



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

4th Session

Day 25

15th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Pages 843 - 884

The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 8, 2006****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good morning, Members. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the day. Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 67-15(4): Gwich'in Self-Government Negotiations Update**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Gwich'in Tribal Council recently advised the other parties that it no longer views the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle as the foundation for negotiations towards a final agreement in the Beaufort-Delta. Instead, they would like to pursue a stand-alone Gwich'in self-government agreement.

Mr. Speaker, these negotiations began in 1993 when the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation put forward a model for a Beaufort-Delta regional self-government. Later in 1993, the leaders of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in, along with the eight Beaufort-Delta communities, passed a unanimous motion to support the public model proposal in principle. The core of this model was the creation of a regional public government, which would represent and serve all residents of the Beaufort-Delta.

In February 1994, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation met with Canada and the GNWT. They proposed that regional public government model form the basis for negotiating a joint self-government agreement for the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit in the Beaufort-Delta.

Canada and the GNWT accepted the proposal. The federal inherent rights policy, later released in 1995, was consistent with this. The policy states a preference for implementing self-government primarily, though not exclusively, through public government in the NWT. Negotiations using the model proposed by the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit began in 1996, and in 2003, all parties signed an agreement-in-principle.

Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years, the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, Canada and the GNWT have all invested a substantial amount of time, resources and money on self-government negotiations. An AIP is the last step before a final agreement can be reached. The new direction proposed by the Gwich'in is a very significant departure from the government's model we have negotiated.

While the GNWT has always respected the right of aboriginal people to pursue self-government through a

public or an aboriginal model, it has been our preference to pursue these negotiations through a public government model because it best serves communities with mixed populations. However, at the end of the day, we recognize that self-government agreements must be practical, broadly supported and capable of being implemented.

While the GNWT reviews the AIP as a practical way to fairly implement the inherent rights of the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit, we fully respect the right of any party to rethink or change the preferred approach to self-government. The Gwich'in Tribal Council has made such a decision and we respect that decision.

The GNWT is in the process of reviewing the implications of the Gwich'in's proposal and in the near future will formally respond to the Gwich'in Tribal Council. Over the coming months, I will be talking with my counterparts in the federal government, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council. These discussions will focus on potential next steps towards negotiating and concluding self-government agreements in the Beaufort-Delta.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT's vision of a strong northern voice and identity depends on the successful negotiation and implementation of aboriginal land, resource and self-government agreements in all regions. We are committed to finding a resolution that will allow us to move forward with the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit. Thank you. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On The Work Of The Electoral Boundaries Commission**

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. A very important commission to the work of this Assembly has recently started travels and hearings, Mr. Speaker, into the electoral boundaries that are set for, at least at this point, the 19 ridings that make up this Assembly. The commission gave MLAs and members of the public in Yellowknife an opportunity to speak earlier this week. I wanted to take this opportunity in my statement to just do a précis of a couple of points that I made to the commission.

Mr. Speaker, the first is consideration of whether or not more ridings or more Members are needed to do the job of not only representing the people of the Northwest Territories, but also to achieve the work of the Assembly. With our ministerial style of government, I think we have a

lot of work in front of us at any one time. With a seven-Member Executive Council and 11 Members on this side, we're hard pressed sometimes to look after everything and do a good job of it. I think that right now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we should look at is we are in the process, through devolution and resource revenue sharing and self-government, of really fundamentally changing the nature of this Legislative Assembly over time. I think that for that reason, we should not either decrease or enlarge the size of the Assembly.

The other factor, Mr. Speaker, that comes into play is that by the numbers, four of our ridings are outside of a reasonable range of variance to a Canadian convention that 25 percent should be the threshold; 25 percent over and under-representation. I asked the commission to look at that aspect and see what adjustments could be realistically proposed in those ridings to see if we can achieve that representation by population balance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Mental Illness Services In The Northwest Territories

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week is NWT Mental Health Week. The health of the mind, like the health of the body, is taken for granted until something goes wrong. Mr. Speaker, we all have some experience with stress in our lives. There can be enormous pressures to meet the obligations of the workplace and balance work with the demands of family life and other obligations. Fortunately, most of us are able to manage these pressures and maintain a balanced state of mind by making healthy choices about how to deal with life's challenges. Not everyone is so fortunate, Mr. Speaker.

Approximately 20 percent of Canadians will personally experience a serious mental illness during their lifetime. Indirectly, mental illness affects all Canadians through illness in family members, friends and colleagues. Mental illness is brought on by a very complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors. It does not discriminate. Mental illness can affect people of all ages, education, income levels and cultures.

Mr. Speaker, 36 percent of all hospitalizations in the Northwest Territories are for mental health illnesses and they are related to alcohol and drug abuse. This is followed by depression, the second most common reason, that being at 30 percent.

In 2003, five percent of NWT residents age 12 and older reported a major depressive episode. In other words, Mr. Speaker, approximately 1,600 NWT residents over the age of 12 suffered from clinical depression. Statistics indicate that there is no significant difference in the prevalence of depression between communities. However, smaller communities have more limited access to programs and services than does our capital.

Mr. Speaker, Hay River residents, for example, have limited access to prevention and treatment services. The Department of Health and Social Services released the report on NWT integrated service delivery model in 2004.

In it, they identified challenges to the current service delivery for mental health and addictions services. To meet these challenges, the department initiated a strategy to roll out 77 new mental health and addictions workers throughout the NWT communities over a three-year period. Mr. Speaker, I hope to see the situation improve as the strategy is implemented.

According to experts on mental illness in Canada, they characterize mental illness as the last taboo. Mr. Speaker, the stigma attached to mental illness presents serious barriers to diagnoses and treatment. I will leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Post-Secondary Education Challenges In The Northwest Territories

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker...(English not provided)

Mr. Speaker, when I talk to the youth throughout the North and ask them what comes to mind when I say post-secondary education, the replies are first excitement and then they recall not being able to afford expenses on a monthly basis.

Post-secondary education is very important for the healthy development, not only to Nahendeh, but throughout the Northwest Territories. An elder once told me the greatest gift you can give our youth is a good education, and this is the fundamental principle I use as an MLA.

A northern student, especially a first-year student, experiences many overwhelming challenges emotionally, financially and educationally. To further compound the transition to post-secondary education, our students face additional challenges most southern students take for granted like being alone, receiving consistent funding, et cetera. A recent publication regarding the composition of various boards and committees illustrate a very disconcerting trend; the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board has all Yellowknife representation and none from the communities. For a government that prides themselves on being a government of the people, examples such as these seem to be contradictory.

These concerns are not isolated as many students throughout the North have experienced difficulties while dealing with the regional student assistance office. Many students cannot afford to cover the costs of education on their own and cannot retain loans or financial assistance other than the assistance offered by the Government of the Northwest Territories. This leaves the students with what is often described as one-chance policies, closing very important doors very early in a youth's education.

This government must recognize our educated youth and adults as the key to a successful future and must be proactive and creative with student financial assistance policies. A shortage of a skilled and educated workforce will only get worse and we must be prepared. This government must be prepared to be flexible when dealing with our students. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Safety Of GNWT Workers

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, working for the GNWT is filled with many surprises, but I think showing up at work one day only to be told that the building you are working in is at risk of structural collapse and that you need to pack up your files immediately and get out, is beyond what any employee should expect or consider reasonable.

That's exactly, Mr. Speaker, the situation that 57 Inuvik employees who, until yesterday were working in the Perry Building, find themselves in. Employees should not have to worry about their building falling down around them.

Recent events in Inuvik have brought the safety of GNWT workers and the public into question. First we had to close down Samuel Hearne School because the foyer collapsed. Then before the school year even started, we had to close it again because of the fear of the building collapsing. Now the parents of some of the students who have been forced out of their school are now being forced out and abandoned from their workplace because of the danger of a collapsing building. When is it going to stop, Mr. Speaker?

I find it very ironic that just last August, during our pre-budget consultation, a resident in Inuvik brought up the poor state of the GNWT's buildings. She said to us, just walk around. Do they make you feel proud? Well, Mr. Speaker, they certainly don't make me feel very proud. I will have questions for the Minister of Public Works at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today, once again, about the high cost of doing business for small businesses and more specifically about the skyrocketing WCB premiums for franchise businesses in the city.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that my riding of Range Lake is the home of the only Tim Horton's in the NWT.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Yay!

MS. LEE: It is also the home of Pizza Hut, Quiznos, Subway, Domino's Pizza and, of course, we have the good old KFC and A&W downtown. Mr. Speaker, these and other eateries, pubs and restaurants are an essential part of our city life. Mr. Speaker, what has been happening is they have been suffering under the burdens of all kinds of increases, taxes, garbage collection fees, cost of fuel and, in particular, the WCB premium rates have been going up for the classification they are in by 25 percent every year for the last four years. This is the maximum amount an increase can be given to a classification, as I learned this morning at a meeting, Mr.

Speaker. I really appreciate the staff at WCB for organizing and attending the meeting. Fortunately for us, I have learned at this meeting that the governance council has the mandate to review the classification and rates each year. I would like to call upon them to look at this situation ASAP.

Mr. Speaker, I need to tell you that they have a virtual ratepayer revolt on their hands. This issue has to be addressed immediately. We cannot allow the rate for one class to go up by 25 percent each year for four years in a row and not look at it to see what the problems are and put our heads together to solve them.

Mr. Speaker, all the mathematical and statistical information might explain how they got there, but they do not justify this kind of increase. Mr. Speaker, the ratepayers want to work with the WCB and consider all options on how to address them. We all need to listen.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe anyone in this House would put up with a 25 percent increase in their auto or home insurance every year without asking very legitimate questions.

AN. HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MS. LEE: ...that these operators are asking, and ones that I will be asking the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 358-15(4): Safety Of GNWT Workers

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I spoke on the state of the buildings in Inuvik. My questions are for the Minister of Public Works. In July of 2005, cracks were noticed in the Perry Building during a visual inspection and yet we didn't call the structural engineer until October. I would like to know why it took so long before we called in a structural engineer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 358-15(4): Safety Of GNWT Workers

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Perry Building is a leased asset. It is not our own facility. When the initial problems were noted, there was some investigation into what was occurring. Some work happened around removing the stone roof that was there and applying a different roofing material to lighten the load. That was done. After that was done, we had more staff move into the building and noticed that there were some more cracks and issues happening there. At that point, a call was made to bring in a structural engineer to have a look. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 358-15(4): Safety Of GNWT Workers

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A structural engineer was called in October, I believe. He didn't report back to DPW until the beginning of February. I would like to know why it took so long for the structural engineer to come back to DPW and, meanwhile, the employees are working in potentially unsafe conditions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 358-15(4): Safety Of GNWT Workers

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure why the reporting of this and the report being received by us took so long. All I can say is that, when we did receive the report, we have taken action to make sure that the safety of employees were taken into consideration. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 358-15(4): Safety Of GNWT Workers

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know how many other Perry buildings there are in Inuvik. Has DPW been inspecting these buildings to make sure we don't find ourselves in another situation like this? I would like to know what the plans are for the future with the workers and with the government buildings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 358-15(4): Safety Of GNWT Workers

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the record, the Perry Building is not our asset. It is a leased building and we are working with the landlord around the issues that have just come up. The issue of how we deal with our own inspections and so on is something that we have started to take a look at. In fact, they are trying to beef up that side within the department around the risk side of the equation when we look at our facilities and assets. So we are starting to move in that area and working with Municipal and Community Affairs in the area of inspections and how they occur. Thank you.

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

Question 359-15(4): High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must add to that list that I had, that we also have McDonald's in Range Lake. I don't want to miss anybody.

Mr. Speaker, I probably will not be over-estimating by saying that if Tim Horton's ever closed, we, especially the Yellowknife MLAs, will have to put our jobs on the line.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of WCB. Mr. Speaker, in the last four years, the WCB rate for the classification that they are in went up from \$1.30 per 100 in 2003, \$1.90 for 100 in 2004, \$2.34 per 100 in 2005, and \$2.93 per 100 in 2006. In real terms, these mean tens of thousands of dollars that each business has to fork out to WCB every year. In comparison, the rate in Peace River actually went down. In 2005, it was \$1.50 per 100 and in 2006, it is \$1.30. I would like to know if the Minister, seeing as I know he will say that he has no control over this, would ask the governance council to review this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for WCB, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 359-15(4): High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be happy to ask the governance council to review the situation and the classifications. I think it is important that everybody understand that WCB is a non-profit insurance program. What they do is group employers together, collect the premiums from them in order to pay for injured workers' pensions and medical requirements. This isn't a situation where the WCB would be pocketing the money. One of the reasons that the rates have gone up over the past few years is also because, in the year 2000 through 2003, the WCB was in a surplus position so they had 125 percent of the funds that were acquired. So they were operating up to a 30 percent discount on the rates in order to bring their surplus down. Obviously, as they bring their surplus down to the position they should be in, that means that the discount disappears. So there has been a significant reduction in the discount which people who are paying the rates would see as increases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 359-15(4): High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no implication on my part that the WCB is punishing these people to make money. I understand this is not a profit organization. I know it is an insurance organization. I know there were discounts when the investments were going well, but the increases have been up in the period after that. So that is not so relevant anymore. Mr. Speaker, I also understand that insurance is about spreading liability, but, in this situation, when you have a classification of businesses that is seeing a maximum increase every year for four years in a row, there has to be an automatic step there for the governance council to look at to see what is going on and how they can reduce the rates. Would the Minister ask that, to have an automatic provision there? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 359-15(4): High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will check with the governance council. I would be surprised if they didn't do that already. If not, I will suggest to them that they consider making that one of their policies, that

they review those classifications where they are seeing this sort of increase on a regular basis. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 359-15(4): High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

MS. LEE: I have a short supplementary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I learned that, obviously, there are a whole bunch of different classifications of businesses, clusters of businesses. In any given year, there are classifications where there is no increase. Then there are a whole bunch of classes that go up to the max. We need to review this because we are a small jurisdiction. Would the Minister ask the governance council to spread the pain and the liability in a more fair way? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 359-15(4): High Operating Costs Of Small Businesses

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The governance council brought in a team of actuaries -- I think the name was Morneau Soveco -- in the year 2004 to take a look at how the structure of the classification should be set up and make some recommendations. They are moving towards accomplishing those recommendations.

I guess we can ask the governance council to examine the situation, but there will be, of course, those employers who say that their rate classification is not seeing the level of accidents. They don't feel that they should subsidize rate classifications where the accidents are on the increase. That is largely what drives rate increases. If a group of employers, one of the groups or subgroups is seeing a number of accidents, then their rates tend to go up. But I would certainly be prepared to ask the governance council to take a look at the reasoning behind their decisions to move to the rate structure that was set in 2004 and make sure that they are valid. Thank you.

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

Question 360-15(4): Student Financial Assistance For Students In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of ECE just with respect to, as well, my Member's statement. I had a couple of constituents, Mr. Speaker, that had some SFA loans last year and they didn't do too well during the first semester. As a result, they lost all funding for that year plus the second semester. It caused quite a grievance to them. In fact, one of the students ended up actually quitting, Mr. Speaker. Is that something that is ongoing with the SFA Program? Can we look at changing that, because it creates quite an unnecessary burden on our students, especially if it is like a one-time thing in the first semester? It is not that they are bad students. It is just that they are experiencing difficulties in the transition, moving to a different location, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister can answer that for me.

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

Return To Question 360-15(4): Student Financial Assistance For Students In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Without knowing the details of the situation, I can tell the Member that it sounds like a situation that we have probably dealt with through the changes to the regulations this year. Last year, a student had to complete successfully 75 percent of a full course load in order to be considered successful. It was measured term by term. We have changed things this year so that the measure of success is 60 percent success of a full-time course load and we measure that success over the entire school year rather than over one semester. I believe that in the situation the Member is talking about, under our current regulations, the student would find the situation much more acceptable.

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

Supplementary To Question 360-15(4): Student Financial Assistance For Students In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just wondering if our appeal system is retroactive. In the situation I was talking about last year, the student was actually asked to return SFA funds for the whole year, based on his difficulties. He still did well in the second semester. How can we address this, Mr. Speaker, in our appeal system? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 360-15(4): Student Financial Assistance For Students In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With situations like this, when they came to my attention, I agreed with the members who brought them to me and said, this isn't right. We need to make changes to the regulations. That is what we have done. Unfortunately, I don't have the power to change regulations like that retroactively. Once a debt is owed to the government under the Financial Administration Act, the Minister or the appeals committee can't resolve that. Only the Legislative Assembly, through an act, can forgive debts to the government.

We have a situation where people are caught with last year's regulations. They have to live with the way those regulations were set. But going forward, we have changed it to be far more responsive, I think the Member will find, to our students' needs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 360-15(4): Student Financial Assistance For Students In Small Communities

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess part of the difficulty, too, with the repayment scheme was that as the student went through the paperwork -- and actually

agreements were signed -- SFA didn't really say that they would be penalized for the whole year. I am just wondering if the department can provide me with a copy of the actual guideline, rule or FMBS guideline that specifically states that failure of one term will apply to the whole year's worth? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 360-15(4): Student Financial Assistance For Students In Small Communities

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make sure that we provide that in a letter to Mr. Menicoche very quickly.

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

Question 361-15(4): Administration Of Income Security Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this morning are for Mr. Dent in his capacity as the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment and specifically to the responsibilities he has in the income support area. Mr. Speaker, the newly elected Conservative government is, we are told, going to be acting very quickly to implement its election pledge to give \$100 for each child under six to assist families with day care and childcare requirements.

Mr. Speaker, our government, in a couple of other areas, also has a way of handling this for income support clients, especially where impact and benefit agreement awards may result in some cash or the national child benefit, for instance. Our government's practice for people on those programs, on income support programs, is to claw this money back. Mr. Speaker, will this government also be clawing back this \$100 per child allowance that the newly elected Conservative government has pledged? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 361-15(4): Administration Of Income Security Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a bit premature to answer that question because we haven't seen the details of the program. As I understand how it has been talked about, the funding will flow to somebody who is on income support. Under our current regulations, that money would be seen as income and, therefore, would be counted in the assessment of income that the person has for that month, which would then impact on the amount of money that we would provide to them.

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

Supplementary To Question 361-15(4): Administration Of Income Security Programs

MR. BRADEN: Okay, Mr. Speaker. The argument is always out there. Low income people are already at or below the poverty line. Some cash would certainly make a difference in their hand, but we have the other argument here that it costs money to make childcare programs

available and accessible, and therein lies the dilemma. Mr. Speaker, in the review of our overall income support framework, will the government be entertaining a new policy and a new outlook on how we are going to treat low income and income support clients in relation to outside cash awards that they might receive? Is this something that we'll be able to look at and hopefully come up with some kind of long-term answer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 361-15(4): Administration Of Income Security Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that is one of the issues that will be up for consideration as we work through the process of re-examining our income security programs. It is an area that I have talked to the standing committee about that we will certainly be prepared to listen to advice. But when we come back and take a look at the package, it has to be something that we take a look at as a whole part of the package and whether or not it is appropriate or not. The short answer is yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 361-15(4): Administration Of Income Security Programs

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, recognizing that it is early days and more details of the program have to come out, if this materializes as we anticipate, \$100 per child under six, that could be a lot of cash. Does the Minister have any idea of what kind of new money that would result in? Under our current policy, what kind of new programs or enhanced programs could people look forward to? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 361-15(4): Administration Of Income Security Programs

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, we have not done that level of assessment. I can point out, though, that our healthy children's initiative, for instance, is funded with monies that are reinvested from the national child benefit. So that is the sort of programming that we have right now that is funded with those sorts of programs and could be an example of what we might look at should we decide that this money does count as income. Thank you.

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

Question 362-15(4): Measuring Progress With Addictions And Mental Health Issues

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement today, I talked about the fact that this is NWT Mental Health Week, and I touched on some of the areas that this week is intended to draw attention to. No one likes to talk about addictions, mental illness or depression, but I think it is important that we do have weeks like this that do recognize the prevalence of these things in our communities and in our society because we need to do things to address them.

I mentioned in my statement, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Health and Social Services did commission a plan in 2004 and that this has been getting rolled out. Some of the areas and challenges they identified was the need to emphasize prevention and promotion programs at the community level, increased accessibility to community mental health and addiction services, increased clinical support and supervision for frontline workers, increased training for frontline staff, and increased access to mental health and addiction services after hours. The commitment in that was to employ 77 new mental health and addiction workers throughout the NWT over a three-year period. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, what is the status of this undertaking? How is the implementation of this piece related to addictions and mental health rolling out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 362-15(4): Measuring Progress With Addictions And Mental Health Issues

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a three-year plan, as the Member has indicated. We have completed the first two years. There has been a lot of discussion in the House about what is happening. As well, we thought it was an appropriate time to take a look at work that had been done. To that end, we did ask Dr. Chalmers to come back to take a look at what we had responded to in terms of her initial report back in 2001, the State of Emergency. That report will be tabled in this House and presented to committee members here before the rise of this House.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, we have 77 positions to date. There are 45 community wellness workers that are now in place, 24 mental health and addiction counsellors, as well as eight clinical supervisors. Mr. Speaker, a quick and important note is that, at the national level, there has been an agreement finally. The Member, in her statement, referenced mental health as the last taboo. There was an agreement at the FPT table in support for the setting up of a national mental health committee similar to the health council to provide an oversight and an ability to look at what is happening in mental health services across Canada, because it is recognized that it is an area that is fragmented, under-recognized, under-represented, and there is a need for us to collaboratively, at the national level in all of the provinces and territories with the federal government, work together. The hope is that the new federal government and the Minister of Health, Minister Clement, will honour that commitment, if we can move forward, not only with the work we are doing here but with that very important move to get a national approach to mental health services. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 362-15(4): Measuring Progress With Addictions And Mental Health Issues

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the commissioning of the report and the undertaking to increase the services as I have outlined in the challenges here is a very good step in the

right direction. I quoted some statistics here: 36 percent of all hospitalizations are alcohol and drug use related; 30 percent related to depression. How are we going to measure the outcome of our investments that are being made? What is the process for ensuring that we are making progress and that the numbers are going in the right direction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 362-15(4): Measuring Progress With Addictions And Mental Health Issues

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the addiction side, very clearly, the record of some success would be the amount of alcohol consumed in the Northwest Territories as going down, that the reliance on shelters and folks going to jail because of alcohol-related crimes are going down, that the number of alcohol-related accidents are going down. These are some of the specific ones. On the mental health side, it is much more difficult to quantify because there is not, as the Member indicated, a black and white issue that you can easily measure. The issue is going to be how coordinated are we and how able are we to respond to an unmet, pent-up demand that is out there for these types of services starting at the community level in all communities? Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 362-15(4): Measuring Progress With Addictions And Mental Health Issues

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That summary of indicators of all those things that he listed that are going down is certainly very good news. Something indirectly related to addictions, I suppose, are the incidents of FASD in our communities and in the North. There are very high rates. This might be slightly off in a different direction, but the Minister has just returned from an FASD conference, I believe. Do you have the same ability to measure whether or not we are making progress and seeing lesser incidents of FASD as a result of addictions in the North? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 362-15(4): Measuring Progress With Addictions And Mental Health Issues

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we should be clear, for the record, that I indicated that those would be indicators and, if those numbers did go down, they would be signs of success. It is unfortunate that I am not able to stand up and say with much joy and happiness in my voice that that, in fact, is happening, because it is not. It is something that we are striving for.

The FASD issue, as well, is a very complex and difficult subject where diagnosis of FASD is a very complicated process requiring a lot of work. Our ability to, in fact, diagnose these are very limited across Canada. The issue for us is going to be very basic initial indicators like the alcohol consumption, like the number of pregnant mothers acknowledging that they drink during pregnancy

being reduced, are two that come to mind. The other indicator, Mr. Speaker, in a more general sense, would be the recognition in schools that, possibly in the coming years, the number of special needs children seems to be dropping when it is recognized that a significant percentage of those children are FASD affected. Thank you.

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

Question 363-15(4): Made-In-The-NWT Branding Initiatives

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions today to Minister Bell who operates under the capacity of Industry, Tourism and Investment. During last session, I talked about a "Buy NWT," kind of a made-in-the-NWT program. I brought forward my concerns that we are not representing them in a capacity of a profile getting out there to our own citizens, as well as the rest of Canada, that we make good products here and that we should be looking for them at every opportunity. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister is, what are we doing with this "Buy NWT" program I brought forward to him? Where are we to date on that program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 363-15(4): Made-In-The-NWT Branding Initiatives

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Member was very interested in our branding initiatives. A number of members of the committee have had this discussion with me as well in committee. Members will also remember that the NWT Arts Strategy response, the GNWT response did talk about a Visual Identity Program. We are partially underway. We have gone out looking for interest in developing some branding that will be used around NWT arts and crafts. We do think that NWT arts and crafts are something that we need to get out, promote, and make sure everybody in Canada and the world understand what we have to offer. We are looking to develop this programming. It will start with the development of a logo. We are not out soliciting interest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 363-15(4): Made-In-The-NWT Branding Initiatives

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is excellent news that we are out looking for a logo and seeking interest, but have we spoken to the manufacturers? Mr. Speaker, I am well aware, many times I have brought it up, but we all know about the diamond industry that cuts and makes diamonds here in the sense of polishing. I am well familiar with the window industry, trusses, canvas bags, the special teas that are made downtown. What I have asked for is something simple that we can start off with, which is supplying tags that say made in the NWT, so our northern residents can buy things with pride knowing that they were made locally. So those types of initiatives I am talking about moving

quickly. Would the Minister respond on that aspect whereas what are we doing in that regard to promote our local products? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 363-15(4): Made-In-The-NWT Branding Initiatives

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Arts and crafts are but one piece. They are the first piece. It was in the interest of responding to the NWT Arts Strategy that we move forward on this. As I indicated the last time in the House we had this discussion, I have underway the BDIC is travelling to regions conducting a business program and service review to understand the types of programs that we are delivering. We want to know how they are working, whether or not they're still relevant. One of the things they are talking about is manufacturing in the North. We do want to move forward on a manufacturing strategy, but it has to make sense. You can imagine that there's got to be a lot of discussion around what percentage of value added does a product need to be in order to be considered NWT manufactured? There's a big difference between building cabinetry, for instance, from scratch and order cabinetry from the South and putting doors or doorknobs on it, and we have to have some discussion around what qualifies as NWT manufactured. So we are undertaking that discussion, as well, Mr. Speaker, but it's more complex than the arts and crafts piece which is why it has not rolled out as quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 363-15(4): Made-In-The-NWT Branding Initiatives

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not really talking about splitting atoms here in the concept of, you know, we have to create a whole new program or department or whatnot just to get some pride out there. I'm talking about logos, little tags that we can add on. I remember when we sent out carvings, they had little tags saying that they were northern made. I'm talking about stickers that people can put on their products and people can buy with pride. So I'm talking about fullness of consultation about getting out there and just doing something simple so we can get this moving forward, and then we can worry about refining it with the fullest of consultation. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, would he extend consultation, of course, to both the bands and municipal corporations because I'm very familiar with, for example, the City of Yellowknife has a whole economic development department, so would he extend that consultation to those bands and municipal corporations that do this type of thing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 363-15(4): Made-In-The-NWT Branding Initiatives

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to understand that we can't simply issue stickers that people can plunk onto their products. This has to be credible; it has to be real. We can't have situations where we have products that aren't really manufactured in the North, aren't really northern arts and

crafts. There's got to be a way for us to support our manufacturing and arts and crafts industry, but also be able to audit it. We have to ensure that we provide certainty to people who are purchasing these products. So it's very important to us to maintain the integrity of our branding programs. It isn't as simple as it might appear, but we will work with all of the interested stakeholders. We are underway now in this regional consultation. We'll make sure that we have discussions with all the communities and all of the interested partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 364-15(4): Police Dog Attack On Good Samaritan

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the honourable Member responsible for Justice, Mr. Brendan Bell. I want to ask some questions today in regard to a police dog attack on a good Samaritan that happened in the city of Yellowknife just recently. It's not the first time that this dog has attacked somebody. In the past it happened to be a criminal, but this time it was a good Samaritan. I'd just like to ask the Minister of Justice what the government's response is. You know, Mr. Speaker, I was very supportive of this dog and the handler showing up here in Yellowknife to do some good work, but this is the second time. Did we get a second-rate dog, or what is the real story behind this dog, Mr. Speaker? I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice that question. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 364-15(4): Police Dog Attack On Good Samaritan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think all Members are supportive of this initiative. The dog has been successful in helping us find drugs in residences, helping us find drugs in parcels, I think it's going to help us in our strategy and work with the street team to get drugs off the streets. It can also be used in situations where we're trying to apprehend people. In the case that we're talking about, there was an apprehension underway of some people who were stealing snow machines. Unfortunately, yes, a good Samaritan was injured. We have to review the incident and make sure that all of the proper procedures and protocols were followed. It does cause me some concern. We will be in discussion with the RCMP to make sure that we're doing everything we can to ensure that people are safe as we use this. We do have to ensure that and are following up on this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 364-15(4): Police Dog Attack On Good Samaritan

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this good Samaritan had to be medevaced to Edmonton, as far as my information tells me. I think certainly from a public relations standpoint, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Justice has a problem on his hands because if we want to get the public involved and assisting the

RCMP and helping out, the next time somebody goes to help the RCMP they're going to be worried that this dog is around the corner and it's going to attack them. I think, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice and this government have to try to get the message out there that this isn't going to be the case, this won't happen again, and that it was an isolated incident. But, Mr. Speaker, the track record would suggest that it's not an isolated incident and I'd like to know what the Minister of Justice is going to do about this dog. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 364-15(4): Police Dog Attack On Good Samaritan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Mr. Speaker, it is an isolated incident and I don't want to get into the details of the incident that the Member referred to initially because it's a matter before the courts. But I can tell you that this is the first instance with this dog in the North where a bystander has been injured. We can go through the details, but, of course, I think it's premature at this point. I can assure the Members that I've asked the department to sit down with the RCMP and undertake a full review. I will agree that public support for this initiative is very important. We do have to maintain public support, but I don't want people to think that the dog is a danger. I think there were some circumstances here that lead to this injury happening and we will undertake this review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 364-15(4): Police Dog Attack On Good Samaritan

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the discussions that the Minister of Justice has with the RCMP, I'm wondering if in part of those discussions will be if we cannot get a new dog. I think maybe that's part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, is to get a new dog, one that's going to not do what the one did just yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I'd like the Minister to at least ask the RCMP if we cannot trade out this dog. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 364-15(4): Police Dog Attack On Good Samaritan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously a lot of money and training goes into being able to work with a dog like this. It's simply not a matter of subbing a dog in or out. It takes a lot of work with the handler. In this particular situation, unfortunately the RCMP handler had asked the bystander to stay back and not get involved in the chase, and he did involve himself in the chase. The people in question who had been stealing snow machines apparently, or allegedly stealing snow machines, had been asked to stop. They did stop, and then the bystander entered the picture and ran onto the scene to try to help, and I think the dog mistook the bystander for one of the individuals. So it's an unfortunate circumstance. Somebody was very hurt and that is very serious, and we take that very seriously. Again, I'll give the House the full assurance that we are undertaking a review and we'll make sure that we do whatever we can to see that this won't happen again. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Order! Replies to the budget address. Petitions. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motions for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 15: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 20: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, No. 2

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Motion's on the floor. Motion's in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question's being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 20 has had first reading. 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, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 17: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'll call Committee of the Whole to order. When we left off yesterday, we were doing the detail of the information items for the NWT Housing Corporation. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: We'll continue with the deliberation of the Housing Corporation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Then I will ask Mr. Krutko if he'd be prepared to take the witness table and have his witnesses join him. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I'm going to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms, please, if you would bring Mr. Krutko's witnesses to the table.

Committee members, we left off on page 8-34 and I'd like to welcome Mr. Koe, the president of the Housing Corporation, back to the Chamber today. We're on page 8-34, information item, district operations, grants and contributions. I'll give Members a chance to find their place.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 8-37, Public Housing Program funding, operations expenditure summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 8-38, information item, Public Housing Program funding, grants and contributions. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, a lot has been in the North, and in this government and around the world about the escalating cost of energy and how it impacts our cost of living, and certainly in this government how it's going to impact our bottom lines. I would like to see if the Minister could give us a bit of information on what kind of energy initiatives the Housing Corporation has undertaken to assist in managing this extremely expensive part of our operation.

I note, Madam Chair, that in the information given that the department is looking at a couple of areas of increasing expenditures. It's an interesting kind of inversion going on here, Madam Chair, in that heating fuel budgeted for -- this is under Public Housing Program funding for the provision of public housing and rent supplement programs to low income residents. We're actually forecasting a decrease in the cost of heating fuel, Madam Chair, from an estimated \$6.4 million this year to 5.7. This is sort of why I was asking what kind of energy management programs are we undertaking here, because if we're going to be saving this kind of money, I'd sure like to find out how they're doing it, Madam Chair.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we are involved in the process government-wide with all government departments and agencies, and looking at the high energy costs, especially the high-rising fuel costs in which there are dollars that will be approved in this House through the supp to carry us forward. We did not build it into our estimates. In the last year we did. I think because of the uncertainty of the high price and the impact that it's had territorial-wide and also government-wide, that it has been managed now through the central government. We are looking at the energy affects that we've seen, so we're again with our partners, we're working with the Arctic Energy Alliance in regards to finding ways to how we utilize energy and also how we use energy. Also, with our local housing authorities, we've been having workshops with our different authorities to find more ways of conserving energy, but also finding new technologies that are out there in regards to using less energy and also bringing down the costs to ourselves and operations.

Members realize that there is a high cost to operate public housing, especially in the communities, and one of the highest cost-drivers we have, you think it will be electricity, but realistically the highest cost we pay is for water consumption for our public housing units because we pay a high rate by way of the government rate in most of these communities. So to deal with that, we do have a full volume of flush toilets. We're able to try to conserve energy. We're doing some pilot projects in regards to the different communities, of how do we re-use or recycle water that's being used in those units. Also, we're looking at energy-efficient appliances in regards to changing the heating systems we have in our facilities that are more energy-efficient than the older furnaces that we have in place. So we do have some pilot projects that are in place, but again that the Member talks about in regards to fuel costs is territory-wide. It affects all government departments and it is an issue that is dealt with through

the Government of the Northwest Territories across the board, so we are a part of that program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Just for the record, Mr. Anderson has joined us at the witness table. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, does the Housing Corporation...Has it set any specific targets for reduction or management of energy costs? It's all very useful to hear of these various areas: yes, we're going to look into new technology; we're going to look into changing our appliances; we're going to look into, you know, better training and technical orientation. The Arctic Energy Alliance I think is showing some real leadership in this area here. I guess I have to remind myself, Madam Chair, this is the work of the oversight and accountability within Committee of the Whole here and it's difficult to be able to do a good job from this side when we don't have targets or milestones that we think could be out there. So I'd like to ask the corporation, has it set any targets, any parameters for the kinds of reductions that it sees as possible? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, there has been a decision made within the government departments to be more energy efficient and also bringing down that cost in which we've decreased the amount of subsidy we have received in regards to fuel. I think all departments were directed that we have to find 50 percent by way of next year's allocation in house to cover those higher costs we've recovered for this year, and next year we have to be able to find ways of reducing our costs by 50 percent. That direction has been given and that's why it's reflected the way it is in regards to the budget; it's why you see such a decrease.

But again, we are working to find ways of being more aware of the cost of operating our housing, but also the cost of heating our units. Again, we are trying different things and working with the people in the industry to look at more energy-efficient appliances and trying to make our customers aware, in regards to our clients, and making them realize what it really costs for our units. So we are doing mail-outs to our tenants to make them more aware of the costs of those units.

In regards to the budget, one of the ways we've dealt with that is the way we construct houses. We used to do a lot of single home construction, now we're looking at multi-construction configuration so that we have a centralized heating system, a centralized boiler system and also that we're able to take advantage of a centralized mechanical system in a lot of these units which make these units more energy efficient. In the older systems in the single-built houses, the cost of operating those compared to the multi-constructed units, we have really seen the savings in that area. So as you can see from the budget, the majority of the houses that are going to be built in regards to the replacement of a lot of our public housing units will be multi-built construct configurations. So that's another way we're trying to deal with bringing down the high costs of the fuel costs in a lot of these communities. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, the Housing Corporation also leases a lot of property, and to that extent, along with, say, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Department of Health, we are, this government collectively is a major tenant, perhaps the biggest single tenant, if you will, in the whole of the Northwest Territories. Now, when it comes to deciding how best to negotiate our leases and get the best value for our money, Madam Chair, it's becoming increasingly important that we look at the long-term operating costs of our leases, in addition to, or perhaps even more significant than the simple per-square-foot leasing costs. So I want to ask, what steps has the Housing Corporation taken to assess the long-term lifecycle of operating costs? Given the huge spike in energy and utility costs, can we hear something about just how much this factors into our decisions on which landlords to lease with and what impact does that have on our bottom line dollar figure? Are we putting a strong emphasis on the long-term operating costs of, say, a newer, more modern building compared to an older one? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we do five-year reviews in regards to the escalation costs, but I'd just like to point out we are getting away from leasing units and building more of our own units. So with regards to the leases that are in place, there is the five-year review in regards to the escalation costs where we look at that. But I think also realizing that we are getting out of being involved in long-term lease commitments in which we are becoming more involved in our own property management and not depending on the third parties.

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

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, thank you. That was not quite my question, though. I want to know, when we look at leasing or renting a building, does the Housing Corporation have a way of analyzing the long-term operating costs of buildings? I guess to illustrate this very briefly, Madam Chair, if I'm going out to lease a building and one landlord offers me a 20-year-old building with a lease cost of \$10 a square foot, and then I'm looking at a newer building that's going to cost \$20 a square foot, over the long-term cost of that I know that the older building is going to cost me more to operate than the newer building. Are we calculating this into our decision about who to lease with? That's the point. Have we got a way of assessing long-term operating costs and is the corporation factoring that into its negotiations?

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

MR. KOE: Mahsi. Yes, the corporation does look at all those factors. We have people on staff in our property management section that assess these costs and when we are negotiating transactions to look at buildings or new structures, we do take into consideration energy efficiency systems.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to address my questions to page 8-39. I was reading leasing commitments infrastructure under the North Slave district and I noticed under office space, Yellowknife...Sorry. I thought we were on that page.

AN HON. MEMBER: No. Page 8-38.

MR. HAWKINS: Oh, sorry. I can withdraw my question and wait until we're on that page. I thought we were on that page.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We are on page 8-38, information item, Public Housing Program funding, grants and contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Okay. Thank you. Page 8-39, information item, lease commitments, infrastructure. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will now direct my questions to page 8-39. Under the leasing commitments under the North Slave district, there is office space, it says Yellowknife headquarters. If the Minister can explain the anomaly of why under the main estimates, we have a number of \$350,000, but future lease payments are only \$60,000. That's actually five-sixths of what is being spent this year versus next year's commitments. Is there going to be a dramatic change or negotiation in the lease? Are we talking about one or two months only? Could I get some detail on that relevance? Why is the number significantly changed? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, our lease expires May of this year and that's why it's only up to May. We do have to either buy a new lease or go out for lease commitments. Our lease expires in May, so that's why that amount's only set to the May expiry date.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I understood the Minister correctly, he said the headquarters lease expires in May. Then if I'm understanding him correctly, he says we're now paying, for two months, \$358,000. Thank you, Madam Chair. Is that the expectation that we're just...That's the whole year fee no matter where we go? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in the arrangement we have in our lease, we do have a month-to-month availability where we can carry on month to month until we have made the renewal or we make a decision on where we're going to lease. That's the reason it's in there is because it's based on a month-to-month allocation once our lease expires.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm only just surprised because, maybe it's only me concerned with this, but if we're acknowledging that a volume of space needs to be required for a year and that volume of space, even though we have a lease running out here in two months, but the typical volume of space for 12 months will cost us \$358,000, why wouldn't we acknowledge that any year going forward would still require that type of volume of space, which would be relatively the same amount? I'm sure it's just an accounting reason. It just seems like an anomaly that, I don't know. Because, I mean, we're going to have to lease from somewhere else or we're going to have to buy it from somewhere else. So there must be some plan why the lease rate drops to the floor. Are they planning to build a new building, which would then be structured under some different mathematical category, or is it just an accounting, is it just a way to account for this? I'm not an accountant, so I'll respect it if that's the way you have to account for this. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: I'll let the accountant answer.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$60,000, we have a legal commitment to fulfill that obligation up to May of this year. We are looking at our space requirements over the next short period of time and we will be coming up with a course of action to make sure we have the resources and accommodations we need to run our operation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Just before we move on, I would like to recognize in the visitor's gallery today Sharon McBryan and Rod McBryan, and Kenny is here serving as a Page -- I don't know where he is right now -- on the floor of the House. That's Sharon's grandson.

---Applause

Welcome. We're on page 8-39, information item, lease commitments, infrastructure. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 8-40, information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Information item on page 8-41, infrastructure acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 8-42, information item continued, infrastructure acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 8-43, again, infrastructure acquisition plan continued.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. One more continued, 8-44, information item, infrastructure acquisition plan.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 8-45, information item, proforma income statement.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. If I could address the Members' attention, then, back to the beginning, page 8-11, activity summary, NWT Housing Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: It's page 8-7.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): It's 8-7? Sorry. It is actually 8-7, department summary, NWT Housing Corporation, operations expenditure summary, expenditure category, \$36.828 million. Mr. Braden.

Committee Motion 18-15(4) To Defer Consideration Of The Departmental Summary For The NWT Housing Corporation, Carried

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, I'd like to make a motion. I move that this committee defer further consideration of the department summary, operations expenditure summary of the NWT Housing Corporation at this time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question has been called. Speaking to the motion. Why are some people yelling question? To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, our usual practice here is to try to conclude each department as we finish it, but it is not unusual for committee to get some more time, especially in light, Madam Chair, of a number of commitments that the Minister made to supply new information to committee. Yesterday I counted at least three commitments and they will be certainly necessary for me to make my decision on signing off. The Housing Corporation, too, I think we need to observe, Madam Chair, unlike other departments where we have numerous opportunities to approve and debate, potentially change allocations, the Housing Corporation by the nature of its act and its accountability structure, we only have this one large, single item to signal. All the rest of the pages that we've gone through are information only. So given that it is early in our budget process, the Minister has made commitments and it is in the course of, I think, good governance and our task as the accountability committee to request more time and put this in abeyance until the Minister is able to satisfy his commitments to us. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Well, thank you for that contribution, Mr. Braden. I've just been informed that the motion is not debatable. My apologies. I was not aware of that rule in relation to this motion to defer the NWT Housing Corporation. So the motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The NWT Housing Corporation final conclusion will be deferred. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Thank you, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Koe.

---Laughter

Okay. Just give Mr. Krutko and his witnesses time to exit. What is the wish of the committee now?

AN HON. MEMBER: Call of the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Call of the Chair. Okay. We'll take a break before we proceed with MACA. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We are on the main estimates Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I would like to ask the Minister responsible, the Honourable Michael McLeod, to provide committee with his opening comments. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' main estimates for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

The department is requesting \$110 million in operating expenses and \$2.6 million for capital acquisitions for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. This represents an increase of 14 percent. Beginning in 2006-2007, the department's budget includes a stable ongoing funding commitment of \$28 million for community public infrastructure. This enhanced capital funding, which was first announced in the 2005-2006 budget address sets the stage for the move to capital formula funding on April 1, 2007, as part of the implementation of the New Deal for NWT community governments.

Eight percent of MACA's operating budget is in the form of grants and contributions, the bulk of which flows directly to our key stakeholders: community governments. This includes formula funding for community government operations and additional funding for sport and recreation programs, water and sewer services, municipal insurance, grants-in-lieu of property taxes, infrastructure projects and community development.

Communities continue to face increasing pressures including compliance with regulatory requirements, demand for services from residents, pipeline development, changes in governance arrangements, demand for land development and rising energy costs. Community governments are finding it difficult to recruit and retain capable staff in a competitive employment environment.

The new initiatives included in MACA's 2006-2007 main estimates are designed to help address these pressures.

Funding is requested to extend four term staff positions to assist community governments in undertaking preparations for the proposed Mackenzie gas project. MACA staff have been actively assisting community governments as they prepare for the upcoming panel hearings. In addition, significant effort is being undertaken to ensure that communities have up-to-date and relevant bylaws and user-fee agreements, affording them the opportunity to maximize the benefits of resource

development activities associated with the Mackenzie gas project.

Additional resources are also included in the 2006-2007 main estimates for term positions to address the increasing demand for land administrative services. These resources will assist community governments to address urgent pressures that are being experienced in all regions. Additional resources will result in improved land administrative service levels to the public across the Northwest Territories, and enhance the capacity of community governments to take on land administration activities.

A multi-departmental drinking water quality framework has been put in place to ensure all communities are provided with drinking water that meets federal guidelines. Recent developments in northern Ontario remind us of the importance of this issue. In addition to activities already underway, the department will use additional funding in 2006-2007 to assist communities with water licence applications and assist with training and certification of water treatment plant operators.

Communities need assistance to address rising energy costs. In 2006-2007, the department will continue to work with the Arctic Energy Alliance on its Community Energy Planning Program. In partnership with the NWT Association of Communities, the department will help communities to develop community energy plans as part of the broader requirements of the gas tax funding agreement.

The department continues to play an active role in delivering on the GNWT's strategic priority of healthy living.

Funding for the 2007 Canada Winter Games will enable NWT youth to become involved and will support the showcasing of traditional sports at the games. One-time funding for the Healthy Living Strategy will support the rollout of the second year of the Get Active physical activity challenge. Last year, more than 15 percent of territorial residents got involved in this challenge designed to promote physical activity.

Youth initiatives remain a priority for the department. One-time Northern Strategy funding will be used to build on existing programming and pilot some new approaches to support Northwest Territories youth to develop the skills they need to succeed and contribute to their communities.

During the 2005-2006 fiscal year, the government made \$35 million available through the community capacity building fund to support communities in addressing local priorities. Any funds that are not expended by the end of this fiscal year will be carried over to 2006-2007, so that the communities still have the opportunity to make an application.

The New Deal for the Northwest Territories community governments remains a strategic priority of the department and the Government of the Northwest Territories. An initial round of community consultations was conducted over the spring and summer and the response from communities was positive. The department is committed to continue to work with the communities to ensure that their concerns, needs and unique pressures and challenges are addressed during and after implementation of the New Deal. I am pleased

to report that good progress has been made on this initiative.

One highlight is that 2005-2006 was the first year in which the department distributed the property tax revenues collected within community boundaries in the general taxation area directly to community governments. This resulted in \$250,000 in incremental funds going directly to the 18 non-tax-based communities.

Another highlight is that as a result of increased capital funding announced in last year's budget address, the department has been able to add several new community projects to our capital plan. I am particularly pleased to note the inclusion of several recreation infrastructure projects, including a gym for Nahanni Butte and an above-ground swimming pool for Tulita.

---Applause

One of the driving forces behind the government's New Deal was recognition of infrastructure pressures facing communities and the need to provide communities with the tools and the resources to deal with those pressures.

The 2006-2007 fiscal year is the last year where MACA will play the leading role in capital planning and development for most of the non-tax-based communities. Beginning April 1, 2007, MACA will provide capital funding to community governments through a formula. This new approach will not only give communities the authority to make decisions about community infrastructure, but the flexibility to lever funding from other sources, enter into partnerships and get more value for money.

In preparation for the transfer of full capital authority, the department is working with all 33 communities to undertake a baseline assessment of existing community infrastructure. The intent of the assessment is to tell us where immediate repairs or replacements are required. The results of the baseline assessment will also provide communities with a starting point for developing their own capital investment plans.

Over the next year, the department will consult with communities on a proposed formula funding approach and work with the small communities to develop transition plans so that all communities are positioned to assume new authorities for capital planning and development.

While the department is pleased to be able to provide enhanced funding, we recognize that government resources alone will never be sufficient to address all the infrastructure needs in communities. An exciting development over the past year has been the injection of \$37.5 million in gas tax funding over five years beginning in 2005-2006, which will provide additional assistance to community governments. Community governments can use this funding for a variety of environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure projects. Communities will be able to use this funding for dust control, among other things. Continued funding under the federal Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program has also supported the fast-tracking of infrastructure projects.

Over the past year, many of our achievements have been due to the support of our key partners. The Northwest Territories Association of Communities has provided excellent support during the negotiation of the gas tax

funding agreement and continues to work closely with the department on the implementation of the New Deal.

The local government administrators of the Northwest Territories have provided the expertise of community staff to support the department on several policy initiatives. The newly formed Sport and Recreation Partners Council is already bringing forward exciting ideas for collaboration with government departments. Sport North was fundamental to the success of the inaugural NWT Games over the past year, and the NWT Parks and Recreation Association has shown leadership in bringing together several funding sources to provide communities with access to recreation infrastructure funding. It is the department's intent to continue to work in partnership with these and other stakeholders in order to reach our common goals over the next year.

In closing, the department's draft budget provides additional funding for community governments, provides new resources to encourage healthy living, and responds to the needs of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister McLeod. I now turn to Madam Groenewegen for the Governance and Economic Development committee's report that has the responsibility for overlooking MACA. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Municipal And Community Affairs

General Comments

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee met with the Minister and his officials on Monday, September 26, 2005, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs since the committee reviewed the business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$110 million in operations expenses and \$31 million on capital projects in fiscal year 2006-2007.

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

MACA - Land Access And Squatters On Commissioner's Land

Building affordable and adequate housing for their residents is a serious challenge for our communities. The inability to expand our communities is jeopardizing our families and our businesses. For instance, the location of the proposed Kam Lake access road is on disputed land. This is one of the reasons the access road could not be included in the Department of Transportation's Corridors for Canada II proposal to the federal government. The difficulties of obtaining funding for this road may delay construction.

There are several issues complicating land administration. These are: the limited availability of land due to ongoing

land claim issues; the lengthy 60-day consultation periods required by interim measures agreements, and finally, small communities simply face too many complicated land administration issues.

People without land tenure are building on Commissioner's land because of the lack of land and affordable housing available to them. With the impact of resource development upon us, the housing situation will become even more dire.

The committee recognizes the efforts of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to address the issues of land access and squatters by increasing land administration positions in the regions. We believe, however, that the department could go even further by taking over all land administration related issues for the government.

Recommendation

In order to allow territorial businesses to grow and to give residents access to affordable housing, the Governance and Economic Development committee recommends Municipal and Community Affairs expedite resolution of the access to land issues and also encourage the federal government to fulfill their obligations with regards to land administration in the Northwest Territories.

The Governance and Economic Development committee also recommends that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs broaden their mandate with regard to land administration and become the department responsible for all GNWT matters pertaining to land administration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I would now like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in witnesses. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort in the witnesses.

I would now like to ask the Minister, the Honourable Michael McLeod, to please introduce your witnesses. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize. On my left, I have Ms. Debbie DeLancey, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs; on my right is Ms. Sheila Bassi-Kellett, the assistant deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome to our proceeding this afternoon, ladies. We will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to Municipal and Community Affairs, once again, I would like to commend the department for listening to the needs of Nahanni Butte.

---Applause

You made mention in the opening remarks of the gymnasium for Nahanni Butte. I look forward to progressing further with that.

Throughout the year, the inquiries I get within Municipal and Community Affairs would be technical in nature. A lot of the smaller settlements and band governments are getting increasingly frustrated, Mr. Chairman, on their ability to purchase heavy equipment, and the limitations that are placed on the specs that are there and the funding available for it. I just thought I would mention that.

I don't know how MACA can best address this, but in the larger communities the band governments are finding it difficult to address the pipeline development and they see that the responsible agency is...Like Fort Simpson is getting pipeline funding, but the band governments cannot access that same funding. There must be a way in order to massage the money that's available to prepare our communities for the potential impacts of a pipeline. So that's what is happening. It's not only the band, but the Metis governments in the larger communities are having trouble accessing these funds, too. It would go a long way. I don't know how the department would care to administer that.

Just on those two points, if the Minister cares to comment on the structure or the guidelines used for purchasing equipment, Mr. Chairman, as well as the guidelines and structures used to access community pipeline preparedness funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, right now the specs that are used to set the standards for which the communities can purchase equipment are set by our department and our technical people. The specs are set in relation to what the equipment will be used for. We have a lot of communities that would like to use the equipment for other things and, in a lot of cases, would like to go to a bigger piece of equipment or a piece of equipment with more attachments. That's always caused some concern.

If, in the case of a community where there is a need or desire to go beyond the standards we set, if they are willing to pay for the difference, of course we will accommodate that and we have done that on a number of occasions.

Following the introduction of the New Deal in 2007, the communities will have the ability to set the specs that they desire. We will not be in the picture anymore in terms of setting what they can have and what they can't have. That will be up to them.

In terms of funding for the pipeline preparation, we, as a department, are funding the municipal governments, the governments we do business with, the ones that carry out and deliver our services or the services for the municipalities. The Member is right; we do not provide funding for band councils or the Métis councils. We have provided funding to all the municipalities in the North. They have all drawn down the initial base funding, and all of the impacted communities, or at least three-quarters of them have drawn down on the second drawdown for additional dollars. The funding for band councils would have to come from another source. That doesn't come

from us. Our requirements are to fund the municipalities that deal with us.

Having said that, we have people in the regions that will be providing advice. They are not restricted to only deal with the municipalities. They can, and have, worked with the band councils and Métis councils. We don't anticipate that they will have any new monies into the communities. So this is what our funding restrictions are. That is what they are going to.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to thank the Minister for that response. Just getting back to the type and availability of quick mentor infrastructure for communities. What are the guidelines based on? Is it per capita, accessibility, or remoteness, or non-remoteness? Just specifically, how is that guideline laid out, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, as I stated earlier, the guidelines are set through the requirements of the community. In the case of a loader or grader, it is evaluated as to what this piece of equipment is going to be doing. Is it snow removal? Is it gravel hauling? That is something that we take into consideration. There are standards and criteria developed for the size of the community, the population and what the equipment is going to be used for. A lot of communities, as I have stated, want to do more with some of this equipment. There is a desire to have sometimes bigger equipment with more attachments, but our evaluation is based on what it is actually needed to be used for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Okay. I know that, in your guidelines, you try to apply them equally to all the communities, but I think some of the feedback I have been getting is that it is quite often that the people, as they travel around, they will see a different side of the equipment in another community and say why didn't they get that? So it just comes up to the question. Is it being equally applied to all communities?

Just recently, I toured one of my smaller communities. They are saying that it appears, when it comes to infrastructure or equipment, our community gets left out or we get a smaller piece of equipment. It seems that they are not applying the guidelines equitably and fairly. I was just wondering if there is a way to ensure the communities, by the department, that programs and guidelines are being applied equitably to all the communities, just so that they see that one community is not being taken care of above another community, especially the remote ones. They tend to feel that, Mr. Chair. Just with respect to that, as an example, perhaps the Minister can explain how a capital need is addressed in a community from the ground up, just the various stages from identifying need up until it makes the capital plan -- cradle to grave -- and then what they do with the equipment once it is no good to the community.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I want to, first of all, assure the Member that our standards are consistent across the board. There are, of course, some communities that are of equal size and have a larger piece of equipment or a more costly piece of equipment, but that would have resulted as maybe -- we are talking hypothetical here -- being a lot of communities have invested their own resources or dollars into some of this equipment and resulted in having a larger piece of equipment, or equipment with a capacity to do more things.

The capital planning process starts, first of all, with the community identifying a need. Either it will be something that is required in the community, or it will be something that needs to be replaced, or something that is coming to the end of its lifecycle. That will be brought forward to our regional staff. Our regional staff compiles it, does an evaluation on it also, and then brings it to the attention of the headquarters staff and we put it on our needs assessment based on where we think it would be required in the community, or depending on the urgency of it. That would go through a process where it would also be filtered down to a five-year capital plan. The capital plan is approved on an annual basis in this House for the year that we are going to be expending the money in.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions on this particular topic right now. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. General comments, I have Ms. Lee on the list next. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I, too, would like to begin by congratulating the Minister for having women deputy minister and assistant deputy minister on his side. Now I know why he is doing such a great job, Mr. Chair, not only because he is getting good advice from the women, but also because he is wise enough to know to take those.

Mr. Chair, let me just make some comments on two things. One is the land issue around the city of Yellowknife, and the second thing I want to address a little bit is about the department's plan on land administration issue. I would like to just, first of all, comment that I think that all observers on that issue on Yellowknife land selection and what the city has been requesting, as well as the requirements and demands by Akaitcho, has not been an easy issue. I do appreciate that the announcement that the Minister has made might not be one that is satisfying to everybody, but it does meet the requirements of...It goes in some lengths to address this issue for the time being. I do want to congratulate the Minister for really concentrating on the issue. I know that he has really been working to see what is the best way that he could handle this, and the government could handle this, at this time. I do believe that this is the project in progress. We are making a baby step progress. I think that everyone recognizes a need for more land for the city to grow into. It is a very economically vibrant community. There is no question that we need to be able to find more land in order to meet the growth and housing needs. One of the biggest cost drivers for the city right now are the housing prices that are mostly driven because

of lack of land and the high cost of land that follows from it.

I also do understand and I think a lot of us in this House have had meetings with Akaitcho leaders and the elders. I can appreciate how this might look like sitting in Ndilo and Detah and many of the elders watch the city grow for 50 or 60 years where there were traditional homelands and doing their traditional things, and then all of a sudden these gold prospectors fly in and start a gold mine. Next thing they know, the city becomes a capital. Now it has grown into a 20,000 people metropolitan with Tim Horton's and McDonald's. We have laws in Canada and policies that compensate and address those. I think that all of the parties involved understand that the original inhabitants of this land have to be compensated, and we do that by way of going through land claims negotiations and sometimes combined with self-government agreements and such. I think the interest and the impetus right now is to get the process moving and to make sure that the city does have room to grow in the interim. I think, if anything, this is a way to get the process focussed and moving along. I want to tell the Minister that I do appreciate his effort thus far. I do know that we collectively all have a lot more room to go.

On that issue, where does the Minister see this issue going? He has given some parts of land to the city, but differently. It is only a part of what the city needs not only in the long term, but in the short and medium term, as well; probably for a medium term. The land freeze for two years will expire in two years from now when we will have a different Minister. I don't know if we are going to have the same Minister. This is a new process that the Minister...I give credit to the Minister and this government for really focussing on it. Obviously, it is part of his plan. The good plan should be such that, as a player leaves, the plan still survives. If he could just add more to where does he see this going and what is the outcome he is looking at. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I certainly appreciate the compliment from both the Members. I want to point out, first of all, that the land issue and the shortage of land is not an issue that is restricted to the City of Yellowknife. There are many communities across the Northwest Territories that are experiencing land shortage. There are a number of areas that have a settled land claim and are now working on a self-government process and are proceeding very cautiously about the transfer of land over to the municipalities.

However, the need for land is probably more obvious and more an issue in the south end of the Northwest Territories in the areas of the Dehcho and the Akaitcho. As the Member has indicated, the City of Yellowknife has been under some significant pressure for lands. When we looked at transferring over the lands, we took into consideration the infrastructure, the land requests from the city, and we also took into consideration the needs or the areas where the Akaitcho people have indicated they have an interest in lands. There were a lot of areas where there was an overlap. Some areas were areas we thought we could transfer over that were not too much in dispute. We tried to look at how long and measure how long of a time frame we would need for the governments

of Canada and the Northwest Territories and the people of Akaitcho to do their land withdrawal and land identification. We have included Aboriginal Affairs in our discussions. Our best estimate is that there will be some kind of conclusion within a two-year period. The people of the Akaitcho, I think, are probably more optimistic than that. They feel that they should be able to settle it earlier.

We tried to set a time frame that was giving enough time to the Akaitcho to work out their land selection, but also to set it long enough so that there would be enough time to resolve some of these issues. We have presented this to the city. We have shared this information with Akaitcho. Of course, in the Akaitcho's eyes, it would be that there is too much land transferred over to the city, and the city is taking the position, of course, that they need more land. We have just set this as part of the process on an interim basis. In two years, if there is no resolution to the land issue, the government may have to consider another land acquisition request because what we have transferred over is just a small portion of what they have asked for and need over a longer period. We figure the city can live within a two-year period with this amount. The amount that we estimated should be enough for at least two-and-a-half years. It is not everything that the city needed. It is not what the Akaitcho wanted, but we are hoping that it is a balance and will keep everybody fairly happy and allow the process to move on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do mean my appreciation for the Minister's effort when I say that, but I think that there is a very clear understanding here that the move on the Minister's part is just above the minimum that we need to do at the moment. It might be the minimum for the city and for the Akaitcho. I am sure there are a lot of elements there that they are not happy with, but I am hoping that they will see it as a means of moving the process along. My positive opinion on this move is that we have some kind of a process going right now. The process is clear to me. It is really incumbent on all parties to move the process along.

I have another question actually. I am going to have to put my name up for another round for the land administration issue, but just as a last question on this one, I am wondering if the Minister has given thoughts to having some representation of the city council or the city government to the land selection and land negotiation process for Akaitcho. It is something that the city has asked for. We know that the negotiations are between the Akaitcho Government and the Government of Canada. That is traditionally the case. But I am wondering, as a third and very much interested party, if there is any movement on seeing these people having some kind of place in their negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I have good news and bad news. The good news is that you are next on the list. Mr. Minister, just for a reply and then, Ms. Lee, you are next on the list. Your time is up is the bad news.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, the Member is asking if we would consider having the City of Yellowknife at the negotiating table for lands. That is not something I can answer. The responsibility for negotiations lies with the department of Aboriginal Affairs. In the case of land

issues in the City of Yellowknife and other municipalities, for that matter, we do involve the municipality. In this case, we have asked the city to participate by identifying five years' worth of land and bringing it forward. They have done so. They have also been working with the Akaitcho, the Yellowknives. They have brought forward their lands that they have identified they have interest in. Our job, of course, was trying to find that delicate balance. We know it is a small amount of land in terms of what the city sees their needs are. We are very careful that we are not infringing on the negotiations or tripping up the negotiations with the Akaitcho. There was not significant overlap in some of these areas that we transferred over. We are hoping that the process is going to continue and that we are not going to end up in litigation for the next five years or so.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have general comments to a few issues that I wanted to ask about. In the area of land administration when our committee makes reference to it, could you broaden your mandate to take care of land administration for other GNWT or on behalf of all Government of the Northwest Territories departments? I guess what precipitated that, to some extent, were the units that the NWT Housing Corporation is preparing to build over the next few years and the issue that they have, as well, with access to land and land administration. Rather than ramping the land administration function up in a number of departments, we were wondering what role MACA could play in working with the Housing Corporation to ensure that they do have land in order to meet the needs of the public and social housing, homeownership programs and things that they would like to implement. I would like to ask the Minister what MACA could offer in that regard. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have been doing a lot of work with MACA, especially in the area of transferring over what is now Commissioner's land in the municipalities where the NWT Housing Corporation has buildings or houses. We are in the process of transferring the title or the leases over to them. There is roughly close to 400 leases that we are working on transferring over and then there is another 269 parcels where they have houses located and we have to establish tenure. There is a lot of work that we are doing. We also have a land development program. It has a small budget, a budget that is oversubscribed on an annual basis. We have \$300,000 that we allocate to the communities to help them offset some of their costs. The community governments have the responsibility to develop properties in the communities to deal with some of these land issues. We do have a budget that we try to assist them with. But our budget is mostly geared towards the creation of subdivisions towards drainage studies, surveys, and those types of things. We expect the developer of the property to pay for the driveway, power pole, the gravel pad and everything that is required to put a house on there. That includes Housing. Housing is a housing developer. We expect them to pay for those costs.

Whether we would take over the land responsibilities of the Housing Corporation, I guess if they were willing to transfer their money over to us for us to administer, we

would certainly consider it, but it is difficult to deal with the land issues that we have in front of us as it is. We have a very limited budget to help the communities with.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. If I could, I would just like to recognize a group that we have in the gallery with us today. It is the North Slave Young Offender Facility, some of the folks from the facility. I see some staff there, as well. Welcome to the proceedings this afternoon.

---Applause

We are going through the main estimates for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. We are in Committee of the Whole this afternoon. I have Mrs. Groenewegen. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is difficult to exactly know. I guess I am not too familiar with the inner workings of what land administration folks do in the departments. I guess I am concerned about duplication of efforts. We have seen, over the years, the centralization of certain functions of government to one department or to one administration or another just in order to streamline things. I guess what I am hearing from the Minister is that the NWT Housing Corporation looks after their own land administration issues at this time and what you actually do is something quite different than that. So that is not a function that could be easily absorbed by MACA. Is that correct? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, the responsibility of land development lies with the municipality first and foremost. We do have a budget of \$300,000 where we assist the communities. Our lands people do most...Our responsibility is in the area of establishing tenure leases, fee-simple title where available. We also help with the planning and developing of subdivisions, drainage studies, surveys, and we expect the developer, whoever that may be -- it may include Housing -- to develop the gravel path, the driveways, do the survey and the developer is expected to pay for their own costs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will just move on to something else. The additional sources of revenue for communities' gas tax, the \$250,000 you referred to which is property taxes, which the municipalities, a number of them have been able to retain the community capacity funding, the municipal and rural infrastructure fund, IBAs industry, the socio-economic impact money that will filter to communities. All of these potential additional sources of revenue for communities lead me to the question of whether or not Municipal and Community Affairs envisions or foresees diminishing their contributions for functions that they have traditionally supported communities in view of all of these additional pots of money that are out there. Say, for example, with the gas tax. There is a reference to it on the dust control program. Are there any of these monies which would see Municipal and Community Affairs have less, or diminished, responsibility to communities in terms of funding? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I think the general answer is no. In fact, with some of these funding agreements, especially in the area of more specifically the gas tax, we had to sign, as part of the agreement, a condition that we would not claw back any of the money to communities. We don't anticipate our role to be reduced. We still have a role to play, except that we will now have the decisions for how the money is going to be spent in the municipality made by the municipality. We haven't put together all of the ingredients needed to present a formula of how some of this money will be disbursed to the community yet. We are hoping to have funding, especially the capital funding formula, ready to present to the NWT Association of Communities this June. I think the meeting is...The dates have changed to mid-May and it was supposed to be in Liard but it is now reassigned to be held here in Yellowknife. We will not be clawing back any of the dollars or expecting to diminish any of our responsibilities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. That is good news for the municipalities. I just listed off all those different sources because a lot of them are new and emerging sources of money for communities that they can tap into. It would just be unfortunate if that money was actually having to go towards things that traditionally, historically, have been provided by the territorial government. I know there is not a lot of connection between those sources of funding. I just mentioned them because there are a lot of them out there right now. With them comes a lot more autonomy for the communities to sort of make decisions about their own priorities. I know our government will have to grapple with how we work with communities to ensure that there isn't overlap and duplication and actually maybe even, in some instances, competing interest in the community with respect to certain programs and services. We want to make sure that we are still getting value for money regardless of what the source of it is. With that, my time is up and that is all the comments I have right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, in the last while, as we moved forward to try to work towards giving communities more autonomy, we have recognized that there are a lot of needs out there in the communities. There are the capacity needs and, of course, the need to be able to deal with all the resource development that is happening. There is also the need to deal with some of the infrastructure requirements that exist in the communities, tax-based and the non-tax-based.

So, in fact, in the last while, I think our responsibility, at least I feel has increased. We've tried to put more people on the ground. We've tried to bring in more programs that will increase capacity to try to move forward towards the communities delivering their own programs and making their own decisions. I tell you, it's a real challenge in some communities. Other communities are basically ready to do a lot of this stuff, but it also means that we have to address that there is a lot of need out there. We don't plan to reduce our staffing levels for the next while. We have

some new positions in our budget, including our budget, but those positions we've all brought in as term positions. Some of them are for two years and some of them are for three years. We expect to have a lot of this stuff in place and work through some of the complications and some of the challenges that are going to be coming up as we move forward and give them more authority and more responsibility.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. I have Ms. Lee next and then Mr. Braden. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Just to follow up on the land administration question that I wanted to ask, about four or five years ago MACA undertook, I thought, quite a massive project on land administration, and I haven't been sitting in GED committee so I don't really know what the latest is on that. From hearing from some of the answers prior to this, I'm not sure if I'm getting a clear picture there. Separate from land selection and the shortage of land question, we have a whole new area of the need for land administration in the previous debates we had in this House in the last few days. For example, the housing projects coming out of conversion of pipeline workforce. That could create the need for massive amounts of land and I'd like to think that somewhere in this government or somewhere in the Territories, somebody's keeping tabs on what sort of capacity we have for land, where and what the need is, and somebody's working on developing them and doing planning. I'm just wondering if the Minister is saying that all that is within the control of community governments and if we were to engage in a massive project that would require 14 or 15 hundred lots, it would take a mobilization of all the communities, bring them together and take inventory. What role does MACA play in that area of land administration? Maybe I should just start there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, MACA is the lead in land administration in the Northwest Territories. We work closely with the municipalities. We do the processing of leases and fee-simple title. The strategy that the Member is talking about that took place several years ago was an attempt to move some of these properties over to the municipalities in fee-simple title. Some of that has taken place in some of the larger centres where there is a settled land claim. There have been problems with the process. A lot of communities have raised concerns. A lot of the aboriginal governments have raised concerns that there is still land involved through the self-government process that has to take place. In some cases, they've asked us to stop the transfer of land to the municipalities. The communities of Deline and Norman Wells are two that come to mind. So this has not worked all that well. We have not been able to transfer all the lands over to the municipalities as we had hoped. Part of the other package of the land administration strategy was to incorporate and set up a GIS system. It's available for the communities to do quick reference checks to see the land available in the community, who owns what lands, or the different identifications.

If we were to be required to process a large amount of land in the case of, I think the Member used the number of 1,400 lots, we would probably need to get additional resources in the community that they're required in and at the headquarters level. It's not something we are

resourced right at this point to do, unless it was over a larger time period.

We also have to recognize that with some of the resource development, the municipal governments are going to be responsible for processing permits and that's something we're also working on. That's going to be another challenge. I think we would have to require additional resources to process a large amount of land applications.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Well, there would be a need for additional resources to administer it, but also there have to be agreements with community and aboriginal governments about the availability of land. But I will leave that aside for discussion in another venue with other departments.

I want to ask the Minister a question about a funding arrangement with the federal government in the last six to eight months. The GNWT and the community governments have entered into a lot of different agreements with the federal government under gas tax and with Northern Strategy money. That has seen some extra dollars coming in for various infrastructure programs. I'm wondering what portion of that, Mr. Chairman, -- I'm assuming that most of them are one-time funding -- or what does this mean having a new government and what parts of MRIF or communities' gas tax money that have to be renegotiated and, if that's the case, what does the Minister plan to do to meet with his counterpart to continue some of this going? Is there any plan to talk about this with his other counterparts in provincial governments? Could he just give us an update on that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is, and has been, a lot of progress in the area of securing new dollars for the communities in the last couple of years. We have the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program where we secured \$16 million for the communities to deal with infrastructure mostly in the area of water and sewer. This money is considered one-time and we would like, of course, to see that continue. We'll have more discussion on that with the new government at the provincial and territorial Ministers' meetings.

The gas tax is a very welcome amount of money of \$37.5 million that is committed for a five-year period. The unknown portion, I guess, is that there was also some commitment or discussion around the money that would flow through the gas tax program after the five-year period was up, and that was supposed to be ongoing at \$15 million a year and we have to follow up to see how secure that is. We will be doing that as we move forward and have our first opportunity to discuss it with the Minister.

The land tax to the communities is something that was agreed upon in this House to transfer over and we have been doing that. This is our second year.

The community public infrastructure funding, which was historically around \$17 million, only earmarked for the non-tax-based communities, has been brought up to \$28

million a year and is now available to the non-tax-based and the tax-based. This is the first year that we will be providing money to the tax-based municipalities.

The Northern Strategy money of \$35 million is, of course, one-time funding that can be drawn down over a three-year period. So there is quite a significant amount of money that has been flowing to us as a government and we were, in turn, transferring it over to the communities. Most of it is ongoing except for the Northern Strategy, and we have to confirm whether the gas tax commitment is going to be something that will stay, and also we'd like to have further discussions on the MRIF.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one more question to squeeze in there. On the MRIF money of \$16 million, and I think there's additional, I mean, the GNWT puts into that fund, as well. I'm just wondering about this five-year commitment because there are discussions about the fact that some of the provinces signed a five-year deal on day care with the federal government and the federal government is announcing that they will want to introduce something new. So I guess my question is, how solid is that five-year deal? It might be the case that the new government might want to come out with a different regime for community funding and such. So I guess I'd like to know how firm that five-year deal is. I would certainly encourage, I mean, there are so many things on the list that we need to take to the federal government, but I would encourage the Minister to see if it is at all possible to continue having this level of funding coming into our communities. It took so long to get there and we would hate to see that not continue, Mr. Minister.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we have in all instances where we have funding that we mentioned, the MRIF, the gas tax, the land tax, the community public infrastructure, the Northern Strategy, all the money is committed. It's agreed on. We have agreements in place. They're rock solid. The only unknown is after the five-year agreement expires. We had commitment for the gas tax to extend beyond that at \$15 million a year ongoing. We're not totally comfortable that it's going to stay there. We're not sure; we don't know. The MRIF is something that was in agreement for five years and that's something we'd like to pick up again and see if we can negotiate a further agreement along the same lines. But for the five-year process for all our initiatives, all our commitments that we've included, they're all committed and they're very stable.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. I have Mr. Braden next. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. This department is, I think overall, doing a good job of assuming a growing mantle of responsibility, and it's with some confidence that I look forward to going through this budget and the business plan. That is not to say they can take it easy, because there will be a lot of attention focused on the evolution of municipal government and our oversight and our stewardship of how communities can operate.

An area that I wanted to go into, Mrs. Groenewegen and I think Ms. Lee might have touched on it, and it is these, I

won't call them windfalls, but these substantial cash pots, Mr. Chairman, that have come our way or at least the prospect of them. We always have to remind ourselves, for instance, that the \$5 million over 10-year socio-economic impact fund is merely a promise; a big one. I sure want it to happen. But it is still there and I still believe we should go forward planning on the assumption that it will happen. There's \$35 million in gas tax revenue over the next five years; \$35 million in Northern Strategy money.

The aspect of this, especially where this department comes into play, is in having some oversight function, if you will, to see where the discretion and the jurisdiction of the communities comes into play, where our own mandates and jurisdiction come into play. In looking for areas where, obviously, there may be overlap or duplication in some thinking and planning again in jurisdiction or, conversely, Mr. Chairman, some major gaps in what could or should be good places to spend money.

So I wanted to ask the department if, of course assuming that it agrees with me that it has a front-line function with communities and that there is a lot of money coming into play in the next little while, how does it propose to go about this coordination and hopefully collaboration that we can undertake with the communities, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure where we would play a role in the \$500 million that was brought forward as part of the pipeline discussions. I'm not sure, actually, how that money's going to flow. I don't think it's definite yet.

The money that has been earmarked or the new money that has come forward, the gas tax, the MRIF, the CPI, the land tax, the Northern Strategy funding, is all flowing forward as part of a couple of initiatives, I guess. First of all, we are committed to transferring the responsibility of capital infrastructure to the communities. We want the communities to be able to make their own decisions. This is all part of the initiative that we've called a New Deal for community governments.

As part of that, we did an analysis, and I don't think too many other jurisdictions have done this or are doing this, but what we've done is we conducted an infrastructure deficit analysis in both the tax-based and the non-tax-based communities. That gave us a real clear picture, or at least a very good understanding of where we were in terms of meeting the community needs in the areas of infrastructure. In the tax-based communities it was reported back to us that we were meeting...What was it?

AN HON. MEMBER: About 62 percent.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: A little over 62, a little over 60 percent, 62 percent of the needs is what we were addressing. It wasn't even that high in the non-tax-based communities. We had to use that information to sit down with the federal government to explain to them that we had significant needs. Other jurisdictions in Canada were using, I mean, were bringing forward the same arguments, except we had backup information. This money is all practically earmarked towards dealing with that issue to dealing with the infrastructure deficit needs in the

communities. It's a significant amount of money, but it's also not close to what we need in the communities. There are new regulatory requirements in a lot of our communities for water and sewer. For an example, in Yellowknife we know the city needs at least \$10 million to upgrade their systems. Inuvik is in the same boat and same area of need for upgrading their infrastructure. So there is a lot of need in terms of infrastructure and these are a couple of the initiatives we've put together to try to deal with that. How we fit in with the \$500 million, we'll have to wait and see.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So what I've gathered, then, is that the department is not taking any proactive position at this time on any kind of coordination or broad oversight function. I didn't hear that. I heard basically an inventory of where the needs and the responsibilities are going to be happening, but no direct...as I say, really a source of proactive moves to get into coordination. Okay.

Another area that I wanted to talk about, Mr. Chairman, was in regard to squatters and the unauthorized occupation of land, especially in the Yellowknife area with recreational properties. This has been a chronic and cumulative situation that hasn't really bothered anybody to any great extent, Mr. Chairman. It seems to be one of these things that goes on without anybody challenging to any great extent the unauthorized use of land. But in the meantime, those people who have recreational leases continue to pay their leases and their taxes and wonder what's going on when somebody else is not getting, or when others are basically getting away with illegal or unauthorized occupation. So I know that in the past, in fact, even in the previous Assembly, Mr. Chairman, this was an issue that Mr. McLeod's predecessor undertook some action in and it would seem to get to a certain point and then it would die, it would drop off, and we wouldn't really see a resolution to the situation. So I'm wondering where the department stands on this chronic issue with unauthorized land occupation, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I just want to comment on taking a coordinated approach to some of the issues that are happening in the municipalities with this new money. I want to make sure it's clear that we are working with the municipalities. The municipalities are the frontline people and we are providing the support and we are working on a number of things that would allow us to take a strategic approach. We are working with the communities to develop transition plans, and also as part of some of the funding requirements from the federal government, we are working towards each community to develop an integrated sustainability plan. That's something we're going to have to do in the next while. So we are doing a number of things in the area of coordinating some of the transition that's happening with the communities.

As to the issue of people on lands that are with no tenure, I have been advised by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner that I may have a conflict as I own hunting cabins that I use for hunting and so the questions have to be referred to the Premier.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod, for referring the question to the Honourable Joe Handley. Mr. Premier.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I'll just outline what has happened up to now and where we're going with this. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has had a number of complaints over the years from people about squatters on Commissioner's land. Surveys have been done, aerial surveys. Some cabins have been posted. MACA has met with the Yellowknives chiefs and with DIAND to try and have a coordinated approach to this. MACA also intends to implement a public relations campaign to educate the public about it and are developing a revised policy framework to address how to deal with these existing trespassers, as well as with issues around aboriginal rights and title over land. Quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, there has been some difficulty with the Akaitcho who take a different view about rights to the land, and so have some Metis from the Yellowknife area. So there are some issues to be worked out yet. In the longer term, it's MACA's intention to review the Area Development Act and its regulations, including the Yellowknife watershed development areas regulations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Braden, as time has expired, we've got no further Members on the list for general comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering on one point regarding the Minister's acknowledgement of potential conflict there. When did the Minister become aware that he could potentially be in conflict, Mr. Chairman?

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we brought this to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, I believe, was it before Christmas? Sometime just before Christmas and we had a report back early this year and we brought it to the Premier's attention and he assumed the responsibility for this area.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, could the Premier, then, provide committee at his earliest opportunity with a briefing on these initiatives? A number of them sound good. So did a number of things that MACA has promised in the past, and I'm going to be looking at where these new initiatives now under the Premier's authority are going to address this situation. So my request, then, would be to seek a commitment to provide information on these new initiatives regarding unauthorized land use. I believe, as the Minister said...Was it Yellowknife watershed regional assessment, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can provide, if the Member wishes in writing, a summary of where we've been and the various initiatives that are underway. Just for clarification for the Member, what I'd said is over the longer term MACA intends to do a review of the Area Development Act and its regulations, and including the Yellowknife watershed development

area regulations. The intention here would be to work toward getting a land use plan for the Yellowknife watershed development area, as well as for the greater Ingraham Trail area where there's the majority of these people who are defined as squatters. In doing that, MACA would, of course, look to participation from the city, from Akaitcho, from all the people who have an interest in this, including the residents along the Ingraham Trail and other areas under consideration. So, Mr. Chairman, we'll provide that in writing to the Members.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister and the Premier for that information. I do have a number of other questions, but I think they'd be outside of the business at hand, which is the budget. I would return to that, if I may.

A question perhaps particular to the city of Yellowknife, but I think one which has territorial implications, is the bringing into play of 911 emergency telephone service. I may be wrong, Mr. Chairman, but was this something that was under MACA's jurisdiction in the area of emergency services and this kind of thing? To what extent is this program proceeding, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This issue was looked at two years ago. We looked at the possibility of what it would take to bring in this 911 service, and our analysis showed that it would be very expensive to bring this to the city of Yellowknife. So we did a couple of things. First of all, we have changed all the phone numbers in the communities for emergency services so they are consistent. The RCMP in every community is 1111 and the fire departments are all 2222. What we are also doing is having some discussion, some communication, with companies to look at the possibility of making our communications within our emergency people, our firefighters, our ambulances, consistent.

It's a concern that's been raised by the Government of Canada as a result of what's happened in the United States over the hurricanes. We have had some discussion with Public Works on this issue. We are looking at what other jurisdictions are doing, namely Yukon. The Yukon has embarked on incorporating a new communications system that will allow all agencies to be able to talk to each other in the case of an evacuation or an emergency, they are required to do so.

So we are doing that much, but we are not going to be moving forward on the 911 issue as it's too costly.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, I think that about does it for me, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Does committee agree that there are no further general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): If I could draw committee's attention to page 4-7, operations expenditure summary. We are going to defer this department summary until the activity summary and info items are considered. That means, committee, that we will start on page 4-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$4.529 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-14, activity summary, directorate, program delivery details, \$4.529 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 4-15, activity summary, directorate, grants and contributions, grants, \$225,000, contributions, \$390,000, total, \$615,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-17, activity summary, this is an information item, directorate, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-19, activity summary, community operations, operations expenditure summary, \$24.570 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-21, activity summary, community operations, grants and contributions, grants, \$350,000, contributions, \$21.517 million, for a total of \$21.867 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 4-23, activity summary, information item, community operations, active positions. Any questions? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-25, activity summary, School of Community Government, operations expenditure summary, \$2.058 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this area, we are obviously seeing the flow through of...Let's see; this is the Northern Strategy funding, the \$35 million coming under the jurisdiction of the School of Community Government. I am looking at the activity description here and I guess my understanding, Mr. Chairman, with the School of Community Government is it is our vehicle for training and assisting local government capacity building. How is it that this \$35 million ended up being flowed through this area of activity in the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. I will allow the question for the Minister, but it's a little bit premature. I think we will be dealing with that question on 4-27. If we could, committee, we will agree with 4-25,

that's the page we are on. Activity summary, School of Community Government, operations expenditure summary, \$2.058 million. If we can agree with that, we can go on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Now, Mr. Minister, Mr. Braden had a question that is more in line with 4-27. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the money was placed in this division because the School of Community Government, this division is responsible for a number of things, one of them being capacity building. They do all the coordination for community development, so we decided this would be the appropriate division to administer these dollars as they flowed through.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Okay. So the justification is that there is...Okay. I am going to have to ask for another take on the explanation. Why did this money end up being flowed through the School of Community Government? I didn't really hear an answer there.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this money is titled community capacity building fund and this division, School of Community Government, is the area that delivers our programs for us, administers and is responsible for community development. They work with the communities. They develop the programs and they are responsible for capacity development. So this is the area we thought would be appropriate to flow this money through and administer this money on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Fine. I guess I will accept that. The impression that I have had, Mr. Chairman, is that the School of Community Government, while it was an integral part of delivering programs, it really hasn't had the budget or the level of activity in the past for jumping from a history of expenditure around \$1 million now to \$37 million. There is a big loop in there and I was wondering how this particular unit of MACA got the job. I am sure it has been thought out and there is going to be the appropriate oversight and governance on what happens with the money through this unit. No more questions, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. We are on page 4-27, activity summary, School of Community Government, grants and contributions, contributions, there is no total there, but we will agree to the page and move on.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-29, activity summary, information item, School of Community Government, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-31, activity summary, lands administration, operations expenditure summary, \$2.971 million. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed. Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 19-15(4) Recommendation To The Municipal And Community Affairs Remedy Access To Land Issues, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a motion to read. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that in order to allow territorial businesses to grow and to give residents access to affordable housing, Municipal and Community Affairs expedite resolution to the access to land issues and also encourage the federal government to fulfil their obligations with regard to land administration in the Northwest Territories;

And further, that this committee recommends that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs broaden their mandate with regard to land administration and become the department responsible for all GNWT matters pertaining to land administration. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. There is a motion on the floor. It's not debatable. Sorry; the motion is debatable. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Question has been called. We are being asked for a time out. Maybe this would be a good point to take a short 15-minute recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am looking for a little more of the context of this motion. I think I see a positive initiative here from the committee, but I am wondering if we could get, just for some discussion, some further explanation of maybe some of the specifics and the outcomes of this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Anybody else? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could respond to Mr. Braden's question about the motion...

---Laughter

I'm speaking to the motion, too. My understanding of the motion is that -- if I could, Mr. Chairman -- the GED committee was concerned about having different departments and organizations of the government involved in the same activities as it relates to land

administration. I raised that in my questions to the Minister and he has clearly indicated the specific scope of MACA's involvement in the land administration function.

So the intent, although well meaning, may be somewhat skewed. But that was the intent of the motion, was to have MACA take on more responsibility for trying to ensure that significant land development took place in the communities so that any government department, including the NWT Housing Corporation and any private citizen who wanted to access housing programs under homeownership or things like that, would be able to have access to affordable land. Now we find out that, in fact, the money that the Minister refers to is money to communities for the creation of subdivisions, and drainage, and surveys, and all the things that the Minister indicated, and, in fact, there may not be a duplication of actual activity between what the Housing Corporation is proposing and what MACA does. So having said all that...

The Minister indicated that he could take on a broader role if he had a broader budget, he could expand the mandate. So I think it's probably a bigger issue than just... This would actually be a reassignment of activities and budget, so I think this may be a bigger issue than this motion contemplates. So thank you for your support of the committee's motion.

---Laughter

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

MR. BRADEN: Thanks, Mr. Chair. It's, perhaps, a bit unusual for among committee members to be looking into the reasons or the background for a specific motion. I guess what really caught my attention here was the suggestion that Municipal and Community Affairs broaden their mandate with regard to land administration. Mrs. Groenewegen has explained, to some extent, if I got this correctly, that their mandate is already broad enough. It does cover the requirements on a government-wide basis. So I guess where I would perhaps look to the Minister would be to see where or in what areas broadening the mandate could be constructive, or is the mandate already inclusive enough? I'm very prepared to entertain a discussion -- obviously it would have to occur in a different forum -- about changing the mandate so that we do a better job. Can the Minister advise, is there something in here that his department could, indeed, use to do a better job of land administration? Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Just to be clear here, we're speaking to the motion and questions aren't allowed in this forum, even though you're asking questions but not expecting an answer. We'll move on. To the motion. Anybody further to the motion?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I'd like to seek unanimous consent to return to page 1-18, if that's possible.

AN HON. MEMBER: I second that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Is committee agreed we go back to 1-14?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: 4-18.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): 4-18. Okay, committee, we're going to go back to page 4-18. Ms. Lee, 4-18.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Members. I just want to raise one issue that I've been meaning to raise and, I'm sorry, I missed it when the page was up. It's in regards to emergency responsiveness. Because we have witnessed around the world a lot of catastrophic disaster such as the one we saw in New Orleans. I'm sure that something like that would not happen here, but I do recall discussing what will we do if something really dramatic happened where all our communication systems go down. My staff and I, we tried to look at, okay, where do we call, what do we do, just going from basic steps. All the information we were able to get are telephone numbers and things like that, but what if there are no phones working, and what if the cell phones are down? I don't know what would precipitate that. But if the power was out for a long time or something like that, I think 20, 30 years ago when that happened, there was talk of evacuating all Yellowknife residents, for example, to somewhere.

I think we are much bigger now, and I think an emergency response like that now has to contemplate something that goes back right to the basics, like thinking about where there are no phones, where people have to walk down the street and maybe every household has to know where to go. It should be for all the Territories, all communities. I would like to know that at least there's somebody in each community. For my riding of Range Lake, I don't know if everybody should go to the Range Lake School, or Tim Horton's. Then when you do go to wherever you're supposed to go to, that there are some emergency supplies. I would just like to be comforted that somebody's looking into that, and I'm not sure if we have that. I think we have enquired into that. I know we don't have 911, but that's contemplating a television service again. We don't have TV channels like in major cities. Radio station, maybe CBC. I mean, they have 24-hour coverage and they our local programming in the afternoon, but I don't know if the government has a contract with them to delve into that and make sure that people have a radio or TV that could be run by batteries. And how much water do you need? I think that the government should undertake at least designating who's responsible for each community, and I think we should explain to people what to do. There should be a 10-step thing, rather than giving them a number to call, or a web site to visit, because we have to contemplate situations where all the systems are down and we have to go back to the basics.

I know somebody in the department is working on this, and I'm just looking for the commitment from the Minister to pay attention to that, and perhaps report back to the House about what we can do. I'm noticing that the community emergency measures item actually is down on its money this year, so that's a little bit of a concern, too.

So if I could just get that commitment from the Minister. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this certainly is an area of concern and it's something that falls under the responsibility of this department, Municipal and Community Affairs, and we do have emergency measures plans with every municipality.

We request that the municipality review the plans on a regular basis and update them as people change, councillors change, SAOs change. We also have a territorial-wide NWT emergency plan. We have a territorial emergency response committee that our government sits on. We also have representatives from the federal government. We also have people from the private sector. We have people that are involved in communications and different areas that sit on this committee.

We also work with the federal government under the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada Committee. That's now headed up by a new Minister. Stockwell Day is the new Minister for this area. Through that agency, we deal with the Disaster Assistance Program, we also deal with the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program, and through the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program, we did fund and were able to secure some money for the highway rescue vehicle that was in Hay River. We also do a lot of emergency management and planning with the communities through some funding from this agency. So we have a full complement of emergency plans in our communities and at the territorial level, and we try to keep the profile of the importance of emergency planning through mail-outs, through brochures, through letters that we write to the different communities and try to keep this on their radar screen. So there are disaster assistance plans out there.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are assumed, but I don't think they have been tested really. I think probably MACA and the officials assume that all the municipalities have those plans and I think people assume that. But in the event of everything shutting down, where, I don't know if everybody is supposed to drive to the fire hall and see if that's the emergency measure area, or would they all drive down to the city hall, look in the phone book? Where would they look?

In many parts of the world...I mean, I grew up in a place -- post-war Korea -- we all had a drill without warning, where all the kids had to go under the desk or something. But we don't live in that sort of situation. But we live in such a sophisticated technological world where we think that if we just turn on the TV, turn on the radio, get on our cell phone and call somewhere there will be an answer. I think the government has an obligation to totally step out of that, and assign somebody to test it. Say if a real emergency happened, would people know who to call and where to go? I don't think that the government could assume that every municipality has that, because even in the city of Yellowknife it was not easy to figure out who to call and where. What if you don't have a phone? I don't want to play a dooms day scenario, but I think we have to

be prepared for something happening where everything shuts down and we have to go down to the basics. Also, who would be the emergency supplier if something happened where everybody has to go somewhere? Do we have an inventory of how much water is there in the city? What shelters and blankets and I don't know. I'd like to ask the Minister to make a commitment to come back with a more detailed plan about how this is supposed to play out.

I think the communication and publicity campaign has to be a lot more intense. We don't have a 911 line working in the North, but I think kids or families should be able to just roll off their tongue about when something happens we go here. This is the number we call. I don't know if those emergency numbers that we have implemented, like 669-1111, 873-1111, like all the 1111s with the first three prefixes, I don't know if they would work if there were no phone system. I don't know if anybody has tested that, you know? So I would like the Minister to come back with more evidence that suggests that we do have a plan and it's going to work and it's been tested in all circumstances. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we do have a plan. As I indicated, we have a plan in every community and we have a territorial-wide plan. We'd be glad to do a presentation to the Member or the committee at any time. We have a territorial emergency management coordinator. His name is Eric Bussey. He would be very pleased to come and present the plan that we have. We have tested it. September of this year we did a tabletop exercise in Inuvik with DND. We've had to actually implement disaster plans in Fort McPherson. In Norman Wells we had to do an evacuation, and we had a flood in Good Hope this year where that was also...We had to declare emergency measures. So there are communities that have been using the plan, and there is an NWT plan. So we'd be very glad, I'd be pleased to make that commitment to come back and present to the committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche next. Mr. Menicoche. Page 4-18.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Just following up on my honourable colleague's questioning with respect to emergency preparedness, I had a public meeting in Fort Simpson a couple of weeks ago and this very topic came up. At one time, our government used to provide emergency preparedness supplies, like emergency blankets, emergency stretchers, blankets, some equipment, some supplies, all stored...Well, particularly in Fort Simpson it was stored at the airport. Just over time, the time expired so a lot of the blankets are not good anymore. The medicines weren't good. The stretchers are...(inaudible)...they're sort of failing because of age. But it was noted that this emergency equipment was never replaced. So there's one fellow in Simpson, he was saying look, if, indeed, there is some kind of event or some kind of emergency, Simpson is prone to flooding, as well if there's some type of emergency that people have to leave the island rather suddenly, he's saying that the supplies that are available won't take care of the people. Like any other emergency, even a huge multi-casualty event of some type, there won't be enough blankets, or stretchers, or equipment to be there.

The other part of the emergency preparedness was that when that equipment was available, the government was pleased to provide heated storage at the airport, as well as this is where the generator of the Fort Simpson Airport was talked about through the Minister's other hat, through Transportation. It was a big issue for Fort Simpson. It was a \$1000 line item to the department, but it created lots of headaches in that the only source and supply of electricity is on the island. So if an event happened on the island, then residents will be left in the dark.

Mr. Minister mentioned that we do have a territorial emergency coordinator. But what specifically does our department do to help fund any emergency preparedness in terms of supplies and equipment and even for storage in our different regions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, our department provides support to the communities to develop their plans. We provide the people to come into the community to develop a plan or use a template to set up an emergency measures plan including all the contact people that have certain responsibilities in case of a disaster. In the event of a disaster, we would provide the information on how our disaster assistance plans work, who to contact, how to contact people, and which agencies cover what type of emergency. If it is search and rescue, it is a different agency. If it is disaster assistance, it is a different agency again.

We provide that. We also provide some of the basic essentials to run an operation centre; maybe some of the communication equipment and things of that nature. We do not provide an inventory of blankets and medication as the Member indicated. Neither do we provide heated storage space. We do have a partner in this whole emergency area, the joint emergency program that is delivered through the federal government. There is the ability to access funds through that program. As I have indicated, that is how we were able to partner up with the Town of Hay River to get their highway emergency vehicles. So there are possibilities, but that is about the extent of where we provide supplies.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When did our priorities change with respect to providing emergency preparedness equipment in terms of blankets? It sounds like you are well prepared for an event in Yellowknife, but, if there was an event in my riding, and it happened early in the evening, and there are 12 hours of daylight, what would the plan say to do then? I know right now there are not enough blankets or emergency supplies or even back-up generator facilities to take care of the community.

I am not too sure how to make it a priority of our government if it is not right now. In terms of that, Mr. Chair, how do we start making the priority? How would we start creating a stockpile of supplies for an emergency? If, indeed, the Minister is saying that it is not their responsibility, then let's start some dialogue. Let's get this addressed because it is a gap that has been addressed. Often, you talk about a gap, but when an event does happen, when somebody is always saying I told you so, then I am hoping that I can mention it now

that we don't have to be saying I told you so sometime later on down the line. How do we best address this gap, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I am just checking with our staff here to see when and who would have provided blankets and how far back that would have been. We are not sure if MACA has ever provided that kind of emergency supplies. We are not sure who else would have.

Mr. Chair, we have to recognize, with an emergency, the rules change somewhat. There is an administrator or the mayor becomes the emergency person that is responsible for what happens in the community and how to respond. If there is a need for blankets, he would declare a state of local emergency and he has a number of new authorities that come with that. If there is a need for blankets, he would open a store or whatever the case may be. If there is a need for some supply, he would make that supply available. So we don't have a program that provides blankets. I don't know if we ever had a program that provided blankets or medication. We can certainly look into who would have done that. There are supplies available through some of the federal programs that we work with. There is ability to access some basic stuff to set up an operation centre, but that is about the limit of it. We would be glad to have our emergency person come in and provide a very thorough presentation of all that is required and what is available.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to his assistance on this matter and researching it further. I am trying to address this gap. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we are really fortunate in the Northwest Territories. If we look at a map of North America and areas that are affected by natural disasters, there is almost nothing once you get north of 60 in terms of volcanoes, hurricanes, tornados, and things of a volatile nature. We have had things like the flood in Hay River, this past year a flood in Fort Good Hope, but they haven't been that sort of catastrophic magnitude. They have been fairly localized. We had an earthquake that started in Fort Simpson one time and it shook us up in Hay River.

Anyway, but I think it is important on the communication side. I have no doubt there is a plan in place, but sometimes people see things or become aware of things. It is just good for people to know who is to respond and what number you should call in an emergency. I think about a day last summer when I was out and I saw that black cloud coming over Yellowknife. It was the Yellowknife dump that was on fire. I remember thinking, I sure hope somebody is on top of this. I sure hope somebody is in charge of this because it seemed to me that it could have quite a devastating effect on the community. It was just coming up over the dump and setting right down on residential areas. Anybody with a breathing problem, it could have been fairly serious. You

feel like you should do something. What do you do? I don't know. I suppose by the time I saw it, people were responding to it. But I think communication is the best thing so that there is a number that people know that, when something happens or something is just in the beginning stages, people know where to call in. In that instance, I suppose the Yellowknife fire department might have been the number to check with. Myself, I called the Premier on my cell phone, but he didn't answer.

To the issue of communication then, the numbers are just the ones you listed, the four ones or the four twos and that is it? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, the emergency numbers are listed in the blue pages of the phone book. All the local emergency numbers, including the RCMP, the fire department and our emergency measures or emergency coordinator, are also in the phone book.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. We are going to agree to page 4-18 and 4-19, community operations activity summary, operations expenditure summary, \$24.570 million again before we move on. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. We are now on page 4-31, activity summary, lands administration, operations expenditure summary, \$2.971 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Page 4-33, activity summary, lands administration, grants and contributions, \$300,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-35, activity summary, lands administration, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-37, activity summary, sport recreation and youth, operations expenditure summary, \$2.877 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-39, activity summary. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note a number of increments here in grants and contributions to various agencies and organizations and some substantial increases here, Mr. Chair. I am assuming, and this is a question that I want to ask, that there is about \$1 million worth of new contributions outlined compared to the previous year. Is this a result of the Northern Strategy funding and I believe a decision that was made last summer to hive off \$1 million for what I thought was, generally speaking, youth initiatives? Can I confirm? Is that the source of the funding here, Mr. Chair?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are actually three new sources of funds. One is not so new. The \$450,000 for recreation contributions is...We reprofiled some of this money; \$300,000 of this was listed prior to this under regional operations. We have now moved it into recreation contributions as this money is going to the new sports council.

The Northern Youth Program, the \$500,000 is money from the Northern Strategy money. This money will be allocated through six different programs: \$100,000 will go to the Youth Trapper Training Program; another \$100,000 will go to the NWT Youth Leadership Program; \$50,000 for a youth leaders' forum; \$20,000 to bring students to the Aboriginal Achievement Awards; \$30,000 to set up a youth web site; and, \$200,000 will be used for Summer Youth Trade Institute Program. So that makes up the \$500,000. There is also \$250,000 from the community public infrastructure money that will be spent to support trail development. So those are the three areas that are new profile dollars.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One thing to look at here is the sustainability of these various initiatives. For instance, Mr. Chair, the Northern Strategy money was one-time dollars. We are shoring up some fairly aggressive initiatives here, certainly good ones, but, of course, when something is started, if it meets with any degree of success and has some good outcomes, people want to see them keep going. Can the department advise on what, if any, these would see continuation in future fiscal years? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are a number of things here that are considered to be pilot projects. The NWT Games, of course, was brought forward as a pilot project over a couple of years. I think 2007 is the last time we are going to see this funded as part of this budget or as part of our business plans. We intend to look at this, review how successful the games were and see whether it was valid to carry them on. If that is the case, then Sport North has indicated that this would be something they would consider as part of their revenue funding from lottery tickets.

In regard to the Northern Youth Program, the six different programs that are listed under there are all considered to be pilot projects, also. If these programs are very successful, very popular and they achieve what we want them to do, we would consider looking for new sources of funds or else a possibility of moving them under our Youth Corps Program. We have a budget of \$750,000 for youth programs there, so those are the possibilities. Those are actually the targets of where we want to go. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under the Youth Program, there are trappers, leadership, involvement in

the aboriginal achievement awards, which I certainly support, the youth trade initiatives, the web site here, can we get some information on just what would be the purpose or the function of this web site? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, with the creation of a web site, we are hoping to be able to package up all the information that we have compiled on youth programming and youth resources, use it as a reference and an area to access resources and to list out some of our programs. So it is an opportunity for us to take all the information in the area of youth and some of the upcoming events, the opportunities and the different programs and pooling them and put them in one area that the youth can access quite easily.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chair, I don't have the information at my fingertips, but through at least one other department, and I am thinking ECE, is there not a web site with a youth focus or a youth audience already designed? Are we duplicating something here? Has the department checked into whether or not there is something already existing that we could use? Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, this web site is intended to capture all the youth initiatives, all the programs, all the activities that fall under our responsibilities for youth. We have developed this web site as a source of information. I don't know if...Have we checked? I am not sure if ECE has a program of that nature. We have an interdepartmental committee, so I don't believe we are duplicating anything here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a specific example to point to, but I do point it out as an example where there may be something already in existence. Our government has web sites and helplines all over the place. In the absence of a detailed kind of survey or system, I am not entirely convinced that we are really putting these efforts and getting good value out of them, because there are already a lot of existing similar functions in other departments. That is all I have for questions for now, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I understand what the Member is getting at. We may have a similar web site, but they are not the same. Our information is quite different, but there may be an opportunity to package them up under one web site that would serve all the youth. We will have that discussion with ECE.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Braden? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This \$500,000, the activities for which the Minister listed off,

would we, as committee members, have had any prior knowledge of what those activities were, or is this the first time we are hearing it right here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I believe this would be the first time the Members are seeing it or hearing of it. When we did present our business plans, we did not have the programs ready and we have not been able to develop them, identify all the different areas we wanted to spend this money. So we had indicated to committee that we would be coming back at budget time to include the programs and have them ready by then, but we did not present to the committee at all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thanks for that, Mr. Chairman. I didn't think I had missed something this significant. This is a large piece of that Northern Strategy money that's \$500,000 for youth programs and I'm not particularly impressed with the line-up in terms of activities. I don't know much about it, though, so it's hard to say what they're like, but I wouldn't mind just getting a print-off of some kind. You know, say we come back during the budget session, give us this, if we passed over this page without asking these questions, we still wouldn't know what they were. So I don't know if you have a more detailed description that you could photocopy and circulate to Members as to what these are. I guess my concern is who was consulted on taking this \$500,000 and dividing it up under these particular activities. Who decided that? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we worked with ECE and developed some of these programs and we worked with our Social Ministers Committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe there's other money available through the government that I'm not aware of, but when I look at the recreation, NWT Games, Arctic Winter Games, Canada Winter Games, there's a whole lot of youth dollars that are going towards kids who have inclination towards sports and sports are good, sports are healthy, it's good for kids all around to be involved in those kinds of things. It takes money for kids to be involved in these not only on the part of the government, but on the part of their parent. Also, like I said, I don't have a lot of detail, but some of the activities too that the Minister listed off, taking kids to the Aboriginal Achievement Awards, again, we're talking about kind of an elite few here and there's a whole lot of kids in the Northwest Territories that cannot, for various reasons, access sports activities that are kind of booting around their communities without a lot to do and not a lot of supervision and, in some instances, creating some difficulty for themselves and their communities.

I would like to know if there is any money that's been set aside that is proposal based that could go to fund some of our struggling youth centres where volunteers in the

communities are trying to create activities, keep kids out of trouble and those who maybe either aren't inclined to sports or their parents don't have the volunteer hours to put into it or don't want to and maybe don't have the financial wherewithal to set kids up with all the equipment and things you need to get involved in those sorts of things. I would rather to have seen at least somewhere a pot of money where some of the youth centres, and I don't know who supplies money like to the SideDoor in Yellowknife, for example. They're doing wonderful work with some of the more marginalized and needy, I would say, youth in the community, and in Hay River we had to shut down the youth centre because of lack of funding. Yet the money we would use to take a few handfuls of kids to the Aboriginal Achievement Awards would probably keep the youth centre in Hay River going for six months. So where is the money for our youth centres that are struggling and hanging on by a thread? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this money was earmarked for the youth portfolio and we work with the social programs Ministers. We've also done an evaluation on some of our programs and consulted with some of the youth to see where there should be some investment. It did not go to our sports division because it was accepted. We had a different submission that was rejected for our sports division and this money is earmarked for youth at risk. The programs that we have are pilot projects that we want to bring forward to see and run them as pilot projects to see how effective they are to deal with youth at risk. If the Member is interested, we can provide the rationale of every one of these programs and how and why we think they're valid and important. The Aboriginal Achievement Awards have a kids at risk component attached to it, and that's why we wanted to bring some of our youth to this function and also see some of the people that were receiving awards. Every one of these have a rationale of why we should bring them forward.

The youth centres, we recognize there's a need there. The Member is quite correct that the youth centres have a problem. There's a gap and a need for operating funds and right now that's not something we have as a program. We do provide money to the youth centres, however, and we have provided money to the friendship centres across the Territories on different programs that they've been coming to us for, including the SideDoor. So we do provide monies for friendship centres, but we do not provide money for operations. That's not something we have in our budget, but we recognize there is a need there and we're looking to see how we can help. Right now the only government that does that is the federal government. They have an aboriginal friendship centre youth centre that some communities have been able to tap into. We do, however, provide money for friendship centres and youth centres through the Community Initiatives Program. There's up to \$100,000 available over a two-year multi-year funding. Many of the communities are using those monies to build centres or renovate buildings to use as centres, but right now it doesn't include operating funds for youth centres.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess, in a general sense, my point is \$500,000 is a lot of money and I would like to see it reach as many youth as possible. The web site, again, it has an elite overtone to the web site because you're assuming that the kid has a computer and they have access to go on there and want to see what the government programs are, otherwise it's just there for youth and recreation leaders and if that's the case, just click on your MACA web site. I don't know what other kinds of activities are going to be on a web site that are really related to the youth. Anyway, the problem is that I'm talking here without detail. So if it sounds like I'm critical, it's just because I don't really know exactly what's going on. If these monies have been allocated to youth at risk and have been earmarked in a way that reaches a broad kind of group and not just a few that will be hand picked, I remain to be convinced whether that's the case, and this is something I'm looking forward to seeing in much greater detail. I'm very sorry that the committee didn't have a chance to have some input on this prior to this exchange here today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly take the points the Member is raising and we do apologize for not having some of this information ready for the business planning process. It was something that was approved fairly late into the year, so we had to really get these things developed and packaged. We did have a youth conference where we did a survey. We have talked to the youth. They have flagged that they'd like to see us set up a web site and there is, I guess, a significant amount of access because all of the schools have Internet programs now and computers that can access the high-speed Internet. So there is a fair amount of access, but I take the point that the Member is making, that we should have had a more thorough discussion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. At this time I just wanted to take a second, we've got a mother of one of our Pages, Jeannie Weyallon and her friend Gabriella in the audience here with us today. Jeannie is the mother of one of our Pages, Raschenda Weyallon from the community of Behchoko. Welcome.

---Applause

Next on the list I have Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As well, I look forward to more details from the Northern Youth Program to support the various development issues and the youth, also. We always talk about infrastructure so I didn't know, like the Minister mentioned six different areas with that particular line item. I don't know if infrastructure was eligible at all. Perhaps I can ask the Minister with respect to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we didn't include infrastructure as part of this one-time funding that we get from Northern Strategy because we do have an infrastructure program available to the communities. The Community Initiatives Program has \$100,000 a year available for up to two years. So that program is already there. It exists so that communities can access that.

We've focused our programs here to try to target the youth at risk and try to pilot these projects to see how well they'd be received and how well they would be utilized and delivered.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As well, when it comes to sport, recreation and youth funding, one of the difficulties that a couple communities had last year was that actually they were quite excited to have submitted an application by April 1st for new funding as is going to happen again this year, but last year they were surprised to find out that by April 1st it was already too late. So I guess I'm just asking the ministry to consider some equity in considering applications that are not to dispense or commit funds even though they've got their applications in by April 1st they weren't really late, but yet they weren't considered or they got minimal funding based on being late, but they weren't really late, they were, like, early. What I found last year -- and I spoke to it in House -- was that the funds were already committed to and expended before April 1st, before people really had a chance to submit their application, Mr. Chair. So I'm just wondering if the ministry will look at a more equitable way of dispensing these funds or else hanging onto applications for the various programs that are available to youth for sport and recreation, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we're trying to figure out which community the Member might be referring to. We actually send notice to all the communities in March and we make our decisions in April. Of course, sometimes the communities don't get their applications there in time and it comes in fairly late, but we fund a significant amount of communities for projects under the community infrastructure program. Mr. Chairman, we're just looking at the list here and I think we've got every non-taxed-based community on the list except for two. I'm not sure which communities have been left out.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. No it was just an incident last year where an application was submitted by April, but yet the department said no and I appealed on their behalf, but the funds were already committed or expended and that community was ineligible to pursue one of their initiatives for that year. So I just wanted to give the department a heads-up just to watch out for that and, like the Minister said, they're already developing a list and keeping track of how many communities are accessing funds and what programs, and just to be mindful of that and not to commit all their funds before the deadline and just to be mindful of that, I guess, Mr. Chair, is what I'll be looking for at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Chairman.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I recognize what the Member is saying. However, it's very difficult to try to hold back money to allocate later in the year. Some of our programs are totally oversubscribed and the money

is expended and allocated early in the year. Usually by June, some of our Youth Program dollars are all committed. So we will take a look at it and certainly take the Member's comments under advisement and see if there's a better way to do it, but it's going to be a real challenge. There's a lot of applications that come forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the items noted on this page, page 4-39, is a contribution to the host society for the Canada Winter Games in our sister territory of the Yukon next year for \$86,000. I'm wondering if we might be able to get a little bit of detail on just where that is going. What is the value in it for the Northwest Territories? Related to that too, was the appointment of a former Member and a Premier of this Assembly, Mr. Antoine, to be an ambassador or a coordinator of, I think, a pan-northern initiative. Does this come under Mr. McLeod's watch and would he be able to give us a bit of information there? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the Member is correct. We do have an ambassador for the pan-territorial games, the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse. It is Jim Antoine and we do have a little bit of responsibility. He works under the direction of the Premier. We provide some in-kind support. We've provided him with a loan of a computer and we do supply him with some office space in Fort Simpson. This contribution for \$86,000 is a portion that we'll be using to host. We're responsible for three different programs in the Canada Games in Whitehorse, and some of it will be taking place in the NWT. The torch relay is something we're going to be hosting in the NWT portion of it, the pan-northern Youth Ambassador Program is something we will be heading up, and also we are going to be delivering the Dene and the Inuit games demonstrations.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. So is the \$86,000 contribution, now the Minister mentioned three different areas of responsibility we've undertaken to get involved in. Is it going to support that, or what's the objective there? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, this money is going to support our initiatives in the Canada Winter Games. I should point out, though, that we have other departments that are involved and they are Education, Culture and Employment; industry, trade and investment; and the Executive, and we're all working with the 2007 Canada Winter Games Host Society and we're working on a series of joint programs. This is our portion of what we'd be delivering.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay, So four departments are involved in making contributions to the event. Okay. I appreciate

the information. We'll look for information there. Maybe one thing the Minister could advise us of is, what was the total contribution that the government is undertaking across all these departments, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I'm just checking with our staff here. She informs me the total contribution by this government was, by this department, \$211,000. The different components that make up our different areas of responsibility are: ITI is going to be looking after some of the cultural enterprises; ECE will be looking after the Northern Arts Festival; ECE also will be providing performers; and the opening and closing ceremony. Dene and Inuit games, as indicated, will come under the responsibility of MACA. The pan-northern youth ambassadors will come out of the responsibility of MACA, as will the torch relay; and the national marketing campaign will be headed up by ITI and the NWT association.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Thank you. Useful information. New information for me this afternoon. I guess I would appreciate just to have some of this detail, if a note could be circulated advising Members of the overall program that the GNWT's undertaking. But I don't need that now. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, just for further clarity as we've dug it up now, the total funding in the mains for contribution is \$396,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Thank you. I'll draw committee's attention back to page 4-39. We are on activity summary, sport recreation and youth, grants and contributions, grants, \$77,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Contributions, \$1.381 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Infrastructure contributions, \$250,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): For a total of \$1.708 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. On to page 4-40, sport recreation and youth, activity summary. It's an information item, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-41, it's a continuation, activity summary, sport recreation and youth, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-43, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, \$73.007 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-45, activity summary, regional operations, grants and contributions, grants, \$41.312 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Contributions, \$7.678 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-46, regional operations. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): None? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Activities summary is continued onto page 4-47, regional operations, activities summary, grants and contributions continued, infrastructure contributions continued, for a total of \$60.942 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Grants, \$55,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Continued on page 4-48, activities summary, regional operations, grants and contributions continued, \$2.45 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): For a total of \$63.447 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. To page 4-50, activities summary, again it's an information item, regional operations, active positions, and that continues on to 4-51, regional operations, active positions. Any questions on those two pages?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed. Thank you. Page 4-52, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could just seek some clarification in this area under the Inuvialuit land claim. Last year in their main estimates we scheduled \$100,000. It appears that the revised estimate is now \$244,000. Could the Minister sort of explain the significant jump there, as well as the fact of why are we now, if it costs more to do business, why are we now only scheduling \$100,000? So if you could explain the seesaw anomaly there, as well as, where are we getting the

money from this. Is it flow-through money that's federal money, or is it funded directly out of our coffers? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the money is flow-through money that we receive from the feds and it is a carryover. The revised estimates show a carryover from 04-05.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: No, that's fine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We're on page 4-52, work performed on behalf of others. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 4-53. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The same question in regards to the Tlicho implementation funding explaining the numbers why we go from 111 to 535 and then down to this year's main estimates of \$78,000. As well as, if the Minister has any comment on the definition where it speaks, if I may pick it up in the middle of the Tlicho Agreement, may be as early as April 2005. It looks like this sort of definition is out of date. Would they look at updating it? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member is correct; we need to update that date. The extra money that's in the Tlicho implementation funding, there's \$424,000 included in '05-06 as a carryover from the previous year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. In part of that little description/definition the last sentence says the GNWT must complete prior, these activities must be complete prior to the agreement. Why are we saying this sort of after the fact? This is sort of the definition that says in advance of the agreements we have to spend this type of money. The agreement came into effect last year in August. So again, the definition is probably the problem here. So maybe if the Minister could provide some clarification why we're still spending \$70,000 in this area if this is money to be for the vamping up of the effective date. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, yes, there was a requirement as part of this agreement that we had a number of things that we had to do before the effective date -- not this effective date that's on here, but 2005 -- and those things were done. There are a number of things that we still are working on that we will have to do in the next little while, but those don't have a deadline. So not all the money had a deadline attached to it. The ones that

required us to have the work done as part of the pre-implementation were completed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was this carryover money that's being stated here and it is flow-through money from the federal government? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is carryover money and it is flowed through from the federal government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee, and thank you, Mr. Minister. We're on page 4-53, work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Looking at search and rescue programs and what looks like...We're not going to get any flow-through money for search and rescue. There was an agreement with National Search and Rescue Secretariat for at least the last two years, Mr. Chairman. We got \$52,000 last year and this current year \$65,000, but there's nothing on the boards for the coming fiscal year. What will be the impact on our search and rescue capacity if our friends at the national secretariat aren't going to be funding this anymore, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the reason there isn't a number at this time as part of this budget is because we haven't had an opportunity to sign an agreement. This money is application-based that we have to apply for every year, and we have no commitment from the federal government at this point. However, we remain very positive that we will receive some money this year. However, having said that, this really has no effect on search and rescue operations. This budget line is more towards the planning, more towards the education on search and rescue activities and workshops and things of that nature....(inaudible)...we don't have confirmation that we have it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and we're still on page 4-53, work performed on behalf of others. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 4-54, it's an information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): If committee's agreed, we'll go back to page 4-7 and that is the department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$110.012 million. Committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We'll now go to capital acquisition plan, community operations. Page 3-5, committee, if you have your binders available.

I'll give you a couple seconds to get your binder out. Page 3-5. Okay. Thank you, committee. We're on 3-5, community operations, infrastructure contributions, total infrastructure contributions, \$16.367 million, total activity, \$16.367 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 3-7, infrastructure acquisition plan, lands administration, infrastructure contributions, total infrastructure contributions, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Total activity, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 3-9, infrastructure acquisition plans, sport recreation and youth, infrastructure contributions, total infrastructure contributions, \$250,000. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister elaborate, it says trails development. Could you elaborate on where these trails are or what's anticipated?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this is an application-based program that will be put in place and any community can apply.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Application-based, does it exclude cities and what type of trails are they referring to? Walking trails, bike trails, Ingraham Trails, et cetera? What type of parameters is it designed for or intended for? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the money is earmarked for hiking trails, walking trails. It's available to all communities in the Northwest Territories and we transfer the money over to the NWT recreation and parks and they administer it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mahsi, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. So that would also include the City of Yellowknife to be able to apply on that? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman. All communities includes Yellowknife.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. So that page 3-9, sport, recreation and youth, total activity, \$250,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 3-12, regional operations, infrastructure contributions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Page 3-13, regional operations, total infrastructure contributions, \$11.952 million, total activity, \$14.562 million, total department, \$31.479 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Agreed. Thank you. I'd like to thank Minister McLeod, Ms. DeLancey and Ms. Bassi-Kellett for their attendance here this afternoon. Thank you very much. Perhaps we'll take a 15-minute break here while we switch gears. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. The next department is we have to consider under Bill 18 is the Department of Health and Social Services, and if the committee's agreed, I'll ask Minister Miltenberger if he would proceed with his opening comments. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Department of Health and Social Services is requesting a total of just over \$265 million for the 2006-2007 fiscal year. This is an addition of about \$18 million over last year's main estimates, an increase of approximately seven percent.

Investments in and changes to the health and social services system are being made to continue to implement the integrated service delivery mode, a team-based, client-focused approach to providing health and social services. The primary community care approach, a key element on which the ISDM is based, ensures that services are available as close to the client as possible. The primary community care teams, working closely and cooperative with regional and territorial caregivers, ensure a continuum of services for all residents of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to highlight a number of very important new initiatives in this budget in support of advancing the ISDM.

The 2006-2007 Main Estimates proposed establishing three new rehabilitation teams, to be located in Inuvik, Yellowknife and Hay River/Fort Smith, in addition to the existing territorial team located at Stanton Territorial Hospital. These regional teams will work with our community-based partners, schools and boards and will be made up of physiotherapists and their assistants, speech language pathologists and speech aids,

occupational therapists and assistants, as well as support staff. Through this significant investment, the teams will provide more consistent coverage of rehabilitation services and reduce patient wait times.

The main estimates includes over \$4 million in new initiatives made possibly by the federal health care funding out of the 2004 First Ministers' Accord, including additional frontline nursing positions for small communities and the introduction of six new nurse practitioner positions.

In addition, while we continue to find efficiencies in as many areas as possible, we are investing additional resources to deal with the rising cost of doing business. We have made investments in the workforce, like salary increase for our physicians and specialists, the higher costs associated with foster care, medical supplies that must be purchased, and the expanding costs of our health benefit programs, including drugs and medical travel.

The main estimates request of just over \$265 million will be distributed between five main areas of activity:

- \$26 million for program delivery support. This is the support and assistance needed throughout the system. This includes HR services such as recruitment and training, IT systems development and support, as well as the administration of our health services insurance programs and the authorities' operations.
- \$149 million for health services programs. These services are provided at our health centres, public health clinics, doctors' offices, hospitals and some facilities in southern Canada. It includes things like public health, chronic care clinics, inpatients and outpatient care, and physician services. The cost of delivering these programs is estimated to increase from last year's costs by approximately \$15 million.
- \$17.6 million for supplementary health programs. This covers the additional benefits provided to eligible residents for programs like Metis health benefits, indigent health benefits, extended health benefits and medical travel.
- \$65 million for community health programs. These programs include the provision of child and family social services. This budget also supports programs that promote healthy lifestyles and community wellness, and include services for at-risk individuals and families.
- \$6 million for the directorate. This includes system-wide leadership and management, planning, policy and legislation development and administration support for the department.

We are continuing to make the necessary changes and improvements to the system to ensure access to services is as efficient and seamless as possible for clients. We are working to reduce wait times at Stanton's operating room and emergency room. We now have three registered midwives in the NWT. We are hiring northern graduates and training our staff for more advanced positions, including nurse practitioners. The toll-free nursing line provides 24-hour advice to people in their homes. NWT residents have used the toll-free health line over 5,000 times in 2005. For all these programs and

services, the department and the authorities work collaboratively with many government and non-government partners.

However, there will never be enough money for health and social services if the primary focus is on treating illnesses. We need to continue to emphasize prevention: encouraging people to eat right and get enough exercise, to stop smoking and drinking, to immunize children against contagious diseases. Additional investments are being made, in cooperation with a number of other departments, on healthy living initiatives. Phase two of the very successful Butthead campaign, a challenge to our children and youth to be smoke free, is underway. We also have a responsibility as leaders to be role models and lead by example. I commend Members of this Legislative Assembly for successfully taking the challenge, along with our youth, to be smoke free. In the upcoming year, a healthy foods policy is being implemented in all health facilities in the NWT to promote healthy eating.

Madam Chair, I welcome the opportunity to answer the questions and listen to the comments of committee members. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time, I'll ask Ms. Lee if she would like to provide the Standing Committee on Social Programs response to the Health and Social Services budget. Ms. Lee.

Introduction

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, as Members of the Accountability and Oversight committee, were involved in the new pre-budget consultation process with the people of the Northwest Territories in late August of 2005. Hearings were held north and south of the lake, and gave northerners and non-governmental organizations the opportunity to provide input to MLAs on the priorities that the budget should focus on.

The committee then met with the Minister and his officials on Friday, September 23, 2005, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Health and Social Services.

Members also received a briefing from the Minister of Finance on January 17, 2006, outlining the changes to the budget of the Department of Health and Social Services since the committee reviewed the business plan in September.

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$265.186 million in operations expense and \$9.301 million on capital projects in 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.

Pre-Budget Consultations

During the community visits, several common themes became apparent to committee members. People want to see health services delivered at a local or regional level.

There is a general recognition that existing addiction programs are not close enough to the community and require a holistic approach that involves the addict's family and reintegration into community life.

Many comments were also received on the need to support the non-governmental organizations that deliver health and social programs on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services, with stable, multi-year funding agreements.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MS. LEE: It was also noted that government departments build forced-growth funding into their budgets and yet expect NGOs to make do with the same amount of money, and deliver the same level of programming, year after year.

Finally, committee heard many comments on the need to support frontline workers at the community level. We heard that these workers are doing an excellent job, but are hampered in some cases by inadequate funding, large caseloads and micromanagement from the department and regional authorities.

Non-Governmental Organization Funding

During the business plan review and following feedback received from the pre-budget consultations and other concerned constituents, the committee recommended that the Department of Health and Social Services issue a directive to the health and social service authorities on the use and preference for multi-year funding agreements with non-governmental organizations with proven track records.

The department did not commit to a directive, but did commit to advising the health and social services authorities that they can use multi-year funding arrangements where it is determined such an agreement is in the best interest of the authority and the service provider. In addition, Minister Miltenberger encouraged NGOs to work with their health and social services authority to enter into multi-year funding arrangements during the October session. Whether this will translate into concrete action on the part of the department and its authorities remains to be seen.

Multi-year funding agreements may be inconvenient for the health and social services authorities to administer and track; however, it is important to remember that the reasons for multi-year funding agreements are to provide financial stability to the non-governmental organizations that deliver services to the residents of the NWT on our behalf.

Within the context of a proper reporting and accountability structure, we should, as a government, be trying to make things as administratively easy for NGOs as possible.

The committee will be tracking the use of multi-year funding arrangements during the business planning process and will be expecting an increase in the number of such arrangements by September 2006.

Madam Chair, at this time I would like to ask that Mr. Bill Braden, Member for Great Slave, continue on with the report. Thank you.

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

Treatment Centres For Troubled Youth

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the area of treatment centres for troubled youth. During the business plan review the committee made a recommendation that the department examine any and all possibilities to increase capacity in the NWT to deal with those children and adolescents with addictions and emotional and mental problems.

This recommendation was made because of the significant amount of money, Madam Chair, presently spent on southern placements and the infrastructure that is in place in Yellowknife that will be underutilized once the Territorial Treatment Centre is transferred to Hay River in 2007-2008.

The department's response indicates that, given the amount of money being spent on southern placements, it is economically viable to deliver these types of services in the NWT. The department is in the process of examining its options, and although they have not provided committee with any firm timelines, the committee will follow up during the review of the 2007-2008 Business Plans in September of 2006.

Rehabilitations Teams

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is very excited, Madam Chair, about the concept behind the rollout of the rehabilitation teams. Getting important services closer to the people they are intended to serve is the hallmark of a responsive health care system and responds to many of the concerns that we heard during our pre-budget consultations.

Members strongly encourage the department to be aggressive in staffing these positions. Recent media reports seem to indicate that audiologists are in high demand and that the NWT's pay scale may no longer be realistic or a sufficient incentive to attract experienced and qualified candidates. The department, within the context of the Collective Agreement, will have to look for solutions to this dilemma.

Once the teams are in place, it is expected that wait times for rehabilitation services should be dramatically reduced and that services to children in the school system will improve. It is extremely important that the rehabilitation teams establish a close working relationship with schools, educators and child psychologists.

Madam Chair, the one area of concern for the committee was the workload that the Yellowknife-based team would have in meeting the needs of the residents of the Tlicho, Sahtu and Deh Cho regions. Some members of the committee believe there should be regularly scheduled visits to each community within these regions, while others would prefer the workload to determine the service patterns. The department is encouraged to monitor the workload of all the rehabilitation teams to ensure there is a proper distribution of resources and that extra help is provided to those teams that require it.

Addiction Services

Madam Chair, in the area of addictions services. During the community pre-budget consultations, it became apparent to committee that there is not a lot of buy-in at the local level for the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. Anecdotally, Members have been told there is a real disconnect between residents and the primarily southern-hired mental health workers. Many people told committee that if the government would give them the money, they would be able to deliver addictions programming at the local level for much less than what the government is currently spending.

Members suspect that the answers and solutions lay somewhere in between the current model and involving communities and regions more directly in the delivery of addiction programming.

Committee also heard that the spectrum of addiction services is failing, not because there is a lack for funding or infrastructure, but because there is a lack of coordination between the department, authorities and non-governmental organizations that are delivering addictions programming on behalf of the GNWT.

There is clearly a need for a coordinated approach at the community and regional level between governments and NGOs. The department is encouraged to take the lead in fostering and maintaining such an approach, and it is hoped that the second Chalmers Report will provide the department with the strategic direction it needs to improve addictions services at the community level.

Members of the committee are also concerned that there does not seem to be an adequate focus on addictions in the school curriculum. Many people have told committee that the school system, in concert with parents and the community, has to do a better job of communicating the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse to our children.

Madam Chair, I would refer the balance of the report to my colleague, Mr. Robert McLeod. Thank you.

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

Capital Planning And Health Infrastructure In The Smaller Communities

MR. MCLEOD: There is concern at the committee level that there is sometimes a leaning towards protecting government assets, such as health centres, in the larger communities, over ensuring that all NWT residents have access to the same level of health care at the community level.

It is noted there are several communities without adequate health centres and/or health care professionals.

The committee asks that the department be cognizant of this fact when determining their capital requirements for upcoming years.

Nurse Practitioners In The Northwest Territories

The standing committee would like to commend the department on their ambitious program to expand the use of nurse practitioners throughout the Northwest Territories.

Increased Funding For Dialysis And Cancer Treatments

The committee supports the repatriation of patients to the Northwest Territories from southern facilities and the provision of dialysis at a local or regional level wherever a sound business case can be made for offering such services.

Aboriginal Wellness Program At Stanton Territorial Hospital

The committee supports the department and Stanton in taking these first proactive steps in incorporating aboriginal traditional healing, values and beliefs into the health care system.

It is hoped that the physical component of this commitment will be seen once the committee has an opportunity to review the Stanton master plan.

Members would like to reiterate that they believe the community health representatives -- CHRs -- have an important role to play in the success of an Aboriginal Wellness Program, and the department and Stanton are encouraged to tap into this valuable human resource.

Dementia Facility And Other Territorial Long-Term Care Facilities

Members support the building of a dedicated territorial dementia facility in Yellowknife...

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

MR. MCLEOD: ...as well as renovations to long-term care facilities in the communities. The committee believes it is important to keep patients in long-term care as close as possible to their families for as long as possible.

Funding For Foster Care

Over the last number of years there has been a marked increase in the number of children being taken into care and placed in foster homes. Increased uptake has meant an increase in required funding to deliver the program.

It is noted that this budget proposes to spend an additional \$469,000 on foster care placements in 2006-2007. The committee is concerned this amount will not be enough and that more work needs to be done in addressing the root causes of why children are taken into care and placed in the foster care system. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. At this time, I'll ask Mr. Miltenberger if he would like to bring witnesses into the chamber to join him.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I would.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms, then, if you would please escort the witnesses into the chamber.

Mr. Miltenberger, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me Dave Murray, the deputy minister; and Warren St. Germaine, the director of finance and information services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to begin the discussions on the Health and Social Services' budget by highlighting some of the points that were raised in the Standing Committee on Social Programs report, Madam Chair. The first issue that I want to highlight again is the possibility of multi-year funding to the NGOs. I have to tell you that I was quite disappointed that we couldn't be more enthusiastically supporting government's action in this regard so far, because I was under the impression definitely that the last time around, last fall or perhaps even in the summer session, that I had thought we made some progress in moving the government forward to be more receptive to this idea, and I don't think we've gone as far as we should be able to.

I think all the Members here understand the work that so many NGOs do in our communities. I can name tons in our city who have been around for many, many years. They provide services in all sorts of areas, whether it's about supporting women or supporting people with addiction issues. The list goes on and on. It's the kind of service the government does not want to take on. These are groups that have been around for a long time. They have a proven record and if they were an individual, no one would have any problem giving a great reference to them. I just do not understand why we can't see the government starting to get into some of these contracts. Give them three-year multi-year funding.

At the same time, I really want the government to look at the forced growth issue. Every year, the government budget goes up. It's hard for the government budget to stay the same. Just the forced growth items come and it's almost an automatic passage. When the government departments come to our committees and they tell you there are 100 positions in our government and we have an automatic increase of four to five percent, or three to four percent, whatever that might be. It's usually a very huge amount because of collective bargaining or just natural inflation costs. We just don't even have an argument about that. I think that same has to apply to school boards, NGO funding, because these are all the places that provide essential services and I am not saying the budget should go up by three or four percent every year. I am just saying what's fair for the public programs that we provide in government, it's a fair game for the NGOs, too. They have to put up with the same cost of living indexes. They have to compete to hire qualified people to provide the services that they do. Often they usually hire staff at a lower level of salary than what would normally be called for for the level of qualifications that people have. They aren't usually able to provide the benefit package that governments can. So already they are having to hire people and get resources in much more adverse circumstances than the government can.

So unless the government is looking at the future where they may have to take on some of these programs, I think it is in the interest of the government to look at those

NGOs that are doing well, that have a proven track record, to build in a forced growth element and to consider seriously multi-year funding.

I would like to ask the Minister if he would take the lead. I think that question has been asked to the Minister of Finance or the Premier and the Minister of Health and Social Services in the past. I believe various commitments were made to look into it. It's just that no one has taken the next step of actually doing something about it. I would like to know if the Minister of Health and Social Services would take the leadership on that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we are committed to the use of multi-year contracts. I well know the aggravation and concerns that the Member has outlined that NGOs go through and the amount of time they spend year after year doing yearly contribution proposals and such. The Member has indicated that they would be monitoring us closely come September. We have made those commitments to committee and we will follow through on those.

I would also just like to touch base briefly on the issue of forced growth. This is a government-wide concern because there are services provided across government by NGOs, and the issue of adequately compensating them or recognizing that they have the same pressures we do is an issue that we are looking at. The Government of the Northwest Territories is putting out a third-party accountability framework which speaks to that in general terms at this point. Very clearly, there is a fundamental principle that we look at, and that is if the NGO was not providing the service, would we, as a government, step in and provide the service. That's a fundamental principle and criteria that's looked at. In some of our NGOs, we do have forced growth built in, but clearly it's not a comprehensive approach yet. It's one that we want to address within the Department of Health and Social Services, for sure. I know government-wide, it's an issue we are trying to get a frame around because of its implications.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I just want to ask the Minister to keep working on the forced growth issues and hopefully we will have more opportunity to discuss that in Social Programs committee in the days ahead.

I want to highlight another point from the Social Programs committee report and it has to do with treatment centres for troubled youth. In previous budget discussions under MACA, we spoke about some of the money going to youth. There is a Minister responsible for youth in this government and there are pockets of money and probably some of them quite significant, whether they be for sports and recreation or some of the youth conferences or whatever. I think what I would like to see, if we can organize it, is we should have as a goal at least one viable youth centre or youth activity place in every community. It doesn't have to be in away that the GNWT funds 100 percent of the money, but the GNWT taking a lead role or

working with community governments or aboriginal governments to make sure we are all working towards the same goal. The SideDoor in Yellowknife, for example, the history and struggle that centre had to go through to have the place built and then to fund the program, I know it has a program there and they do have a weekend program right now with support from the Department of Health and Social Services. They are still looking of funding and it's a constant struggle for the board and the people to make sure the program survives.

I wonder why it is that we do not have a comprehensive plan because I am sure there is enough money within the government and all the other community governments and aboriginal governments and some of the private sector. It seems to me it's just a lack of a big plan, a target that says in the next five years we would like to see a viable place for the youth to go to, a youth centre, a youth shelter. It is absolutely shameful that we had to witness a youth centre in Hay River close. The executive director there came and talked to us at the pre-budget hearing. He is one impressive young man and I won't be surprised to see him in this House years down the road if he decides to do that. It wouldn't be for lack of trying that he would have had to close that centre and we should all be reflective about the fact that a centre like that with the people behind it couldn't stay open. There is no question about how necessary that is. I would like to know if the Minister has given thoughts and talked to other Ministers, with the Minister responsible for Youth or at the Cabinet level, just talk about how do we bring it all together and have some kind of more tangible target and goal about how we address the issues pertaining to youth and place and centres for youth. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, one of my roles is that currently I am the chair of the social envelope Ministers which comprises, of course, Health and Social Services, Education, Justice, MACA, Housing, Madam Chair. We have talked about youth issues facing young people. We have made collaborative efforts with what is happening in the schools with what Minister McLeod outlined today through his responsibilities as Minister responsible for Youth. As well, we spend considerable amounts of money working with families and responding to youth in crisis.

The issue of is there a need to set up youth centres all across the land, that very well may be the case. One of the fundamental issues facing us, as in most governments, is the lack of resources to do so. Currently, we respond and assist the SideDoor, for example, on a one-time basis and we review it on an ongoing basis. But the reality is that we don't have a plan that is going to see infrastructure being built or funded in regards to youth centres at this particular juncture. I would point out that, in most communities, larger ones especially and I will use mine as an example, we have services and recreational facilities that are second to none for communities our size both in the land around the community as well as actual recreation services with the gyms, rinks, pools, and the curling rinks that are available, the weight room, the fitness centres, the drop-in centres that are there. As we look at issues related to youth, we have to never forget the connection back to the family and the role of the parents and what we do collectively together. Without that

kind of support and connection, more facilities are not going to change things. It gets back to the prevention piece that I talked about in my opening comments. But the Member raises a good point. Clearly, we have to continue to work on this issue. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are a number of areas that warrant discussion. I look forward to a bit more detail on them, but I guess just to give committee and the Minister a bit of a heads-up of the things that I want to pursue will be quite a handful of things here. Overall, our ability to grow our own workforce, we have had considerable success through Aurora College and the nurse training program there. But I am aware of a couple of situations where, even though we are returning nurses through the college process, we are choked with our ability in our hospitals to enable these young people, mostly young people, to do their preceptorships -- Is that the right word? -- and actually gain experience and gain a career.

Madam Chair, there is the need, as forecasted, for better design and outfitted dementia and cognitive disease services that continue to grow certainly across the territory, but it is becoming more acute here in Yellowknife. I will be looking for progress toward serving that need.

The area of servicing addictions, especially drug addictions, crack and cocaine, are also accelerating. The leadership provided by some NGOs is tremendous. I will be looking for some discussion on how our department is developing that partnership and carrying on with it.

Related to that, Madam Chair, is in the area of other kinds of addictions and lifestyle things. We are continuing with the overall assault on tobacco use. In fact, our Social Programs committee is having a public hearing tomorrow morning with the Minister on the Tobacco Control Act. So we have achieved some good things there. The Minister notes in his opening remarks, Madam Chair, that in the coming year, a healthy foods policy is being implemented. This is great news. An area of core concern for me, though, has been our government's inaction to directly address the area of alcohol abuse. We do so little in the area of awareness and prevention of alcohol abuse. There is a review underway of the Liquor Act we are about to engage there. I am hoping that, through that, we will be able to highlight the need for this government to be much more proactive where we have done so with tobacco. Now we are undertaking healthy foods. Why not alcohol, of something that causes so much damage, hurt and expense? I still do not see the need demonstrated here, or the desire demonstrated, to do anything really substantive about it.

Madam Chair, a considerable investment has been made and strategies and studies undertaken to see how we can better serve people in clinics and in emergency room areas here in at least the city of Yellowknife. I will be looking for some discussion on progress there.

We are taking more kids into foster care. We are doing this at an alarming rate. As the committee's report pointed out, and I think this was gleaned from the pre-budget consultations in the communities, where we seem not to be able to find out or do much about the causes of

issues of why young people, youth and children, have to be taken from their homes, but we are able, as I think our budget is outlining, to be spending another \$400,000 on foster care. We are going in the wrong direction.

Madam Chair, if I could leave with a question, it is in regards to the huge expectations, the arrangements that are already there, but the expectations of where we are going to be able to go with the federal government, the new federal government, in terms of revisions to the way health care is delivered and how we are going to be able to sustain this very expensive but also cherished above all institutions that make Canada such a great country, and that is the equality of health care. Madam Chair, we do have a new federal government in place and a new Minister. How would Mr. Miltenberger characterize the near-term future and the sustainability of our health care system, at least in the context of the new federal government?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I made a list of the concerns raised, but I will start with the last issue first. That is the relationship with the new federal government.

Madam Chair, coincidentally, I am not the longest serving, or very soon will be the longest serving Health Minister in the country now that the Minister from Saskatchewan has been transferred to another portfolio and the Minister from New Brunswick has announced his retirement.

I have been around since 2002. I have had the benefit of spending a couple of years at the federal/provincial table with Minister Clement when he was the Minister of Health for Ontario. He is very conversant, articulate and passionate about the issues facing jurisdictions to deal with the very many problems.

Once again, coincidentally, I also had the opportunity to tour Mr. Clement up as far as going into Sachs Harbour. We took him north. We fuelled up in Kugluktuk and went into Sachs Harbour. We met with the community. There are pictures of himself and some of his staff standing in the Arctic Ocean to give him a sense of the vastness in scale of the Northwest Territories. They have never been there before, so I have been able to give him that personal experience. On that relatively personal level, I am very confident. I am also confident that Prime Minister Harper is going to honour the commitments that have been made in the past. While they may want to revisit some of the strategies, their commitment to health of Canadians is no less real or intense than the government that was there prior to them.

We will be, as the Premier indicated, writing to all our respective counterparts of the federal bureaucracy. I will be writing to Minister Clement. We anticipate that there will be a gathering, some calls and gatherings here of the federal/provincial/territorial ministries in the next few weeks to get operational.

If I could quickly touch on some of the other issues, or would you like me to wait on this? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have some questions about the rehab teams he is speaking about in his opening statement. I think I am quite excited about this new initiative because there is such need for this service and the ones that we have had were mostly set up in Yellowknife. They were hard pressed to serve the headquarters area, and with these additional teams, we will now have four more teams, I think, one in Inuvik, Yellowknife, Hay River; actually, four teams altogether, I think. So it is a good initiative, but one that would require a lot of very successful recruitment plan. We all know, Madam Chair, how difficult it is nation-wide to recruit and retain health care professionals. We are speaking about hiring a whole new batch of physiotherapists, assistants to the therapists, speech language pathologists, speech aids, and occupational therapists. These are positions that we really need and want. I think that it will really make a difference in the lives of everyone in the North to have more of these skilled people available and travelling more to, and actually operating out of, some of these regional centres.

I would like to know from the Minister whether he has a recruitment and retention plan that goes with this. I think that has to be an essential part of implementing this initiative. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will make some general comments, and I will ask Mr. Murray to provide some of the more specific planning detail, but, clearly, we see this as a good news story. We recognize that there are challenges to getting it up and running. The recognition of a need is there. There are currently huge waiting lists of hundreds of individuals, a lot of them children, waiting for services. We are going to stage this, and we are also going to do some fundamental things like work with HR to look at the classification of the positions that we are bringing forward for staffing to make sure that we can do a cross-country comparison to see if we are competitive, and take the steps necessary for a reclassification if that is indicated by that cross-country survey.

Madam Chair, with your indulgence, I will ask the deputy minister to speak more specifically about the plans for the establishment of the rehab teams. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ms. Lee. I'm sorry. I was reading a note. Mr. Murray.

MR. MURRAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As to expand on the Minister's comments, in the main estimates before the Legislature, for 2006-07, we are investing almost \$1.1 million to create 12 new full-time positions. Those positions are the first of basically a three-year implementation for the rehab teams. Each of the teams will have 11 members, but creating three new teams with 11 members in each will be way too much to expect to be able to implement in one year, so it is being phased in over a three-year period.

One team will be located in, split between Fort Smith and Hay River and be responsible for south of the lake. There is a central team that is located at Stanton. There will also be one located out of Beaufort-Delta or the Inuvik hospital that will serve the Sahtu and the Inuvik region. Between

the Stanton and Yellowknife teams, there will be two. They will also be serving the Tlicho and Deh Cho regions. As I said before, this is actually a three-year rollout plan. We will be intending to include in the 2007-08 business plans requests for additional \$2.2 million to additional positions in 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Just a follow-up big on the classification comments the Minister made, human resources has the ability to do market surveys for positions across Canada and then they take that information and compare the cost of living for each of the communities in those regions, as well.

I might add that this is all being part of our funding out of the last First Ministers' accord for health care. We are being able to do this because of increased federal investment. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: That being the increased federal investment from the last federal government. Madam Chair, on that, I hope it is not going to be the case that the actual hiring and seeing the bodies out there working and doing the audiology work and physiotherapy work is not going to be delayed too long. I was hoping that this would be up and running April 1st. With respect to classification of these positions, while they may be new positions within the department or our health care system, it is not the newest job on earth. Those jobs are around. Many of them we already have. The health care professionals went through a reclassification exercise not too long ago, so I am hoping that that is not going to be something that will keep this project from getting delayed. I just want to see it on the ground happening. There are kids in our school systems, and I am sure that is not just the case in Yellowknife but everywhere in the North, who need to get this support. Language pathologists are very much needed. Physiotherapists. The need is so there. Could the Minister or the deputy minister confirm that reclassification and hiring...I want him to tell us that the groundwork has been done, or it is almost done, and that, pretty soon after the budget is passed, we are going to see this on the ground quite quickly. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would first like to point out that we have been working in very close collaboration with Education, Culture and Employment on the rollout of this particular project, and their involvement is absolutely critical to the success of this initiative because a lot of the work is going to be done in the schools with the teachers and special needs assistants that are going to be there who will be following through on the work that the team does in terms of setting up treatment planning and the care required by the various children who are going to be seen by these teams.

We are already putting the pieces in place. I would like to assure the Member. We, as a matter of course, continue to assess our competitiveness as a jurisdiction, since we are in a very competitive environment nationally. We have our own classification system that requires that we go through a certain process to, in fact, try to make sure that we are competitive on a national basis. Sometimes that's

a process that takes time, but we are not waiting for that. We are going to move on this. The plan is there. The money has been identified and we have been working with Education to make sure we start rolling this out. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to move a motion. I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: 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 6-15(4), Standing Committee On Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process, and Committee Report 7-15(4), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process, and would like to report progress with two motions adopted and, 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 to the motion? The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Third reading of bills. Orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK ASSISTANT (Mr. Ouellette): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 9, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address

11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 6 of 7)
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007
 - 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
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ouellette. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 9, 2006, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:55 p.m.