



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**4<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Day 33**

**15<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, February 21, 2006**

Pages 1169 - 1218

**The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 21, 2006****Members Present**

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

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

---Prayer

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

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS****Minister's Statement 75-15(4): Congratulations To Mr. Fred Carmichael**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to offer congratulations to Mr. Fred Carmichael on his induction into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, this occasion will be commemorated at a gala dinner in Toronto tonight.

Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of aboriginal business leaders who have built full and rich careers by expanding the frontiers of aboriginal business. Nominees serve as strong role models for their communities and give hope and encouragement for future generations of aboriginal businesspeople.

Our government was pleased to nominate Mr. Carmichael for induction into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, as all of us are aware, Mr. Fred Carmichael has had a long and distinguished career serving the people of the North. Following a very successful career as a pilot and airline company owner, and when most people would be going into retirement, Fred began a second career as president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council. He has recently been elected on his second term in this role.

One of his greatest achievements is the creation of the Aboriginal Pipeline Group. This group, under his leadership, has negotiated a one-third ownership of the pipeline, ensuring significant, long-term benefits for northerners. Mr. Carmichael continues at the helm as the current chair of the APG.

Mr. Speaker, from his excellence in business leadership, to his contribution to the community, to a renowned commitment to building capacity, Fred's work on behalf of northerners has been tremendous. I have no doubt that he will continue to lead with the same determination and persistence he has shown to date.

I cannot think of a more worthy candidate to be inducted into the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Once again, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Fred Carmichael.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

**Minister's Statement 76-15(4): Gas Tax Agreement**

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide my colleagues with an update on the Gas Tax Agreement which was signed between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada in November 2005, and witnessed by the Northwest Territories Association of Communities.

The Gas Tax Agreement will provide additional funding of \$37.5 million over five years to community governments for investments in environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure. This funding is in addition to the federal Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program of \$16 million over five years that is reflected in this year's budget and the enhanced Government of the Northwest Territories commitment to stable funding for community public infrastructure of \$28 million per year. This injection of infrastructure funding will go a long way towards addressing the infrastructure deficit in our communities.

Projects that are eligible for funding under the Gas Tax Agreement include environmentally-friendly public transit infrastructure such as bike lanes and walking trails. Gas tax funds can also be used by communities for the construction of new and more efficient community energy systems, water and sewage services and solid waste facilities. I am particularly pleased that the Northwest Territories was also able to negotiate the inclusion of dust control expenditures as an eligible cost.

Some communities have expressed concerns about the restrictions on what projects gas tax funds can be used for. As chair of the provincial/territorial Ministers of Local Government, I am working in collaboration with other provinces and territories to lobby for changes to the list of eligible projects. All jurisdictions would like to see more flexibility in how this funding can be used.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is currently working with all community governments and the

Northwest Territories Association of Communities to prepare for implementation of the agreement.

Under the terms of the agreement, each community government must complete an integrated community sustainability plan by 2010. It will be up to communities, working with the department, to determine just what these plans will look like, but we do know that essential components will include capital investment plans and community energy plans. Although these plans are a requirement of the gas tax funding, the focus on capital investment planning will help communities as they prepare to take on increased responsibility for infrastructure under the government's New Deal for community governments.

Later this year, the Northwest Territories Association of Communities and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs will provide an opportunity for communities to meet and discuss development of sustainability plans. The conference will bring in resource persons from other jurisdictions who have experience in community sustainability planning and give communities a chance to share ideas and expertise.

With the assistance of the Arctic Energy Alliance, the conference will include information on the benefits of community energy planning; the sharing of best practices in energy planning and conservation initiatives; and the identification of resources available to community governments to develop their integrated community sustainability plan.

I will continue to provide my colleagues with information on our progress and activities undertaken through the Gas Tax Agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Minister's Statement 77-15(4): Adult Literacy In The NWT**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. The new Education, Culture and Employment, ECE, strategic plan for 2005-2015, Building on Our Success, highlights the need to improve English language literacy levels of adults in the Northwest Territories.

People who have low literacy skills are challenged to understand and use information from texts, such as newspaper stories, brochures and instruction manuals. These are important skills that help us manage our daily lives and enter into the labour force.

Data from the 2003 international adult literacy and skills survey, IALSS, was recently released by Statistics Canada. The survey showed that 42.6 percent of working age adults in the Northwest Territories had a literacy score below functional levels in prose literacy. This is about the same as the Canadian average, Mr. Speaker.

While our literacy rates overall are the same as the rest of Canada, the IALSS report revealed a significant discrepancy between aboriginal and non-aboriginal adult English literacy levels; 68.9 percent of working age aboriginal adults are below functional literacy levels. In comparison, only 29.8 percent of non-aboriginal NWT adults test below functional level.

This information confirms what we already know: although overall literacy levels in the Northwest Territories are improving, a large percentage of our population struggle with literacy challenges. It confirms the need to keep investing in training to address low literacy rates, especially among aboriginal adults. To this end, we continue to work on a number of initiatives.

We are partnering with Aurora College to revise the beginner levels of the adult literacy and basic education curriculum. We are also investing in curriculum resource development and adult educator training to strengthen adult literacy and basic education delivery. We are continuing our focus on family literacy by working with the NWT Literacy Council and communities to offer a variety of family literacy projects. Six new libraries opened in 2005-2006 to provide residents with more access to reading materials. We have invested in our schools through the student success initiative, many aspects of which focus on literacy. We have implemented achievement testing in language arts and math in grades 3, 6 and 9, so we see how we are doing as a system and measure the development of literacy and numeracy skills in our students.

An evaluation of the 2001-2005 Literacy Strategy is being undertaken in 2006. Following that, ECE will develop a renewed Literacy Strategy.

The new strategy will consider recent data, including the international adult literacy and skills survey, territorial and Canadian literacy rates and trends, and the lessons we have learned from the past five years of program delivery.

We must continue our work to improve adult literacy levels to ensure that all northern residents can achieve their potential and have the opportunity to participate in our booming labour market. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ministers' statements. Members' statements. The honourable member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

#### **ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

##### **Member's Statement On Support Of The Citizens On Patrol Program**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to speak in support of the COP program in Yellowknife, otherwise known as Citizens on Patrol, which has been running in our community for the past three years. Mr. Speaker, this group rose out of a meeting back in a 2001 where hundreds of Yellowknifers showed up to protest and resolve to work towards some concrete actions together to move back the tide of ever-increasing violent crimes and the epidemic of drug use, drug trafficking in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, this happened when the community said out loud that we have had enough and we are not going to take it anymore. Mr. Speaker, in many ways, we have seen much progress since then. There have been a number of significant RCMP arrests that really put a dent in the criminal and drug trafficking elements of the community, but the RCMP cannot be everywhere all the time and this is where the COP volunteers come in. They are there to cover the gaps in communities, but they

remain highly under-resourced, overworked and under-appreciated. They do their job by driving around in gas guzzling surplus vehicles, but often they have to pay for their own gas and equipment. They also spend a lot of time looking for sponsors to cover their expenses for training and equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe very strongly that what they are doing for our community is very important and their work should be applauded and supported and, at minimum, they should not be put in a place of having to fork out their own money to cover very basic essential expenses that they need to have to run this very important program.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this government has supported this program. They've understood the importance of it in the past and I would urge the Minister and the government to continue to do so. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, these cops do not bite. Thank you.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Assessing The Status Of The NWT Caribou Population**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mankind has not been very smart and does not have a very good record when it comes to managing some wildlife species. We have a long list of grave mistakes, Mr. Speaker: the bison of the plains, the passenger pigeon, the codfish off Newfoundland and now we are looking at some management plans for one of the great resources here in the North and those are the herds of caribou.

Mr. Speaker, it's kind of early days yet, but the Minister, in releasing the plan yesterday, made it very clear that this is a rolling agenda and something that is open to input. I would like to offer a bit of comment from what I have heard so far, Mr. Speaker.

The overall decision to take a precautionary stance at this time and take some measures to reduce the harvest, I think, is a good one and is generally accepted among just about all sectors of the NWT. There are a couple of variances though, Mr. Speaker, and some gaps in our overall strategy and in the way we are gathering and collecting information. One of them, for instance, seems to be considerable variance, Mr. Speaker, on the impact of predators on our herds. We have numbers listed in the government's plan, for instance, that wolves may take as few as 20, while some traditional hunters are suggesting that a wolf may take as many as 50. I think we need some work done on that one.

I think also, Mr. Speaker, as some sectors have called for quite consistently, we need to look very carefully at how we monitor and assess the health and size of our herds. It's becoming more and more apparent, for instance, Mr. Speaker, that herds change, they shift and merge and split from each other and I don't know that there is a lot of confidence in this approach to really knowing what the status is. Mr. Speaker, the position to keep an open mind and get back together again in the near future to look at this strategy again is the right one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Member's Statement On Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In Communities Of The NWT**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many residents in the Northwest Territories go to bed each night and take for granted an often overlooked but very important service: police protection. The other day, the Minister responded to comments raised by my Nunakput colleague with the possible arrangements whereby a police officer could be stationed in a small community with another peace or enforcement officer such as a wildlife officer. For years, this is exactly what the communities have been asking for: additional resources and flexible arrangements. This has been a long time coming. Now, will this Minister follow through?

Recently, as well, there were discussions concerning a pilot project in Gameti whereby two officers could be stationed there for the winter months until spring to offset the increase in drugs and alcohol from the opening up of the ice roads. This government and the RCMP recognize that there is a problem and it's only going to get worse. Without police protection, it is often the most vulnerable who are impacted, the greatest abused: women, the elderly and children.

Studies have shown that with police presence, the number of specific incidents could be less, depending on other conditions. Concerns were raised by my constituents and, as well, through pre-budget consultations in all small and remote communities with regard to presence of policing.

Last session in this great Assembly, I raised the issue of residents' safety being jeopardized due to response times and loss of policing positions. Mr. Speaker, as expressed, triple AAA is needed; adequate, accessible and accountable police services.

There is the opinion that community police funding from the federal government earmarked specifically for aboriginal people in the NWT is not all going to its intended purposes. Large portions of funding are going to central administration. Mr. Speaker, residents' safety should never be evaluated along with money. Police are often stationed in small and remote communities during special functions or circumstances such as the one in Gameti. This criteria should be considered for all communities. This growing perception of less police patrols is something this government must work at in regaining the confidence of our communities. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to make a statement regarding elders and their work. (Translation ends)

...to talk about the importance of elders in our culture. Traditionally, elders play a large part in passing on the

stories, traditions and knowledge of our culture. Many generations of family often live together, so that children can learn from their grandparents, Mr. Speaker. The elders are the teachers in our communities.

The experience and knowledge the elders bring to our people could be compared to our education system today. Many of our elders would hold Ph.D.s if we recognized their traditional knowledge for its value to our communities and ways of life. Industry has recognized the value of this knowledge, Mr. Speaker. They often call upon our elders for advice about the land or the animals when seeking permission to use our land, Mr. Speaker.

When we attend workshops or conferences, we often call upon experts to teach us about the particular subjects. We will pay these experts some large amounts of money for their consultant fees, whether it be hundreds or thousands, Mr. Speaker. Yet, we often expect our own experts to work for a nominal fee, or free of charge, Mr. Speaker. We expect our elders, our traditional knowledge Ph.D.s, to donate their time.

Schools and learning centres, community groups, often call upon the elders to teach the youth, Mr. Speaker. Funding for cultural activities does not allow these groups to pay for the elders what they truly deserve for their knowledge.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this pay also affects the elders' pension. The money is essentially clawed back, Mr. Speaker.

Then to add insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, the government system requires that all cheques be processed through FMBS, the standard system. This means an elder may have to wait up to two or three weeks at the most.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Shame!

**MR. LAFFERTY:** This problem is just not in my community, but other communities in the North. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is this the kind of respect we should pay those who give us life and are the bearers of our traditional knowledge? I think not, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of ECE at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Deh Cho Business Conference In Hay River**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today is about the Deh Cho Business Conference taking place at the Chief Lamalice Complex on the Hay River Reserve this week.

The theme for this conference is preparing for the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline, and the event gets underway today and runs for three days. The conference will focus on how business can capitalize on all aspects of the proposed pipeline from exploration to construction right through to pipeline maintenance.

It is well known that the proposed pipeline provides an unprecedented business opportunity for the NWT. Being

ready to take advantage of it is absolutely crucial. This conference is geared to provide practical, how-to information about how to make the most of the opportunities that will be literally on our doorstep.

Mr. Speaker, conferences are great for raising and bringing energy and focus to an issue, and I congratulate the Deh Cho Economic Corporation for taking the initiative to host this event, and the GNWT, and the Government of Canada, and the Mackenzie gas project for their support. This is a great example of what can be achieved when industry and government work together.

The agenda for the conference looks promising, Mr. Speaker. Today's sessions include presentations from key individuals from the Mackenzie gas project. They will provide information about the proposed pipeline and potential business investment opportunities. Time has been allocated for a question and answer period to facilitate a free exchange and dialogue. Specialists will be sharing forecasts for long-term oil and gas activity in the NWT, including five and 10-year estimates. Knowledge is power, Mr. Speaker, and the information available to the conference participants is exactly what is needed so that businesspeople can do what they do best: use their energy and imagination to make things happen.

Mr. Speaker, government representatives from the GNWT and the federal government will be in attendance to provide information about the roles and responsibilities and support that will be provided by government. The business potential of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline is enormous. Some of the possible business opportunities identified by conference operators are: communication; transportation providers; fuel suppliers and fuel storage; construction; equipment and office rentals; personnel requirements; safety and medical; drilling completion and well servicing; and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

The business potential of the proposed pipeline is as vast as our imaginations. Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho Economic Conference is a wonderful opportunity for businesses in the Deh Cho, and I am sure the event will be a big success. I hope as many people as possible will take advantage of what it has to offer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On The Need For Consultation On Interim Measures For Management Of The NWT Caribou Population**

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today is about the interim measures that this government is considering to deal with the declining caribou herd numbers. Mr. Speaker, the issue of caribou harvesting policies or limitations, and how these policies and limitations should be applied to and at what levels, have always been a contentious issue with this government and with northerners.

The public reaction to government policy in an area as sensitive as harvesting rights and limits are always met with either a lot of uptake or with just as much opposition. Mr. Speaker, finding middle ground is not always



achievable, especially when we are talking about a wildlife resource which is regarded as a basic sustenance for many, cost-savings for some and a sport for others.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I want to stress the importance of finding a solution or a direction which will get us closest to this middle ground as possible. I do agree that we have to address the declining numbers of caribou issue before it becomes irreversible, but I do not agree with the process that has been taken to develop these so-called interim measures. We are all aware of the difficulty to get this government to change or revisit policies once they've been established or implemented; one main reason being that the government always says that they need to give it some time and see what happens, good or bad, and then make some changes after results are tabulated. Well, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I do not want to find out that these interim measures did not meet the government's or the public's expectation. Much to the dismay of many residents who did not have any input, they will be saying I told you so.

I want the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to do a thorough evaluation of what this policy should include or exclude, and very seriously consider traditional knowledge as an integral component to finding an agreeable and workable caribou management plan...

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** ...a plan we can all be confident and say that northern residents, and especially aboriginal people and the elders, have agreed to work with, and a plan that they themselves are confident will work for the betterment of the people, their traditions and, last but not least, our wildlife. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement On Adequate Housing For The People Of The NWT**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my Member's statement is about the need to ensure that adequate housing is available for those people who need it most. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government can be defined by how it treats its people. I fully believe that those actions are demonstrated, in essence, how we treat and take care of our sick, elderly and disabled. I've spoken a number of times on this matter and I feel very strongly that we need to do more for those who need assistance; that is, basic assistance, far beyond their personal reach, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about assistance that they deserve.

I ask myself continually, are we doing enough. Are we making every reasonable effort that guarantees an enjoyable life for those who struggle day to day with the simplest of tasks? In many cases, I believe very strongly that this government cares; however, just caring isn't enough. Warm words are welcoming; however, actions are truly instrumental.

I've spoken on these occasions to bring forward the concerns of many constituents who struggle getting into their doors, washing basic simple dishes in their sinks,

and even just getting home at the end of the day. I believe this government needs simple steps to guarantee a minimum level of care. I believe minimum level of care that can be measured only through a policy that enshrines standards of care for our sick, elderly and disabled people.

I've risen in this House to plead this case a number of times and to the good Minister who has worked with me on bringing forward a barrier-free housing in our city. But I believe our government needs a policy that shows that we seriously take this matter wholeheartedly and we want to do more.

I know this government is listening, Mr. Speaker, but I want to ensure that they are acting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Member's statements. The honourable Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

#### **Member's Statement On Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I thought I'd put on my rubber boots and wade into the Novel debate.

---Laughter

You know, we've heard the argument from all angles; concerns that the government's being used as a lobby group, to the Members saying that these homes are needed in their communities. They all have legitimate arguments and they'd just like some concrete answers and some action from the government. But today, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak on the training aspect of the project.

Ideally, we'd like to see the northern manufactured products being used; but if not possible, then we want to see all northern labour used. If they plan on using northern people and not just use them for cheap labour or to fill a quota, then I can support the concept. We have to know that at the end of the day, our workforce will benefit from the training and come out of it as qualified tradesmen.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Hear! Hear!

**MR. MCLEOD:** We need to know that our qualified workforce will be responsible for the conversion, and not some company from the South.

Mr. Speaker, even though we don't all agree on the Novel project, some may support the project if it makes good business sense and northerners benefit from the supplying of all modular homes or the conversions. I will have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

### **Member's Statement On Need For RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we are reviewing the budget for the Department of Justice in Committee of the Whole today, I thought it would be appropriate to once again raise the issue of communities without an RCMP presence. I will speak particularly to the community of Sachs Harbour.

Yesterday on CBC Radio, the Honourable Brendan Bell, Minister of Justice, spoke about what the department is doing to address the needs of communities without RCMP officers, and that the issue was more than just putting an officer into a community. Also there needs to be fiscal infrastructure in place.

Mr. Speaker, I would like just to clarify, for the record, that the necessary infrastructure is in place in the community of Sachs Harbour to post an RCMP officer there sooner, rather than later. There is already dedicated accommodations available for the RCMP when and if they visit, and there's an operational detachment complete with a jail, garage and a vehicle. So you see, Mr. Speaker, there is the infrastructure already in place for a full-time officer in Sachs Harbour. The question is now, when will the department and the RCMP come to agreement that will allow for the posting of an RCMP officer?

In my last Member's statement on the issue, I spoke of the community having problems recently involving the dangerous use of a firearm. The RCMP were able to respond within three hours, upon receiving the complaint. But the weather will and can dictate the response time.

Mr. Speaker, will it require a person to die before the GNWT and the RCMP can manage to put an officer into Sachs? I would certainly hope not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Members' statements. The honourable Member from Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

### **Member's Statement On NWT Housing Corporation's Homeownership Program**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak today in regard to an issue brought to me by a constituent. My constituent, formerly of the community of Behchoko, is having a very difficult time dealing with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. I have met with my constituent many times, trying to understand the reasons why they are not being treated fairly or in a timely fashion.

In 1997, my constituent received two separate letters from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The first on July 4<sup>th</sup>, at which time the Housing Corporation told her that her mortgage was valued at \$139,000, and if she accepted the offer, her mortgage would be discounted by \$84,000, leaving just a balance of \$55,000 that she'd need to obtain from a bank.

Five days later she received another letter, on July 9<sup>th</sup>, that stated her mortgage balance was, indeed, \$139,000 and that it would be discounted by \$55,000, leaving a balance of \$84,000 to obtain from the bank.

In 1997, my constituent was unable to arrange for a payout, regardless of how many different figures the Housing Corporation had provided to her. From 1997 onward, she pursued an education and is now in a position to arrange financing for the purchase of her unit in Behchoko. The problem is, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation want her to pay the full amount of \$139,000. It would only seem fair that she'd be able to purchase the house for the same price in 1997, adjusted, if need be, to a present-day figure.

In pursuing an education, she had to come to Yellowknife. She had no choice in this. By removing the payout option and adding the penalty of paying the full amount, she's being unfairly penalized for advancing her education.

If my constituent is unable to pay out the mortgage, she will have no choice but to discontinue her education, resign from her employment here in Yellowknife, and the mortgage will revert back to a forgivable loan. This is not in anyone's best interest.

She's maintaining her studies part time while working full time, and I'd like to keep her as a constituent, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I'll have questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Members' statements. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### **Member's Statement On History And Culture Of The Sahtu Region**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, now the gloves come off.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Oooh!

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Sahtu region in terms of some of the history and culture that we have in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu, the word itself translates into bear water, which is the closest translation we can have in regards to the English language. It's more than that, however, that's the closest that we could have it said in the English language.

The Sahtu is comprised of 120,000 square miles without our settled land claim area. We have a total of 12,000 square miles of the world's best fishing: Great Bear Lake. As a matter of fact, I think the world's record for trout was caught in that lake there. The elders refer to Great Bear Lake as the heart of Denendeh, the heart of the land here. Also with the recent announcement of Deline being the birthplace of ice hockey in Canada, we can't get any better than that. I'd like to see an NHL official game be held where hockey was born. Hockey night in the Sahtu has a good ring to it there. Mr. Speaker, need I say more about Great Bear Lake?

Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu also has magnificent mountains on the west side of the Mackenzie River. To the west, we have world-class hunting areas in the mountains there. We have a world-class heritage trail that's being developed right now. It's called the Canol Trail that has huge, huge significance to the people in the Northwest

Territories. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the world's rack for musk-ox was caught in the Mackenzie Mountains.

Mr. Speaker, we have lots to offer in the Sahtu region. We deal with many chiefs, many mayors, and many Metis presidents and land corporations. So our region is very diverse. However, when we put our mind together, we move things in positive ways. So I want to let the people know that in our culture, in Colville Lake and Fort Good Hope, there's stores of legends there. In Colville Lake they have story of creation and the...(inaudible)...of caribou, as one of people have indicated that we were once a caribou people and then we turned back into...So there's lots of history to the Sahtu that I think this government could benefit from and also the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Members' statements. Returns to oral questions. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'll take the opportunity to welcome visitors in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the session. It's always nice to have an audience.

#### Speaker's Ruling

Before we go on, Members, to the next order on the Order Paper, I would like to now provide my ruling on the point of order raised by Mr. Handley on Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

During Members' statements, the honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley, rose on a point of order claiming that the Member for Yellowknife Centre had contravened Rule 23(i) of the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

In reviewing Mr. Hawkins' statement in unedited Hansard, I noted that the Member for Yellowknife Centre made the following assertions, and I quote from page 2465: "Mr. Speaker, the Premier has said time and time again this is just a letter and there's nothing to worry about. Well, the same thing was said about the gun registry, Mr. Speaker. It's just going to cost a couple of million dollars; there's nothing to worry about. The same thing was said about the sponsorship scandal just a couple of years ago with the Liberals; nothing to worry about, just a couple of Liberals out of control. I think, Mr. Speaker, whenever a politician utters the words "nothing to worry about" Canadians start to get nervous."

Colleagues, what is now before the Chair is whether Rule 23(i) has been compromised. It states, and I quote from our rules, "In debate a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member imputes false or hidden motives to another Member."

As I have stated before in this House, the interpretation of any Member's language and the tone must be taken into the context of that specific moment in time, and the Chair must attempt to balance the actual words that were spoken with the reaction and responses of other Members of the House, recognizing that particular uniqueness of the situation.

Taken into full context, I find that it is difficult to conclude that Mr. Hawkins' comments constituted a contravention of our rules. His decision to question the honesty and integrity of the political profession is, of course,

regrettable, but does not, in itself, constitute a violation of the House rules.

The Chair does not find that the spirit and intent of Mr. Hawkins' words, and the subsequent reaction of the House, were severe enough to constitute a breach of Rule 23(i). Mr. Hawkins did not intend to imply that the letter of comfort signed by the Premier was in any way dishonest, illegal or immoral. He was, in my view, attempting to make the case that the actions by governments often can and have lead to unforeseen consequences. While his choice of analogy was unfortunate and very close to the line, it does not, in my opinion, constitute unparliamentary language. Therefore, the Member for Weledeh does not have a point of order.

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to again caution Members to consider very carefully the words and expressions that are used in this House. I trust that all Members will continue to make every effort to operate with the utmost dignity and respect towards their other colleagues on the floor of this House.

Thank you, Members, for your attention.

Orders of the day. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

#### ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Question 430-15(4): Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I spoke to the training aspect of the Novel project and I think it's something that I have a great deal of concern with, and I'd like to ask the Minister of Housing a few questions. I'd like to know from the Minister of Housing, who would be responsible for the recruitment of the northern workforce to go down to get trained. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

##### Return To Question 430-15(4): Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we haven't made that decision at this time. We are developing a human resource component of the Novel housing to see what opportunities will come by way of the conversions in the communities, and identifying the individuals that we're going to need. Also, Mr. Speaker, we will be working in conjunction with the Department of Education and training and try to implement these programs through our college program in the Northwest Territories so we can develop through our trades programs, either through the regional colleges or even through the local colleges in the different communities. So we are working with developing a human resource strategy to go along with the Novel project, and working with my colleague from the Department of Education to develop into a curriculum program through the college program. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 430-15(4): Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The human resource part of this project is something that we're probably going to have to get on with right away because it's going to take four years to have these guys as qualified tradesmen. That would be my second question, is who would monitor their progress and will they come out of it as qualified tradesmen after they're done working down in the factory? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Maybe two questions there, Mr. Krutko.

**Further Return To Question 430-15(4): Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the whole area of building capacity in the North, especially in our trades areas. We are working in conjunction with the existing housing programs we have. We're looking at trying to put 500 houses on the ground over the next three years. There again we want to ensure we start identifying these people so that they can get their apprenticeship tickets, and hopefully get the journeymen that will come along. So when Novel comes down the road, we're looking at four or five years down the road, that this will flow into that. So we'll develop it into our existing programs and moving it forward so that we can identify these individuals at the front end so that when we do the conversions for Novel we'll already have the people identified through that human resource strategy we're working on. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Your final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary To Question 430-15(4): Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project**

**MR. MCLEOD:** That leads into my third question, is having the people identified. I'd like to ask the Minister, after the trailers have been used as workforce housing, who then would be responsible for overseeing the conversion into residential homes? Who would be responsible to oversee it? I know who might be responsible for doing some of the work on it. It's hopefully our northern workforce that we're going to have trained. But the actual overseeing the project of the conversions is what I would like to know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko.

**Further Return To Question 430-15(4): Involvement Of Northerners In The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are working in conjunction with, like I mentioned, we're developing a human resource strategy. But we also want to ensure that we have control of the overall project, so it will be managed through the Housing Corporation to look at the training needs that are going to be identified in communities, contracts that we're going to need, and also the human resources that are in those communities and who has the capacity to do it. So we will work it through our local housing authorities and our regional housing organizations.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member from Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

**Question 431-15(4): Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker...(Translation)...during my Member's statement, I want to ask the Minister regarding...(Translation ends)

...I spoke highly of recognizing our elders for their expertise and wisdom, as we would with our northern and southern consultants. Mr. Speaker, question to ECE Minister: Can the Minister investigate a standard of pay for organizations using elders' knowledge, somewhat like the pay scale that we have established for other areas of expertise, such as teachers or consultants, that will recognize the value of such knowledge and services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Good question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

**Return To Question 431-15(4): Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that it is important to say that the department and this government recognize the value of advice that we receive from elders, and we encourage local education councils to involve elders in their programs in the schools. We can certainly take a look at whether or not it would be possible to establish a standard of pay, but I suspect that would be very difficult because then there would have to be some assessment of elders' knowledge, and I think that goes against the understanding of traditional knowledge. I don't know. I'd have to talk with the Member about whether or not there is a standard that could be recognized. But I'm certainly willing to meet with the Member and his leaders and talk about what we might do on this area. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 431-15(4): Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next question will be, has the department looked into alternative ways to pay elders such that their pensions are not penalized? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 431-15(4): Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I advised the House yesterday and I believe on previous occasions, we are in the process of reviewing our income security structures and how we deal with people who are elders, with people who are disabled, with people who are in other classifications is something we're going to discuss as we go through this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 431-15(4): Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question could be a recommendation, but the question to the Minister: Would the department consider paying elders in other ways, such as on a contractual basis, to avoid long delays in the government pay system that's created? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 431-15(4): Supporting The Work Of Elders In The NWT**

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no impediment to local education authorities or other bodies making up a contract with an elder. That could be something that they could undertake on their own responsibility. The department itself doesn't hire people to go into the schools or in the areas where the divisional education councils have responsibility. That is something that can be done at the local level. But all payments now are being done through FMBS. If there are areas of concern in a region, then if I'm advised of that, I'll certainly take the issue up with my colleague, the Minister of Finance.

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

**Question 432-15(4): Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In The Communities Of The NWT**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the honourable Minister responsible for Justice, just with respect to my Member's statement and the request from constituents and communities for increasing the policing presence in their community. Is there a current or existing plan that the department's working on in order to look at increasing policing presence in the communities? Mahsi.

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

**Return To Question 432-15(4): Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In The Communities Of The NWT**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would point to a couple of things we're doing, some work currently underway. I think as Members know, our Department of Justice and the RCMP have established a joint working group that is looking at and examining various options available to increase police presence in our smaller communities. They are serviced from the larger centres. We want to make sure that we have an improved and enhanced presence in these communities. So that work is underway, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also point to I think we're in the fourth year now -- the final year, at any rate -- of our response to the comprehensive submission by the RCMP for additional resources. I think over the past few years, we're talking about 28 additional police officers across the Northwest Territories. We'll discuss this again today, but I think in this year's budget the number is six to bring that total up to 28. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 432-15(4): Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In The Communities Of The NWT**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just with respect to enhancing the presence and the request for 28 additional positions, this is probably based on some previous work, as well. I'm not too sure if there was a report based on that there, Mr. Speaker. However, I'm just wondering if it's taking into account the new increased pressures of resource development, of pipelines, particularly, passing through my region, and the need to have an established presence in the communities because of increased drugs and alcohol incidents that will happen. Has that report been taken that into consideration, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Further Return To Question 432-15(4): Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In The Communities Of The NWT**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our response to this multi-year submission and to this, in effect, business plan submitted by the RCMP and the additional 28 officers, does take into account the pressures of development in the North. The RCMP are very well aware and very cognizant of this issue. It is driving our needs. I would also point to our hope that as we see some of this \$500 million socio-economic impact fund roll out in our regions and in our communities, some of that will be earmarked or targeted for policing resources.

As the Member has pointed out, and rightly so, I believe, if we can enhance our police presence in our communities, we have a better chance of keeping other resources in the communities, such as nurses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary To Question 432-15(4): Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In The Communities Of The NWT**

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'm glad the Minister mentioned the nurses, because my next question is just more specifically geared towards a community like Wrigley who can't get the professional services of nurses due to the lack of a police officer. So is the ministry working along with the Department of Health and Social Services, coming up with a plan to address this specific community's concern? Mahsi.

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

**Further Return To Question 432-15(4): Increasing And Enhancing The Police Presence In The Communities Of The NWT**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have an agreement of social program Ministers. We meet together frequently. These are the kinds of issues we discuss. I have discussed this specific issue with Minister Miltenberger. He's very much aware of it. It is our goal and is our aim, as a government, to be able to

deal with some of these pressing needs. I know about the situation in Wrigley and I am hopeful that through programs like the socio-economic impact fund we can roll out additional funding and respond to some of the needs in our smaller communities. It is a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Oral questions. The honourable Member from the Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Question 433-15(4): Enlisting The Help Of Elders In Wildlife Management In The NWT**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, the honourable Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister: Considering the recent announcement of the interim measures of the caribou situation in the Northwest Territories, will the Minister consider implementing a territorial education campaign with the other departments on the caribou herd, enlisting the use of the elders in our regions? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Return To Question 433-15(4): Enlisting The Help Of Elders In Wildlife Management In The NWT**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have, as part of the interim measures, identified the need for public education and awareness as one of the primary and first areas we want to move on and work with the regions and communities on. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 433-15(4): Enlisting The Help Of Elders In Wildlife Management In The NWT**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to that education campaign. Mr. Speaker, I want to again ask the Minister, would he consider using primarily the elders under the traditional policy that the government has to use the traditional knowledge policy to have an impact on this educational campaign? We need to use the elders in terms of this education campaign. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 433-15(4): Enlisting The Help Of Elders In Wildlife Management In The NWT**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the use of traditional knowledge is one of the types of knowledge that we've used to get to where we are today, and I commit to the Member that we will continue to use the traditional knowledge and the experience and knowledge of the elders, and we will be working with the wildlife boards region by region to look at how we want to best work on this public education campaign, and that will include, as the Member has suggested, using all the skills and the knowledge that elders possess. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Supplementary To Question 433-15(4): Enlisting The Help Of Elders In Wildlife Management In The NWT**

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I look forward to the input from our elders and to see how it plays out in the educational campaign program. Mr. Speaker, the Colville Lake people have a story up in Colville Lake about the creation of the world, and they have a story about the creation of caribou, and I want to ask the Minister when they're conducting surveying methods, would they consider strongly the use of the aboriginal method of conducting surveys of our caribou as part of their education campaign? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 433-15(4): Enlisting The Help Of Elders In Wildlife Management In The NWT**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We will strongly consider that, yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 434-15(4): Alternative Dispute Resolution For Housing Corporation Clients**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation and it goes back to my Member's statement and the fact that government should be about trying to help residents move ahead and be successful. I think the Minister of ECE should also be paying attention to the questions that I'm going to be asking today, because what it would seem like to me is that the Housing Corporation is willing to turn its back on an aboriginal woman who's pursuing an education and is gainfully employed. I'd like to ask the Minister if he's aware, or I know that he is aware that there is a dispute here over what is fair and reasonable in this case. I know the Minister knows about this case. I'd like to ask him, what is the process that the Housing Corporation has for dispute resolution with people wanting closure on something? Are lawyers the only way out, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

**Return To Question 434-15(4): Alternative Dispute Resolution For Housing Corporation Clients**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am unable to respond to this question because it is a legal matter that is before the courts. They have retained a lawyer and I will not respond to this question. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister has refused to answer this question because it's before the courts. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 434-15(4): Alternative Dispute Resolution For Housing Corporation Clients**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister answered my question for me. It's

before the courts and he can't answer. I'd like to ask the Minister if the Housing Corporation has ever thought about coming up with some type of alternate dispute resolution mechanism so that folks don't have to go the legal route. They don't have to go into court with the Housing Corporation on what is fair and what is reasonable. Disputes can be resolved without having to go to court and I'd like to ask the Minister if the Housing Corporation has embarked on a plan to try to get people out of having to go to court with the Housing Corporation. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Krutko.

**Further Return To Question 434-15(4): Alternative Dispute Resolution For Housing Corporation Clients**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to individual clients, we do deal with each individual case by case and it falls under the parameters of what the situation is. We do have policies and procedures that deal with mortgages and how we deal with our clients. But again, Mr. Speaker, there are different types of circumstances, like the Member mentioned, that when students do go off to school we do allow them that, we do not charge them, or we basically hold their unit for them during that period of time when they're going to school. But there are also certain conditions attached to that in which the individuals have to abide by. Again, we deal with a person or application individually and we do have a process in place how we have rules and procedures to deal with those. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

**Supplementary To Question 434-15(4): Alternative Dispute Resolution For Housing Corporation Clients**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned in my Member's statement, I wouldn't want to see my constituent, even though one of my colleagues might be happy that they moved back to the community of Behchoko and take up social housing in the community of Rae and live in a unit with a forgivable loan, I don't want to see that happen. I don't want to see her become another statistic. I'd like to ask the Minister, doesn't the Housing Corporation have anything they could negotiate with clients on compassionate grounds? Don't they have any compassion at the Housing Corporation that would allow them to negotiate with people so they don't have to go to court? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Krutko.

**Further Return To Question 434-15(4): Alternative Dispute Resolution For Housing Corporation Clients**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we try to do everything we can to be as compassionate as we can to our clients. We realize that without them, we won't be in this business. But again, we are trying to find solutions to these problems. But in this case, again, it's before the courts. The individual has retained a lawyer, and that's why we're unable to proceed. Until it goes through that process, we are unable to move until we work out an arrangement where we can try to resolve it outside the legal process. But because it's before the legal process, we are unable to discuss or

debate it at this time. We are willing to work with the individual on this. Thank you.

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

**Question 435-15(4): Precautionary Measures For Managing The NWT Caribou Population**

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Speaker, Mahsi. My questions this morning are for Mr. Miltenberger in his capacity as the Minister for energy and natural resources in regards to the caribou strategy, Mr. Speaker. Information contained in the strategy document tells us that at least among the known harvest we're looking at a minimum of 11,000 animals. Mr. Speaker, it also tells us that at least with the best information we have, and some of this information is eight or 10 years old, it also tells us that existing herds in the NWT probably number around 600,000. So something that's plain to me is that we are not in a panic or emergency situation. But paying attention to what seems to be rapidly declining numbers is, as I said earlier in my statement, a good position to take.

Now, long-term measures continue to be worked out. In the meantime, the government has taken some steps as precautionary measures. One of them, Mr. Speaker, is that a bulls-only harvest restriction has been imposed on all residents and sport hunters. Mr. Speaker, the question that I'd like to ask regards whether this restriction also applies to aboriginal harvesters, who I know, and understand, are covered under some land claim agreements. But, Mr. Speaker, if it makes good sense to protect the cows at this time, why is it or how will aboriginal harvesters be considering whether or not this kind of restriction should apply among themselves, as well, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Return To Question 435-15(4): Precautionary Measures For Managing The NWT Caribou Population**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the main goals here is to get good blue chip information, both on the herd numbers as well as the number of animals being taken. We can track the sports hunters and the resident hunters. The one gap on the number of animals taken is the aboriginal harvest piece, and we're working with all the management boards to look at how we set up monitoring stations and such to be able to get a better handle on the number. That's one thing. The bulls-only, at this point, applies to resident hunters. As the Member will note in the information I gave out to the Members on interim measures, there have been decisions made by some of the boards that are putting very strict limits themselves on the harvest, limiting the commercial harvest and the amount of quota in general that they're allowing on, for example, the Cape Bathurst herd, as well as the Bluenose West. So we're going to work collaboratively with the boards to get the best information possible, then we're going to come back next fall and look at what all this information tells us and then plan for some next steps. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 435-15(4): Precautionary Measures For Managing The NWT Caribou Population**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also related to the bulls-only harvest restriction for non-aboriginal hunters is a concern that I've heard expressed is that, especially at this time of year, Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to tell, under the kind of conditions that we hunt, the difference between bulls and cows. But I also understand, Mr. Speaker, that there are penalties and they can be quite severe if a hunter is convicted of killing a cow, whether or not by accident. I was wondering whether, in applying this restriction, has ENR considered the potential for mistakes to be made? Have they considered the consequences that it may have in the case of mistakes and accidents that it may have for a hunter, and whether or not this could potentially result in even wasted meat as hunters decide to shut down their hunt and not report this kind of thing, even though it may be an accident, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. A couple of questions there. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 435-15(4): Precautionary Measures For Managing The NWT Caribou Population**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, when you make rule changes there is going to be a transition period, but, once again, clearly the person whose finger is on the trigger is going to have to be sure and be responsible for the animal that he or she decides to shoot. If they have trouble distinguishing between a bull and a cow, then I would suggest they have to take the appropriate measures for certainty before they pull the trigger. Will there be mistaken identities? Possibly. I understand, for the most part, the bulls and cows are not necessarily together and that there's a clear ability to distinguish them, to do an equipment check or look at the antlers, those type of things, and make the decision. So the person who's pulling the trigger will be ultimately responsible, so they better be sure.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary To Question 435-15(4): Precautionary Measures For Managing The NWT Caribou Population**

**MR. BRADEN:** ... (inaudible)... just to give us a basis for this, what are the penalties? What are the consequences of conviction for mistakenly or otherwise killing a cow caribou for non-aboriginal harvesters, Mr. Speaker?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return To Question 435-15(4): Precautionary Measures For Managing The NWT Caribou Population**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the regulations are drafted up and that level of detail is provided, I will be sharing that with Members so that they're aware, as well as with the general public. At this point, I can't give the Member a specific answer to that. Thank you.

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

**Question 436-15(4): Adequate Housing For Disabled Persons In The NWT**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to my Member's statement made earlier this morning, I have questions that will be directed to the Minister of Housing. Mr. Speaker, I have talked at length in this House about the need for our government to be in touch with the needs of the seniors and disabled communities, how they struggle through day to day, as I mentioned earlier. I've had a chance to work with this good Minister of Housing on making a commitment to bring forward a barrier-free housing project here in Yellowknife. So this is something that will have a positive effect to people's day-to-day life. So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of housing is, can he give me an update on where this project is? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 436-15(4): Adequate Housing For Disabled Persons In The NWT**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the unit the Member is talking about is the eight-plex for persons with disabilities here in Yellowknife. The contract has been awarded. We have awarded it and are going to proceed with this project. Again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member and the Council for Disabled Peoples in the Northwest Territories who worked with us in designing and putting out this tender so we are able to assist people with disabilities. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 436-15(4): Adequate Housing For Disabled Persons In The NWT**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for that answer because that was a good news answer. My next question to the Minister is, will this project be started this year and completed this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 436-15(4): Adequate Housing For Disabled Persons In The NWT**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I mentioned earlier, we have awarded the contract. We are hoping to have the project concluded by this fall. That's the timeline that we're looking at. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 436-15(4): Adequate Housing For Disabled Persons In The NWT**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, this is excellent news today and I want to assure this House, through the Minister, if he could give us some details on any type of consultation that we are getting this project right, because I would like to see this as a new model that we deliver good, solid, barrier-free housing to the Northwest Territories and to the people. To ensure that we



have the project right and to make sure that we can continue this model throughout the North, could the Minister tell me what we're doing to make sure that this project is being done right and we can expand it throughout the North to meet our housing needs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return To Question 436-15(4): Adequate Housing For Disabled Persons In The NWT**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, like I mentioned, we had worked in conjunction with the Council for Disabled Persons and they were instrumental on a design that we feel we can implement elsewhere. It's a three-storey building that has all the accessories of elevators, and also to be able to function in these units in regards to the washroom unit, the kitchen unit. So it is disabled-friendly, so we're able to look at this design and hopefully be able to deliver it in other centres throughout the Northwest Territories to help people with disabilities, but also get them out of...Right now we're renting a lot of these units in which we have to do a lot of retrofits and I think that now we have a design we can work from, so hopefully with that we're able to implement it in other communities throughout the Territories. Thank you.

---Applause

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

**Question 437-15(4): Northern Training Programs For The Novel Housing Project**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask my questions to the Minister of Housing Corporation regarding training opportunities for Novel housing. Mr. Speaker, my understanding of this product is that it's very unique, it's being trademarked and that's what it means, it's a unique product and that's the reason why this government has to go with this at the exclusion of all others. But in terms of a training program, Mr. Speaker, I think that's precisely the kind of thing that we want to talk about for industrial development project like this. We'd like to see training opportunities and the information that I got from the Minister in answer to my written question that was tabled on February 1<sup>st</sup> indicates that there really is no training program. There's no indication that the Minister has asked Novel, if we go with this project, to provide the training. The Minister just indicated that the Housing Corporation is going to do this and I don't think that's the job of Housing Corporation to do this. If somebody stands to get a \$300 million project, the least they can do is set up a training program. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he's ever asked in these negotiations and dealings and many visits to ATCO, did he ever ask them what kind of a training program and how and in what way would they provide that for the North? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

**Return To Question 437-15(4): Northern Training Programs For The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a very unique component of the proposal that we're putting for Novel because there is a major investment we're going to make in the Northwest Territories. We don't want these conversions to be done in Calgary or the South. We want these conversions to be done in our communities by a community resident and the money and the dollars stay in our communities. The training that these people take to do the conversions will be able to be used in other initiatives going forward in the future. So we are looking at almost \$86 million going back into our economy to pay for the wages of these individuals to do the conversions in our communities. That is a very important component. But on behalf, as part of our working with CMHC and in regards to the Novel project, a very important component of any deal is there has to be a human resource strategy or report attached to it so we can see exactly how this conversion is going to take place, how many, what type of training do you need, and also what tools do we need to do it in our communities. So the idea is to do it in the North, in our communities, and have a component which will include a human resource component, too. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary To Question 437-15(4): Northern Training Programs For The Novel Housing Project**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ideas are good, but I'm not hearing any concrete information there. I don't want him to get confused and I don't want him to confuse me. Mr. Speaker, I want to know, it's a pretty clear question, what can he provide in this House in terms of what he has gotten from Novel about what they're going to do about training? Because this is a very unique product. They get trained to work on the Novel project and what are they going to do after? Where are they going to be trained? If they're going to be trained in the North, the wage is different than being trained. Where are they going to be trained? Is there going to be a training centre? Is there going to be a training centre in Inuvik, Norman Wells? What precise information does he have, seeing as he's been negotiating for months? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Krutko.

**Further Return To Question 437-15(4): Northern Training Programs For The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the parties on developing a human resources strategy to go along with the arrangement for Novel. As part of the strategy will include the number of hours it's going to take to convert a unit and what it's going to take to convert it. You're going to have to put cupboards in. You're going to have put washroom facilities in. You're going to have to move a few walls around. So the idea that we're already doing is that we're looking at doing, using the Deh Cho Bridge as the basis to doing it in the Northwest Territories so we can physically see what the costs are of converting a unit in the Northwest Territories, learn from that experience, and go forward so that we can do it in the Northwest Territories and take it out of the southern environment. So we are already looking at doing that in the Northwest Territories by using our own

workforce to do it. So we're already looking at those numbers. They've already done it in the South, they have a good idea what the costs are, what it took to convert it, so we're working with them to basically do that in the Northwest Territories and use the residents of the Northwest Territories to do it.

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

**Supplementary To Question 437-15(4): Northern Training Programs For The Novel Housing Project**

**MS. LEE:** With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, he's missing my point again, and it really demonstrates how he and this Minister and this government does not get what benefit work to get out of a project of this magnitude. Mr. Speaker, I hope he's not saying that we're going to be training hundreds of people to be a conversion specialist of one product because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. That means they're not going to be good for anything else after that. The Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes is talking about a training program that would train tradespeople, not somebody who knows how to convert one product for one time only.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Exactly.

**MS. LEE:** When would the Minister ask Novel and present to us exactly what he's demanding from ATCO about training plans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Krutko.

**Further Return To Question 437-15(4): Northern Training Programs For The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories we are in need of tradespeople; we are in need of jobs in a lot of our smaller communities. The idea behind investing the \$200 million in the Northwest Territories is to have that \$200 million remain in the Northwest Territories. We have programs already through our college programs in regards to apprenticeship programs where we're already looking at putting 500 houses on the ground over the next three years. We're going to need people to do it. The majority of those houses are going to go into communities over the next three years. The same people that are going to be working on these houses in the next three years are going to have the training to be able to become apprenticeships, carpenters, plumbers, electricians. We want those people to build in the Northwest Territories and our communities. So they remain in the Northwest Territories, they're able to take advantage of the economic opportunities, but the money stays in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what's wrong with that.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

**Question 438-15(4): Need For RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour**

**MR. POKIAK:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement, I clarified that Sachs Harbour has the necessary infrastructure to accommodate a full-time RCMP, maybe two of them. The Minister of Justice on occasion has indicated that a committee was formed to address the RCMP presence on patrols in

communities. Mr. Speaker, presently there is no renewable resource officer in Sachs, however, there is a Parks Canada warden in Sachs Harbour on a full-time basis. My question is for the Minister of Justice. Will the Minister sit down with Parks Canada, the RCMP, and his department to arrange a plan for the full-time RCMP presence in Sachs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return To Question 438-15(4): Need For RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, it is a priority of mine to see if we can't address the situation in Sachs Harbour. We do want to see a detachment in the community. We are going to look at a number of options and initiatives, but it is more difficult, as Members will know, to find the resources for two officers in a small community. If there is a way, if there are alternative ways for us to partner a police officer with another peace officer in the community, maybe a parks warden, then that's something that we'll certainly pursue and those are discussions we will have with Parks Canada. I would also like to sit down and have discussions with our own government about possible options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Pokiak.

**Supplementary To Question 438-15(4): Need For RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour**

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in that regard, I'm just wondering if he could actually sit down immediately with Parks Canada already. They do have a personnel. Can he do that? The Minister indicated earlier that there were six RCMP members coming up on this budget, so where will those guys go? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Bell.

**Further Return To Question 438-15(4): Need For RCMP Presence In Sachs Harbour**

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course we'll be discussing those details shortly in Committee of the Whole and we can get into that. My understanding of where the RCMP will be putting those officers -- and we can have that discussion -- operationally, of course, they make the decisions based on their needs. It is possible that they will define a resource or an RCMP officer for one community and move it in six months, depending on workload. So I'll give the Member that detail today in Committee of the Whole. We can have that discussion. We will engage Parks Canada. I think it's important to recognize and remember that Public Works Canada will make decisions about actual infrastructure in the communities. The Member knows we are doing an assessment of those assets on the ground, both the residence and the detachment. I look forward to having some information soon and I have committed to the Member that, at my earliest opportunity to meet with the new Minister Day, I will be raising this issue specific to policing in smaller communities and the need for a detachment in Sachs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 439-15(4): Training Opportunities Of The Novel Housing Project**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk to or question the Housing Minister and speak to the issue of the training associated with the Novel housing. I have been to the plant in Calgary. I have said that before. I have admitted it. I have confessed I've been to the plant in Calgary.

---Applause

I've seen the plant and the question I was asking as we were getting a tour through the plant is, wouldn't this be a great place to bring young northerners down here and train them on the floor of this plant to become plumbers, electricians, carpenters, welders. All those activities are taking place on the floor of the house. Now I hear questions about the training centre. A training centre? To my mind you learn the trades down there, you go home, you employ the trades in your community in whatever capacity, including converting, potentially converting these units into homes. So I'd like to ask the Minister, for clarity, Mr. Speaker, would it not be anticipated that if there was going to be a training on the front end during construction component to this, that it would take place in the ATCO Structures plant? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Housing, Mr. Krutko.

**Return To Question 439-15(4): Training Opportunities Of The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, in order to convert this product you will have to take some training in regards to how modular homes are constructed. We have talked to ATCO in regards to that; I've talk to Winalta Homes out of Edmonton. They are willing to take our students and put them through that factory so they can get a feel for how you do build modular homes. It's not much different than stick built homes, but again, the opportunity is there.

Right now they are looking for 70 people in the plant, just a job opportunity. Again, we are working through our human resource strategy on what type of training these people are going to need, where they should take that training, and exactly how we're going to be able to do the conversions in the communities. So there are certain components that we have to fulfill to be able to carry out the final conversions in our communities: identify the people, give them the experience they're going to need on the product we're going to use, and also give them the tools they're going need to do the job, and do the conversions in our communities. So there are steps that we're taking and it's going to come by way of our human resource development plan that I mentioned.

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

**Supplementary To Question 439-15(4): Training Opportunities Of The Novel Housing Project**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it makes perfect sense to me that if northerners watch these units going together, they're going to know how to do whatever they need to do to partially take them apart to convert them to a housing unit. However, I have one question about that, and it doesn't mean that the same people who go down there to train are necessarily going to be the ones doing the conversion on the other end. Are they going to get recognized apprenticeship training hours and credentials through this program? I want tradespeople coming back from there, not somebody who knows how to convert a trailer. Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 439-15(4): Training Opportunities Of The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, one of the important components of the whole idea of building houses in the Northwest Territories is we have to do a better job of finding the people, giving them the training they're going to need, and making sure they have the tickets to do the job. One of the ways that we're doing that is to develop a human resource strategy that we can develop around the 500 houses we're going to build and also the Novel. So it has to come together in regards to how we develop that human resource for the Northwest Territories, but also using the projects that we are going to be delivering over the next number of years. So we are working that into the project, and again, for people to get that training, they have to go somewhere. Like I mentioned, we are working with ATCO and CMHC. CMHC has made it clear, any dollars they invest there has to be a strong human resource component to those federal dollars that are going to be expended. So there are jobs created, especially in aboriginal communities where we have high unemployment so that is a very important component of where we're going with this. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary To Question 439-15(4): Training Opportunities Of The Novel Housing Project**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question is, does the human resources strategy include apprenticeship training for the trades? I mean, if these people are going to be down in Calgary, SAIT is right there, we all understand how apprenticeships work, you work so many hours, you take so many hours of theory. Will the human resource strategy include apprentices sponsored by these employers to produce tradespeople? Thank you.

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

**Further Return To Question 439-15(4): Training Opportunities Of The Novel Housing Project**

**HON. DAVID KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it will include that because that's a very important

component of us building our human resources in the North.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Oral questions. Written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

---Applause

#### ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

##### Written Question 31-15(4): Wildlife Management Practices In The NWT

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

1. Can the Minister outline when his department will have an accurate population count of the caribou in the North?
2. When will the Minister provide an explanation of the impacts of the wolf population due to increasing their harvest quota?
3. Can the Minister's department provide an explanation on the consultation process either in the future or present to implement the measures of the caribou quota with the trappers, hunters and harvesters in the communities? What types of surveying measures are aboriginal driven?
4. When, if at all, will the department gather the regional harvesters of caribou use to strategize future management measures for all wildlife?
5. What provisions in the Wildlife Act uphold the land claims and treaty obligations negotiated in these modern day treaty agreements?
6. Where will the department implement, partially or fully, the traditional knowledge policy, developed from elders, into future plans for not only caribou, but all wildlife issues?

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Written questions. Returns to written questions. Petitions. Tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

#### ITEM 11: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

##### Tabled Document 93-15(3): Public Utilities Board 2005 Annual Report

**HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Public Utilities Board of the NWT 2005 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Tabling of documents. Notices of motion. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. First reading of bills. Second reading of bills. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 18, Committee Reports 5, 6 and 7, with Mr. Ramsay in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** I will call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee wishes to consider the Department of Justice.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We will entertain the Department of Justice after a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Minister Bell, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses?

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today is Don Cooper, deputy minister of the Department of Justice; Kim Schofield, director of finance, Department of Justice.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. The next thing is general comments, but before we go to general comments, I would like to maybe lay out a proposal of how we can make the best use of our time in Committee of the Whole and perhaps even expedite things in the process.

In Committee of the Whole, when we are considering the budget, as everyone knows, there are Minister's comments, the committee comments, general comments and then detail. Under general comments, people take that opportunity to either speak for the whole 10 minutes and make general comments, or they use it as a Q and A with the Minister. I think the intent of general comments is as the title indicates. It is to make general comments on the department's budget, similar to the opening comments that the Minister makes.

I would like to try to draw a distinction between general comments and questions. So I would ask Members to try and hold their questions for the detail. It might involve going to your book, and taking your stickies, and going page by page, and making a note to yourself of the things you want to question on those pages.

I understand that when Members make general comments, they may say something to which the Minister would like to respond. I would ask Ministers to try not to respond unless you need to clarify something that's been said, for the record. Otherwise, I would ask you to receive the general comments as general comments and save the responses to the questions when you are actually posed with questions from the Member on the detail pages.

So if I could just liken it to one thing, we make Member's statements and then we ask questions subsequent. I would like the general comments to be like a statement and then I would like the detail to be the questions. Let's try it and see how it goes. General comments. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would be pleased to provide this new way of making a presentation to the Minister of Justice. Particularly in my riding that I represent, Nahendeh, a lot of the services in the Justice department provided to the six communities that I represent has an impact on the way people do

business, especially with justice and the court services. They have always expressed concern about the workload of the court circuits and recently, last year, the court circuit was extended to about once every six months. Even though I am not really getting an outcry of justice not being provided because of justice being delayed, it is having an impact on people getting some of their legal concerns out of the way, Madam Chair.

What happens is every time there is a delay or a...I was going to say stay of proceedings, but it's more of a deferral. Every time an item gets deferred for constituents and clients of legal aid, it means another six weeks that people have to wait. In some cases, you do need that time because it really is difficult to get a legal aid lawyer, but aside from that, I don't know if the department has undertaken a review of how much the impact the six week-circus has had...I beg your pardon, six-week circuit has had at all because it has been in effect for about a year. I know it impacts how our JPs do business in our communities and our JPs are mostly volunteers. They have full-time day jobs and I am hearing that because of the length between court proceedings, that a lot of the workload is being delegated from the Territorial Court to the JPs and the JPs are actually holding trial.

I think the concern is they are holding more and more trials and they have day jobs. What is happening, Madam Chair, is court proceedings are going late into the evenings during justice of the peace days. I think Fort Simpson has it, it used to be once every two weeks, but I am not sure if they increased their rotations just for the JPs alone; I am not sure. It has an impact on the person providing the service. I don't know what is needed, if we need to provide more services.

The main thing is our department should have a look at how to best provide these services just to ensure there isn't a delay in providing services to our communities.

I touched on legal aid earlier, too. It's quite often the case in the communities and the regions that when the client is up there in front of the judge and the judge says where is your lawyer, and they say they having difficulty getting a lawyer, that really is the case. It's not that that person is intending to abuse the system and get things deferred so he's out of the courts longer. I don't believe that's the case at all. There really is difficulty getting a lawyer. In Yellowknife, constituents or people can just phone around and make appointments, actually go and see which lawyer is best suited for their particular case. That's just not the case in the smaller communities. Often you have day jobs. You are leaving messages for lawyers and lawyers are in court here. Just to touch base, that first phone call, may take weeks and that is not even getting the lawyer retained. Therein lies the other problem. You have to make the initial contact, so that our legal aid system can catch up with them, too.

So there is a little bit of gap in terms of the legal aid system. That still needs massaging and work. Quite often when that person is phoning around for a lawyer and discussing his particular case, that's not the one that shows up in the community. I know that, again, we are going to have a real good look at how we improve that service, as well.

I don't know if it's up to us to tell lawyers to be more sensitive to people in the regions and try to be more responsive to them, but even though it's legal aid, a

service provided by our government, I don't know how much of a percentage of the workload each lawyer contributes to the government or to legal aid services as opposed to how much money it would make on an individual basis. I don't know if that's a barrier at all, Madam Chair, if legal aid provides less of a fee to that lawyer. That's something I really think we should also pay attention to, Madam Chair.

I know the parameters of legal aid services change a bit where we are able to take more cases that involve personal issues such as divorces, helping people with adoptions and that kind of area. That's something that I am very supportive of, but I think there's a little bit of...I don't know how much of an uptake of lawyers we have for those particular cases. It seems that even though we are providing that service, it's a bit of a barrier to some people. Some people think that it's not available. I don't know if it's a case of more public education getting the news out there that this is a service that we provide. Often in the small communities, Members and constituents are really frustrated that I have this personal problem and it's a huge thing and I don't know how to do it, but they don't know that we have the programs and services available to provide assistance to them; childcare for adoptions, or even divorces. That's something we are going to have to publicize a lot more, Madam Chair. Perhaps I will end my comments there. I notice I am getting to the end of my allotted time. I would gladly get back on the list, Madam Chair, if you will. Mahsi.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank the Minister for being with us this afternoon and his staff, as well. I don't have much in terms of general comments, more questions than anything.

This is more of a government-wide thing and I know that it's not the Minister's doing so much, but when it comes to reductions, I have heard other Members speak about this during our budget process here, and the fact that the government was forced to cut \$30 million, \$10 million this year, from its budget without any type of input by Regular Members. The \$200,000 that is coming out of community policing that gets back to the bigger picture. AOC should have been informed of the reductions and had some input on the reductions. I know Mr. Yakeleya was speaking about reductions on aboriginal wellness in Health having been reduced. We just did not have a chance to have any input whatsoever on reductions. The same holds true with the Department of Justice. Social Programs or any other Regular Member, for that matter, didn't have any input on where these reductions were going to come from. Now after the dust has settled, we are left trying to defend or support reductions. I think there is a better way to do it, and that would be to consult Regular Members early on in the reduction process, so we have some kind of idea what's going on and what we are going to be faced with, so there are no surprises.

Having said that, I will give the Minister a heads up on this; I do have questions with regard to legal aid services, the new legal aid Family Law Clinic that was opened in Yellowknife. I would really like to see if it has decreased the amount of time clients have to wait to get their cases settled. I don't know what type of performance measurement indicators we might have in place to see the

wait times reduced to get some closure on family law issues.

The other thing I wanted to talk about today, under the new format -- I won't ask questions right now -- I will have a number of questions. I know the Minister mentioned the delay that's happening with the human resource report in the corrections services. I have a number of questions there about why the delays are taking place, what the status of some of the recommendations are. Some of them were pretty important recommendations and I wouldn't want to see them delayed much more.

The actual human resource plan was initially supposed to be completed in March of last year. It's been pushed to March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year and I am just wondering if that target will be met. There are a number of things, and I will have questions for the Minister on that at the appropriate time during detail.

A good news story is I haven't heard many issues coming out of the corrections services as I have had in the past. So things are getting, it would seem, better there. There have been a number of changes that have happened, but it's important that the plan is followed up on and followed through. I will have questions at the appropriate time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments. We are having some difficulty with the timer here, so I am just going to be timing it manually. I will give you some kind of a signal when you are getting close to 10 minutes. We will try to get that sorted out. Next for general comments, I have Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple of things in the Minister's opening remarks that are all worthy of consideration, Madam Chair, but a couple that stand out to me are when Minister Bell told us that this year, six new RCMP positions will be created in the NWT in addition to the 22 that we have seen added in communities in the past three years. So I am very pleased to see that we are putting the money into it.

I also know, Madam Chair, from conversations and meetings with the RCMP here at the Yellowknife detachment in "G" division, that they are working at changing some of their approaches, the way they are doing business, and I am seeing evidence of this. It's positive evidence, Madam Chair, especially in community relations in the openness and the invitation from the RCMP for citizens to come forward and let them know what they see, what they think, what they want in terms of their own neighbourhood policing.

To the creation of a committee in Yellowknife, a citizens' committee, non-political. There are no MLAs on it, no city councillors. It is made up of citizens, people in the business community, some NGOs. This is the kind of thing I see as very positive and deserves every support that the department can give.

Madam Chair, something else that stood out was a description from Minister Bell that our court system is experiencing tremendous pressure and growth. This is not the kind of growth that we want to see, Madam Chair. He told us yesterday that the Supreme Court had 113 sitting days in communities outside of Yellowknife, three times the number of days this court has sat in communities in

just one year; triple. In Yellowknife here, courtroom use has doubled in the last five years. So I won't, at your request, Madam Chair, beg for detail on that, but at some point in the budget discussion, I will be looking for some sense of what is driving this, what seems to be, extraordinary growth in our court sitting days.

Madam Chair, on a broader basis, something that has always intrigued me, and interested me, are alternatives to the court system. We have, over a number of years -- this is nothing new in the NWT -- instituted new levels of an approach to alternative sentencing, to ideas about restorative justice, to the idea of diversion where enforcement officers may have some discretion of diverting or directing, especially a young offender or a new offender, Madam Chair, to community justice committees, as a way of getting their case, or their problem, or their difficulty heard at a community level among the peers, rather than in a court system which is foreign. It doesn't have much relevance in some ways. It is the law of the land, but in terms of delivering justice and curbing or avoiding repeat offences, I see so much more potential in these alternatives.

We have dispute resolution pilot projects, I believe, in our court system, especially in the area of family law. These are the things that I really would like to see continuing emphasis, resources and priority on. It's something I think we can do a better job of, we can be progressive. We can make a difference in the number of people in our court system, serving in our jails. Investing more authority and responsibility for managing crime in communities. This is not easy, but it is something that has shown results and can show more results if we give it the emphasis that I believe it deserves.

Madam Chair, that concludes my opening comments and I look forward to detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next on the list for general comments is Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Although most of the subjects have been touched on, I am just going to breeze through them really quickly. I am happy to see six new RCMP positions being created in addition to the 22 that have already been established. I am hoping, on a personal level, that this is addressing the concerns that were brought up in the report of needs. I think it was coined by Terry... Now I can't remember the officer's name, but we had an RCMP report establishing basic needs that they needed to do to provide clear services and solid services to the public. It mentioned where they needed the creation of a whole new bunch of positions. I would like to hear later on about the details. Are we meeting the needs that the RCMP have said to ensure that basic policing services are out there, and we are covering the need in a safe way?

The next thing is legal aid services. I appreciate that the Minister has mentioned here that we have \$4 million for legal aid services. I am hoping we will get some detail on what type of backlog and wait times we have on this. I am going to propose some new ideas. If the Minister has an appetite to consider options; for example, creating a territorial service agreement with Nunavut and the Yukon. I am not a lawyer or have that type of experience, but maybe the Minister or his staff can express the details of how difficult it would be to create some type of service

agreement with the other two territories, recognizing that our lay of the land is not much different in the essence of the peoples and the type of community justice that may need to be provided. Quite often backlogs are because we can't get a lawyer due to the conflict problem and the relationship with them. Then we are forced to shelve those family law cases until we can find someone in the private sector to pick it up, or even potentially go to the private sector down south. I am going to propose ideas like that; start thinking outside the box because if we can't get local lawyers to do that, we are going to have to look elsewhere. It's quite often that we could extend this type of territorial service agreement to maybe even work with justices across the Territories. We are thinking far beyond our small little area and saying maybe we could work on a territorial level. I recognize that laws in the Yukon are different and laws in Nunavut are different but, at the end of the day, lawyers can practice anywhere across Canada, assuming they met the bar requirements. Why don't we look at options of making sure we can certify justices to do the same, so we can deliver on a regular basis fairer justice in a timely way? I just hate to think people are waiting for justice and can't get lawyers. I certainly hate to think of people waiting for justice to be served and we can't provide them a judge to see their case.

Other areas I would potentially like to hear more detail on, speaking of justices, the Minister had mentioned 113 days the Supreme Court had sittings outside of Yellowknife. As I understand it, there are three Supreme Court justices and that works out to approximately 38 days each judge. I will be curious as to the details how often they sit in Yellowknife, just so we can get a bigger picture on how much they do and what the territorial justices do. On the Supreme Court point, I have always wondered who pays for that appointment when the federal government decides which judge we are getting, and how do we signal when the workload requires another judge, or how do we decide we do not need another judge. I am curious on the type of workload associated with that.

Madam Chair, I think that gives an extremely high level point of view of some of the areas that I think I will be raising when we get to those specific pages. I will look forward to those detailed answers. I know the Minister and his staff are writing these things down, but I will ask them in such a way that will give them a fair chance to comment in the detailed way I am looking for. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on the list for general comments is Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A lot of my concerns were also brought up by other Members, so I won't repeat what they stated in their general comments. With some of the main areas that the Minister had mentioned in his opening statement, with regard to services to government that our legal advisors give to various government departments, I also have more questions than comments. I know the Government of the NWT employs a large number of its own lawyers to look at drafting legislation and providing legal advice. I think we should revisit the contracts policy also of the GNWT. I know that the government also contracts out a lot of legal services to be provided to the GNWT that I think we could do just as well in house as any other contracted firm can do. I think if we task the government to do a lot of those

things in house, I am sure they could find the resources to carry out a lot of those functions that we pay in contract fees.

To the law enforcement, it's good to see new positions being created. I would have liked to see more emphasis put into continuing on with the aboriginal recruitment program that the RCMP were doing for the last couple of years, with not much uptake, but I am sure with the new graduates and our kids going through high school, we could have maybe...That is something that I think should have been ongoing for the next five years to get more of an aboriginal presence in the law enforcement field.

With respect to legal aid, that's another department that's severely backlogged with the number of lawyers that are in legal aid services. I know that the issues of family law are usually the ones that are put on the backburner, the real complex issues I guess that people are dealing with and trying to get legal aid for some family law decisions that people have been waiting years and years to deal with with no progress being made to resolving their family issues.

With community justice, the wilderness camps culture program is a great thing. It works in a lot of communities and I know that the community justice needs vary in community to community, and I hope that the government allocates the funding that supports community justice needs and is not a funding arrangement where each community is allotted a certain amount of money to deal with their community justice because it would be unfair to have a community divert justice funding because they just don't have the need to spend all that justice money. Money just gets held up where in communities where there's a lot of criminal activity and the community justice committees are busy and they take on a real large caseload. I hope that the funding arrangements are based on historical caseloads that each community is dealing with. That would help make it more of a balanced program, I think.

One final thing with the Supreme Court rotations outside of Yellowknife. I don't think it's really something that's that contentious, given the fact that if we did fly in all of the people that the Supreme Court is dealing with to Yellowknife to deal with their court cases, I think the costs would be much higher than what we're experiencing today with just the Supreme Courts doing their circuits. So I think it's good to get the Supreme Court out there to the communities so the community people can see who are their justices and who are their courts, who are the judges and who are the lawyers that are all in the Supreme Court department.

Three times the number of days the court sat in communities the previous year, I think that's all relative based on the work that they have to do anyway, and more people aren't just going to court these days and pleading guilty and I think that's something that's of the past and people just don't take that easy route out anymore and just do their time, which is usually the case that legal aid gives everybody, you know, just plead guilty and it will be done. I think people are taking a different approach in dealing with their justice issues and taking it to a higher court to get a fair outcome.

I agree with one of my colleagues that there should be more training to JPs and other justice committee members and workshops in the communities so that the

communities are able to deal with a lot of the justice issues that may be just too cumbersome for the higher courts to really waste any time on.

For the proposed new funding of \$1.4 million for training and staffing levels at the NWT corrections centres is a good thing, also. I really see the need to train the staff and the corrections officers. I would even like to see more training going into just the RCMP division also to get some more intercultural training along those lines that the guards and corrections staff have to deal with. Other than that, I know Justice is a big portfolio, especially here in the NWT where crime rates really fluctuate and spike from one year to the next. It's always a hard read to figure out what impacts pipelines and mines and exploration development have on the NWT and in communities. Some communities have real drastic changes in criminal activity, where some really know how to deal with it. For instance, Fort Good Hope with the drug dealer there where they just expelled him from the community. A real quick and simple solution like that sometimes work just as well as adding a new police officer or something.

I hope the Justice department really takes into consideration a lot of the community feedback into justice requirements and how they deal with their justice in the traditional ways versus the conventional way. But I look forward to also getting into some new detail so we can get more in depth into where this department is actually headed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Department of Justice, general comments. Any further general comments? Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to keep it brief. I have some questions for the Minister and his staff also in Justice. I want to ask the Minister, but I'll ask later on in the detail. My comments will be around the impacts of justice in our region, especially for my communities that I represent in the Sahtu region is that we need to have some discussion around having a presence of the regional justice office in our region. Right now they deal with the community of Yellowknife, I'm not too sure how the process works, but we seem to be going outside our region to get some direction. I think it's possibly from Inuvik or Yellowknife. There's no presence of a regional justice superintendent in the Sahtu region to deal effectively with the issues that we have to deal with. So I want to pursue this idea sometime in the future in terms of having some presence of a regional justice office in the Sahtu region. There's going to be an increase of activity and there's already an increase of activity in our region through the oil and gas exploration work and there's going to possibly be some more work done if the Mackenzie gas project comes through. If we could have some form of presence in our region from the Justice department for people to deal with concerns and questions. There's no single point right now in the Sahtu.

Communities that I represent are taking on more responsibilities of administration of justice through the justice committees, and this is where we can really see the benefits of having a regional justice office, superintendent or person in our region to deal with these justice initiatives that are being promoted by this department and myself, also. Right now, it's a concern for us. So I wanted to make that as a general comment, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I want to talk about the initiatives that the Minister is pursuing. I fully support him on the out of the box type of innovative solutions to look at how to deal with the issue of bringing people back to the land through the wilderness corrections camp program. It would be very beneficial. I think sometimes we need to just think in ways that would work for our region. It may be different in a southern region or in a northern region, but it's something that's done for our region that makes sense for our people there and I think sometimes we get lost and a blanket follows you. You know, everything has to be the same and it doesn't quite fit. So I want to encourage the Minister to continue having these type of discussions and see where it fits really well with our people in the region.

The other one I want to talk to him about is with the court system in terms of the type of programs that maybe could be explored in using the Dene language as the first place of language in the court system. Right now I'm not too sure what type of plans are in place to have language translation in our court system, or do we just pick the language translation in our court system, or do we just pick the translators or the interpreters when the court system comes into the community? Sometimes they're honoured, but they're not too comfortable in terms of some of the words that the lawyers are using. So they try to find a way to use that type of language through our aboriginal languages and they have a hard time because they don't have the proper training. So that's something we could look at, because our language is totally different from the English language and some things that don't make sense in English, in our own language make sense. So there's quite a difference of the world views in terms of the administration of justice and how it's being interpreted into our own language, and so there's different philosophies and that. I'm not too sure how the language aspect part of training is being implemented into our justice system.

I wanted to say some more about the courts, but again, Madam Chair, I'm going to leave it until the detail. I look forward to seeing some form of solution to policing in small aboriginal communities. Mainly that's what we talked about with the policing services. Myself, along with Mr. Pokiak and other Members here talked about our communities that do not have any policing. There's a solution to look at providing services to those communities. I'm not too sure how that's going to roll out, but I'll wait until the Minister provides further details on that issue.

I want to thank the Minister for his time and working on some initiatives. I know it's tough. I know his department has lots of work ahead of them. So I want to leave that until we get into details, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next for general comments I have Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A lot of my colleagues already indicated some of the questions I will be asking later, I guess, in detail. There are just a couple of little things I'd like to find out from the department in regard to services to government. I'd be interested to find out what do they actually do to improve support to families in court in conflict. Also, what have they done to prepare for the impacts of resource development since last year?

It's interesting. The department is looking at six new RCMP positions this coming year. I have a feeling about



where they're going to go, but I'll ask the Minister later on anyway exactly where these six people will be located.

These are just some of the general comments I'd like to make. The last one, Madam Chair, is that I don't know where I can add this into it, but it probably has to do with the NWT court facility. The people in my riding are still not happy with the proposed Yellowknife courthouse. Once we get to the main estimates, I'll probably raise it up anyway. So it will be brought forward. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. General comments. Any further general comments? We're ready for detail. Then I would ask Members if they would please turn to page 7-10, information item, revenue summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you, 7-13, activity summary, services to government, operations expenditure summary, \$8.589 million. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to ask the question that I mentioned in my opening comments. That was getting back to legal services. I'm just wondering if the Minister could tell us whether or not today the backlog of cases in family law is more or less than it was prior to the government embarking on opening the new Family Law Clinic in downtown Yellowknife? So I'd just like to ask that question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I believe that legal aid services is covered off further on, under 7-23. I think there's a distinction between legal services and legal aid. I'll let the Minister proceed with that answer if he'd like. But for the other Members who may be constantly asking questions about legal aid services, that's on page 7-23. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. You are correct, but I'll answer the question. My understanding was that prior to the new Family Law Clinic in Yellowknife, there were 133 people on the wait list. The last numbers I have, end of January, in the neighbourhood of 80. So there has been some marked improvement in that area. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Anything further under services to government? Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Justice, as described in this area here, provides services to government, including finance, legal services and legislative drafting and this kind of thing. We're looking at, as you said, Madam Chair, about \$8.5 million. I was wondering if we sort of take the overall requirement of our government for legal services. Does the department provide 100 percent of what our government as a whole needs, or is it half? What's the ratio here? If we're talking about \$8.5 million in blanket legal services, what portion of the total government need is satisfied by this appropriation, Madam Chair?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, in the sum \$2.2 million that we have in that area of legal services, most of that work is provided in house for the government. If there are specific areas of expertise that we require specialized legal help, say taxation, we do frequently go out of house. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Madam Chair, I'm taking it that the requirement of another department, for instance taxation and Finance or something, that they would have the discretion to go out and find that service on their own. I guess I'm wondering whether the Minister could give me some sense what would the entire legal bill be for the GNWT. Does he have any sense of that? I'm just trying to look at it here for if we're allocating \$8.5 million, how much additional legal services do we buy across the board in our Government of the Northwest Territories, Madam Chair?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Contracts for the provision of legal services have to come through the Department of Justice. So if the Department of Finance wants some legal work done and they want a contract and want to see somebody contracted, we handle that for them. They would pay for it, but you wouldn't see a budget line item in their mains that would be specific to that. So in order for us to pull together the entire legal bill, if you would, for the government as a whole on any given year, we'd have to go out and talk to the various departments and see what their needs had been on a year-to-year basis. Thank you.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thanks for the information, Madam Chair. I will not ask for that as a commitment. That sounds like a pretty big piece of work. I'll just conclude my questions on this page now. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next I have Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess with some of what Mr. Braden was touching on, some legislative drafting in government because we do make a lot of amendments to a lot of the bills and a lot of the acts that we pass in this House. A lot of those amendments are drafted hopefully in house. I guess just alluding to the other expenses of \$2.349 million, which about 60 percent comprises of fees and payments. I was just wondering if maybe the Minister could just elaborate more, or give me some detail on what the \$1.4 million in fees and payments comprises of?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is right; the lion's share of the work is done in house. If we look at the breakout on fees and payments, we're talking about other expenses, things like systems chargeback, the TSC, there are also bar fees, course

fees, conference fees in there; sorry, legal bar fees, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just getting back to the taxation issues going out of house, I know a lot of these are probably some property tax issues that the government has kind of been on hold with finding any resolve for I'd say 10 years now. Are there any timelines now as to when some of these property taxation issues will find some resolution to all these outstanding taxation issues that we have with companies that have been dealing, like say up in the Tuk area where Beadrill and Shell had been doing some exploration 15 years ago and yet the property tax issues with those companies have never been resolved to date? So if we are contracting out all these taxation issues that we want the government to deal with, how much longer can we expect these issues to remain outstanding? Are there any timelines that the government is looking at finding any resolution to any of these issues, Madam? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously, from time to time the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs may ask us for legal advice on such matters and we would provide that, but in terms of the policy line and where they decide to go as a department, and how they move on collecting those fees, or what approach they take, that's really up to the department to make that determination. I'm not in a position to give you any sort of sense of time frame for resolutions on those issues. Those are probably questions that would be best put to the MACA Minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** One more quick point then, I guess. Just earlier, the Minister stated that all the government justice issues or advice on justice and redrafting of legislation goes through the Department of Justice. So where do the departments draw the line on whether departments make the call of whether to contract out a particular legal advice issue or justice issue related to the department's activities? Where is that line in the sand, I guess? When does the Department of Justice make the call? When do the departments make the call? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The contracting department and our department would sit down to discuss a matter. For instance, we would advise them as to whether or not we had the expertise in house. If they were looking for information that we weren't able to provide, they may have a recommendation as to somebody they'd like us to contract with and we might engage in that. So the two departments really work the matter out. If there was ever a situation that couldn't be resolved and the two departments had differing opinions, it would come up to the deputy minister to make a decision. If it still needed to go further, then it would come

to my level. But I can indicate that that really would happen very infrequently. It's usually worked out at the department level between staff and it's usually a matter of whether or not we have the expertise in house. I think most times we do, as I've indicated, except for very specific issues. Thank you.

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

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** I'm fine, thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** On the list I have Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering if the Minister and the department have ever done any kind of cost-benefit analysis as to having all the legal help in house, as opposed to contracting the services out. Has that type of work ever been done?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As you can imagine, if we think there is a benefit to having some expertise in house, if we think it will pay for itself and we can make a business case for that resource, then we would certainly go forward to FMB and make the case that we need that in house, but it would have to be something that we use frequently enough to make sense. Otherwise, it's more cost effective for us to contract out. I would point out, though, that when there is the ability for us to have in house resources that we're going to use enough, there is an advantage in that there is some continuity. I think that is one of the advantages to having the resource be a staff resource that we can draw on, but, of course, it's got to make business sense. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The reason I mentioned that is we are spending almost \$9 million on this and I'm not sure exactly what the breakdown would be for the legal services or legislative drafting that would be provided to the government as a percentage of that, but it's probably quite substantive I'd imagine. I just wanted to mention that. The Minister doesn't have to respond to that, he's answered the question. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next on the list I have Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just carrying on with some of the concerns I had with respect to legal aid concerns in some of my opening comments. I think that some of the other Members asked some specific questions with regard to legal services, the family aspects of it, helping and assisting with divorces, child adoptions. I would just like to ask the Minister, Madam Chair, how much of an uptake is that, or do we have, in the system? Specifically, is it being used frequently, is it infrequently, Madam Chair?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Again, I'll just point out to the Members that we are on page 7-13, services to government. Legal services, in this instance on the description page, does not refer to legal

aid services. Legal aid services are on page 7-23, but again, I will ask the Minister if he could respond to that question. Thank you.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, in terms of the legal aid services that we provide or that are provided through the Legal Services Board, we do, and lawyers do end up working with clients through a myriad of issues. Sometimes social workers are involved and our Health and Social Services system is involved. I think as much as possible we try to take a holistic approach to dealing with our clients. It can be very frustrating I think for legal aid clients to be told that we're only here to help you through some legal issues and you can go somewhere else to get addictions issues sorted out first, or social services, or family issues sorted out first. So we're cognizant of that and ensure that we try to do what we can to help people work through these issues. I would point out that the people who sign up, in effect, to be legal aid lawyers, are taking on this challenge because they're interested in helping people through these very difficult and sometimes often very divisive issues, you know. Wherever possible, we try to see if these can't be resolved outside the courts. I think that that's always our goal and that's why you see us engaging in pilot projects like the mediation project to help families work through some of these very difficult issues. We'll certainly continue to apply that philosophy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** No, thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just continue with the question on the appropriate page. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay, thank you. Page 7-13, I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Madam Chair, I may ask for some guidance here. I wanted to ask the Minister about the positions in the regions, and as I said in my own general comments, in terms of a presence of the Department of Justice in the Sahtu region. So I'm going to ask for guidance on where should I bring this issue up.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. I think it would be fine right now. I don't see...Maybe under active positions, I don't know. Mr. Yakeleya, just go ahead now. We are trying to get more organized here in terms of being on the right page, but since you're posing the question to me, I don't know the answer, so you just go ahead.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Okay, thank you. Straight to the question is, would the department consider putting a regional position in the Sahtu?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Well, there we go. Thank you. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We're down to the cut and thrust of it now. Of course, I'm not in any position, you could appreciate, to suggest that I'm not going to answer questions if they're on the wrong page. We'll just do the best we can to adjust.

Madam Chair, in terms of how we're organized, it is different than other departments in terms of our regional complement of staff. Our court workers in communities do

report back to the Legal Services Board in Yellowknife, but our corrections workers report regionally and sometimes the regional staff are at facilities and sometimes not. But for the most part, they are in facilities. But I'm not sure exactly what type of position the Member is talking about or where he thinks there is a void, but if the Member wants to take me through that, we can talk a little bit about where he sees a need or a void in the region. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll take up the invitation from the Minister, in terms of a void here. In terms of the programs and services that we operate or administrate out of our communities, at times they have difficulties working with the headquarters in Yellowknife. I'm not too sure if they even deal with the Inuvik region in terms of the court services, in terms of the justice programs, and overall with the other initiatives by Justice. We're working in isolation. There's no coordinated effort that says this is a Sahtu justice program, even that's in line with one of our recent self-government land claim negotiations. Negotiations...(inaudible)...with Deline. The justice committees I know in the Sahtu are working in isolation. They individually phone headquarters. So there's no coordinated approach in our region so say that this is similar to what they have at Education, or Health and Social Services, or other departments, MACA, that are regionally located with a presence in the Sahtu. We don't have that with Justice. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In terms of community justice committees, we have contribution agreements with the committees in the communities, and the Member's right, that they do report up to Yellowknife when there are concerns, or questions, or issues that they need to deal with. I can't remember which Member, but I think the point was made earlier that we have undertaken a review of our community justice committees because we've recognized for some time now that some function much more effectively, we believe, than others. I don't think we're entirely sure why. It doesn't necessarily seem to be always the amount of funding. So there are a number of issues here.

I think when it comes to diversions, a community has to buy the approach, has to believe that diversions make sense and want to use the community justice committee for that reason. The RCMP has got to be supportive in the community. If they're not, this won't work. So there are a number of issues that we're working through. I'm hoping by the next time we meet, in June, to have finished the review and the inventory of our committees, and then we can talk, I think, more effectively about resourcing; what kinds of resource decisions we need to make. Training is another thing that I really think we need to talk about and focus on. We know that the level of training in our community justice committees is not the same throughout our communities. So I think it makes a lot more sense for us to sit down and do this comprehensive review, and then identify gaps and talk about what kinds of resourcing we need.

It may be that we need to talk about, in this era of self-government, of regional support positions potentially. I

know that you've seen the initiative with new regional positions in this budget for the Department of the Executive. I'm not sure exactly what role they'll play in terms of some of our programs, vis a vis our community justice committees. But I think it's a very good point, and something we need to have more discussion around. I guess I'd like to have better information for the Member, and I believe that I will have that as we sit down with committee prior to the June session. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Minister and thank you, Madam Chair, in terms of the Minister's commitment to pursue this idea further in our region, I look forward to that discussion we'll have. Again it gets back to the presence of this department in our region that's going to be heavily impacted in the future, even impacted today, that the Department of Justice has a presence. Again, the department has these committees that are working in isolation. I appreciate the extra dollars going into these justice committees to provide extra training or extra services, yet it seems like you have jails and courthouses that have large facilities and we concentrate a lot of our people and dollars to those facilities. So I wanted, I guess, just to say I'm encouraged by what the Minister said in terms of his approach to having some review. I hope he can work with other departments who have some regional positions to say is the department willing to consider that we take on some of the role of the responsibility of a justice presence, so the people in the region can phone somebody in the Sahtu and talk to them, and then can go around to the regions, into the communities, and visit them, rather than have somebody from Yellowknife. Which is good, but they've got a big region in the Northwest Territories. So we're saying we have to put a little more concentration in the region.

There's MACA, there's Education, certainly one of them can take on that role as the justice...I'm not too sure, but that's just an idea here. So I'm just floating that by now, Madam Chair, so I'm going to leave it at that. I heard the Minister and I appreciate his openness to bring it back for further discussion. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you. I know there was not a question, and maybe just a little bit of some suggestion as to why we've been structured and organized the way we have. I think in past, because of scarce resources, we tended to focus instead of having layers of bureaucracy in the regions, if we were able to find money for justice we typically were trying to reinvest in policing, making sure the RCMP had the adequate resources on the ground to ensure public safety, making sure that our court was able to travel and bring justice to people. I think you've seen that increasing, although that's not great news, we are getting out there and making sure that people have access to court in their regions. That isn't something that's common across many jurisdictions. That is something that's quite unique in the Northwest Territories, and I think it's a model that we're proud of.

So we will work with Members and I think we're always flexible. What works in one region may not work in all

regions. We don't believe that there's a boilerplate model that we can apply and take a cookie cutter approach. So I want to work with Members; we will do that. But just to give some explanation as to where we've seen the priorities in past, we tend to try to put our money into frontline positions wherever possible. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Activity summary, services to government, operations expenditure summary, \$8.589 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. Activity summary, services to government, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$79,000. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just quickly, I see the YWCA received \$60,000 in the '05-06 budget, and it looks like it's for Protection Against Family Violence Act. I'm wondering why that wasn't continued to operate as a designate. Was the money not used? Was it a one-time grant? Hence, why was it not carried forward as part of doing business and whatnot? Maybe the Minister can shed some light on why there's no money attached to that. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We anticipate that we will be successful in resigning the contribution agreement with the YWCA to provide this service. It was done on a one-year basis, so we're going to sit down, and I believe we are sitting down, to renegotiate that and talk about that for this year, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That's certainly good news. I'm glad to hear that. In anticipation of signing an agreement, where will the money come from, and I'm curious why it wasn't identified as at least a ballpark number to signify that it's being seriously considered. So where will the money come from that they've suggested that if they do sign some type of agreement? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** I understand, Madam Chair, that it is O and M under policy and planning, and once it's specifically earmarked for this project, then it would be transferred into this area. So we do have the money to provide the support to the YWCA for this initiative. It isn't reflected here because the contribution agreement hasn't been signed and at the time of the production of this, we weren't able to be absolutely sure that that would be the case. But I think we know that we're working toward finding an arrangement with the Y.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Not to belabour the point any further, but will that not have some

type of corresponding effect in the O and M policy and planning budget? Obviously, if we have to approve that budget for that section, did it need the, potentially, \$60,000 that we're just going to move on the line item? I'm just curious on the corresponding effect. We're now taking you could say \$60,000, for argument's sake, out of it. So what type of net effect will that create? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It's sitting in contracts, so there would be a net reduction to contracts, policy and planning O and M, and an increase in contributions. It really depended on how this was going to be treated, but I think now we are fairly certain that this will end up being a contribution. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Madam Chair, the issue on the national justice issues, grants to organizations working towards improving the Canadian justice system. Has there been a successful uptake on this funding here? I'm very curious to the type of funding that's available to improve the Canadian justice system. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you. I understand that these are very small contributions that we provide for conferences or other specific asks in this area. In terms of what the recent uptake has been in past years, some breakdown of that \$9,000, I could probably provide that. I don't think I have that at my fingertips, but I could certainly provide that information if Members are interested.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I'm sorry. Madam Chair, I would like to know more about the Minister said he could make it available. Hopefully the request so this can be known in the smaller regions in terms of funding like this is available in terms of conferences. I'm going to make the assumption, I hope these types of conferences are scheduled, or designed, or work in partnership with other departments to have conferences like this in the Northwest Territories, that our contribution to the Canadian justice system. So I'll wait on that, Madam Chair.

The other one I wanted to ask is on the aboriginal court challenges. Has the Minister, or has his department, given any issue to looking at a court challenge by this government here to the UCEP program on the court challenge where the university/college entry program has a definition of aboriginal. When you go into the program itself the specifics get down to, I think, Inuit and First Nation people and not Metis in there. So I think this is a real good court challenge that this department could consider in terms of this, especially in my region where we have a land claim defined under our land claim of aboriginal. I guess I'm asking, would you consider this government taking this type of issue to the federal government? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I hope I understood the question, but maybe I'll just provide a little bit of background. We have an Aboriginal Court Challenges Committee that has some funding; as you can see, \$40,000. What happens is individuals or non-profit groups interested in further defining an aboriginal right, or protecting an aboriginal right, it would be broadly held by aboriginal people. They would make an application to this committee. The committee would make a recommendation to myself as to whether or not this is something that they thought would properly fit the criteria, and then I would make a decision on that funding. So we could go back into the past years and see what the monies were used for; what types of court challenges, but that is some level of detail that I don't have here today. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this committee here determines the funding criteria or the application. Now, do I see a conflict of interest in the sense that if our government or our departments may be infringing on an aboriginal right or something that has to do with the aboriginal rights, how does this Minister then argue if some aboriginal group wants to take our government to court on a court challenge on aboriginal rights? He's the one that decides which committee gets funded, so I'm not too sure if there's impartiality. You know, it gets quite delicate, I would suggest, in terms of the court challenges. The Minister has the ultimate responsibility or ultimate authority to say who has funding and who doesn't get funding. I just want to know the type of process there is if there's an appeal, or an aboriginal group or a non-profit group feels that they're not getting a fair share of the funding that it's intended for. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I could do is provide the program criteria, because I think that would help Members understand the nature of the issues that come forward, and assure the Member that whether or not our government was involved or the complaint was against our government, that would have no bearing on whether or not I would approve the funds. I think we can think of examples with the federal government, where the federal government frequently funds organizations who end up, in turn, using the money to sue them or challenge certain rights. It happens with aboriginal organizations frequently. The same would apply here, and I can assure the Members if it was our government being complained of or challenged, that would have no bearing on whether or not I would approve the funding. It really comes down to the recommendation of the committee coming forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to the criteria. Could I also have the Minister provide names of the people who are on the committee that provide recommendations to the Minister? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** I'll make that commitment and we will get that information for the Member in terms of program criteria. It is available to the public on the web site. I'll certainly provide that to Members. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya. Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Page 7-14, activity summary, services to government, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$79,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Page 7-16 and 7-17, information item, services to government, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Page 7-18, 7-19, activity summary, law enforcement, operations expenditure summary, \$29.900 million. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask the Minister in regards to the RCMP where those six new positions will be established and I'll remember the name later on, it was Terry Scott, I believe, who did the operational review. He was, I think, staff sergeant at the time in the local detachment. I'm just wanting to make sure, although it's been quite some time since I've seen that operational review that they had done, are we addressing the needs? The Minister should know; if not, the staff should know, on the required officers that they had identified a couple years ago. So where are the six new RCMP members located and how are you addressing the operational review brought forward by the RCMP a few years ago? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is going to complete our response to the multi-year business plan submitted by the RCMP. This year's complement of six officers will be, we understand, at least our information at this point is that they will be located in Yellowknife, Rae, Providence, and Inuvik. But of course, as I indicated earlier, the operational decisions will be made by the RCMP as to where their assets are best located, including people, and they will move them around as they see fit. But that's the information that we have at this point; six officers in those communities. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that from the Minister. Now, although I don't have the report before me, the deputy is probably familiar with the operational review prepared by the RCMP, Mr. Terry Scott, a few years ago. I'm wondering on the complement that they had requested in order to deliver effective and basic law enforcement services throughout the Northwest Territories and it wasn't just based on Yellowknife, but on the territory as a whole, if I understand it correctly. I'd like to underscore that it's been quite some time since I've read it or even seen it, so I'm just wondering, I'm sure somebody here today is familiar with that report and can they sort of give us an overview on have we addressed

the needs that the RCMP have put forward to ensure that basic law enforcement services are being delivered in the Territories and, if we are not, what are we missing out on at this time, and how do we expect to or how do we foresee that we will be meeting that challenge? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I suspect that the work the Member is speaking about was done and contracted or done for the RCMP. What they've done, I believe, is taken that work and submitted a multi-year business plan to us. So that's what we've seen. It was submitted by the RCMP, not the individual that the Member is speaking of. They ask in total, over a number of years, was 27 positions and we have come forward over the last, I think it's three years now. This is the last year of that funding plan and we will be providing funding for 28 positions. So we've gone one unit over what the original ask was in the business plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** That was the dog.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. No, that's exactly what I was looking for, was the fact that we met the challenge that they put forward in order to deliver the basic services they felt. So, no, that's exactly what I was looking for. Thank you.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So continuing the line of Hawkins, the questioning from Mr. Hawkins...

---Laughter

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Hawkins.

**MR. BRADEN:** Hawkins. Continuing Mr. Hawkins's line of questioning, how many officers are there in total now stationed and funded in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to endeavour to get that information here as we speak. The current number of established positions, total established positions in the Northwest Territories is 217.5 positions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does that include the number of civilian positions, too, that are required, or is this all police officers, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, in that number are 23 civilian positions. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Does this leave us with any, with the six positions added this year, a total of 28 new ones in the last three, which I think is a very good track record, Mr. Chairman, does this leave us shorthanded or understaffed in any particular areas and, if so, where, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, we would add the six positions to the 217. Let me say, across the board and throughout the country the RCMP are hard pressed to train enough officers to make sure that we have enough officers to fill the vacancies and the needs that the provinces and territories have. They have an ambitious plan that they are rolling out to try to be better able to do that. We're hopeful that they'll be able to do that because it is certainly one thing to create the position and to get the funding, but it's also very difficult to staff positions throughout the country. I think in addition to that national reality, we are also faced with the fact that Public Works Canada has decided that they are not going to subsidize housing for RCMP and that RCMP will have to pay market rates for housing, making it, as we go forward here, more and more expensive for officers to locate in the North. That is something that we are very concerned about and something that we are taking that discussion to the federal level to try to appeal to them and have them recognize that that would be probably, we think, too onerous for northern jurisdictions. We know that officers have a choice in where they're going to be located and we think that will hurt our vacancy rate over time if that's the case. But that is what they are planning to do, and we're certainly working to see if there can be some special recognition of our challenges and the cost of housing in the North for officers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister mentioning the housing issue. This was something that I recall, oh, a little more than two years ago now, was an issue during the election campaign for this current Assembly. I have a number of constituents affected by this and I guess I'm kind of disappointed to hear it's still on the radar screen. It certainly would have quite an impact, I think, on a member's choice of whether to locate to the Northwest Territories. I guess a little bit more detail on this, Mr. Chairman. If this were to come about what, I guess, what's the anticipated timeline of it? Is it potentially going to start to affect us in this current business year, or when are we going to see this policy changed, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, the current plan would see it phased in over about three years. It still has to be decided on by the federal government. There's been no firm decision. Of course we're lobbying against that, I can tell Members. At the very least, we are looking at the federal government approving a scheme that would see it phased in over three years, we would also want to see the isolated post allowance raised to take that into account. That's the

case that we're making. So this has been an issue that has been on the radar and in the planning stages for some time. We haven't felt the brunt of it yet. We're hopeful that we won't get there, but the planning is that it would be over the next three years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Mr. Chairman, is this something that our sister territories, Yukon and Nunavut, or even the northern provinces are also in the same boat, or is this specific to "G" division in the NWT, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, it's my understanding that we would be hit the hardest by this. We have the most officers between the three territories and I understand that there is market housing for the most part, if my information is correct, available for officers in the Yukon. So the challenge is really one that, of course, Nunavut will face, as well, but the sheer number of officers that would be impacted it would be us first. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is something that will probably return over the course of the next few days or weeks in future sessions. I have a couple minutes left here. I wanted to explore, I think the Minister mentioned that recruiting and training adequate numbers of police officers is a challenge across the country. In the last two or three years, there was some expectation and some activity in the area of recruiting special constables. I don't know if that's the correct terminology. But there was a push, or an expectation, that in the NWT, or perhaps across the Arctic, Mr. Chairman, we could, especially among aboriginal communities, see more recruits in this area. Has there been any uptake on that? Mr. Chairman, I hope I'm on the right page. I'm taking a little bit of a flyer here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. I was trying to look for the pages too, but if the Minister would like to respond. Mr. Minister.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, I think the RCMP is very supportive of such programs and they want to make sure they have a representative workforce. So programs like the Special Constables Program, which I think have been well received in the North in past, are things they're considering. I know they've conducted regional consultations this fall. They're compiling the information that has come from those consultations. But I think anecdotally we already know that people are very supportive of this. It's something that our government's been supportive of. Any of the programs that we've been able to access from the federal government where there are special monies earmarked for aboriginal policing strategies, for RCMP access programs, for special constables, we've always been supportive of and I can say, from meeting with my provincial and territorial colleagues, the other northern territories are also very supportive as well, as you can imagine, northern jurisdictions. So we have some common interests here in ensuring that this stays high on the federal government's

radar. We're very supportive of any monies that can be earmarked for either special constables or other programs that would see more aboriginal officers trained and more aboriginal officers in our communities. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** That's all. Thanks, for now, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. My concern has been addressed, Mr. Pokiak.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Wow!

---Interjection

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister exactly how many officers are not in communities, as we say, Colville Lake or I know Sachs for sure, That are not in communities. How are we addressing the needs to fulfill those communities with some form of RCMP presence? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have indicated before, we have 13 communities in the North without detachments and they rely on coverage and service from larger centres. We do have and the RCMP have schedules worked out in terms of how often, outside of emergencies, of course, but how often they typically visit each community, whether or not they have the facilities in place to stay overnight, what the duration of the stay typically is, and it varies by community depending on, as I've indicated, the assets and support we have on the ground. We are, and it is our priority of this government, to see more adequate policing, more adequate coverage in those 13 communities that don't have dedicated detachments. So as I've spoken of previously, we have struck a working group between our department and the RCMP to talk about this. One key part of that, and a piece that I'm interesting in driving, is looking at some new detachments in a couple of communities in the most dire need. We've talked about Sachs Harbour and I think there are other communities that come to mind. Wrigley is another one that we've talked about. So there are some specific communities that I think really need detachments. That doesn't mean that we don't need a game plan for enhanced presence in all of our communities, specifically I would say those that are going to be heavily impacted by resource development. I'm hopeful that as we sit down to talk about how this \$500 million socio-economic impact fund will be spent, that as the regional groups talk priorities, they will talk about policing and they will recognize that public safety is paramount. As we have these increased challenges, we've got to have increased resources and we've got to have the community come together to deal with this need. The RCMP are certainly prepared to play their part. It does come down to resourcing and I'm hoping that those

committees will recognize the priority that we should be placing on public safety. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I was hoping you would say nine or eight, but it's 13. The last time we heard, it was 11 communities. I'm not too sure how the RCMP goes through the process of determining how many members go into the communities. You have three that are very close around Yellowknife, Rae and Fort Providence and you have one up in Inuvik where there are new RCMP members. I don't know if it's just bad spots with more crimes or why you are having more RCMP in those communities. Now, you have 13 communities without detachments and you're...Of course, we know it's more we need them in our communities, but it just doesn't seem to make any sense where they're going to get more RCMP in Yellowknife, Rae and Providence and Inuvik, where you have 13 communities that have no RCMP members and you tie them to a detachment, you tie them to...It's easier in the larger communities.

Now you're run up on the issue with the federal government, you're saying that Public Works Canada is not going to house any more RCMP. It's going to be twice as hard now for the RCMP in the Northwest Territories. So you have another challenge on your hand, but I just shake my head. Thirteen communities without RCMP. You're putting six where they already have detachments. Well, it's too bad. You don't have the places, you don't have the detachment. I know you have mind-boggling how they come up with justification to put more members into these communities.

Now you're asking, you're hoping the communities with the \$500 million fund, which is not very much when you divide it down the Mackenzie Valley, hoping that the communities will say, gee whiz, let's put some money into the RCMP public safety. That money, that's a territorial government issue. The federal government. Now you're putting the onus on the community to take some of that \$500 million fund and put it towards the RCMP. You're offloading a prime, key essential service to the communities and you're hoping that we would say yes, it is a concern so we should put the money to public safety. You're tying the communities' hands again.

Get the RCMP and put them in the communities where they need them. It's going to come back up to the House again. Have some creative solutions. I mean, I heard somebody talk about special constables. Folks on these larger centres where you have them, I'm thinking maybe there's something that we don't know here. But you could have police again dedicated to Yellowknife, Rae, Fort Providence and Inuvik. They haven't even looked at the 13 communities that are without RCMP.

I'm having a hard time, Mr. Minister. I'm just really having a hard time. It's a passion of mine and I know communities like Colville Lake, Wrigley, Sachs Harbour, I wouldn't go any further because I don't have the exact list. The Members who live there, whole communities live there without RCMP members. So I'm having a hard time right now to rationalize how the department came up with a joint discussion with the RCMP to locate these RCMP members. For me, it's just, you have more RCMP, more crime in those locations. I don't know where the thinking is



sometimes that goes on how they allocate the services and resources to the communities.

I'm letting some of my frustration off, Mr. Minister, in terms of we're not seeing nothing in the communities. That's where you do get into the large centres/small centres debates about us against them. You can see a prime example. So I think it'll continue until we start seeing some changes and I think the communities are looking forward to this government to make some changes here.

They shouldn't be tying this \$500 million. This shouldn't even be in the discussion. This \$500 million fund shouldn't even be a part of the discussion. What if the pipeline doesn't go? What if the government, for some other reason, doesn't honour this commitment? It has nothing to do with this discussion. We should wait on this \$500 million. It shouldn't be even a topic here.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to ask how the RCMP determines where should the RCMP new members be located. Is it by crime? Is it by need? Is it by... They have to have some kind of a grid or some kind of a method to say, yes, Yellowknife needs another RCMP because there's more crack cocaine, or in the city of Yellowknife there's more dealers, or there's more impact on Rae or more potential, this is happening in the Providence area or in Inuvik. Because certainly it doesn't, I don't get it in terms of how they determine their allocation of RCMP members in the Northwest Territories. Now we have 13 communities. I'm going to stop there, Mr. Chairman, in terms of venting more frustration. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'm not too sure in regard to the \$500 million fund he's talking about, but I think he'd like to know more about the allocation of the RCMP members. Thank you.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member has put his finger on it in terms of how the RCMP allocate their resources. It is on the basis of need. It is on the basis of crime rate. We know that when we're going to create a detachment that we have to have two-member detachments. We can't have members working by themselves anymore. That is a requirement. That is just a reality for us. So when we talk about how the RCMP best locate their resources, that is something they have to consider. It's 13 communities. It hasn't gone up, but of course we do, part of the problem could be the confusion around what we consider a separate community for this purpose. The Hay River Reserve is a separate community when I refer to 13. Detah is a separate community when I refer to 13. So that may be the confusion between 11 and 13. As I look at these communities, that's what I'm thinking.

We talk about the best use of resources. I hope the Members can appreciate that if you take some of our smallest communities, Kakisa with 36 people, Jean Marie River with 70 people, Trout Lake with 80. If we set up a two-member detachment the reality is the RCMP, some of the downtime could be spent supporting other communities. So they've located them in other communities and then serviced these communities. I would like to see detachments in every single community across the North. Unfortunately, I don't think we'll be successful in getting those kind of resources either from the federal government, nor do I think our government could afford that.

My reference to the \$500 million was simply to point out that there are pressures from development coming our way. Regional committees will have to make decisions about how they deal with those pressures and how they allocate those monies. We are and will provide, continue to provide a basic level of service. If there's a desire to enhance that, those committees I think will, I believe, have broad latitude as to how they do that. It could be that they choose to leave policing out of the mix. We will continue to do our utmost and we're not relying on that fund as some sort of a crutch. I'll continue to make the case to the federal government that they need to make sure we're provided the adequate resources. But if I'm going to be forthright about this, and honest, I would say that we will not be successful in seeing detachments in all of our communities and I don't think that would probably be the best use of those resources. It would be nice to have, but there are some communities that are going to rely on service, whether that's monthly or weekly or every six weeks. But hopefully we have the ability to have those RCMP officers stay on the ground in communities to provide service. I've been dealing with, for instance, in Tsiigehtchic the Minister for Housing has come up with what he believes is a solution that would allow the RCMP to have a residence so that RCMP officers could stay overnight as they come on tours from McPherson.

So we're doing a number of things to try to make sure we have more RCMP on the ground in our communities during weekends, during evenings, during off hours. We're looking at solutions like the policing approach we're taking with the ice road in Gameti, for the ice road season to try to restrict alcohol coming into the community. The bottom line is, these communities are opened up and as we have access, and we have ice roads, and we have more development, there is more access to alcohol and there is more pressure from development.

So I'm not suggesting that communities should spend their money in a certain way. Our government will have a seat at that table; will be involved in that discussion. Communities will have to come up with those decisions. I would suggest that they're going to be difficult decisions and we'll find out what the priorities are. It isn't an attempt to offload. I'll do my utmost to make sure that we're at the table clamouring for resources because I think we need them. We have unique challenges here.

But I appreciate the concerns of the Member. I know that he's very passionate in this area and is advocating for his communities and the other communities. What we want to do is get that number from 13 to come down. I think we have a chance here to move in the right direction and I'm going to see that we do that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask a few questions in regard to trying to get northerners interested in a career with the RCMP and I'm wondering, I guess, and I'm pretty sure I know the answer to this, but access to funding such as student financial assistance to attend the depot in Regina. I'm just wondering, what funding is available to northerners who want to go through the RCMP recruitment process and come back north? Have we ever thought of things like return-of-service programs where we could negotiate with the Solicitor General to allow us so many spaces at depot so that we can send so many residents down there a year and they

could come back and work in the Northwest Territories? Have we done anything like that, or looked at options like that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are working with the RCMP to see if we can't increase the number of people from the Northwest Territories who are successful in entering depot and graduating. We'd like to bring them back here. Primarily aboriginal people so that we can have aboriginal people on the ground in communities providing policing services. That is the goal. We have been successful with several candidates. We'd like to see that number up. Of course, as I've indicated, the challenge across the country is enough seats at depot, and this is something the federal government has to talk about with the increased pressure and increased need. We continue to make the case that we want to see our residents trained and successful.

Now, specifically to the question of student financial assistance, that's something that I'm not sure I have an answer for. I can find that out and get back to the Members, though, as to whether or not the RCMP depot is eligible for student financial assistance and we'll try to see what I can do to provide a breakdown of the costs and what is required of a candidate. I know there is a selection process for candidates. We know there's a new intake coming. That process has begun again this February. So we have a number of candidates, but there is an eligibility list that gets established after people meet the screening criteria and those folks are then placed in the program as space becomes available. So we're going to make sure that we do what we can to allow people who are interested to have access to the program and not be limited by the seats at depot that are currently available.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I had heard that the RCMP were even considering an increase or an extra charge to students or cadets that are going through depot. I guess the main thing I'd like to see is, I wouldn't want the financial hurdle to cause residents that are interested in a career with the RCMP to be a barrier. I think access to whatever programs are available, such as SFA, and I'm pretty sure that you can't today access any type of student financial assistance to attend depot in Regina if you're an RCMP cadet. I stand to be corrected, but I'm pretty sure you can't. It's things like that that I believe will help northern people and our residents want to seek out a career with the RCMP and return here to work after they're done their training. So I'd like to see the financial hurdles overcome, or barriers removed for people who want to get into a career with the RCMP. It's a big step. Obviously, it's a six-month time frame to go down there and complete the training. So it's a big obligation for people to undertake, and finances are definitely a concern for a lot of people that are considering a career with the RCMP. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I could propose in another forum that we would discuss this with the Member. We're not aware of and

hadn't really anticipated that there were major financial hurdles for those interested in attending. My understanding was that if they passed the eligibility criteria and the screening, that finances really wouldn't be a limiter for the most part. They are flown from their home community to depot; they do live for free; they aren't paid while they're there, but that's my understanding of the program. So if there are some costs that I'm not aware of, or not taking into account, if the Member could provide me with that in a discussion, I'd be prepared to look at that. So I guess the answer to the question about SFA would be that SFA wouldn't qualify since there aren't those expenses, I don't believe; no tuition that the student would have to pay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a quick follow-up in regard to what my colleague Mr. Yakeleya was saying, but I wouldn't go too deep into that. I think I would just like to maybe reverse a situation around in terms of what we're talking about in terms of policing in small communities, what's more important, a community of 20 people that are concerned about what's going on in their community. It's important to them that they have the presence in the communities because they are afraid if something happens. So if you take a look in terms of what the community needs are, and in terms of what the RCMP are supposed to be doing, I think it's very important that it be considered. I understand your answer before, Mr. Minister, but again, I just hope that we can work very quickly in regard to working with the RCMP and the third party to find a solution very quickly to these communities without police services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** I will make that commitment. We are looking for a solution. The public safety in all of our communities is paramount. We want to make sure that people aren't living in fear. Obviously, it's very helpful to have RCMP on the ground, and I'm sure that the RCMP feel that it's certainly nice to be wanted. They want to know that they're supported in communities; they want to know that they're welcome in those communities. It's important that when we do have RCMP officers located in communities that communities work very well with them, and the effort has to go both ways because it can tend to be adversarial. But I know the RCMP is doing what they can to make sure that their officers have some cultural training and do what they can to meet community members and be involved in community activities, and I know communities will show the officers the welcome and the respect, as well, and I think that that can go a long way toward making sure that we have effective law enforcement on the ground. I share the Member's concern. We do need to see more officers on the ground. We are trying to increase the number of detachments and I agree with the Member that that is very important. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one last follow-up. Like I say, I wouldn't push it any further because he understands where I'm coming from, as well as Mr. Yakeleya. So I'm just wondering if something happens in a community, are we going to take the responsibility for liability? Will we be liable? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, there are always potential situations, whether it's in communities or outside communities, where a crime could be committed, somebody could be hurt, somebody could be lost and we do our best and the RCMP do their best to make sure that that doesn't happen, and we react as quickly as we can to provide service. We're continually trying to enhance our presence. The addition of the dog and handler we think will have benefits that we haven't really maybe anticipated yet in terms of search and rescue. We know that there have been some recent search and rescue issues in the Northwest Territories. We think this dog could be very helpful in that regard. So what I would say to the Member is that we acknowledge and recognize that there are limitations on what we can do. We can't be everywhere. The RCMP can't anticipate every potential crime, but they are doing what they can to work with people to make sure they're a deterrent to crime. I think the more people see them and the more they have a presence, the more likely we are to see that that will be effective. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one last one here in regard to integrating the new RCMP presence in the communities. Is there a plan in place already where you are doing that, because I know in Tuk they are doing a very good job in Tuk where the RCMP are really associating with local people. So is there a plan in place already for the Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is a plan and this is by design. Members are trying to work as closely as they can with community members. I think you can imagine that it's a much more effective way to provide and ensure the security and safety of community members. We want to make sure that community members trust their officers, because when there are issues that can be potentially headed off, where there are crimes that could be committed that can be avoided because the RCMP know about them in advance, we think those incidences are reduced and we can be much more successful in anticipating these things if community members are comfortable with bringing their concerns forward, and comfortable in engaging in a dialogue with officers. So that is part of the policing strategy and it is by design, and we're hopeful it's going to improve and we do think it is working. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Page 7-19, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. Just to follow up on this, would the Minister consider the possibility of policing in terms of the discussion paper or time to look at special council and programming in these communities that don't have members? I think you're right. There are 11 plus two, so it makes it 13, where these special constables they may be wildlife officers, they could be bylaw officers in the communities where there is some form of authority the same as the RCMP. So I think there's different ways we could look at it. So I think he's going to have a hard time with the federal government in terms of getting more RCMP in the Northwest Territories. So I think we're looking at something that may be northern made and northern designed for a solution, I guess, Mr. Chair. I have another question after that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Nationally, I understand, Mr. Chairman, that RCMP headquarters are looking at bringing back special constables. We know from our regional policing consultation exercise that there's a lot of support for that in the North. So this would have to be reconstituted. Of course, as I indicated, we're very supportive and we hope that special constables will be brought back. I would just point out that most likely special constables, if we can bring them back, would be effective at adding to the police presence in a community, or be in addition to regular police officers, not a substitute for regular police officers in this day and age. So we know the requirement is for two-member detachments. We are trying to look outside the box.

The discussion here today in the House about Parks Canada employees or wildlife officers, other peace officers, this is something that I want to pursue with my colleagues in Cabinet and with the federal government. If we can find and come up with a model that looks at one regular officer and a peace officer, I think that could be an effective solution, and then we'd like to see in addition to that special constables brought in, because we really think they can be an enhancement. They were well received in the North and we would like to see them come back, but it would be in that support role, Mr. Chairman, as compared to having them replace officers or have detachments where it was only special constables in a detachment. We don't think that that is probably realistic. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** That's for further discussion, Mr. Chair, in terms of we had different points of view and I'm going to leave it at that in terms of the roles of the special constable. Hopefully, we'll have that discussion at another time.

Now, in terms of the RCMP officers, right now we're focusing on a physical presence in the community with a detachment and with housing and all this that support an RCMP officer in the community. Is there any type of thought, and I'm going to leave it with the Minister, in terms of what about the community itself having some kind of law enforcement present? I mean, like Colville Lake, could the band somehow enforce some community laws where members would have some respect for the chief or some elders so other serious crimes could be referred to the detachment in Fort Good Hope or Norman

Wells, but there's got to be some form of law enforcement in the communities? There is some, but we've got to have some sort of a linkage, and I'm not to sure how that would fit into the whole public safety or any other course that we go into, or be impacted. So just sort of a thought right now with the department to alleviate the community members that don't have RCMP. That's a real sore point in my communities and probably other regions that we, in the Northwest Territories, in this day and age, don't have any RCMP members in some of our communities, but we're still adding up on other communities that have RCMP members. It just doesn't make sense in our small communities. It's a crying shame with the amount of resource development happening here in the North. So, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to leave that, though, with the Minister.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we'd be willing to sit down and discuss a wide range of options and hopefully this work this committee is undertaking will do that. But we don't have our own police act and we fall under the RCMP Act federally. I would just say there are some technical challenges and impediments for us to be able to duplicate a police force specifically in small communities. Obviously, there are economies of scale; it's difficult to set up the legislation, the legislative framework and a separate police force. Not to say that it can't be done, but there would be some hurdles and I'd certainly want to sit down and talk to Members about what some potential solutions are. For starters, I can say we're absolutely committed to improving the service delivery in our smaller communities and recognize we need to get police officers on the ground more frequently. We need to improve the level of service in our communities. So as a starting point, that's the approach we are taking. If there are other models and other solutions, that's something that I could talk to Members about and would certainly bring forward to the RCMP if we could find a way that they would be viable. Again, there are some technical hurdles, but I'd certainly be prepared to sit down and discuss what those might be with Members. I don't think we're closing any doors here, Mr. Chairman, and we are looking for a flexible approach and recognize how important it is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Anything further, Mr. Yakeleya?

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chairman, in our region we have a lot of activity going on in our community and, for good reasons, Colville Lake decided not to have the exploration happen in their region. Now, next year they're going to continue with the exploration. When you look at the amount of money Colville Lake is pumping into this economy in the Northwest Territories and the amount of money that's going into the oil and gas industry, I just don't see why you can't have the RCMP there. I mean, the economy says yes and when you have that type of economy, you have a lot of things happening, and that's pretty well visible in a community of 134 people and to increase the RCMP presence there. It's not going to slow down. Indications show that our region is going to be busy, I think, as other regions are going to pick up also in terms of oil and gas exploration and diamonds in the southern parts. So I hope we have some discussion in terms of Colville Lake. It's booming and there's a lot of money spent there. I just don't see why we don't have an

RCMP there. This year is quiet because they decided not to have any activity, but next year again Petro-Can, and Paramount, and other resource development I think they're going to be working in that area. That's millions into that little community. Why don't we have an RCMP officer? Again, I'm flabbergasted as to the reasons why we don't have members in these small communities that don't have any RCMP officers. In Yellowknife they've got a dog, too; \$85,000 for the RCMP dog here and then you've got more members. I'll leave it at that, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. We're on page 7-19, activity summary, law enforcement, operations expenditure summary, \$24.9 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you. Page 7-23, activity summary, legal aid services, operations expenditure summary, \$4.385 million. Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question about the legal aid services. Compensation and benefits are steadily rising. I guess forced growth and stuff, again. I just want to look at fees and payments of \$1.2 million. What's that include? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, that's payments to lawyers in the private bar who provide legal aid services. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Villeneuve.

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If this is strictly fees and payments to lawyers, I wonder if the Minister could tell me what the caseload has been for the legal aid services we provide here in the NWT. You did indicate earlier that the Family Law Clinic has seen a decline on the waiting lists. What about the legal aid side of things? Is there an increased workload and, if there is, where is that coming from? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Villeneuve. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly provide the overall caseload for Members. It's not something I have here right now, but I'll make sure we get that to Members. I've simply laid out the waiting list in terms of civil and family law, but the Member is right that that doesn't give probably an adequate assessment of criminal cases and the drain there on our legal aid resources, but it is increasing. We are finding it more difficult to get members of the private bar who want to undertake and take on legal aid cases. So our model is a bit of a hybrid. We have both staff lawyers and rely on legal aid lawyers from the private bar. There have been incidences where we've had to go to Alberta and find lawyers who have come to the bar here in the Northwest Territories and used them. That's an expensive way to go and not something we want to do. We want to have the ability here to meet the needs, but there are increased pressures and I'll certainly provide that information in terms of workload to the Members.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my first question under the legal aid umbrella is have we established any type of wait time benchmarks for providing services? I'm talking about obviously you can't speed justice up. I mean, by assuming that we'll put it through the meat grinder and make it go faster, but the fact is real contact, real service is doing something on someone's case. So have we established some type of wait times on that as some type of benchmark so we know that we're providing a fair and reasonable service and if we haven't, why have we not considered something along those lines? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, obviously with criminal cases there is a need to respond right now and that's what the Legal Services Board does, is make sure that it provides a lawyer as absolutely quickly as it can. There are incidents where the person going to court will decide they want a different lawyer or isn't available to meet. So it can be a two-way street in terms of how quickly a lawyer is provided, but for the most part criminal law cases are dealt with very quickly.

The backlog and the time lag comes in terms of family law matters. There is a priority caseload and there are criteria. So a case is assessed and depending on the facts in that case, that will determine how high a priority. I think the bottom line is that we could set some benchmarks in terms of guarantees, but we know that we are absolutely strapped to be able to find enough lawyers in the private bar who will take on this kind of work. We have had vacancies in terms of staff lawyers. I am happy to say that we just filled two vacancies and we have people coming online in the next couple of months. That's a very positive sign. Without the resources, I would suggest that some sort of guarantee that we can't live up to wouldn't be that effective. So we are striving to improve, get that wait list down as much as we can, and we think we can make some headway now that we have filled some positions and we have the addition of this Family Law Clinic in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister's answer. If someone was waiting to go to court and they weren't seen in a reasonable time or they couldn't get a lawyer to serve them, the challenge then becomes are we being fairly served by the law. I wouldn't want to think that somebody who qualifies for legal aid who can't be served through the justice system...I underscore the fact that we are only talking about family law. I appreciate the Minister always mentioning criminal law, but that's not my main concern here in this particular case.

I think rights, to one degree or another, being denied. We are allowing, in some cases, caustic situations to go on. I don't want that to happen when it comes to child custody matters or maybe some divorce matters that truly need to be settled. What about maintenance matters where parents struggle to make ends meet? It's the concern of those specific areas. We have difficult situations that we

need clear rules and guidelines for the folks to make sure that someone is able to feed their kids or to be able to afford rent somewhere. I see it where we are allowing them to be in a situation that we could do something about.

I was told a few weeks ago, directly by a lawyer, that they don't see it as an affordable way to practice or to run their practice, because it was expressed to me that the tariffs don't allow them to make any money. So if they can make \$250 an hour or more, \$300 or \$350, whatever the case is they charge, it's difficult to then convince them with a carrot by saying we will pay you \$125. I only say that because I can't remember that exact tariff, but it's in that range.

So it almost becomes a moral issue when they want to help the system. It's difficult to encourage that. We have an ethical duty. We tell them the system will be there for them and it causes me serious difficulty to say the system can only run because we only have so many lawyers. I respect that because that is just the fact, but I am worried about the underlying guarantees. I feel like we betrayed them. The system allows them to be qualified and I fear that one day we will have a horrible scenario where one of these custody cases crossed the line when it shouldn't have. No fault of the government, I believe, but the fact is we weren't able to provide a service. It all comes back to clarity was never established, maintenance orders may not have come into place, somebody acted because of the stressful situation that maybe we needed something to be established; established by court, that is.

When I said in my opening comments, I said let's think new. Let's think innovative. Let's reach beyond what we normally go for. Would the Minister consider options about opening up discussions with the Yukon territory and maybe the Nunavut territory? Maybe there is a way we can start marrying our family law practices because we seem to keep coming into difficulties when they talk about relationships between lawyers in the sense of conflicts, too many files in the same office and the difficulty and the benefits that would be created by creating a new law office in Yellowknife where we would be getting a certain amount of files on one side of the case out of that office and we don't have to worry about conflicts.

I am going to ask some similar questions when it comes to Justice and if we have some shortage. The Justice Minister may want to lead in that area to see if it's considered reasonable. It's time to be innovative with our abilities. I don't see the Yukon, from my perspective, that out of touch with what we do here. Now I recognize that you would have to qualify for the bar, and that's not the issue. I also see the fact that the Nunavut law system essentially was a mirroring of ours. I don't see it as a major stretch. Could we look at maybe making or opening some kind of discussion up to help some of these family law cases? Maybe a pan-territorial perspective. I don't know if it would be easy and I wouldn't want to give that impression that I had this little epiphany the other day and it could be solved tomorrow, but the fact is that's how things get done. Somebody comes along with something new and innovative. Maybe it's time for us to figure out new ways of doing business. Does the Minister have any comments on a new way of doing business? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of questions there. The first one on some kind of pan-territorial model, right now one of the realities is that Nunavut is hard pressed to have enough lawyers to deal with their own needs at home, so we haven't been really able to tap into Nunavut to help us meet our needs.

In terms of connections and flights, Alberta is our easiest marriage and that's where we are seeing most of our support come from. NWT lawyers essentially pass the Alberta bar, Yukon deals with British Columbia. So there's a closer connection we have to Alberta in this regard and that's where we have been trying to go to help beef up our provision of legal aid services compared to the Yukon.

I would agree that we have an obligation to ensure that people are able to get service in a timely manner. I think the Member probably knows, but, for the record, I should indicate files are assigned to lawyers for legal aid on the basis of application date, except that there are priorities given to certain clients. In cases where there are child welfare matters, or in cases where there are people who have had to leave their homes because of violence, and others who may be facing an imminent court date, those cases are given priority. I want to assure Members that we recognize that that has to be a priority. We are supportive of that and that's how the Legal Services Board operates.

The issue of attractiveness of legal aid cases to lawyers, there are several factors, we believe, that make some of these cases less attractive, but one of the things that has come up now, despite the fact that we now have the second highest legal aid tariff in the country behind Nunavut, we recognize and have been petitioned by the Legal Services Board to look at increasing that tariff to make it more attractive and to see if we can't get more people from the private bar taking on these cases. That is something that is under consideration and I will report back to the House in future and talk about that. It's on our radar. It's something we are going to talk about dealing with, but it isn't the only matter. Obviously, it takes a certain individual. They have to be dedicated. They have to really want to work in this area of law. You can imagine, as the Member has indicated, it can be a difficult field to work in. We know it's not going to be the only answer to get more people involved, but we are looking at a number of potential solutions and we are dealing with the local bar to talk about how we might be more successful in getting people to take on this kind of caseload. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are in a House in the sense of the Assembly and this truly is the area to create some type of debate. Although I don't want to belabour something that may be seen as fruitless, I would like to discuss and explore a little bit for a moment the matter of my concept of a pan-territorial model. If we thought of it in the context of full cost accounting where we would pay for somebody to provide services, which we do already. In my mind, I can sit here from a Legislature point of view and look at this situation where I can see us justifying two more staff lawyers in an office to help things move a little faster. We can certainly farm them out to Nunavut or whatnot. I wouldn't want to close the door to the concept. Maybe it's a model we want to discuss directly with Alberta, I don't know. If we don't have enough lawyers to handle our family law cases. I guess that's a

signal that we either aren't doing them right or we just don't have enough staff. I don't know. This is not my specific area of expertise, but it does tell me that some element is going wrong there and if we're having a continual backlog of between 80 and 100, that tells me we're missing at least one more lawyer, maybe two more lawyers. I am not sure. I look for the expertise of the Minister and his deputy to tell me would that make the difference.

Why don't we create some type of agreement that we could look at exploring these options? Again, you are right; it probably is more costly to share or work with Nunavut, but justice shouldn't necessarily be seen based around cost. It's about fairness and effectiveness. I just want to make sure we are doing the right job under the right factors. I would like to hear some thoughts about that whereas the Minister looks at beefing up the legal aid office with two more family law lawyers in the concept of working with another agency, another region, so we can maybe do some cost sharing when we have slow times and busy times. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, we have recognized that it would be better to have more staff lawyers and we think now that we have just filled these two vacancies, that will bring our complement to five or six. I think there is still one vacancy, but this will be the most staff lawyers we have had at any one time while working on these legal aid cases. So we think we can make some real inroads into getting that number down from 80. I think that's where we need to go. We are hopeful that we will be able to keep these folks here and that we won't have any additional vacancies. Of course, you never anticipate them and things do come up. We have to work as quickly as we can to recruit new lawyers when we have vacancies and we will do that. This is a priority for us. We recognize the difficulty of going to the private bar, so we do need a core complement of staff lawyers.

In addition to that, we are working very closely, as I have said, with the private bar to try to get more uptake and more interest. The tariff issue is one we will sit down to talk about and address. So it's a multi-pronged approach here in strategy. I think if the Members have suggestions, or the committee has suggestions as to models for legal aid service provision or delivery, I am certainly interested in hearing about those and having more discussion about those models because I think we all have the same interest here, and that's in getting the caseload down and making sure people get timely service. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I will accept that invitation and maybe the Minister and I can meet later, on another day, to discuss how I see this happening. It may not be feasible. I will recognize that, but I would certainly like to have a serious discussion about that going forward.

Specific to family law lawyers, specific to Yellowknife, does the Minister have any idea how many family law lawyers we have in Yellowknife that can practice family law? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to be clear on the question. In the private bar, how many lawyers practise legal aid or have been dealing with legal aid cases in the family law area. Is that it, or is it more generally outside legal aid?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Just a clarification, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess really to beat it down, how many lawyers do we have in Yellowknife that can practise family law cases?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can undertake to provide some more concrete information if the Member needs that. The deputy has suggested to me that it might be in the neighbourhood of 10 people in the local bar who can, and probably five who do so with any regularity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The ballpark is just perfect. That's all I really need. If I take the estimate of 10 lawyers that can practice family law, let's work with 10. What is the Minister doing to advocate at the NWT bar that we cannot convince these 10 lawyers to take eight cases each? I would like to hear that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've met with the bar to talk about potential strategies for recruitment of lawyers. They do attend universities, talk to students who are going to be entering the workforce, talk about what we can do to attract more lawyers to our jurisdiction. That's something the department is going to be working with the bar on. We think there is merit in that, but we can't force work on anybody who doesn't want to do it. Even if we could, I would suggest to you that that is probably not the type of representation you would want for people. You don't want to coerce lawyers to take cases, even if we could, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will say you can't force them, but I will put it this way: Have you gone to the bar and asked them for the potentially 10 lawyers, could they carry a workload of eight extra files in order to clear off the backlog so we can continue to deliver services in a timely way? If he hasn't done this, could I get a commitment from the Minister that within the next little while he will make that commitment to go to the bar and even write our local law firms to see if we can get this? We don't have 100 law firms, there are maybe 20 independents including the little law firms, individual shingles, as well as the big ones. I don't imagine we have too many. Can I get the commitment that the Minister will

write the local bar, as well as the local law firms, point out our problem and say we need you guys to pitch in to clear up the backlog in order to keep ensuring that justice is delivered in a safe and effective way? Can I get that commitment from the Minister, please?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, it doesn't come as any surprise to the local bar that we have a backload of cases in family law. The Legal Services Board does meet with the bar frequently to talk about this and to talk about strategies for dealing with this backlog. It is that type of discussion that leads to the discussion from the bar to Legal Services Board is that one way to deal with this is to raise the tariff. That's why that is under consideration at this point. You have some lawyers who are well established in town, very busy in their practices and have decided that they don't want to practice family law, have decided that they don't want to take on legal aid cases. I would suggest that probably to a person they know we have a challenge because it's a challenge right across the country. It's not unique to the Northwest Territories. We have a challenge in meeting the need for legal aid cases. The federal Ministers are very well aware of this.

One point I would make is, I think in the Northwest Territories and in the other territories we have done a good job in getting our special circumstances recognized and we do get some funding for legal aid for civil law matters. That's not the case for the rest of the provinces. We do have a separate deal. We get separate treatment from the provinces who would all like to be treated similarly to us, I would suggest. I think we've done a good job as a department in bringing forward our interests and in advocating that the North has special challenges and circumstances. We will continue to do that at the federal level. I know the Legal Services Board and our department will continue to work with the bar, to see if we can't get more lawyers interested in practicing family law and dealing with our legal aid caseload. One approach will be the tariffs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see time is running out, but I will ask the same question again. I don't believe it's a cry for help if we wave the white flag and say we need some assistance. I am asking the Minister, would he write the bar and would he write the law firms in the local area and tell them we have a backlog of 80 cases? Whether they've decided for some reason or not that they are not presently practicing family law, would he take that initiative? That's all I am asking. Would he ask for help to clear off some of the backlog? It's a nice little letter. I wouldn't ask the Minister to make any over and above commitment. That's all I am asking for, is for the Minister to say can you help us deal with this family law problem, we need your help to pitch in to keep things moving. That's all I am asking for. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I could suggest is I write to the president of the Law Society and make sure the Legal Services Board is also copied to approach that individual to sit down and discuss

strategies for combating our legal aid caseload. We can start that discussion. I am prepared to do that. As I did indicate earlier, this has been an ongoing matter with them, but I am certainly prepared to take that up. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** I am going to call page 7-23 and then the chair will call a break. So we are on page 7-23, activity summary, legal aid services, operations expenditure summary, \$4.385 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you. We will call a short recess and continue on page 7-26.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are on the Department of Justice. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I just want to provide some clarification. I had indicated earlier that SFA wouldn't be irrelevant for RCMP depot. The Education Minister has advised me that, in fact, it is an accredited institution. So if somebody interested in attending depot or was accepted at depot came forward to the department and presented a list of eligible expenses, that would be up for consideration and potentially for SFA. I think that was a response to a question that Mr. Ramsay had posed. I just wanted to make sure that I clarified that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Information item, legal aid services, active positions, pages 7-26 and 7-27.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Page 7-29, activity summary, courts, operations expenditure summary, \$8.551 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will officially say I appreciate Cabinet for helping us move along in the system. Madam Chair, the Minister read into the record in his opening remarks about Supreme Court and the fact that they sat 113 days. As I understand it, we have three members on our bench for the Supreme Court and that's about 38 days each. I am trying to get a sense of how many days each year each justice sits. How many sitting days do justices sit in court? Talking about Supreme Court justices, who pays for the appointment of a particular cost associated with the Supreme Court? How do you know when you need four, if you only have three in the system right now? I find it unusual, of course it's a normal practice, I am sure, by federal standards, that the federal government appoints a Supreme Court judge to our court without any input from the territorial level. Maybe the Minister could enlighten me on some of those matters. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry, Madam Chair. The federal government pays the salary for Supreme Court judges. So if you wanted to take the number of sitting days and divide it by the three Supreme Court justices, that would tell you sort of, in a round about way, what each of those judges has in terms of workload. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Do we get charged back for any of the services that they provide, other than the usual costs associated with having a sheriff on duty? Specific to the actual Supreme Court justice, does the Government of Canada charge us back for fees to compensate the pay of Supreme Court justices? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, as I understand it, I indicated the federal government pays for the salary for the justice; we pay for the trial, the operations and maintenance and support staff related to carrying out that trial. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Minister Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The only reason I am asking is because the Minister sort of singled it out in his opening comments. I am in no way thinking that justices should be on a treadmill of any sort, but I was just curious on why he pointed out that only 113 days were served outside of Yellowknife. He didn't mention Yellowknife at all. I was just curious who paid for them and he did answer that question twice. I was only curious on the second time around if we had to compensate their salaries in some area. The fee for justice in the sense of court times and whatnot. It's a cost that I would assume we pay anyway. I don't see any concern about that detail. I was only concerned at the time of who pays their actual salary; again because he pointed out that they sat 113 days in his opening remarks. Does he know how many days they sit in Yellowknife? Again, because it was in his opening statement, it drew my attention out of curiosity, how many days do territorial justices sit in total both in Yellowknife and outside of Yellowknife? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, in 2005, Supreme Court sat for a total of 247 days in Yellowknife; a total of 113 days outside of Yellowknife; total sitting days, 340 for Supreme. The question on Territorial Court is 305 in Yellowknife; 359 outside of Yellowknife. Sorry, just a correction, total Supreme Court days is 360. I missed that. It was 247, plus 113; 360. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Hawkins. Page 7-29, activity summary, courts, operations expenditure summary, \$8.551 million. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The statistics regarding the increase in the number of sitting days of court, I believe it was triple the number of community



sitting days over last year and in Yellowknife, double the amount of court time in the past five years. Madam Chair, the first one especially, the number of community sitting days triple in one year is quite a change. What is the explanation, or what can the department tell us about what's going on? What's changing in this area? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, generally the trend is rising crime rates; we no longer, more serious trials. I think Members are aware of that. I should caution and say there can be instances -- and I don't know if that was the case here -- where we can have one case that can take a significant amount of time and since we are dealing with only 113 days, it wouldn't take much to skew that data. I think generally the trend is more towards rising crime and more serious trials, longer trials. Thank you.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Okay. We may have a couple of anomalies there. I am prepared to accept that. Madam Chair, perhaps I am skipping ahead a little bit to 7-30. Let's deal with 7-28 and 7-29 first, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Courts, operations expenditure summary, \$8551 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Page 7-32, 7-33, courts, active positions, information item, Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Tracking my previous line of questioning here, under court registries and operations, Madam Chair, we see that last year, or in this current fiscal year, 2005-2006, we budgeted \$4.3 million for court registries and operations. This page shows a revised amount there at 4.8, almost \$4.9 million. So we have about a half a million dollars extra booked in this area. The projection for the coming fiscal year is also at 4.8. So we've jumped a half a million from last year's forecast and we are staying there. Can the department provide some explanation to that? Is it forecasting that the trend for increased crime and potentially longer court sitting requirements, is that with us to stay with us, Madam Chair? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I can reconcile that for Members. There are some increases here obviously through supplementary appropriations. We had collective bargaining increases, we had job evaluation changes related to courts. We had an increase in what we pay for psych assessments in Alberta. There was a court registries increase related to registry training and there was a court case with the Franco-TeNoise that was also involved in there that brings us up to the revised total. If Members are interested, I can provide that information and those specifics of that breakdown in terms of dollars.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. From the sounds of at least a few of those areas, those are costs that have escalated and they are going to stay at a higher rate on a go-forward basis. That's all. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** The Member is correct. Again, if that detail is of interest to Members, I can provide that, but it is those things that I have indicated. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Information item, courts, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Page 7-35, activity summary, community justice and corrections, operations expenditure summary, \$34.005 million. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to ask a little bit about the report into human resources and the corrections service. The last information we've gotten from the Department of Justice was back in October when they tabled a status report and in that status report it talks about the comprehensive human resource plan that was supposed to have been completed back in March of 2005, but has been pushed back to March of '06. I am just wondering the status of that comprehensive plan. Will it be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup>?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have an update, a status report as of February '06 related to the Member's question around human resources and corrections service. We can talk about exactly where we are, how we are doing in terms of meeting our goals and I am prepared to provide that to Members. It is my intention to provide that to Members. We follow up on the recommendations. There were some that we still had to deal with. We have laid out the proposed actions and we provide a status report or progress report. So I have that for Members and will transmit that right away. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Minister for that. The proposed actions in the status report, the last status report that came before the House, many of the proposed actions dealt with the comprehensive HR plan that was supposed to be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup> of last year. The last I heard was slated to be done by March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. I would just like to ask the Minister, is that going to be the case? Is it going to be completed by the end of March or is it not? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, it is ongoing. To suggest that we will truly be finished and that will be it and we will be passed this, I don't think is accurate. What we need to do is pay a lot of attention in this area. There are a number of ongoing training initiatives, communication initiatives. I think the Member is referring to much of the proposed hiring that we were looking at. I can certainly provide an update on that. As Members know, in this budget, there are additional resources in that regard, so we are moving toward that. I can indicate to the Members that staffing at the North Slave Correctional Centre has really made some drastic improvement. It is moving ahead dramatically. There were a number of offers made to candidates in December of '05; 13 correctional officer positions, four case managers, one nurse. In addition to that, we have four additional competitions underway and we are continuing to meet with corporate human resources to talk about recruiting, staffing, retention responsibilities and training. So the strategy is well underway now. There were some delays and I think part of it was our change in how we deal with human resources outside the department, but I think largely that's been dealt with now and we are moving forward. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe the Minister is right; I think things have gotten much better at North Slave Correctional Centre and it's in large part due to the review of human resources, not just there but in corrections across the territory. Things have been progressing towards some type of resolution. I think the deputy minister and the department should be commended for making the necessary changes there to see this forward. I just wanted the Minister to know that I think it is necessary that we follow up on the recommendations that were contained in that report and do so as soon as we can. He's got that point.

The one other area that I wanted to speak to was safety that's contained in there. Looking at the recommendations, it's hard to believe that the government could spend that kind of money. It's \$50 million was the total price tag on the new facilities on Kam Lake Road. There would be areas of that building that wouldn't be covered by cameras. Have those been immediately addressed, the issues regarding safety and security at the facility?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I have to admit the Member has gone beyond my immediate knowledge of some of those specific operational details at that facility, but I will speak to our departmental staff. We will talk to the warden about those issues and provide an update on that, as well. If there are outstanding issues that we need to deal with and address, we will do that. I will provide some update to the Member. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** That's good. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Next on the list is Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the Minister briefly update me in terms of the initiative we are looking at from several regions in terms of adult correction facilities, more of the on-the-land/wilderness camp initiatives in terms of their support for this program and possibly continuing their support? I know TI'oondih is running the program that will fall into this area. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I am pleased to do that. I want to thank the committee for their support in this regard. It really was at the urging of committee that we decided to look at new approaches to be able to provide the service on the land. I appreciate the committee's support, specifically Members Yakeleya and Lafferty who indicated, really, interest in trying some initiatives in their regions. We recognized that we were having a problem both finding inmates who wanted or were eligible to go to any of these wilderness camps to serve part of their sentence. At the same time, we had fewer and fewer operators willing to provide the service and engage in really what amounted to a business. So we looked at some of the shortcomings and pitfalls and recognized I think, through discussion with Members, that we had to come up with a more streamlined model, a simple model, something that really focussed on the basics. That is about getting back on the land, serving part of your sentence out on the land, doing some healing, but maybe, more importantly, making reparations to the community.

One of our thoughts was that providing meat and doing some hunting for those who may not be able to hunt in communities might be a very useful service and something to be appreciated by communities. So instead of providing a lot of the complex counselling and insisting that the camp operator had to be both a counsellor, a business operator, a jack-of-all-trades, we wanted to see if we couldn't come up with a more successful model by working with some elders, by bringing out one or two people at a time, no more than that, in a very simple setup on the land with tents and rudimentary equipment. This really is about getting back to basics and get back to traditional ways of traditional practices.

So I am happy to say in the two regions, the Tlicho and Sahtu, we are moving ahead. It's a little more quickly in the Sahtu right now. We are in negotiations with an elder. We are hoping very shortly to have some eligible inmates out on the land and then after we are able to conduct this, I have indicated to Members that I will do a review of these pilots, but we're very close now. I understand it's now next steps for me to sit down with the Member, Madam Chair, and understand what the operator is looking for and some of our challenges and some of our accountability issues that we have to ensure are looked after, but I think we're very close. It's down to the short strokes now, Madam Chair, and I think we'll be on the land fairly soon. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad to hear that the Minister is saying we're going to be on the land very soon. So I'm looking forward to that program. I'm happy in the Sahtu region and I appreciate his support

to go beyond certain policies and criteria, and again, going back to what makes sense in our region. So I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of this community justice and corrections in terms of community justice committees, is the Minister looking at or will consider looking at in giving more authority to the community justice committees in terms of they have to be looked up as a very serious committee to be reckoned with? Right now the communities are just saying, well, they don't have much authority so they really don't have much power to do any types of meaningful sentencing or decisions made by them to have an impact on the community. Can the justice committees, in terms of the activity descriptions, can they have some meaningful authority to have some impact on young offenders or adults in terms of the community if the people should decide to go to these justice committees? Right now there are more of an advisory committee and I think some of the elders want to talk about these justice committees to have some more authority and such as maybe a judge that comes into our communities. So I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of any type of discussion that possibly could happen in the near future. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I think there are a couple of things that will come to the floor here as we sit down and conduct our evaluation of community justice committees. We're trying to understand why some succeed and why others are less successful. We're going to look at best practices and I think there are a couple of issues here. The Member has pointed to authority and making sure that the committees are taken more seriously, have more authority, and I think that that's one of the issues that we need to talk about. But maybe more important is making sure that these committees are relevant in that they have the respect of the people in the communities and are providing programming and are involved in aftercare, are involved in making sure people are adequately reintegrated into the community because these committees don't just on their own go out and dictate sentencing. They work restoratively and they work with both victim and accused to make sure that there is a healing that takes place here. We're looking to get away from the formal court system. So we're looking for something that isn't more of the same. I think we've already got that, Madam Chair. We're looking for another model that can work to bring people and communities back together and do so and allow them to heal. So it's about coming up with relevant programming, as I've indicated. But I think this review that we will conduct -- and we'll come back in the May or June Session, have that discussion with Members -- I think is going to raise a lot of these issues, but I'm prepared to talk about the authorities at that point, too. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my last question to the Minister in terms of this specific item on the budget here. In terms of correctional facilities is the department closely working with the other departments in terms of having an inmate come out of the correctional facility, he usually ends up in a half-way house, be it in the Salvation Army or some other location. What's done for the families when the offender is making the transition from an institution of rules and regulations to

society where there's little more broader rules and regulations for safety in society, but also the family that's expecting him or her to be back into a family setting in a community setting that they somewhat have a transition period where they could be more or have a positive contribution to the community? So sometimes if the offender is right back in the community, next thing the children don't even know it or the community doesn't know. So what's the gap that we seem to be sometimes missing is something that I would really like to explore, because I have received some phone calls in terms of this type of situation, and it's no fault of any, just what things are in place to tighten up the aftercare programs or the training programs in the institutions and hopefully that would make a difference to the community. Certainly we don't want to see our people in these facilities. I mean, if we can deter it, if we have our people to prevent them from going back in these institutions, that's the end goal here, to have our people not to go into this facility here or any other facility in the Northwest Territories. I mean, that's the end goal; however, that would require more discussion. So what are the steps in terms of having offenders be integrated back into a society with all the aspects of his or her life? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, there are a number of things and I think there are a couple of questions here, but they are linked and they are connected. Recently, and I'm thinking in the last year or so now, we've had income support workers from ECE go into our facilities to make sure they're working with case workers and with inmates, because each inmate has a post-incarceration plan that is developed with them, and for them to help them be better integrated into the communities when they leave. So we have other agencies involved in that. But even before that, if I could back up just a step, we have made a philosophical shift in recent years and we've talked I think a lot about moving away from warehousing prisoners, to working with prisoners and ensuring there is programming in our facilities, literacy, numeracy, job skills, related programming so that people have an easier time integrating. So those are some of the things that we are doing, but I can assure the Members that we are interested in working in a comprehensive way to make sure people have the best chance of getting back into society and living a meaningful life and not re-offending.

Separate and apart from that, I think the Member asked a question about people being released into communities whether on parole or just outright released. There are protocols in the RCMP that if people are a perceived threat to the community, the RCMP will release their names and notify the communities that they're coming back to, but it's on a balance. They make a determination about whether or not it's in the public good, or if there's a need to release that information also respecting the need for privacy. So that is the test that the RCMP conduct and they have protocols that deal with this. If they think there's the potential for a threat and if they feel that the community should be notified, then they do so. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a quick question. It gets to the graph. I know we're on page 7-35, but I wanted to ask the Minister, and perhaps the deputy minister, when you add up what it costs in terms of corrections, and you can include courts in that, then you're at about 51 percent of your total operations expenditures and you look at law enforcement being about 30 percent. Is that a ratio on expenditures that's typically seen in other jurisdictions? Like, do you typically spend more on corrections in courts than you do on law enforcement? I guess that's the question. I'm wondering are we out of the norm on our ratio on our expenditures than other jurisdictions, and has there ever been any look at that? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I can certainly go back and we can take a look at other jurisdictions and be able to provide you with some assessment of how we compare. The one thing I do know is that in terms of police officers on the ground, we have more police officers per population. So that might indicate that we have a higher percentage of money spent in this jurisdiction on law enforcement. But I hesitate to make that assumption without providing some information, and we will do that and bring that back to Members. Thank you.

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

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Minister for that, too. In addition to the comments the Minister made in the area of law enforcement, the same would hold true for corrections. I think I'd like to see the comparison made with other jurisdictions in terms of what they spend on corrections and we spend. If we're at 41 percent, or almost 41 percent, of the total Department of Justice's budget on corrections, is that in line with other jurisdictions or is it not? I'm not in any rush for that type of information, Madam Chair, but I'd certainly like to see it. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, we will provide that information, but I can say that obviously we have a higher crime rate than most, if not all, jurisdictions in the country. There are, of course, also, the same as there would be in our education system, economies of scale. When you have a smaller population and you have to build facilities and are up against some overheads that you have to make an investment in, it's easier if you can build on balancing larger facilities throughout your jurisdiction to take advantage of those economies. We aren't in that position. So I think that we'll probably find when we do that comparator, that we are spending more money in these areas. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Next on the list I have Mr. Pokiak.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a quick question in regards to community justice committees. I think I'm going to speak more specific to the youth justice committees in our small communities. I'm just wondering under grants and contributions 2.086 I understand that 1.7 is slotted for their community justice. I'm just wondering if

the department has considered increasing that base salary based on dollars for operations and maintenance. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As I've indicated in our review of committees, I'm not sure if I gave the impression that we were only talking about committees as it related to adults, we are also looking at youth and oftentimes it's the same community that deals with both youth and adult issues. So that is under review and it is a part of the work that we're doing. I think at that point we'll be in a better position to talk about operating budgets and whether or not they're adequate. I think this will be one and only one of the issues that we need to get a better handle on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Yes thanks, Madam Chair. Just how long would that take can I ask the Minister? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, in the next couple of months, that work, I understand, will be complete and I'll be in a position to sit down with Members at committee prior to or during the next sitting of the Assembly in May/June.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a quick question in regard to young offender facilities. Can the Minister indicate exactly how full is the Arctic Tern facility in Inuvik for the women? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Getting that information for you, Madam Chair. I think over the number of the last few years the answer is six. We have six female offenders in that facility. It does have space for 10 open beds and four secure beds. Over times these numbers have been down. I think we recognize after the Young Offenders Act and new YCJA, Youth Criminal Justice Act, that there was more of a philosophy around not incarcerating youth and having them work to be reintegrated into our communities. We weren't sure if that would be a temporary phenomenon, but I think the numbers are still down in our facilities, our youth facilities overall. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Does that include the staff that's there right now? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I may have missed the question, but that's not a staff number, I'll get the staff number, but that simply is the occupancy of

inmates. Staff, 21 positions at that facility. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you. Just one last one here. How much does it actually cost a year to operate that facility? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you. Budget and O and M, \$2.1 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Activity summary, community justice and corrections, operations expenditure summary, \$34.005 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 7-37, activity summary, community justice and corrections, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$2.086 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to ask the Minister about the COPS program that I made a statement on earlier today. I could understand if he cannot be 100 percent committed here, but if I could just ask him because I know that a group has applied for some assistance with the department and if the Minister could just, for the record, state as to whether he would look into it and consider supporting it? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am aware that it's been supported in the past and let me just generally say that we are very supportive of involving citizens and communities in the policing effort. More eyes and ears on the ground are going to help our police do a better job. Obviously, there's some training that is very important. There is a specific and defined role that's important in ensuring that this is done safely, but we are supportive. I like the initiative and we are certainly considering it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the Minister indicate as to when the group might be able to hear a response about where the department and the Minister is at? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, in the next two weeks I will have an answer for the organization. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Thank you. Community justice and corrections,

grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$2.086 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 7-38 and 39, community justice corrections, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. Page 7-41, activity summary, services to the public, operations expenditure summary, \$3.370 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 7-44 and 45, information item, services to the public, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you.

Page 7-46, 7-47, information item, work performed on behalf of others, and that actually goes on to 7-49 for a total of \$1.244 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Madam Chair, on 7-48, RCMP First Nations policing recruitment and also community consultation, there's no funding in 2006-2007. What's the intent, number one, for the RCMP First Nations policing recruitment? We did have in 2004-2005 \$228,000, and \$175,000 the following year...(inaudible)...\$175,000, and then there's none in 2006 and 2007. Can I ask the Minister in terms of is this part of the federal government cutbacks in terms of policing? Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, this is a federal government program that we've been successful in accessing in the past. We think we're going to be successful again. This was caught I think at this point in the transition between governments, but we do know that officials are supportive and we expect that we will have a positive outcome here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. In this one here, Madam Chair, I want to for the First Nations policing recruitment, can the Minister comfortably say how much he's looking for funding in terms of the funding and the intention of First Nations policing recruitment? Certainly this is a worthwhile project. So I want to ask him on those two things. Thank you.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, we think we'll be successful in seeing the same amount of funding extended through 2007 and then we sit down to start negotiating a new agreement. There wasn't time for a new agreement, but we think we can be successful in getting that extended or carried over and then we will use

those funds, the RCMP will use those funds to try to work with local people and get them into depot and get them back into our communities. Again, this is all about the philosophy that we need a representative police force and that is a priority for us, as Members know. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister provide to me the history of this program and how successful and does it match the dollars that we are asking? Certainly I know we certainly can see if there some ways we can put RCMPs into the communities where there aren't any RCMP detachments. I know what he's getting at. So I want to see how successful you are with this program. Are we spending it into where it's supposed to be?

The other one, Madam Chair, is the First Nations policing and community consultation. I'm going to make the presumption, is this the same as with the policing recruitment that we're caught in between the governments, because it had \$179,000 in 2004 and 2005 and we went down to \$55,000 in the last couple of years and then this year there's nothing. So I wanted to ask about that, also. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Madam Chair, I understand that it isn't exactly the same situation and that we have, in fact, completed the consultation exercise last year. So now we have documented that and we have a report that we're submitting to the federal government and we're working with our other northern partners, Nunavut and Yukon I understand, and we will be making a submission to the federal government. That builds into the philosophy that we spoke to and aboriginal policing initiatives generally. The first question was about RCMP access and I guess an ask to paint a bit of context and talk historically about how successful this has been. I can just very briefly tell the Members that the program, the RCMP access program began in '04. We had six candidates at that time. We did have a successful candidate complete it and graduated from RCMP training depot in December of '05. There is a second intake now underway, sorry, a second access program now underway expected to run until March 31<sup>st</sup> of '07. Our funding levels currently allow for up to four candidates in the program at one time. Again, I indicated earlier, the selection process is underway beginning in, again, in February of '06. We go through screening eligibility. A list is established for candidates who meet the screening, then they are entered into the program as there are seats that become available. There are a number of other things here going on, but I can say that we've received, and this looks like a good number, but we received 19 applications for the 2005-06 program. So it looks like there is some increased interest here. I'm not sure if all those folks will be eligible, but regionally by breakdown that's five applications from Inuvik, four from Yellowknife, three from Behchoko, two from Hay River, one each from Aklavik, McPherson, Providence, Lutselk'e and Smith. So a nice range of interest right across a number of regions in the territory. I think that bodes well. We think this program is improving. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope that all these 19 candidates will be eligible for RCMP recruitment. It looks like we have a good selection and it will go through the process. However, I'm going to go back to the communities that don't have RCMP officers in their communities, Mr. Bell, and, Madam Chair. This is going to be an issue that I will keep bringing up until we see something happening. There's one-third of our communities that do not have RCMP officers in our communities. Some of the communities have to call 1-800 to call for help. The lines get redirected to Yellowknife for emergencies or whatever situation and that type of situation. It's not very good for our communities. For this First Nation policing recruitment and for having the RCMP officers in our communities, I hope the Minister, and I know he will work very hard to see what he can do to get a police presence in our communities, because right now there's one-third of our communities that are not receiving any type of RCMP presence and other communities that do have RCMP in their regions or in their communities. So again, I just wanted to state, Mr. Chairman, the issue of policing in our communities is very serious and I look forward to seeing where the department and the RCMP come up with some creative solutions, because I don't think our communities couldn't stand it any longer in terms of the way things are moving. I think more or a comment, Mr. Chairman. I'm not sure there's a question in there for the Minister.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, let me restate the commitment that we and the RCMP are making toward both building a representative police force. The RCMP access program numbers that we just spoke of I think are good. I'm happy to see all of those applications. I want it to be very clear this is for regular members, we are also pushing the issue of special constables. We do know in terms of regular members that if 19 people apply, not all will be accepted and even fewer will graduate. That's just the reality; that's our experience; but we're working on improving that and we want to understand what we can do to make sure aboriginal applicants are more successful and we get people on the ground in communities. We know we have to improve coverage to all of our communities, especially our smallest communities. You know that I am committed to making sure we're successful in getting some more detachments. That is something that I'll be sitting down immediately to work with the two new federal ministers in Public Safety and the Justice Minister on, and as well as other justice related issues. But we are very well aware of the need. We think the need is increasing and we are going to do everything in our ability to make sure that we meet that need and ensure public safety in all of our communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The last question that I want to ask the Minister in terms of 7-47, and I think it speaks to 7-48 and 7-49, any of these programs here, are we in a situation where, because of the change of the government, it's not added or not on the books here? Will that come later on in terms of the victims' services project, for example, or

the official language, or French? So is there any type of funding that's going to be added to the budget? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of initiatives where we're waiting to sign agreements or see current agreements extended and we don't have information on them yet at this point. The family law initiative on 7-47 is one such agreement. We're hoping that that can be renewed. The RCMP First Nations policing recruitment is another, but there are others. There are examples on this page where there are simply past agreements with the federal government, have expired, but we keep them on the books so we can see what they were. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question. I wanted to find out who pays to house federal inmates in our corrections system. The last time I checked, there were a number of them at the North Slave Correctional Centre. How is that accounted for and who pays the bill? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, the federal government, through a federal exchange of services. They pay us a per diem for housing those inmates. It's ballpark \$180 a day per inmate. It was in the neighbourhood, at one point, almost \$1 million last year. We expect it will be in the 1.2 neighbourhood this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just wondering how is it accounted for. In the work performed on behalf of others, there is a contracting back of services. I know we also house inmates from Nunavut and the Government of Nunavut pays us almost a million dollars to house their inmates, which is a good deal. How come we don't show how much the federal government is giving us to look after federal inmates in our corrections system? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, just at the highest level, we show this money coming into our revenue summary. We have a forecast there that you can see. Those monies go into the consolidated revenue fund, but the treatment in terms of the accounting treatment between monies we receive for Nunavut offenders and money we receive for federal inmates are not exactly the same. There is a different treatment here and if you want detail on that, I can certainly have Ms. Schofield explain how that is accounted for and works.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay, would you like that?

**MR. RAMSAY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was waiting for the light to come on.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. Ms. Schofield.

**MS. SCHOFIELD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The federal Exchange of Services Agreement was established several years ago and when that agreement was established, money was set up in the department's base to cover those expenditures. As the revenue increases, we often can go back to the Financial Management Board to increase our appropriation. We have not done that in the last several years with the increase in the exchange of services.

The Nunavut exchange of services, when it was signed at division in 1999, it was decided to treat that one as a vote 4/5, so expenditures on behalf of others. I don't think we had expected it to last as long as it has, so we transfer expenditures from our regular appropriation to match the revenue that we receive from Nunavut for that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Ms. Schofield. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So if I am getting this right, the return of services agreement that we have with the federal government, that money just comes back to the GNWT and goes right into general revenue. It doesn't go back into the department. So, in essence, the department is paying to house federal inmates without getting anything back. You have your appropriations, yes, but you are not getting exactly what it's costing you to house these inmates, if you don't have it accounted for like this, or am I missing something, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, I guess it's not a direct pipeline. The money doesn't go directly from the federal government to our department to be used for those purposes and taking care of those inmates exactly. It does come to the consolidated revenue fund, as Ms. Schofield explained. But when we have increasing pressures because of that, I go back to the FMB with a submission for additional funding. It could be a collective bargaining increase; it could be additional positions; whatever it is in order to be able to meet that need. Then it's either accepted or not. That's where I make the pitch for the additional funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am trying to understand where the Minister and Ms. Schofield are coming on this. To me, it's not a true cost accounting of what it costs the corrections system to operate if the money that's coming through to the federal government to house federal inmates doesn't see the light of day inside the Department of Justice inside of corrections. Then to me, it's not a true cost reflection of what is really happening there. The real numbers aren't there. I am not an expert in exchange of services agreements or how those are set up and what they are intended to do, but from an accounting standpoint, I would think it would be much better to show the money coming from the federal

government back into the department, not into general revenues.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, when we designed the facility, I am speaking to North Slave, it was understood that one of the things we wanted to do was repatriate federal inmates. So we are doing that. When we add an inmate to the facility, a federal inmate, and we get \$180 or \$178 a day, that has to be pay for the additional costs of food and clothing at least. We think we more than cover those incremental expenses for adding an inmate. We are not talking about building more space for them. The space is there; it's vacant. We add the inmate. We have to incur costs for food and clothing. We think the \$180 more than covers that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to get back to this, but if it's \$180 a day per federal inmate, that money does not go to corrections, the expenditure of corrections. It comes back to the Government of the Northwest Territories into general revenue. So we just pay the price out of the allotted corrections budget and you never see the real money that's flowing through from the federal government. That's what I am getting at. Why doesn't it flow through? Why isn't there a better accounting of how that money flows through back to corrections and back to the Department of Justice?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, I guess the money to house the inmates is built into our appropriation that you vote on in this House every year. If we didn't have those federal inmates, then we would probably have a revenue shortfall and have to go back for additional funds. So I understand what the Member is saying in that it is the government that benefits through this arrangement, it's the government that gets these funds, but really it's all the money in all of these departments is government money and whether we take it directly to the Department of Justice or move it over from general revenues into department budgets annually, I think it still achieves the same ends. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't keep on this much longer, but how does the Department of Justice calculate what it's going to need on a year-to-year basis if the numbers or levels of federal inmates might change? From a budgeting perspective, do you just ballpark a number of federal inmates and try to get a budget that's close to that? Is that how it works? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The largest component, obviously, for running our facilities is the lights have to be on, and the heat has to be on, it doesn't matter essentially how many inmates we have,

whether we are at 90 percent capacity or 100. Staffing is a huge amount of the cost that we incur and, again, there is very little difference between whether it's 80, 90 or 100 percent capacity in terms of our staffing requirements. So that's how we are able to budget and it is reconciled each year. If we were to lapse money, we would turn it back and if we needed additional money, we would go to FMB with a submission. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ramsay.

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for that. I guess in the future, it would be nice if you could have a work performed on behalf of others component to the budgeting exercise to show exactly how much money was coming back from the federal government on a year-to-year basis. If that can't happen, I know there are probably reasons why it can't happen and that's the way it is. I would like to see it happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I understand what the Member is looking for and we do have the rollup number in aggregate in the revenue summary, so you can see what we are anticipating we will get from this arrangement, but we can provide more breakdown in terms of how many inmates that would be, what the per diems are and those kinds of things. We will certainly provide that information to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Information item, work performed on behalf of others, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** On that point there, Mr. Chairman, would the wilderness camps be in the same situation as how you deal with the federal government in terms of the costing? So when you have wilderness camps, would you pick them, or are you going to say the lights have to be on 24 hours, you have to have wood there, no matter what the capacity, are you going to nickel and dime them on the programs also? I am not too sure. Is this going to be similar to camps for corrections services? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** I understand Mr. Yakeleya is talking about wilderness camps, but we don't have it on the information item at the present time. Mr. Bell, would you like to make a quick comment?

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Sure, Mr. Chairman, just to say that I hope we are not nickel and diming our operator. That isn't the intent. The model, as we see it, will provide and pay a fee or per diem to the operator on a daily rate. From that amount, they will have to cover their expenses. So if they decide that they can save money in certain areas, that would be more money in their pocket, I would suggest. But they do have to provide a basic level of service. They have to run the facilities. Obviously, we are not standing there suggesting that they turn the lights on or off. That's how we can possibly hope to administer one of these contracts out on the land. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya, in terms of 4-76 to 4-79.



**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to get that question in, Mr. Chairman. I was picking up on what Mr. Ramsay was talking about with correction services. I thought I would throw that question in. Thanks for allowing me to do that. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for giving me comfort on this program. I am going to leave it at that. I think I am going to call it quits. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Information item, work performed on behalf of others, \$1.244 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Can we go back to page 7-7? Is everybody there?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$83.800 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Committee, can you go to capital acquisition plan, column two, page 6-5 under Justice. Everybody is on that page now?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you. Infrastructure acquisition plan, services to the government, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$84,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** We have been asking for some other things to be done in the communities in terms of office space or court spaces or any kind of spaces that the court uses in our communities. Can he explain to me in terms of the \$84,000 in terms of the office space renovation in Yellowknife? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, as committee knows, I did make the commitment to review our infrastructure in communities, specifically to the provision of court services. There was discussion and some concern that some of our facilities, not our facilities, but some of the facilities we were using weren't adequate. We are talking about how we might be able to deal with that. This line item here, this \$84,000 was to provide for the coroner's office. That deals with new office space in the new fiscal year for the coroner's office. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Yakeleya, thank you. Page 6-5, infrastructure acquisition plan, services to government, total activity, \$84,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Turn to page 6-8, infrastructure acquisition plan, courts, tangible capital assets, total capital assets, \$3.170 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Total activity, \$3.170 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak):** Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. For the record, Mr. Chairman, I want to state that my region does not support the building of the new courthouse that is proposed for Yellowknife. They have adamantly made the request that the priorities of this should be somewhere else. Again, it's a long history of needs of the small communities versus the needs of the large centre, such as a territorial courthouse and I understand the Minister made a good business presentation to us to have this courthouse here. It just doesn't make sense, just like there are no RCMP officers in small communities. We have 13 communities, yet we are putting money into large facilities like this and you say we have no money for RCMP. I think this government has to get its priorities straight in terms of putting this in the budget here. We need to get those RCMP in our small communities where there are no RCMP, and build this later on when there is money there. I want to say on behalf of the Sahtu, we are strongly opposed to this new building coming into Yellowknife as the courthouse. Let's work on our people, let's work on prevention, let's not work on buildings. That can come later on. I want to say that for the record. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mahsi, Mr. Yakeleya. I have Mr. Pokiak next.

**MR. POKIAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow along the same lines as Mr. Yakeleya because when I did go back home and I did travel to my constituency, they are discouraged about the new courthouse proposed for Yellowknife. Just for the record, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. We are on page 6-8, infrastructure acquisition plan, courts, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$3.170 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Total activity, \$3.170 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you. Page 6-10, infrastructure acquisition plan, community justice and corrections, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$715,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Total activity, \$715,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This page details, Mr. Chairman, a number of smaller, if you will, upgrades or replacements in some of our correctional facilities. For instance, building repairs in Inuvik at \$150,000; vehicle replacement here in Yellowknife for 60; fire suppression systems. A couple of things do jump out here, though, and I am wondering if the department could explain the \$225,000 allocation for a new boiler in the North Slave Correctional Centre. This facility has just opened up in the last couple of years, then we are being called on to replace a boiler for almost a quarter of a million dollars? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that that was in the...The additional boiler was in the original plan for the facility, but in an effort to reduce costs, it was thought that some money could be saved by forgoing that boiler. Public Works is now recommending to us that a new boiler be installed. It is an issue of capacity with the existing system. We have concerns about should one boiler heat fail, the capacity of the existing system probably would not adequately heat the facility for an extended period of time. So it's become a safety concern and obviously one that we need to address. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Okay, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of other issues here, all of them relating to this facility here. This fiscal year at least, we are looking at \$80,000 for a phone system and the one that, gosh, I really have to ask about, Mr. Chairman, is a \$200,000 expenditure for a main gate vehicle barrier; \$200,000 for a vehicle barrier. I would really like some explanation on this one, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, there are two gates, one for the young offenders' facility, one for the adult facility; separate gates. It is to prevent people from just driving up to the facility. So it is a security issue. We think this will help us curb traffic around the main gate barriers along with the fencing that will be installed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. BRADEN:** Tell me, is there lots of unauthorized traffic back and forth, in, out and around here, or is this basically a contingency something that will be nice to have there but it's not really needed? Is this needed? Is it necessary? Two hundred thousand dollars worth of gates?

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

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Mr. Chairman, we do have a problem with skidoos on site coming up to the facility, cars are able, vehicles are able now to drive right up to the facility; in fact, right up to the bullpen, so we have concerns with security. We have concerns with contraband. Obviously we are trying to ensure that there aren't drugs in our facilities. One of the things we can do to ensure that, we think, is improve security in this manner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Minister Bell. Sh! Please, gentlemen, we are almost concluded Justice, so your attention for a few more minutes, please.

We are on page 6-10, community justice and corrections, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$715,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Total activity, \$715,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you. Committee, page 6-12, infrastructure acquisition plan, services to the public, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$60,000, total activity, \$60,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Total department, \$4.029 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that the Department of Justice main estimates are concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, committee. I would like to thank you, Minister Bell, Mr. Cooper and Ms. Schofield, for being with us this afternoon.

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Dent.

**HON. CHARLES DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I would recommend that we continue with the Department of ITI.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you again, Minister Bell.

I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. I would like to now ask the Honourable Brendan Bell, the Minister responsible for Industry, Tourism and Investment, to provide his opening comments on his department's estimates. Minister Bell.

**HON. BRENDAN BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment main estimates for the fiscal year 2006-2007.

In total, these main estimates propose total operational expenses of approximately \$37.9 million for the coming fiscal year and that is an overall net increase of \$2.961 million, approximately 8.4 percent over last year's budget.

To set the context of your deliberations on this proposed budget, I would like to comment briefly on four key elements:

- our present economic environment/climate;
- the work of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office;
- our continued commitment to the traditional economy; and
- new initiatives we've identified to foster economic diversification and growth for communities and businesses across the Northwest Territories.

### Present Economic Climate

Mr. Chairman, for the first time, the gross domestic product of the Northwest Territories, an indication of economic performance, passed the \$4 billion mark this year. A major contributor to this economic growth has been business spurred by resource development.

The private sector has become increasingly prominent in the NWT, replacing government as the primary driver in our economy. Independently owned small businesses are key to the growth in our economy and we continue to work with this sector to determine how we can best support their efforts.

As an example, Mr. Chairman, our small business corporate income tax rate, at four percent, is well below the national average. In an effort to improve the business climate in the NWT and help attract necessary investment, the Minister of Finance recently announced that the NWT's corporate income tax rate on large corporations will be reduced to 11.5 percent effective July 1, 2006.

Our territorial economy continues to grow and our future is bright. The potential for much more economic development is on our doorstep.

It will be our role, as government, to ensure that we can capitalize on the opportunities future development will bring.

### The Mackenzie Gas Project

The Mackenzie gas project is a good example, Mr. Chairman. If approved, this will be the single largest resource development project in the history of the NWT.

We recognize the Mackenzie gas project as a critical element in building a strong NWT economy and providing residents with opportunities and choices to improve their long-term economic, culture and social well-being.

Through the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is contributing to programs, funding to help residents and communities prepare for the challenges and opportunities the proposed Mackenzie gas project will bring.

The Resource Pre-Development Program is a good example, a \$4 million joint funding arrangement with industry, the federal government and our government. This program provides funding to allow organizations to participate in negotiations with the project's proponent.

We also support aboriginal ownership of the proposed Mackenzie gas pipeline by providing funding to the Aboriginal Pipeline Group.

### The Traditional Economy

As Members of this House have stated, our support for the NWT's traditional economy is an important component of our economic strength. For participants in this sector, the traditional economy provides a secure, stable source of food, fuel, shelter and clothing. Programs such as the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program help to reduce the economic gap between large and small communities in the NWT. I am pleased to note that the number of NWT residents engaged in trapping is on the rise. Fur prices are rising. Success in introducing a new generation to

trapping is being achieved in the regions with initiatives like the Take a Kid Trapping Program.

### New Initiatives

I would like to highlight some of the departments' new initiatives.

Two major components of the Mackenzie gas project have come to the forefront in recent weeks: the GNWT's participation in the National Energy Board's regulatory process and the Joint Review Panel's environmental assessment process.

The need for added resources and capacity to participate in these two new processes is reflected in budget requirements for new funding.

In the interests of our residents, we are working to advance key interests as interveners in the National Energy Board process.

The development of the Mackenzie gas project is a "basin-opening" initiative, which will spearhead the development of other NWT gas reserves in addition to the proponent's anchors fields in the Mackenzie Delta. This project can allow us to capitalize on the potential for the future expansion of this development and to maximize the return to the residents of the NWT.

However, NWT residents expect the GNWT to ensure their interests are pursued before the Joint Review Panel. We are also advancing many of these interests through the negotiation of a strong socio-economic agreement that formalizes the proponent's commitments to employment, to training and business opportunities, and to the protection of community and cultural well-being for all of our residents.

Another key, Mr. Chairman, to furthering oil and gas development in the Beaufort-Delta region will be the establishment of expertise in the region itself. This budget includes an allocation of funding for the creation of an oil and gas sub-office in Inuvik to include both a manager of oil and gas activity and an oil and gas development advisor.

---Applause

While a Mackenzie gas project can open the door to a new era for our northern economy, diversification beyond resource development remains a challenge.

For that reason, ITI has been working on a new initiative with the NWT tourism industry to capitalize on our tremendous potential. The investment for this plan, Tourism 2010, is included in this budget.

We propose an investment of an additional \$5 million over the next five years into the NWT tourism industry. We anticipate the public and private partnerships will leverage up to \$10 million more over the same time period.

The Tourism 2010 plan includes \$400,000 for NWT Tourism to supplement the existing \$1.2 million already provided for marketing. It anticipates expenditures of up to \$125,000 in regional product development and provides up to \$300,000 to develop tourism attractions in more remote locations.

Tourism 2010 will also provide training for NWT tourism businesses, provide up-to-date research and planning

information on trends and on activity levels to guide industry planning and marketing.

We have further supported Tourism 2010 by allocating an additional \$120,000 to NWT Tourism to offset increasing overhead and operating costs. We've also embarked on a series of legislative initiatives to streamline and promote an economic environment that will allow our tourism sector to flourish.

We are also supporting artists and cultural performers to attend the Canada Winter Games, so they can use this event to gain valuable experience and showcase their products and talents to national and international audiences.

When this government established the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment last year, it was to focus and streamline government support to northern businesses and to ensure communities are better positioned to take advantage of growing opportunities presented by our rapidly emerging economy.

Economic development officers play a key role in supporting business and prospective entrepreneurs in communities and this budget will supplement the community transfer initiative that funds these positions by approximately \$600,000.

Funding for the Business Development and Investment Corporation will also continue to reflect our commitment to the concept of one-window delivery for business development programs. Business program review currently in progress is aimed at increasing the relevance and effective delivery of business support programs across the NWT.

I would like to thank Members of this Assembly for your guidance and for your insight in the development of our main estimates. I am confident they will allow us to build on our new foundation, also to invest in the programs and services necessary to seize the opportunities we have available to secure a prosperous future for all our residents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Minister Bell, for your comments. I would now like to ask Mr. Villeneuve, deputy chair on the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, the committee that had responsibility for review ITI's estimates, to provide the committee's comments. Mr. Villeneuve.

#### General Comments

**MR. VILLENEUVE:** Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The committee then met with the Minister and his officials on September 23, 2005, to review the draft business plan of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

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

Committee members made note that the department is proposing to spend \$38 million in operations expense and \$2.7 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.

#### Contract Registry Relocation

The Governance and Economic Development committee believes that the contract registry should be moved out of ITI and placed with FMBS.

The purpose of the contract registry is to make available on the Internet contracting opportunities with the GNWT for over \$5,000 with NWT businesses. The registry also makes it possible to report on tendering activity at yearend.

The committee notes a number of reasons to support transferring the contract registry program. First, the secretariat's establishment policy clearly states, "the chairman of the Financial Management Board shall have charge of and be responsible for developing financial and contract policies, systems and procedures required in support of government operations." Secondly, the committee further remarked that the secretariat's 2006-2009 Business Plan notes that expenditure and procurement management is being considered for delivery through the 'service centre' concept. Finally, the committee points out that a recent report on best practices for public procurement recommends that the FMBS would be better suited to oversee the contract registry.

#### Recommendation

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommends that Industry, Tourism and Investment work with Financial Management Board Secretariat to review the possibility of transferring the contract registry to the Financial Management Board Secretariat and report back to the committee on the positive and negative aspects of such a move within a definite period of time.

#### Taltson Hydro Project

The government plans to expand the existing Taltson system to supply power to NWT diamond mines.

The committee is concerned about the growing amount of funds being devoted to this project. ITI came forward with a supplementary appropriation in October 2005 for \$730,000 earmarked for the NWT Energy Corporation's feasibility and environmental studies on the Taltson hydro project. In 2006-2007, ITI is asking for another \$1 million to complete the feasibility studies and environmental baseline work.

As far as the committee is given to understand, although letters of interest have been obtained from the mines, there are not any confirmed customers and there still may be the outstanding issues of agreement to proceed with the Lutselk'e band.

Furthermore, the committee is concerned about the accountability for this project. Formerly headed by the Premier, the responsibility for the NWT Power Corporation has changed and now the money flowing to the corporation is coming from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

### Recommendation

The Governance and Economic Development committee recommends that the government record Taltson hydro project expenditures in the capital plan to show the amount of money being spent on this project.

The committee further recommends that before spending any more money on this project, the responsible department present a business case for this project, including guaranteed customers and total project costs, and confirm who the Minister responsible is for this project

### Interpretive Bison Centre - Chan Lake

During their pre-budget consultations, the committee heard from members of the public who suggested that the GNWT should provide more resources for product and infrastructure development and marketing.

The committee discussed the possibility of creating an interpretive bison centre at Chan Lake with the departments of ITI and ENR during their review of the 2006-2009 Business Plans. The committee thought this project was not only a great tourist attraction, but also a practical solution to some of the issues on that section of road. For instance, the road between Fort Providence and Yellowknife can be a long stretch of road without any services. MACA could locate an emergency phone centre there.

Transportation could also develop a roadside turnout, and the staff at the centre could advise tourists about driving safely in bison country. This recommendation also fits in with ITI's RV site initiative.

### Recommendation

The Governance and Economic Development committee recommends that an interpretive bison centre be established at Chan Lake.

Thank you. That concludes the Governance and Economic Development committee's pre-budget review.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. I would now like to see where committee is at. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

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

### ITEM 17: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**MR. RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007, and Committee Report 6-

15(4), and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Is there a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

### ITEM 19: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Wednesday, February 22, 2006, at 11:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Petitions
10. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
11. Tabling of Documents
12. Notices of Motion
13. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
14. First Reading of Bills
15. Second Reading of Bills
16. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
  - Bill 15, Court Security Act
  - Bill 16, Tobacco Control Act
  - Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Public Colleges Act
  - Bill 18, Appropriation Act, 2006-2007
  - Bill 19, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2005-2006
  - Committee Report 5-15(4), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process
  - Committee Report 6-15(4), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-Budget Review Process

- Committee Report 7-15(4), Standing Committee on  
Social Programs Report on the 2006-2007 Pre-  
Budget Review Process

17. Report of Committee of the Whole

18. Third Reading of Bills

19. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Accordingly, this House  
stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 22, 2006, at  
11:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 17:52 p.m.