choice and decisions. That has an impact on the communities and also the people of their communities.

Mr. Chair, I was kind of struck to see that there is a decrease in funding on these lands resources self-government negotiation for 2006-09. This is highly important in the North. It has always been stressed by First Nations that we need to settle our land claims. I realize that we are focussing a lot on resource revenue sharing. That is greatly beneficial for the North. We are fully aware of that. There are also devolution talks, more funding allocated towards that area, but I don't really see a huge decrease in funding in these areas, and here we are tackling our negotiation with land claims and self-government funding, spending decrease. I was kind of puzzled to see that, because every time we go to communities or even Dene Nation meetings or any First Nations' meetings, land claims is always on the table. Self-government is always on the table. They want to finalize those agreements immediately. It has been ongoing for a number of years. We are reaching a point where Tlicho, Sahtu, Inuvialuit and other respective parties have settled. Now I think we need to focus on Dehcho, Akaitcho and different areas to push it even further. I am sure there will be other questions relating to this matter. I am sure Mr. Yakeleya also brought it up that we need to focus in this area. At the appropriate time, Mr. Chair, when we discuss further in detail about the decrease in funding, I am sure we will be asking more questions in that area. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. There are no further general comments. We are on page 2-131, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operations expenditure summary, \$7.328 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Okay. We are on page 2-131. Mr. Menicoche.

Committee Motion 31-15(3): Recommendation To Hold Self-Government And Land Claim Negotiations In Relevant Regions, Carried

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that, whenever possible, the GNWT should actively seek to hold self-government and land claim negotiations in the relevant regions and to report back to the Accountability and Oversight committee on progress during review of the 2007-2010 draft business plans.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. Oh, just one second. I am getting ahead of myself. We are going to distribute that motion.

Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Briefly and for the record, this is not a new item before committee or before this department or its predecessors. A tremendous resource of time and skill are brought into these negotiations, but we have seen very unproductive time and huge amounts of money have been spent travelling to different parts of the country to continue negotiations. I know that this same plea from committee has come up in several other previous years, that if we are going to be negotiating for the land and the people of the Northwest Territories, why is it not that at least the vast bulk of the negotiations could not occur on our own soil? That is the intent of this. This happened before. We continue to press this case with our own department and recognizing that we also want them to carry that message to Canada and the people we are negotiating with. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you, committee. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operations expenditure summary, \$7.328 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 2-134, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, grants and contributions. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I want to again ask the Premier here, as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in terms of the historical funding of Metis Nation grants. We have a huge budget here but, I believe, Mr. Chair, when you break it down, it comes out to \$13,000 per Metis organization. I just want to confirm that first, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you. Yes, Mr. Chair. That works out to roughly 13,000 and some dollars for each of the locals. Mr. Chair, that is an amount of money, the \$225,000, that used to be paid as a grant to the Metis Nation of the Northwest Territories. When it was disbanded, then the agreement from our government was to continue to make that fixed amount of money,

\$225,000, and pay it out to the locals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if you break down the \$13,000 to the number of days per month for operation, so I am not going to get into that type of a discussion here. I want to ask the Premier, is there any type of consideration by his Cabinet or this government to certainly increase the \$13,000 to what is now, some consideration in the future to properly consider this budget line item in the future for proper funding of a major organization such as the Metis Nation core funding? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, there have been individual requests for additional money, but the agreement made, when the NWT Metis Nation disbanded, was for the \$225,000. We have not had the resources to be able to consider increasing that since, but we have stayed with the commitment we made at that time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I appreciate the Minister's explanation on the reasons why they are not able to increase the funding even though those resources are limited and there has been a request for them. I am not too sure how we ask this in terms of this Minister gave us some reasons why they are not able to increase the funding for the Metis Nation locals here. I guess we have increased the funding in other areas. This one here, in the whole goals or vision of this Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs for \$13,000, how do you expect to have a good relationship with the Metis locals and improve it? These are the forgotten children, I guess, forgotten families of the native or aboriginal organizations. You say this in your vision and your statement of goals. Something does not coincide here, Mr. Chair. I am having a hard time, Mr. Minister. I understand the lack of funding, the resources, yet we increase the funding for our own budget and that. We give a major Metis local organization down the valley this type of dollars, this \$13,000; they should be really ashamed of themselves trying to promote these goals. I really don't understand. That is what I am getting at.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I have to say that as much as we would like to increase funding for the Metis locals, increase the amount of that grant, I have to come back to our earlier discussion about the third-party accountability framework and say that we would want to think very carefully about all the non-government organizations that we provide funding to and whether we increase one and not another. This amount of money isn't meant to cover all of their costs of operating an office. It is meant as core money they are certainly eligible for and possibly receive funding from other sources. We do, as well, Mr. Chair, provide funding for special events in that they are eligible to apply for. The

NWT Metis Nation also has \$50,000 through a political accord that goes to them, to the NWT Metis Nation.

Mr. Chair, there are a number of sources of funding like that. Mr. Chair, I have also given the leaders notice that our intention is to provide them with more core funding that has been allocated directly through the Aboriginal Summit in the past to enable the regional organizations and the members of the Aboriginal Summit to be able to determine how they want to allocate that money themselves rather than us allocating it for them.

Mr. Chair, this core money is not meant to be all of their money, but if we were to increase here, then we would be opening ourselves up to increasing a lot of funds and to a lot of different organizations. I am not sure we can afford to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Minister Handley. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Minister is possibly correct that if he does open up the funding for the Metis local, then he would have a lot of other consequences of opening that door for the organizations.

Again, the NWT Metis Nation is south of the lake. It represents a different group of Metis Nation people. I am hoping that is referred to the NWT Metis. There is some talk about the Mackenzie Valley up the river right down up to the Beaufort up to the Inuvik area here. The organization gets \$50,000. Then the Aboriginal Summit will have some allocation of funding. For the Metis locals again, if you look at \$13,000 a year, it is just about \$1,100 or \$1,200 a month. You divide that into 20 or 25 days of operation. It is hard to believe that some of the organizations do not have land corporations to help them with the operation. If it wasn't for them, they would just be orphans in this community.

I sort of understand where the Premier or Minister is coming from in terms of funding this type of operation. It is just not a good thing here. Again, the Metis are left out of the political development and the evolution of the North. They are fighting hard to get some form of recognition in the federal system. You have some in the territorial where you have some Metis health benefits going to them, which is a real plus on this government's part. It is the funding of the political organization that is falling way short, Mr. Chair.

I would get into the third-party framework accountability, well, you have one, the Status of Women Council, which is a statutory organization under the territorial government. You have different other categories that are not NGOs that are not statutory organizations. Regarding this third-party framework accountability, in my opinion, the Metis Nation grants should almost fall above the Status of Women Council in terms of statutory. This is a major political body. This is a government body of Metis people in our communities. This is not an advisory committee. This is a political legitimate government body recognized by all our people. I am having a hard time, Mr. Chair, in terms of seeing how this...there are some nice words that says vision or mission goals. When you come to this here, it just doesn't mean anything. That is what I am getting at. Maybe I will leave it at that in my frustration, Mr. Chair. This means nothing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have many different situations with regard to Metis in the Northwest Territories. In the Gwich'in area and in the Sahtu, the Metis are part of the land claim agreement so they have the benefit from that side, as well.

In the Deh Cho, it remains to be determined how they will fit in with the Dehcho claim and eventually the same with the Akaitcho region, although the North Slave Metis are recognized in some ways on their own. South of the lake, the Member is right. We have a different arrangement with the NWT Metis. So, Mr. Chair, I agree with the Member in that we have to somehow rationalize how Metis are worked with in the Northwest Territories. Right now, it is a real mixed bag of ways of funding. I don't believe the Metis are getting any money from the federal government except where they are beneficiaries.

Mr. Chair, I hope that, over time, as we get more of the claims settled, we can rationalize our way of working with the Metis communities, locals and also with the NWT Metis Association and the North Slave group.

Mr. Chair, the only thing I can say now is that we have maintained the core funding. We do have some special occasion or special events money. I am going to provide for the regions money that has been dedicated directly to the Aboriginal Summit; we will give it to the regional organizations. They can decide how to allocate it if they want to the locals. There is also capacity money that we have in our government that we will also make available on a regional basis.

Mr. Chair, I know that is not the answer that the Member would like, but, at this point in time, that is the best that I think we can do until we see more evolution of our negotiations in the southern part of the Territories and working on how we work with those who are beneficiaries. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Minister Handley. We are on page 2-134. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: I will wait. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chair, I may also need to wait. I am looking at page 135. Sorry.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We are on page 2-134, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Contributions, continued on page 2-135. Are there questions on 2-135? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On this page, it is showing a \$490,000 contribution under the heading of Intergovernmental Forum participation. It is a continuation of a similar amount that we appropriated this current year. In the previous year, \$583,000, so substantial contributions were made to the Intergovernmental Forum.

What is the status, Mr. Chair, of the Intergovernmental Forum? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is one forum that I would like to speak to the Minister of DIAND about when he visits the Northwest Territories over the next month. The Intergovernmental Forum only met once as a true forum during the life of the last government. Instead, the funding was used to have the aboriginal leaders participate in events like the Circle of Northern Leaders and also through the Aboriginal Summit meetings. So the nature of the forum has changed, but with the new federal government, I am not sure exactly how he will want to deal with the forum in the sense that it was originally conceived about two governments ago. Mr. Chair, this money is used for leaders getting together to discuss issues that are of mutual concern. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. This is where I wanted to go. As we look back a few pages in this department, Mr. Chair, we will see that the Intergovernmental Forum does not exist on the organization chart anymore. Intergovernmental relations does. Maybe there is some change in nomenclature there. If we are calling it Intergovernmental Forum participation, I guess what I want to be certain of is, as the Premier just told us, that it is used as and when the need arises for aboriginal leaders to be able to travel and attend and look after expenses at various venues or forums. I wanted to make sure, Mr. Chair. Let me put it this way: Is any of this money being used for ongoing administration, salaries or work of an ongoing nature? We will stop there, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, all of the \$490,000 is used to support the aboriginal organizations. None of it is used for administration, salaries or anything like that. It is all paid out as grants. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chair, if the Premier says it all goes to support aboriginal organizations, but none of it is used for administration, I am a bit confused on those two terms. What is the money used for, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Clarification, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, the money is used to enable aboriginal organizations and their representatives to participate in the various forums we have. None of it is used to pay our staff salaries. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Handley. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chair, is any of the money used to pay aboriginal organization salaries?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, some of it has been used in the past for the Aboriginal Summit salaries. Now, Mr. Chair, what I just mentioned just a minute ago is what I want to do. I want to allocate all of the money that we have for grants and contributions to aboriginal organizations to the aboriginal organizations and let them determine how they are going to participate in the various forums. One of the problems we have had in the past is that we funded the Aboriginal Summit directly ourselves. The result of doing that was that the leaders became less and less close to that summit because they weren't involved in making the decisions about how it was funded and so on. We did that for them. Mr. Chair, what I want to do is get the money to the aboriginal organizations at the regional level and let them be governments. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chair, this particular item here -- and we are still talking about \$490,000 for Intergovernmental Forum participation -- it indicates that participation costs are cost shared between us and DIAND on a one-third/two-third basis. The Premier did mention that he wants to check with the new DIAND Minister Prentice. So depending on whether or not DIAND comes on board, is this money still going to be allocated to aboriginal organizations regardless of whether or not DIAND partners on this, Mr. Chair?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, it is my intention to pay the money to the regional aboriginal organizations in any case. I would like to have the federal government approach it the same way we do and let the regional organizations determine themselves the extent to which they participate in the summit; or if they want to have some other kind of forum, let them choose their own organization rather than us dictating it to them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I support that approach to this allocation fully. But I want to probe just what are the terms or the criteria under which we're giving this money, and I guess I'd ask an additional question to it then. If we're going to allocate this to the aboriginal organizations, what criteria or expectations are we going to attach to it, Mr. Chairman, if the terms are going to be changing? What are we going to say our expectations are, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're currently working on refining the terms as we speak. Generally, what we're expecting here is that the aboriginal organizations will use this money to be able to participate in any intergovernmental meetings, forums, and so on that

we have. They may use some of this money for their travel costs. They may use some of it to hire research staff. But we want them to be prepared to come to the table and be able to meet us on as much an equal government-to-government-to-government relationship with ourselves and the federal government. Without this kind of money, then they are clearly at a disadvantage. So, Mr. Chairman, we allocate it to the regions, we give them maximum flexibility to use it for this general purpose, use it in a way that they feel is going to help them to present their case. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Anything further, Mr. Braden?

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, there's also, on this page, an allocation for \$240,000, a continuation from last year for the same amount, for the NWT Economic Development Advisory Forum. This one has kind of a similar link to the item we previously talked about in that it says here an equal amount will be distributed by the federal government. Okay, the NWT Economic Development Advisory Forum. So can we also anticipate, are we going to go ahead with this allocation regardless of whether or not the new federal government is on side, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Economic Development Advisory Forum was created a number of years ago as part of the Aboriginal Summit. It never did really get off the ground in playing a significant role in providing advice on economic development regionally. So it put together some recommendations, it met occasionally, and so on. As with the \$490,000, it is my intention to use the \$240,000 as a grant to the aboriginal organizations at the regional level, let them use that for capacity, for the support that they need. Mr. Chairman, I might say that, as well, of the regional reorganization and capacity building funds, there is 100,000 in there that I intend to allocate to the regional organizations, as well. So, Mr. Chairman, the net result will be \$830,000 that will be distributed to the aboriginal organizations at the regional level for them to be able to participate, as I said before, on a government-to-government relationship with us. We're not going to tell them how to spend it except that it has to be spent generally within this purpose; but how much to spend on travel, how much to spend on researchers or renting an office or something, that's going to be their decision. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Next I've got Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Intergovernmental Forum participation, I would like to understand. When Mr. Minister is talking about allocating funds to the regional government that presumption is that it's going to cut out the Aboriginal Summit, Mr. Minister, in terms of...I guess I'm trying to get the grasp how, yes, you all have your visual governments there allocating who or when or how much is going to help with this certain part of the forum here and it's just the Aboriginal Summit will just sort of go away or disappear. I'm not too sure what kind of relationship that will be with our territorial government. I just need some clarification; that's all, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, a couple of weeks ago, two or three weeks ago, I had a meeting with the aboriginal regional leadership. At that time, I talked to them about the summit and the issues around us funding their summit directly for them, and talked, as well, about who are the leaders, who's the leadership in the Territories. The agreement was that the leadership were those people who were elected at the regional level and they are the ones who are the leaders. The agreement at that meeting was that we would, instead of us funding the summit for them, we would give them the money. They would work out, along with us, how much goes to the Sahtu, how much goes to the Gwich'in area, how much to the Inuvialuit and so on. They would then have to collectively make their own decision about what the summit would look like and what their fee would be for belonging to the summit in order to pay its expenses.

Mr. Chairman, the summit is in some ways, I'd say, very similar to the Council of the Federation of the Premiers where we get together regularly, we decide what the fee is, and we choose to belong or not belong to it and it serves our purposes. So I see dealing with the summit in the same way. Whether the summit survives or whether it disappears is going to be a decision that is going to be made collectively by the aboriginal regional leadership. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that explanation in terms of the rollout of this Intergovernmental Forum. Mr. Chairman, in terms of the 490, is this going to be allocated on a per capita basis or distributed equally amongst the regions? Do we have a list of legit governments that we're going to...Are we going to get into any quarrels in terms of who is a government, who is not a government, and what? So I guess those are more the administrative...I'd like to at least have some idea as to the funding of the allocation to participate at the Intergovernmental Forum. I think it's going to be a good, strong forum and you have some proper...I guess it's the communication and that's a lot of work that you're doing here, Mr. Minister, in terms of seeing where this goes. I think it will be a real asset for us in terms of our other negotiations with the federal government.

---Interjection

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm looking at the good that's happening here. So I just want to make sure that we're doing it in a fair and equitable manner; that the funding gets allocated, or you might receive some phone calls next year. Not too sure. Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I hope that we don't distribute it on a per capita basis. I expect that we will put forward a base-plus funding arrangement, similar to what we did with the community infrastructure funding, so that every region that participates would have a fair allocation of money. It wouldn't be just straight per capita. That remains to be concluded, though. We want to work with the aboriginal organization to determine how to best

do this. Mr. Chairman, the participants so far in the summit have been the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Dehcho have had observer status and I'm not sure if that's going to change, same with the Akaitcho, the North Slave Metis participated, as did the NWT Metis. So, Mr. Chairman, it pretty much covered everybody. But, Mr. Chairman, if for some reason a particular claimant organization decided it didn't want to participate in a forum, but rather they were just going to go on their own and not participate on a territorial basis in some form of summit, then we would have to decide whether or not we were going to provide them with funding. But because the funding is to participate in a territorial organization, my leaning would be not to provide them funding unless they participated. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Intergovernmental Forum would certainly, we could get more into some other discussions in terms of its mandate, its goals, its objectives in terms of what's the whole reason for having these regional governments come together. Is it still going to play a role in terms of the negotiations of devolution or resource revenue sharing? I guess I could have some more discussions later on with that, Mr. Chairman, in terms of I need to see something about what type of involvement we're going to have with the regional, if they want to participate or not. It will be up to them. If they don't, does it mean that they go directly to the federal government? Which I don't think is going to be very fruitful. I just want to have some options there for us in our working relationship with the aboriginal governments. More of a comment and I think we can have some more discussions with the Minister later.

The other point here, Mr. Chairman, that I wanted to look at is the regional reorganization and capacity building. It has marked 200,000. Is that again application-based? Mr. Handley did talk about base-plus funding plus per capita. How is that going to be distributed to the organizations? Is this specific aboriginal group or non-aboriginal group? I guess it's more of a criteria in terms of this type of funding because 200,000 is not very much in terms of funding for, well, I don't even know the purpose of this. Again, that might require some other discussion. It says that you're building self-government capacity, so I know when we did our self-government capacity building in Tulita at one time, 200,000 was one-quarter of the budget. I'm not too sure what kind of, how this funding is going to be distributed into the communities that are negotiating or communities that have already, like the Tlicho, negotiated. Just some clarification, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As much as possible we want to structure our funding to the regional aboriginal organizations in a way that gives them maximum autonomy in terms of how they structure themselves and what kind of territorial organization they may need to support them. The purpose in doing that, of course, is to allow them to participate in a forum that lets them work cooperatively; it doesn't matter if it's to discuss devolution, or resource revenue sharing, or caribou harvesting, or whatever it may be that they want to do at the territorial level. It gives them the money to be able to participate.

Mr. Chairman, in that \$200,000, that money was \$100,000 to be distributed to aboriginal organizations across the Territories with the exception of the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit, and \$100,000 was to go to the Beau-Del regional self-government. The regional self-government had signed an AIP and we're moving along toward a Beau-Del regional government. A few weeks ago, the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council formally stated that the Gwich'in were no longer participating in that regional self-government model. We still need to get more clarification from the Beau-Del leaders of how they want to pursue the self-government; whether it's going to be each on their own or what they will do. There's a meeting in the Beau-Del later in March that I intend to go to and hopefully get more clarification, but that, so \$100,000 had been set aside for the Beau-Del. Whether we spend that \$100,000 there and \$100,000 to the rest of the territory will depend on the outcome of the meeting later in March, but this, as Members understand, is changing almost on a weekly basis for us. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Joe just answered one of my questions already. I was just going to ask questions on the other \$100,000 that he was talking about, but that's already covered.

I guess I just want to ask a quick question on the autonomy and the authority and the mandate of the Aboriginal Affairs department versus the Aboriginal Summit with intergovernmental relations and resource revenue sharing and devolution. I know that when the summit was formed by this government a few years ago, it was probably the easiest way to deal with all aboriginal governments under one roof or on one table. Now that the tri-governmental relationships are ongoing, there seems to be a lot of, there's more differences, I guess, with the territorial government's negotiations and what the territorial government wants to get out of the negotiations and the devolution agreements, versus what the summit wants to get and versus what the federal government wants to give. With this growing rift between what the summit is more or less leaning towards and what the GNWT wants to get out of the Intergovernmental Forum is our issues on, I guess, direct resource revenue payments to who is going to accept them and how much is it going to be. I just want to know if this money, this \$830,000 that's going to go to these regional governments to find out how they want to participate in the Intergovernmental Forum with the Aboriginal Summit being their point of contact, I guess, with the other negotiations parties. If these regional governments start pulling out and saying we don't want to go through this Aboriginal Summit forum and work with the GNWT that way, we want to go on one-on-one or on our own with the federal government, but some, say, you know, half of the aboriginal governments decide to stay with the Aboriginal Summit, then there's going to be a whole new, I don't know, can of worms that the GNWT is going to have to start dealing with, I guess, before any devolution or resource revenue sharing agreement comes to fruition. That's my whole point. When or how, does the GNWT have a plan B or a plan C in place, say, to deal with the different scenarios that might be coming up when this resource revenue devolution starts getting closer to just being resolved, I guess, just on a framework agreement? If the pipeline starts going and gets constructed before anything is actually signed, is

there a plan to address that issue to say, geez, you know, we haven't got any resource revenue deal signed yet on the dotted line, but the pipeline is already starting to be built and how are we going to deal with it that way? Is there any contingency plans that the government has in place to address all these unknowns? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, let me correct one statement. There is no rift between the GNWT and the Aboriginal Summit. The Aboriginal Summit was set up for a specific purpose in furthering devolution and resource revenue sharing and also some economic activity. So that's still fine with us. Mr. Chairman, where there are differences is between some of the aboriginal organizations. While some have settled claims and want to get on with the implementation of their claims, that includes further steps on self-government, and they want to move ahead with that and they want to deal with devolution and resource revenue sharing. Other regional organizations, the Akaitcho, for example, have said they do not want to deal with devolution until they settle their agreement. The Dehcho have said the same thing. So we can't get ourselves in a position where we're forcing them to participate in something that they said they didn't want to participate in. So, Mr. Chairman, the best way of having peace among all of the regional organizations is to give them the money, let them create collectively their own organization that is going to respect their individual regional differences, and, at the same time, let them come together where there is a territorial consensus or a need to meet at a territorial level.

Mr. Chairman, I don't know, I can't predict where this is going. It may go the route we did up to 1991 with a comprehensive claim approach and then eventually that broke down and we started going to regional claims. Maybe that's the only way it will ever work, Mr. Chairman. I don't know. But we have to respect the right of each claimant organization to choose their own path. We can't determine that for them. Otherwise we're as colonial as we accuse the federal government of being.

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to mention, as well, when I was listing off the participants of the Aboriginal Summit, I think I omitted the Tlicho, and the Tlicho are active participants, as well. Thank you.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. That gets back to my original question, then, about getting the aboriginal organizations to be more autonomous, at arm's length with the GNWT in their own land claim issues and devolution. So how does this government expect to even...You know, some of these land claim talks could last another 10 years. How are we going to approach devolution with these unknowns? How are we going to even talk about devolution? Why are we even talking about devolution if we know it could be fragmented? It could just all crash down anytime now. Anytime that any aboriginal organization decides to pull the plug, devolution could just go down the drain. So with all the work, and the money, and the resources that all the other aboriginal groups are putting together, putting into this whole process, and then somebody comes up with the bright

idea that, yes, it's not going to work because we have a better idea. So I just want to know, why are we always just on one path to devolution and resource revenue sharing and maybe we should start thinking of a contingency plan or a contingency organization, organizational approach or management negotiation tactics or something that would address these as we go along and when they do come up, say, you know...What do we do if the pipeline starts construction before anything is signed, like resource revenue sharing and stuff like that? What options will we have after that? Is that something that Aboriginal Affairs researches? Is there any plan B, is what I want to know, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if I'd call it a plan B, but the Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Tlicho all have signed agreements. They all have implementation processes to move ahead with implementing their claims, their modern treaties. They will move ahead at their own pace. It won't be the same for everybody. If I can, Mr. Chairman, the Tlicho have their own schedule all laid out of when they will move ahead with self-government, because theirs is a self-government agreement. In the Sahtu, we have individual communities moving ahead with discussions on self-government. The same is true in the Beau-Del area. So, Mr. Chairman, each of those is going to move ahead at its own pace. Because some of the aboriginal organizations have not negotiated a final claim yet isn't a reason to hold up everybody else because that is really interrupting someone else's right. So I see self-government as a process that'll move along as fast as regions and communities are ready to take it on. It won't be lock-step right across the Territories.

Mr. Chairman, devolution itself will continue. Devolution will continue in the sense of discussions of transferring province-like powers held by the Department of Indian Affairs, by the federal government, to the territorial government. So it will become more and more the territory, more and more province-like. That can still continue and will continue. The same with resource revenue sharing. That can still continue even though claims are not settled. But those that have settled claims will not be able to take on self-government responsibilities until they have a claim and become a self-government or become a government, because they're not a government until they have a settled claim.

So, Mr. Chairman, the way I see it, it isn't a plan A or plan B, but it's a matter of respecting every region's right to move at its own pace, in its own direction, and yet do it in a way that doesn't interfere with someone else's right. I think it can happen and there is no reason that it all has to be lock-step. But at the same time, Mr. Chairman, I must say that nobody has a veto over what somebody else does. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Next on the list I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking at the pages before us, 134 and 135, and doing a bit of math here -- and my math is always subject to correction, Mr. Chairman -- I come up with a total commitment here between ourselves and the federal government of \$2.65 million. That's a lot of money on these two pages: \$2.65

million dollars, and \$1.43 million of that is ours; \$1.22 million is the federal government. So some of this, Mr. Chairman, has got relatively specific assignment. There's \$225,000 identified to the Metis Nation. That's quite specific. There's \$100,000 identified for the Dene Nation. That's quite specific. There are, let's see, one, two, three, four, five other sort of categories, if you will, or specific lines identified here. It's these five that I guess I find most concerning, Mr. Chairman, because they are so wide and open in their scope. There is little for me to hang onto here in terms of accountability, seeing what the expectations are, knowing what, you know, if we're going to commit some taxpayers' money what then can we expect will be the value that we will get out of it.

Mr. Chairman, I am fully in support of this government, the territorial government, lending reasonable financial support to aboriginal governments. That is not at issue. It is that we have identified, as I say, at least on these two pages by my assessment, five different pots of money, all of them really, as I say, very wide in scope with very little specific tangible criteria on them. So if I have an ask here, it is can the Minister take a really hard look at these allocations and, over the course of the fiscal year, see if they can be amalgamated, or streamlined, or put into a form that is going to allow for more accountability and more certainty of what the value will be when these dollars are allocated to the aboriginal organizations? As I say, between these two pages here, there is \$2.6 million. I don't think it's unreasonable to ask that we see some more shape and form attached to these expenditures, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, let me say that, first of all, the \$225,000 to the Metis Nation, that is money that goes back to an agreement that was made some time ago. So that's hard to just fold up something we agreed to with the Metis.

So with the \$75,000 for aboriginal organizations' special events funding, that's a pot of money that's first-come, first-served that we give out as grants. Over the year, we always have some request for money to help with the meeting that wasn't contemplated.

Mr. Chairman, I agree with what Mr. Braden has suggested and I would like to do that. I don't think that it is anymore right for us to tell aboriginal governments and associations how to spend their money than it is for the federal government to tell us how we have to spend our money. We are elected. We will decide. Aboriginal leaders are elected; they'll decide. Then we have an accountability framework in place to make sure that the money isn't misappropriated in some way. That would be the arrangement I would like and that's what I hear Mr. Braden suggesting. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, if we could expect that at some point in time through the course of the year, or at least in the next budget planning cycle, to see some consolidation of these funds and what they are used for, I would welcome that, but I am not going to stand in the way of approving this, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't see any problem bringing it forward at the time we do our business planning. I would want to do this in partnership with the aboriginal government, of course. I can't just take their money and roll it up into one ball for them. We have to do some consultation here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Handley. Next on the list I have Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a few quick comments. I am happy to see that the government is providing money for aboriginal organizations. Last year, the Gwich'in decided to step back in terms of self-government negotiations with the Inuvialuit and the non-aboriginal people. I am just wondering, if that's the case, how is that money broken down in terms of their commitment to sit down at the table and talk about self-government? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I know there was some discussion about it over the last months, but it was over the last two or three weeks that the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council formally gave notice that they were separating and doing their own thing. So, Mr. Chairman, from our perspective, we are going to have two different sets of negotiations and two different negotiators, one for the Inuvialuit, one for the Gwich'in, and we will take the money and divide it up into some equitable basis yet to be determined following the confirmation from the Gwich'in that they are no longer in the joint process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just wondering if the Gwich'in decide to come back and talk with the Inuvialuit and the non-aboriginal people, is that door open to them yet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, that would be open. We wouldn't reject it. I would hope that if they did that, that we could sense a real sincerity in staying through with the process. We don't want to be flipping back and forth and I don't suggest the Gwich'in would do that, but if it did happen, I would hope it would be followed through. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Anything further, Mr. Pokiak?

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to go back to the \$490,000, earlier I think the Premier said that it's based on population in terms of the funds. Can I ask the Minister is that on a first-come, first-served basis for how the money is going to be distributed? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it wouldn't come first-come, first-served. It would be allocated by region. They would take it as they wished.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister Handley. We are on page 2-135, activity summary, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$1.430 million, total grants and contributions, \$1.430 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 2-136 and 2-137, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Pages 2-138 and 2-139, information item, worked done on behalf of others, \$469,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Back to page 2-125, program summary, operations expenditure summary, \$7.328 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Does committee now agree that the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has concluded the main estimates?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. I would like to thank you, Mr. Premier, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Sparling, for being with us this afternoon. Thank you. The Chair is going to call a short break. We will come back with Bill 19.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are considering Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Charles Dent, if he would like to provide his department's opening remarks on the bill. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act. The purpose of this legislation is to modernize our legislation relating to colleges in the Northwest Territories. To that end, this bill proposes various amendments to the Public Colleges Act.

First, the title of the legislation will be changed to the Aurora Colleges Act to reflect the fact that Aurora College is now the only public college in the Northwest Territories. Amendments will also be made throughout the act and in other legislation to replace references to public colleges with references to Aurora College.

Second, the act will be amended to alter the current composition and tenure of persons serving on the Aurora College Board of Governors. In particular, the act will be amended to reflect current departmental practice of

requiring representation on the board of governors from all regions of the Northwest Territories.

Amendments will also be made to replace references to the Science Advisory Council with references to the Research Advisory Council and to grant Aurora College with express authority to grant prescribed applied bachelor degrees. Inoperative provisions of the act will be repealed.

These amendments are desirable to ensure the act is accurate and up to date.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be pleased to answer any questions the members of committee may have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Dent. I will ask for Ms. Lee to please provide comments from the Social Programs committee. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Programs held public hearings on Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act, on December 5, 2005, in Yellowknife; on December 6th in Enterprise and Kakisa; on December 7th in Fort Providence and Behchoko.

The clause-by-clause review of the bill took place in Yellowknife on January 31, 2006. The committee received a written submission from Mr. Dennis Bevington, then chair of the Aurora College Board of Governors, advising us of the board's full support of the bill.

Members of the public in both Enterprise and Kakisa raised concerns about the government's intention in amending the act to reduce the number of board members from two per region to one per region. The Minister confirmed that the intent is to reflect the practice that has been in place for some time of appointing just one member per region and leaving the second position vacant. The committee and Minister agreed to one amendment during the clause-by-clause review to correct a minor error in the French version of the bill. Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 17, as amended, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the whole.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 17. Individual committee members may have questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Lee. I would like to ask Minister Dent if he would like to bring witnesses for the consideration of the bill. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, Madam Chair, I would like to bring in witnesses.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses to the table.

Minister Dent, for the record, could you please introduce your delegation?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me today, Mr. Dan Daniels, assistant deputy minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment; and, Mr. Mark Aitken, legislative counsel.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Dent. To the bill. General comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): There are no general comments. Then we will refer to the bill. It has 35 clauses. Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 14.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 15.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 16.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 17.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 18.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 19.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 20.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 21.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 22.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 23.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 24.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 25.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 26.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 27.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 28.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 29.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 30.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 31.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 32.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 33.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 34.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 35.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does committee agree that Bill 17 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Bill 17 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Minister Dent, Mr. Daniels, Mr. Aitken.

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, I move we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 17: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007, and Committee Report 5-15(4) and Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted, and that Bill 17 is now ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Is there a seconder for the motion? The honourable Minister for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 19: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 11:00 a.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. Petitions
10. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
11. Tabling of Documents
12. Notices of Motion
13. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
14. First Reading of Bills
15. Second Reading of Bills
16. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 - Bill 15, Court Security Act
 - Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act
 - Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007
 - Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006
 - Committee Report 5-15(4), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 6-15(4), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 7-15(4), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
 - Committee Report 8 - 15(4), Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General to the NWT Legislative Assembly for the Fiscal Years Ended March 31, 2002, and March 31, 2003
17. Report of Committee of the Whole
18. Third Reading of Bills
19. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 28, 2006, at 11:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:08 p.m.

