



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

Members Present

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 18-14(5): Lead Minister to Address the Issue of Homelessness

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I committed to reviewing a recommendation from this Legislature that the homelessness file be assigned to a Minister. Given the importance which this government attaches to this issue and to ensuring that our residents have access to adequate housing, Cabinet considered the recommendation when it met this morning.

In determining the most effective response, we were guided by a number of considerations. First, to be timely and effective, the designated Minister will need to be able to call upon an already established administration which can provide resources and support. Second, both the Minister and administration should already have the necessary background, expertise and networks in housing and related matters. Third, for the Northwest Territories' purposes we need a lead Minister with a mandate to both coordinate and advance the work and objectives of other Ministers and departments with responsibilities related to addressing homelessness.

Finally, we wanted to act on this proposal taking into account that it will be helpful for implementing the recommendations of the Social Agenda Working Group which will be reporting on how we can better deliver social programs and services in the next few weeks.

Mr. Speaker, with these considerations in mind, Cabinet has agreed that Housing Minister Roger Allen will be designated as the lead Minister responsible for addressing this important issue, and that the Housing Corporation will provide administrative backup for the Minister.

Minister Allen will give a brief report to the House before the budget session concludes on how he, his Cabinet colleagues and their departments will collaborate on addressing the homelessness issue. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Minister's Statement 19-14(5): FAS/FAE Initiative

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about mothers who drink during pregnancy and children with FAS/FAE. Fetal alcohol syndrome and effect in the NWT remains a serious concern and a priority of this government to address. FAS and FAE are preventable, but if not prevented the consequences are life-long.

Early intervention is crucial and early screening and diagnosis are key protective factors for those affected. In addition to increasing public awareness, it is critical that we have workers trained to conduct effective screening.

I am pleased to be able to announce a major initiative to enhance the skills of our front-line health workers that will take place on March 15th to 18th, 2002. On March 16th the Department of Health and Social Services will be hosting a FAS symposium in Yellowknife on behalf of the Prairie Northern Pacific FAS Partnership. Given the importance of this issue to the people of the NWT, Premier Kakfwi, along with the Ministers responsible for social services for the four western provinces and the three territories, are planning to attend.

This symposium is an important opportunity to offer training and professional development for our health and social services professionals. Approximately 60 to 70 health and social services professionals will be trained in screening for social risk factors and screening for maternal alcohol consumption. This type of screening allows the early identification of potential risk, allowing for earlier intervention and, hopefully, reduction of damage to the unborn child.

Training will also be offered in the Nipissing district developmental screening tool. This training is part of an initiative under the early childhood development strategy to ensure that all regions will have trained professionals by the first week of April 2002.

On March 15th, Dr. Loretta Fuddy, deputy director of Health for the State of Hawaii and the founder of the Hawaii Model Home Visitation Program, and Mr. Brad Bell of the Yukon territorial government, will be providing information to front-line staff on home visitation models used in their jurisdictions. Working with children and their families within their own home is an important component of any successful program for children and families at risk. The information provided at this workshop will be invaluable to front-line staff in implementing family visitor/child development support programs in their communities.

On March 17th and 18th, 10 physicians will receive training in the preliminary diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. They will receive continuing education credit for this from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Preventing FAS remains a key priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Providing our health and social services professionals with the tools and training necessary to assist pregnant women and identify children with developmental delays is key in moving this priority forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on New Swimming Pool for Fort Providence

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, although we are still trudging through the freezing temperatures of winter, spring and summer are just around the corner and the warm months will bring to mind recreational activities, including swimming. Today I wanted to discuss the above-ground pool program in the Northwest Territories and make some comments about the swimming pool in Fort Providence and the condition it is in.

Mr. Speaker, the pool was built in 1972 in Fort Providence with a plywood shell and without any heaters in the facility. Now, 30 years later, the roof needs to be replaced. It has huge holes in it that are beyond repair. The cement floor is cracked and heaving. The styrofoam around the pool is cracking and expanding outward and the shower is still in the public view and without any hot water. When the pool is in use, it leaks about a foot of water a week.

It is at risk of collapsing and is a hazard to the public. These problems give rise to issues of security, liability, safety, health and privacy concerns, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs for funding to construct a new pool in Fort Providence.

As we all know, sports and recreation are key to developing strong communities. Sports develops leadership skills in our youth and encourages them to continue to lead in whatever activities or jobs they choose to pursue in life. Sports and recreation also helps to keep youth off the streets and out of trouble. This is unquestionably important in the North where there is a lack of activities for youth, especially in the small communities.

A new recreational facility such as the above-ground swimming pool can contribute to the overall health of the community. Entire families can enjoy what a swimming pool has to offer, be it through swimming lessons, competitive sport or leisurely activities.

These reasons, Mr. Speaker, are why the construction of an above-ground swimming pool in the Hamlet of Fort Providence should be considered. The construction of swimming pools are not considered as capital projects, yet MACA was generous enough to provide \$300,000 in funding to Fort Liard's new above-ground swimming pool, completed just this fiscal year. Fort Liard is a community of 520 residents, while Fort Providence has 840 residents and we do not receive any funding.

The population difference is considerable...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. McLeod, your time for your Member's statement is over.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, the population difference between Fort Providence and Fort Liard is considerable. That is why I believe the Minister for MACA should consider providing a larger community like Fort Providence with funding to construct an above-ground swimming pool.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister responsible for MACA questions regarding this issue during oral questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement on Replacement of Inuvik's Aurora Campus Student Residence

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on an issue that has been a concern for a quite a number of years in the community and it is around the Aurora campus facility in Inuvik. It has been known for many years that it needs replacement. We have gone through the idea of a regular capital project and it has been in the five-year capital plan for some time.

The facility itself is holding together, but just doing that, Mr. Speaker. In fact, it was agreed by the community to allow the campus to jump ahead and put one of our other schools behind in the capital plan to ensure that we can continue to offer programs with Aurora campus in the community. There is much demand for programs there as we are seeing the development occurring in the Beaufort Delta region.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that occurred when the Aurora campus was being discussed was Public Works and Services put a plan together for Aurora College and this government viewed that and accepted the report, I believe, and had the campus put forward. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, it has gone a couple of ways. One is when P3s were discussed by a previous government the campus was put onto that list as one of the things that should be moved forward, but when the government then decided not to carry on with P3s and that there will not be public/private partnerships, the campus fell back onto the normal capital plan of this government.

Since then, Mr. Speaker, as it came on to the plan, the government has stated that there has not been enough funding to build both the campus and the student residence at the same time. In fact, we are going ahead now, as stated in the main estimates, with the plan to build the Aurora campus facility itself, but lacking a student residence. Now this

government has done a number of things to try and address the student residence, but it is doing things, Mr. Speaker, in a forum, as I see it, which is just prolonging the situation and increasing potential further costs by taking little side routes to try to deal with the issue. Later on during question period I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Fort McPherson Water and Sewage Services

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know that the water situation in Fort McPherson has been a problem for some time. They have now found a new water source and they are in the process of implementing that source, but it has been a rough start. There have been major breakdowns and freeze-ups, and no facilities for parking the vehicles. They are being parked outside.

Mr. Speaker, the community is very concerned that they know there is going to be an increase in the cost to deliver the water and sewage programs in the communities. There is a water and sewage subsidy program with regard to the old system that was in place, yet, Mr. Speaker, they do not see any increases in ensuring that the coverage of the cost to deliver our programs and services will be within reason and will be expanded by this government to ensure that the community can carry out its responsibilities for delivering water and sewage programs, and that there will be a subsidy in place to ensure that they can afford to do so.

Mr. Speaker, water and sewage programs are supposed to be a priority of this government, but we have seen a change in focus on how funds are being allocated to communities. In some municipalities there have been increases. In the case of the water and sewage programs, we do not see any increases in the next years for this program, but knowing the new system that the community of Fort McPherson is presently on, there will be a higher cost to operate, maintain and deliver water to the residents of Fort McPherson.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs what they are doing to monitor the costs of this program. Are there going to be unforeseen expenditures in light of the problems they have faced to date? They should be coming forth with a supplementary appropriation to ensure that they will find dollars so that communities can carry out the responsibilities that they have taken on, especially for water and sewage delivery in our communities.

I would like to ask the Minister questions on this matter at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Pre-Employment Training Program for Disabled Persons

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak today about employment in the service industry. I know from

talking to a lot of local business people, local businesses are having a very difficult time attracting and keeping prospective employees.

I suppose there are various reasons for this, some of them good, some of them bad. Certainly, to some degree, it is a good problem. There is a lot of competition. Many people are employed in the mines, for instance, and making very good wages, Mr. Speaker. On the other hand, on the flip side, housing concerns are preventing us from drawing from a larger pool of people.

However, there are some optimistic signs. There was an article in the media today about a pre-employment training program sponsored by the HRDC. This particular program prepares people with disabilities for the workplace. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, many times likely these people had been on the income support rolls previously, and this is one way that they are able to get off those rolls. It teaches life skills, resume writing and helps to build self-esteem.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many of us are aware of this, but about 13 percent of the local population is disabled, and because of programs like this that the HRDC is sponsoring and the desire of these people to prepare for employment, many of them will be working and that is a great sign.

The next session for this program starts in March, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to urge potential workforce participants and also employers to contact the HRDC to learn more about this valuable program. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Scholastic Achievement Levels in Small Communities

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all agree in this House as leaders of the Northwest Territories that education is going to play a major role in the future of the Northwest Territories. However, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing within our educational system kids being promoted from one grade to another without them being ready. We are seeing very low graduation rates within our schools, especially those in communities.

We do not have sufficient classrooms and teachers to teach the basics in science. Math and English seems to be the predominant way to teach students. We see students coming from the small communities into Yellowknife having to go back one grade in a special class to catch up with the rest. It is getting worse as you go further south.

Mr. Speaker, I have one constituent who recently moved his family to Edmonton so the parents could go to school. They put their children in school, but it was determined that the children were two or three grades behind. The territorial government told them that their kids were at that level. They had to go back two or three grades.

This has a devastating effect on the children, especially those 16- or 17-year-olds who are continuously promoted from one grade to the next and then when they hit grade 10 and in some cases have to leave their communities to go to high school in

the regional centres, they are told that they have to go back to grade 9 or grade 8. A 16-year-old who is ready to challenge the world and tackle the problems of the world is told that they are really not as smart as they had been told. It is devastating on them, Mr. Speaker.

This constituent who has moved to Edmonton has to put his children into a specialized private school that is costing them \$20,000. Is it right that my constituents have to pay out of their own pockets to bring their children up to a level that this government had supposedly indicated to them that the children were already there? Is it right that we expect second-class education in the Northwest Territories, especially in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Respect and Understanding for Divergent Opinions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about something which is causing me serious concern. Numerous things have happened lately which are, in my view, counterproductive to unity in the Northwest Territories. Cracks are appearing which potentially threaten the way we live and work together.

We talk about the diversity of our people, our regions, our communities and our culture, and generally we have seen this as a part of what makes us unique and what makes the North a place we are proud to call home.

Numerous things have contributed to what I see as a subtle and disturbing trend, which if not recognized and addressed threatens to divide or polarize us. It is so important that we pay attention to the detail of our policies and initiatives to diminish real actions or even perceived attitudes which lead to alienation of any group that makes up our Territory.

This frustration creeps into our media sometimes and it is reflected in such things as editorial comments and cartoons. With all due respect to our local newspaper, I do not appreciate a cartoon characterizing our Premier in a way which insults his freedom of expression and opinion, whether it is the length of his hair or what he thinks about our Territory's name.

Everyone has the right to respectfully disagree and we heard very clearly from our constituents on the name issue, but if we sink to making comments that are very personal or have racial overtones it does not accomplish anything. In fact, it tears down what we strive to build.

As a Member of this House I want to understand the needs and aspirations of all Northerners and be a part of bringing solutions in a balanced and fair way that does not offend or deny anyone. Let us attempt to be very sensitive to the concerns and aspirations raised by each other as they relate to our constituents, because I know they are raised with sincerity.

If the actions and responses of this government are fair, they should be defensible in downtown Hay River or Colville Lake. So while attempting to arrive at decisions to govern, let us set an example of respect, understanding and unity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Infrastructure Funding for Small Communities

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about funds for small communities to bring them up to standard. In the budget address, Cabinet is looking at small communities. I think this is great. Some communities have facilities like arenas that were built 20 years ago with natural ice. Some of these buildings were made with future plans for artificial ice, but that has not happened to date.

Rae and Fort Providence are good examples of that. This government has put a lot of money into these facilities, but we see them sitting empty. Now, due to climate change and warmer weather, we have arenas opening in December and shutting their doors in March because of this weather. These buildings are unusable for nine months of the year, Mr. Speaker.

In the budget address, it was noted that there will be \$1.4 million in initiatives for improving recreation and sports opportunities for communities. This investment in health and well-being for our communities was made in response to recommendations from the community governments and Northwest Territories recreation and sports partners.

Mr. Speaker, we are constantly hearing how we have to look at existing facilities rather than building new ones. Here are existing buildings, Mr. Speaker, which can be upgraded so they can be used year-round, not three months of the year. I will have questions for the Minister on this issue, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Working in the Trenches Community Justice Workers Conference

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to update my constituents and those in the House on some of my activities prior to the session.

The weekend before the session I was invited to speak at the front-line community justice workers conference and workshop entitled, Working the Trenches, in the town of Hay River. I felt honoured to be asked to do this and it was a great learning experience for me to meet and talk with front-line workers from all over the South Slave and Deh Cho areas. This was especially meaningful because in my life before, about 10 years ago, I had a brief stint working at the Department of Justice and one of the things I did was work on the start of the whole community justice and corrections area.

Parts of the sessions were highly emotional as the issues often evolved around people's experience of victimization, justice and restitution. It was also heart warming to see how far we have come in this area and to see the commitment and enthusiasm expressed by the front-line workers and how they

shared with each other their experiences in starting up a community justice committee, and maintaining and progressing in the important work in this area.

Mr. Speaker, while it is subject to a lot of criticism, I think we should recognize the good work that has been done by the Department of Justice over the last 10 years. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize and thank the excellent organization done by the people involved. They had excellent facilitators and special guests from all over the country, especially aboriginal leaders and healers from some of the aboriginal communities down south. I would like to congratulate Brenda Hall and the board chair, Helen Hudson McDonald for their excellent work. I would also like thank them for inviting me to be part of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Acknowledgement of Legislative Assembly Pages

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the support that we receive every day in this Legislative Assembly by our young people, the pages that serve us here. They provide a great deal of support to us with a great deal of dedication. From time to time we work overtime and the pages are still here with us after hours. They are here serving us diligently every session.

I would like to recognize all pages today, Mr. Speaker, but also I would like to mention that four of the pages with us today are my constituents. They are Miranda Booth, Mara Smith, Sarah Bonner and Leslie Merrithew. Both Miranda and Leslie served as Members in the Youth Parliament that transpired here in this Legislative Assembly several weeks ago. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Indeed they are very, very helpful young persons. It is a learning experience for them as well. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Schools North Apprenticeship Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Schools North Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) is a program for high school students in the Northwest Territories who are interested in a career in the trades. Mr. Speaker, this is a tremendous program. It gives youth an option to seek an alternative to leaving the North for their education or dropping out of school when they do not want to pursue an academic program. This allows them to complete their high school education while establishing themselves in a trades career. It gives them a significant leg up on that career at the same time, Mr. Speaker.

We know that a healthy economy stems in part from a skilled work force, yet our workforce is lacking many skilled workers. The Northwest Territories is short of trades people and we are right now importing employees from the south to build northern

projects. This is certainly not maximizing our northern economy.

The SNAP program encourages youth to stay in school. Right now too few of our students are graduating from high school in the Northwest Territories in comparison with the rest of Canada. Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that more than a high school graduation is required for most jobs now available. In fact, most require 17 years of education.

Here we have a structured, proven program, yet I understand, Mr. Speaker, that there are fewer than 20 students in the program this year. This number is not proportionate to the number of students that we should have in the program. Mr. Speaker, since we are having trouble getting people into the trades I think this is a program that needs to be supported better.

Parents need to understand too that a university or academic education is not always the best track for their children to follow. In our environment in the North, most jobs will likely come up through the trades programs. With mining, oil and gas and other resource-based industries, this is certainly one of the best ways to pursue an occupation. In fact, a career in the trades can often yield a better wage and usually more secure jobs than many other jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment should be better promoting this program to youth and be doing more to encourage young people to consider a career in the trades as a viable option for their future. The department should also be more actively promoting the program to employers, promoting the benefits of participating in such a program and the assistance available to them in doing so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Captain Karen Hoeft with the Salvation Army and also a strong advocate of the Homelessness Coalition. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Welcome to the gallery, Ms. Hoeft. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In my Member's statement, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned what seems to be a policy or direction of government where we see students being promoted from one grade to the next grade level without them being ready. I would like to ask the Minister, is that a common practice within the education system of the department? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes it is a practice and policy of the Department of Education to place students in classrooms appropriate to their age. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within the education system I imagine that we do track the successful completion grade by grade. Can the Minister tell me, when we see our high school drop-outs, in which grade area do we see them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is certainly a knowledge that the critical area seems to be at grade 10 where students are looking to possibly leave school. There have been improvements in the last couple of years because of the extension of grades to the smaller communities. There has been some success in that. Initially there was increased enrolment and recently we have noticed that there has been improved graduation rates in some of the communities, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I imagine that if there are grade extensions in the communities and we are seeing a success in the graduation levels, I see a consistency in that. If there is no requirement for science in that area of teaching where there are no labs, I guess there will be graduation levels. I would like to ask the Minister, why do we see the drop-out rates high at the grade 10 level? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do not have complete hard data on that, but there is some indication that students feel that their education beyond that is not appropriate. We can all surmise, of course, about some of the reasons, but there is the issue of the appropriateness of the education system to their interested area of study. For that reason, we have been working on developing alternative pathways for students to take in high schools. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it concerns me when we have to start looking at alternatives to accommodate those students who reach grade 9 and 10 and they are obviously not ready for it. We have to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, is it our goal as a government to pad our graduation rates or stats?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 82-14(5): Social Passing Policy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no we are not there to pad. Graduation rates are dictated by examinations that are followed. It is an Alberta set exam that we carry on every year for grade 12. We do testing along the way. Schools do individual testing, Mr. Speaker. We have noticed that graduation rates from the early 1990s to today have improved. It is perhaps not as fast as we would like, but we certainly see it inching up. Thank you.

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

Question 83-14(5): Community Sport and Recreation Fund

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Vince Steen. I would like to ask the Minister, what portion of the money for community sports and recreation is going to bring buildings up to standard for multi-use purposes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 83-14(5): Community Sport and Recreation Fund

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to take that question as notice. I do not have that information here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs regarding my Member's statement on above-ground swimming pools. In my statement I indicated that the swimming pool in Fort Providence is beyond repair and on the verge of collapse.

I would like to ask the Minister, would he consider providing funding for the construction of a new pool in the Hamlet of Fort Providence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department at this present time does not have a policy in place to supply funding for pools in communities. At one time there was a program in place whereby they did this, but it expired or was removed in the days of cutbacks.

At the present time, the department is aware that the community has a pool that is fairly old and they were aware that it reached the point where it has to be replaced, however, this is the first report that the community has a request and I will certainly have the department consider the request.

However, we are going to have to work out how we are going to approach the Financial Management Board because there is no policy.

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

Supplementary to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the Minister's response. Last year I made the same request and at that time I was told there was no policy. The Minister states there was no request, this was the first time. I am quite surprised to hear that. In fact, other communities have received funding since then. Fort Liard has received funding. I wanted to know if the Minister could tell me how that community can access funding when the communities that I represent were refused. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has advised me that the funding for Fort Liard may have been obtained by them switching their priorities around whereby they may have had it in the budget, funding for a community hall or a recreation complex and they turned it towards a pool instead, but I would have to get back to the Member to really confirm that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I am surprised at the Minister's response. In Fort Providence we had budgeted dollars for a curling rink and we asked of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs whether we could use those dollars to build a swimming pool. Again we were refused.

I would like to ask the Minister, how can one community transfer dollars from projects that were identified in that community and convert it, but others cannot?

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

Further Return to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the community had money in the budget for a curling rink and there is still some money sitting there for the curling rink. However, there was no indication that I am aware of that the community wanted to use this funding for a swimming pool rather than a curling rink.

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

Supplementary to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from the Minister's response then, I take it that Fort Providence would be eligible to convert those dollars that were earmarked for a curling rink and the building is right now partially completed, those dollars could be then used for a swimming pool.

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

Further Return to Question 84-14(5): Fort Providence Swimming Pool

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how much this swimming pool is going to cost, but I believe that the funding that is sitting in the budget for the repairs for the curling rink were in the nature of \$50,000. I do not know, if that is what the community wants, well then that is what the department will sit down and negotiate with the community. Thank you.

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

Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I was trying to figure out what to ask today of the many things I could ask, and received this letter from a resident in Yellowknife asking me about the high gas prices in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, this person points out to me that in St. Albert in November the price of gas per litre was 46.4 cents. I called one of the local operators this afternoon and the rate in Yellowknife is 82 cents per litre. I also know, Mr. Speaker, that in Edmonton in October it was up to 63 cents, but it went down to 56 cents, now it is 46 cents, and this was in November. I am sure it is lower now.

My question to the Minister of Finance is, could he give us a simple and clear answer as to why the price in Yellowknife is almost double the one in Edmonton? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I do not think there is any one simple clear answer as to why the price differs in Edmonton compared to Yellowknife. There are a lot of factors including the transportation costs, the mark up costs, the costs at the processing plant, the competition that occurs between retail gas stations in Edmonton. There are a lot of factors that come into play here, Mr. Speaker.

I can assure the Member that our taxes have not changed on gasoline so that has not at all contributed to any price increase. I will also undertake to have the department take a look at the recent increases that have taken place. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. In looking at the budget address, it has indicated that the government is going to have \$160 million in operating surplus this year, yet we have the highest fuel tax in comparison to Nunavut, Yukon and Alberta at 10.7 cents per litre.

Would the Minister, given the good times we are having, consider reducing the GNWT portion of tax to alleviate some of the problems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will always consider any tax changes that Members want to recommend be taken into consideration. This is something we would have to look at over the longer term, figure out what is happening to the price of fuel, what the impact would be on our revenue.

If we were to decrease the price of gasoline from 10.7 cents to 6.4 cents, for example, to bring us down to the lowest, it would cost us \$1.4 million annually. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is \$1.4 million annually, but we are having a surplus of \$160 million. Mr. Speaker, I did not hear any commitment from the Minister in his answer as to whether or not he would look at the question of reducing the burden of the high cost of fuel. Do I have that commitment?

Could the Minister commit to this House to do that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I will certainly look at it. I will look at any changes that Members suggest with regard to tax decreases, increases, whatever it may be. Mr. Speaker, I will look at that issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final short supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Just to clarify, Mr. Speaker, may I also have the Minister make a commitment to provide us with the reason why our price is almost twice as much as the one in Edmonton?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 85-14(5): High Gasoline Prices in Yellowknife

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will have the department take a look at the reasons for the increase. I would have to say that the response we will provide will have to be based on some of our own assessments of the reasons because they are varied, and we may not be able to get access to all of the specific details of exactly what the companies charge for transportation costs, what the mark-up is here and so on. I will provide the best information I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to my Member's statement on the water and sewage subsidy program, my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. There has been no increase with respect to the formulas that are used. As we know, last year there was an extraordinary request for funding because of cost overruns with regard to the water and sewage program in Fort McPherson due to freeze-ups that occurred.

I would like to ask the Minister, when will the community see an increase on the actual costs associated with delivering the water and sewage subsidy program?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for MACA, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my department advises me that in 2001-2002 Fort McPherson received an increase of \$180,000 in anticipation of higher costs

for the operation of the water delivery system. Further to that, the previous Minister in December committed to the community that they would assist the community with any further funding needs, if they were in fact identified. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the information provided by the Minister, it is clear that the water and sewage subsidy program is set at \$318,000. Looking at the information I have in front of me, there is no change with regard to that program for the next four years into 2003-2004. I would like to ask the Minister again, what does the community have to do to see an increase in the water and sewage subsidy program to the cost of actually delivering that program?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the years 2002-2003 and onward the department has not identified the figure because the figure has not been confirmed yet as to what that will be on an annual basis. We are estimating anywhere between \$200,000 to \$400,000 a year, but we will need confirmation of that to put that to the community. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to realize that when we do implement new systems in communities where we used to have a piped-in system and now we have a water delivery system, there is going to be an increase in costs. I would like to ask the Minister, how soon can you have that information available for the communities so they can hopefully see an increase in delivering that program on behalf of this government?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member mentioned there have been a number of problems with the new system, including the operation of trucks and the Department of Public Works is in the process now of identifying those costs that were just start-up costs. Rather than just coming up with a figure at this time, they are trying to analyze what were actually start-up costs and what were actually working out the bugs. I am hoping that once the new system is fully workable as far as Public Works is concerned, we would then be able to give the community an estimate, through MACA, as to what it would cost to operate that system

on an annual basis. MACA would then bring that forward to the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I definitely would like to see the information that has been collected. There have been cost overruns on this project in the past and I think it is important that we keep a handle on what these costs are. I would like to ask the Minister if he will share the information that he mentioned earlier, the information that has been collected, with myself and the Hamlet of Fort McPherson so that we can follow these costs to see what we can do to improve that service.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 86-14(5): Water and Sewer Subsidy Program

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can commit to bringing that information forward as soon as I have it. Thank you.

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

Question 87-14(5): Students North Apprenticeship Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment around the SNAP program. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise the House how many young people are involved in the SNAP program this year and if he has the information going back for a couple of years? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 87-14(5): Students North Apprenticeship Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently there are nine students enrolled in the SNAP apprenticeship program. The program was started in 1996 and since that time a total of 18 students have been enrolled and two students have achieved journey person status. As well, of course, we have the training and occupational certification program and one student is enrolled in that as a tourism counsellor. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 87-14(5): Students North Apprenticeship Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given that this program has been in existence now for six or seven years, why has there been almost no growth in the number of students involved in the program?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 87-14(5): Students North Apprenticeship Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member spoke earlier about the need to promote this further, and I do not disagree with the Member on that. We need to promote this with industry and with employers. One of the school boards here in Yellowknife has a program called Bridges, and they handle this in a number of ways as a promotional program. Certainly there are some hurdles here. One is interest on the part of the students to be able to move into that, and the other is access to employment. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 87-14(5): Students North Apprenticeship Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement I said that we needed to support this program and the Minister just said that he agreed that we need to support this program. What specifically is the Minister going to do in the next year to more adequately promote this program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 87-14(5): Students North Apprenticeship Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been working on not only the issues of all academic approaches, and I spoke earlier about Pathways, the opportunity for students to move into occupations from grade 10 on, and we are exploring that area. I will commit here that we need to ensure that promotion of this program is done throughout the Northwest Territories and I will assure the Member that that is what we will undertake to do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my Member's statement, the Aurora campus facility is due for replacement and there have been ongoing discussions in the community and with this government as well in trying to ensure that the student residence will be built along with this facility.

Many of the community members, Mr. Speaker, feel that building a new facility without the student residence is in fact giving us less than what we have right now and that is not acceptable.

I would like to know from the Minister, what is he doing to deal with this situation, knowing that this government in 1997 did a study and reported that a number of options were looked at, and the cost of a new facility replacement ranged from \$13

million to \$16 million? That was back in 1997. I would like to know what the Minister is doing to address the situation of student residences. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of housing we are tackling by renovating and bringing back on stream some row housing that was available in Inuvik. We presently occupy 30 units and we are putting 18 more units in the market, of which ten will be utilized by the college.

The Member though, I believe, is speaking about what we are doing in terms of a residence with the college. We, Mr. Speaker, at the time that I got involved in this, the issue of how to resolve the issue of building the college was to transpose, with the community and capital planning committee, the funding for Samuel Hearne School for the college. That was \$9 million, Mr. Speaker, which allowed us to proceed with the college building. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister or the department looking at replacing the student residences at a future date or is their fix going to be using these row houses as has been discussed?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Naturally it is our hope to be able to address the issue of a student residence with the college, but for the moment we had to ensure there was space available for students to be accommodated, both single and family units. We decided that we would proceed with the row housing, Mr. Speaker, and that will certainly serve our purpose for a couple of years, up to ten years no doubt.

However, we are interested in the college, but it is a matter of availability of capital funding and the priority, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has the Minister and his department worked with the community in looking at alternative ways of proceeding with the student residence at the same time as the campus facility? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, no, although we would like to do that if there was some interest on the part of the community for us to sit down and talk about possibilities. My restriction at the moment is that I am a bit restricted on the availability of capital funding and the capital plan, but that does not mean I am not interested at looking at possibilities, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister at all looking at the surplus that this government has to try and access some of those funds? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 88-14(5): Aurora College Residence Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of the surplus becomes a government-wide issue and there are demands by this government for a number of projects. It would have to fall in line with decisions that would work out in terms of capital planning. Thank you.

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

Question 89-14(5): FAS/FAE Symposium Participants

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this chance to applaud the Minister of Health for hosting what seems like it is going to be a very valuable FAS symposium. He is bringing in professionals from the south to help train health care professionals, front-line workers and also physicians.

I would like to ask the Minister, how many primary school teachers and school counsellors will be attending? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can I ask the Member to repeat the question please?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, the honourable Minister requests you repeat the question. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will allow the Minister a little more time to work with this, but I am wondering how many

primary school teachers and school counsellors have been invited to this excellent symposium. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 89-14(5): FAS/FAE Symposium Participants

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the final participant list, but when I do I will be very happy to share that with the Member and the chair of the Social Programs Committee and keep him apprised as to who is going to be attending. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 89-14(5): FAS/FAE Symposium Participants

MR. BELL: I would appreciate that because it seems like he has gone through a lot of effort to bring in some really qualified folks and health care professionals would be benefiting, but it would be a shame if the people who are often on the front line and often first see signs of FAS, that being teachers, school counsellors, were not involved. If the Minister will commit that teachers and school counsellors will be involved in this initiative, that would be great. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 89-14(5): FAS/FAE Symposium Participants

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very clearly we want to involve front-line workers, and as I indicated I will provide the list to the Member as soon as I can get it. Thank you.

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

Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, with the challenges of FAS being so predominant in the Northwest Territories, the challenge of facilities in our communities where the schools are not equipped with science labs, the policy of the department to move students from one grade to the next without them being qualified for it, drop out rates are high. Even the SNAP program that Mr. Dent alluded to and the low number of entrants in there, all of this tells me that the policy to promote students from one grade to the next without them being qualified is detrimental to the ability of students and the ability of the department to prepare the students for employment and life.

I ask the Minister, when he said graduation rates are getting up there, can the Minister tell me if students are graduating with predominantly matriculation courses or is it very basic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Graduation requirements are 100 credits, Mr. Speaker, and there are some base courses that have to be taken. There can be some other courses on a selective basis taken, so a total of 100 credits are required. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 100 credits is 100 credits. If you can go from one class to the next and you are told you get five credits in this class, five credits in that class. I am trying to get a determination from the Minister if we are preparing our students for a life of employment after they are done school by providing this House with an indication of the level of education students have and determining if it is matriculation or just basic. The Minister does not seem to have that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A student is required to complete 100 credits of course work. It is required that 15 credits be in English, ten additional credits in English grade 12 level courses, social studies, mathematics, science, fine arts, physical education, northern studies, career and technology studies.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that our curriculum is consistent with what is offered across western Canada in all provinces. It is developed across all jurisdictions, so the examinations that our students take are exactly the same examinations that those students take in Alberta. I believe that when a student graduates from here, if they do get the required marks then they are qualified to graduate, Mr. Speaker, and on a level with other jurisdictions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does a student have to pass all the Alberta exams to graduate in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The examinations are developed by the Province of Alberta and they are consistent with the western provinces. Yes, if the student passes those exams then the student graduates. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of that curriculum is that you only need to pass 50 percent of the Alberta curriculum to obtain a grade 12 certificate. I want to bring the issue back to my constituent who has to pay \$20,000 out of his own pocket so that his children can be brought up to par with their age group in Alberta when they have to pay for a private school. Would the Minister be willing to pay that tag? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 90-14(5): Northwest Territories High School Graduation Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure, we have diverted here from some questions on graduation requirements to whether we would be interested in paying for some students which I believe the honourable Member, Mr. Nitah, referred to earlier as were judged to be below grade level. Mr. Speaker, no we cannot. We have a school system whereby our students can enter and participate in our school system. If they are below grade level, there may be various reasons for that and I cannot judge that at this point, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 91-14(5): Harmonization of Social Housing and Income Support

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Housing. Since the beginning of the Fifth Session on February 19th there have been many questions on the issue of the proposed harmonization implementation. The Minister has stated that he is prepared to re-evaluate the communication strategy. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he would table the information package with the proposed plans for implementation during this session? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Housing, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 91-14(5): Harmonization of Social Housing and Income Support

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Prior to tabling the documents I would like to advise the Member that

we are taking the joint position paper back to Cabinet for final approval. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 91-14(5): Harmonization of Social Housing and Income Support

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am not really clear what that means, but I would like to ask the Minister then, can I count on that information being tabled during this session? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Housing, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 91-14(5): Harmonization of Social Housing and Income Support

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to verify my previous answer, there was a question as to whether we would be willing to defer the communication strategy and implementation until October 1st and we concurred to that. We want to take the position back to Cabinet to confirm that. Yes, if it is passed through Cabinet, I am prepared to table that prior to the conclusion of this sitting. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. No further supplementary. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. I would like to know what the status is of legislation on container deposits. There is a lot of talk about our environment and I think that the North is quite far behind other jurisdictions in terms of protecting our environment through initiatives for recycling. One of the deterrents to recycling is the fact that there has not been a policy in place for container deposits and I would like to know the status of any legislation from this government on that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of support for a deposit and refund beverage container recovery program here in the Northwest Territories. As a result of that and with our own research, as a government we are proposing a recovery program and business plan that we would like to forward to Cabinet. Following that, if it is acceptable, then we would be developing a legislative proposal regarding new waste reduction and recovery legislation. Hopefully, we will have something within the next month available for Cabinet to consider. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the Cabinet supports this, how long might it be before legislation will be in place that would allow people to begin to collect these containers that now go into our land fill sites in our communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if it is acceptable, and I think it will be, we would like to have something going to Cabinet by March. Following that, depending on how things go through the processes that we have to work with, hopefully we will have something as soon as we can, in a matter of months. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also on this subject of recycling, some communities have shown an interest in the availability of blue boxes so that people can put their recyclable items in different containers than what their regular household garbage goes in. Is there any support from this government for communities wanting to initiate such a program, any financial support? I know it was raised in Hay River and there was a desire to do this, but it takes some capital to get it off the ground. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the current time we do not have any that I am aware of. Perhaps I could check with the department as to whether there is the possibility of doing this at the current time. As far as I know, we do not have a plan at this point in time. We would like to do that during the development of a business plan and move it forward as such. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in view of the challenges that most communities are facing with identifying suitable land fill sites and capacity for land fill, if the blue box program in communities would reduce the amount going into the land fill, would the Minister commit to considering in the future whether money would be available to communities for such a program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 92-14(5): Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think this is a concern to all of us. They are initiatives and ideas out there in the communities that are moving forward. Perhaps we could look at some immediate action to start work towards this before a business plan and I will look at that with the department. Thank you.

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

Question 93-14(5): High Cost of Propane

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question again is for the Minister of Finance. I just want to follow up on my earlier question that had to do with the high cost and discrepancies in the price of fuel. I have the same question about the cost of propane. The cost of propane went up very rapidly throughout last year and I do not believe that it has not come down at all. Could the Minister commit to looking at the cause of that increase for propane as well and see what can be done to reduce that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 93-14(5): High Cost of Propane

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes I will do the same for propane as I do for gasoline. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 93-14(5): High Cost of Propane

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a short supplementary. It has not been made clear that the Minister is taking these commitments as notice. To make sure that the answer comes to the House, may I get the Minister to commit to take it as notice so that I can have a reply here? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I am not sure you can ask the Minister that. The Minister only takes questions at notice if he does not currently have an answer. The Minister did answer your question. He did not take it as notice, though. Is that your question, Ms. Lee? I will let you rephrase that. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Well, I am just following the rules I learned. Mr. Speaker, may I get the Minister to respond to those questions in the House in some way so that everyone can hear it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 93-14(5): High Cost of Propane

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. The question was whether I would look into the price of propane and what was causing the difference between Edmonton and Yellowknife.

The answer is yes, I will do that and I will also do it with gasoline. I will certainly make this information available to the Members and if I have it in a timely basis I would certainly consider making a Minister's statement on it if that would help get the information out.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It is regarding the oil and gas activity that is happening up and down the Mackenzie Valley, in the Beaufort Delta, the Mackenzie Delta, the Sahtu and the Deh Cho.

I think it is important as a government that we ensure the communities are prepared and have the resources to be able to take advantage of these developments and really get an understanding and feel of what they want as communities. What type of economic activity do we want to get involved in?

I would like to ask the Minister, from his department, can he assist in hosting a conference in the Gwich'in or the Sahtu regions, realizing there is oil and gas activity on the boundary lines between the two settlement regions? I would like to ask the Minister, will he offer to assist in hosting a conference on oil and gas and pipeline development in the Sahtu and Gwich'in regions?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government would help and support such conferences. We have done that in the past. I think conferences are a means for communities, leaderships and different business leaders of regions to get a better understanding of what oil and gas is all about. We certainly will help out with whatever request comes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the Minister, I think we have to have a system in place that we are able to analyze what is happening out there and what the implications are, socially and economically, for communities and affected communities in regard to a pipeline up and down the Mackenzie Valley. I would like to ask the Minister, does he have resources available within his department to assist with such a conference? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes we do have resources for helping out with conferences, whether the request comes from the Sahtu or the Delta or both, we will help them out. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to the process, is that through an application process or is it a request by a Member or organization to request such a conference?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we would prefer a regional organization put the plans in place for a conference and forwarding a request for funding after they have identified what kind of conference they were going to have, who is going to be there, how long and having a better understanding of the amount that is required. We will respond to that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important as a government that we allow all regions in the Territories to take advantage of this program. There is so much happening out there that we do have to keep a handle on it.

I would like to ask the Minister to ensure there are resources available to all regions that are going to be affected by oil and gas development up and down the valley so we can get a feel of what the general public is saying out there and what their ideas are in regard to oil and gas development.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 94-14(5): Preparation for Oil and Gas Development

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have funds available and we will be providing assistance to the Sahtu and the Delta if they put forward a request for a conference. Thank you.

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

Question 95-14(5): High School Graduation Requirements

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and it follows up on the line of questioning Mr. Nitah was pursuing.

His concern was that we may be touting our graduation rates. I thought I heard the Minister say that graduation rates are based on the passing of Alberta exams. My understanding is that 50 percent of your grade comes from that Alberta exam score, the other 50 percent comes from the term mark.

My question to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, is, do you have to pass Alberta exams to graduate? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 95-14(5): High School Graduation Requirements

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I should clarify that Northwest Territories graduation requirements are still similar to Alberta's in terms of the course numbers that you have to take in order to get credits for coursework.

The question with regard to what forms the graduation I will have to take as notice, whether it is 50 percent of the mark or other. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Just to clarify, Mr. Minister, are you taking the question as notice?

HON. JAKE OOTES: The specific question I am taking as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Question 96-14(5): School Grade Promotion Policy

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, following up on my earlier questions. I indicated earlier the department has a policy to promote students, I heard from the Minister, from one grade to the next before they are ready.

Grade 10 seems to be a wall that they hit and drop out. The Minister indicated that the curriculum taught across the Territories is the same. Why is that when students come to Yellowknife, whether it is in grade 3 or grade 10, they always have to go back a few grades?

I would like to ask the Minister, what happens? Do they keep statistics on students who are going from the small communities to regional centres for high school on how many of those students have to go back to grade 9 to prepare themselves for grade 10, which takes an extra year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 96-14(5): School Grade Promotion Policy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I do not have that information at hand here so I will take the question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 97-14(5): Kakisa Traditional Knowledge Study

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development some questions regarding the development on Cameron Hill. I expressed my concern regarding the process. In the Minister's response he indicated that he had got some feedback from some communities, particularly Kakisa, and stated that the traditional knowledge gathering was inappropriate and not done properly.

Can the Minister confirm whether or not this traditional knowledge study has been completed? Does the GNWT have a copy? Can he confirm whether or not there have been community approvals regarding traditional knowledge?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. There were three questions there. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 97-14(5): Kakisa Traditional Knowledge Study

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to check with the department about the questions, specifically whether the traditional knowledge work has been completed in Kakisa or whether I have a copy. I have not seen a copy of it so perhaps someone in the department has such a copy, if such a copy exists. I have to check with the department. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 97-14(5): Kakisa Traditional Knowledge Study

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mackenzie Valley Review Board has pointed out several issues related to the lack of consultation by Paramount Resources and INAC in regard to the development plan and traditional knowledge gathering and the rights of harvesters. My constituents are becoming increasingly frustrated. There has been a lack of goodwill in their opinion.

Can the Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development relay these concerns? Will he agree to direct these concerns to the Minister of DIAND at the earliest possible opportunity?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 97-14(5): Kakisa Traditional Knowledge Study

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be reviewing the events that have happened in the area of Cameron Hills and the concerns of First Nations in that area, and Kakisa specifically. There are concerns coming from Hay River as well as Fort Providence too.

The whole scenario of events that occurred through the application and permitting process, that is controlled by DIAND of course, I would like to review that to see the appropriate way to further approach oil and gas permitting processes.

This is one of the first in the Deh Cho of such an oil and gas company coming in and applying to do extensive exploration work after they had significant finds. Right now, what I am hearing is that not everyone is satisfied with how things unfolded. We should take a look at what has happened and see where improvements can be made. We all need to work together on this one because it is not only government, but there are First Nations communities and governments, Deh Cho First Nations as well as MLAs, we need to work together to review what has happened and see what the best way to approach it is in the future.

Perhaps we can correct this situation, I do not know. Certainly I will pass the concern on to the Minister of DIAND. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 97-14(5): Kakisa Traditional Knowledge Study

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear that the Minister is undertaking to review the situation. I think it has been very poorly handled from different agencies in government. I hope the report and the review will be inclusive with all of the communities allowed to make their comments.

I would like to ask the Minister, when does he plan to start to undertake this review? Is it something we can plan on right away? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 97-14(5): Kakisa Traditional Knowledge Study

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the concern raised by the honourable Member for Deh Cho yesterday in the House and in thinking about it over the evening, one of the first things I asked my staff to do is go and find out clearly our responsibility in relation to DIAND's responsibility in terms of oil and gas. The work has already started to happen. As we go along we will perhaps refine our concern and get to the bottom of it. Thank you.

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

Question 98-14(5): Proposed FAS/FAE Symposium

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it is regarding the FAS/FAE initiative that he announced earlier. I would like to agree that this is an important and timely event. There are a couple of things that I noticed and would like to question the Minister on.

The first one has to do with the focus of this symposium being on maternal alcohol consumption and mother's behaviour, yet I believe there is research to indicate that the conduct and alcohol consumption of men has an effect on FAS/FAE as well. Would the Minister consider including that into the agenda? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 98-14(5): Proposed FAS/FAE Symposium

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This symposium is geared for practitioners. I will pass on the suggestion made by my colleague. Very clearly the intent is to try and focus on pregnant mothers and ensuring that pregnant mothers avoid drinking, try to detect those who may be drinking and then dealing very clearly and early on with those babies born with FAS/FAE. I will raise the issue raised by my colleague with the people organizing the symposium. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 98-14(5): Proposed FAS/FAE Symposium

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to that, we understand that the most obvious cause of FAS/FAE is the drinking and consumption of alcohol by pregnant women. People have alcohol problems for many, many different reasons. There are a lot of ethical and moral considerations we have to consider in looking at potential risk and controlling women's behaviour. I wonder if the Minister would consider adding that sort of aspect to this symposium. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 98-14(5): Proposed FAS/FAE Symposium

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the suggestions by my colleague, while important and relevant, are tending to broaden the scope of the symposium beyond its very focused intent. Once again I will raise that issue with the organizers and make them aware of the suggestion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 98-14(5): Proposed FAS/FAE Symposium

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's answers in trying to accommodate these concerns. I believe that if he talks to the people involved they will know some of the issues. It may already be included in the agenda. There are a lot of issues related to FAS/FAE. Whenever you are trying to control someone's behaviour by state law there have to be legal and ethical considerations considered.

Mr. Speaker, I will urge the Minister to look at the whole agenda to make sure it is rounded. It is not broadening the scope unnecessarily, it is necessary.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I am not sure there was a question in there. The Minister had a chance to listen to the comments if he wishes to respond. Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return to Question 98-14(5): Proposed FAS/FAE Symposium

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have noted the Member's concerns. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period is over. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 12-14(5): GNWT Public Accounts, 2000-2001**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled, GNWT Public Accounts of the Northwest Territories, 2000-2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 16: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS**Bill 8: An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act and the Pharmacy Act**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that Friday, March 1, 2002, I will move that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act and the Pharmacy Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS**Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 5 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 6 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Bill 2, Bill 4, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), Committee Report 3-14(5), Motion 1-14(5), with Mr. Lafferty in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would like to call the committee to order. We have a number of items to deal with; Bill 2, Bill 4, Committee Report 1-14(5), Committee Report 2-14(5), Committee Report 3-14(5), Motion 1-14(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we continue consideration of Bill 2 and Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5) and 3-14(5), specifically to deal with the budget for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Should we happen to conclude that then we move into the Department of Transportation's budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time we will take a 10-minute break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call committee of the whole to order. We are under general comments, dealing with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, I have witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister brings in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in please? Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my left is Bob McLeod, deputy minister of RWED. To my right is Jim Kennedy, director of corporate services. To my far right is Fred Koe, the president of the Northwest Territories Development Corporation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Before we continue, when we broke yesterday, there were a couple of questions asked by Mr. Nitah. Did you have an opportunity to respond to those requests, or do you have any answers for the Member?

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will respond now. Yesterday, Mr. Nitah was asking a number of questions. In Fort Resolution, there is a full-time EDO position allocated to the community, but this has been vacant since June, 2001.

I have written a letter to the chief of the Deninu Ku'e First Nation, and told him that if he gets support from the Metis local and the hamlet, we would move ahead with this position. With regard to Community Futures, Community Futures has only been fully operational since January of this year out of Fort Smith. That takes care of Lutselk'e as well as Fort Resolution. It is difficult to see how it is really working. I think they approved one loan, so it still has to let itself be known and do the work.

The Community Futures board is made up of one member from, actually there are three members on there from Fort Smith, one representing the Salt River First Nation, one representing Fort Smith Metis and one representing the Town of Fort Smith. There are two members on there from Fort Resolution and one member on there from Lutselk'e.

Regarding the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board referred in its report to the fact that the proposed harvest area for the Pine Point area, which was the -- there was a proposal to do some logging there this year, the Patterson Mill, these areas are located in a forest type similar to northern Alberta. This information is provided to the review board by RWED and is the most relevant field classification guide available for this area of proposed development at this point in time. The forestry division in RWED provided that information so the board would have an idea of what it is that they are dealing with.

The board uses information supplied by both RWED and Patterson Mills. It is a standard practice in environmental assessments to use information from the proponent, which is then supplemented and analyzed by government. This is a standard environmental assessment practice, and is acceptable to RWED.

In the West Kitikmeot Slave Study, the five-year program ended in March, 2001. An additional year was developed as a one-year transition phase. This Friday, March 1st, a board meeting is set up to address future concerns in the West Kitikmeot Slave Study. The fundamental baseline data of that whole region is in place now and the department's position is that we will not begin monitoring, but there is still the need for

the collection of more data. There is going to be a press release coming out this Thursday or Friday announcing the release of the study report on the state of knowledge report.

Those are the responses to the questions asked as we ended yesterday.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments on the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to make a few comments in a couple of different areas of responsibility that come under RWED. First of all, I want to voice my disappointment over how oil and gas had been handled in the Deh Cho. Since I was elected two years ago, I have voiced, on many occasions, in committees and in this House, that there is a need for training. There is a need for people at the community level to provide expertise and provide advice. Everyone knew that we would be looking at oil and gas development in the immediate future.

This year we have gone through the permitting process with no involvement and no help from RWED. We had confirmation two years ago that there would be oil and gas specialists put in the different areas in the North, one in the south located in Fort Simpson and one in Inuvik. We have not seen those, at least we have not seen the one that was supposed to be located in the Deh Cho. We are left with really no resources, except for one business loans officer that was given the title of oil and gas specialist. It was not fair to him. Really his specialty is in the development of proposals and loans. He is more of a banker, and his expertise is in that area. He is not familiar with oil and gas.

As this process proceeded, an application went in and we were left with no resources at the community level and no funding for any advisors. A lot of technical information was thrown on the table, thrown on the desks, and thrown in meeting rooms in front of the chiefs, the Metis locals and hamlets with no real methodology to deal with it, to even understand it. That was what we were up against.

Some communities have spent close to \$100,000 hiring lawyers. Money that they do not have so that we could make sense of this. And why? Because RWED did not follow through with some of their commitments. There has been a scramble to try to make sense of all this different legislation and different regulatory bodies out there. There are about six bodies out there with each taking partial responsibility depending where the ball is in the court. They either pass the buck or throw their two cents in there and nobody will really take it by the horns.

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board made recommendations that we thought would work in our favour. They talked about compensation plans and made other points. However, when it was referred to INAC, INAC referred it to the territorial government who had no policy to deal with these things. The question was raised with the Minister and he stated that they cannot enforce these things. It is this government that is campaigning for oil and gas development. It is this government that is promoting pipelines. At the community level they do not have the resources. They are not ready unless this government provides the resources.

You cannot on one hand say, "We want oil and gas development, bring it on." and then leave the communities

holding the bag. That is totally unfair. There is no oil and gas specialist that we were promised. I will say that once again. There is nobody enforcing. When our own government, people from RWED, throw up their hands and say that it is not their responsibility, then who takes the responsibility? We let the federal government regulations play out, unfold and they are not followed?

There is an obligation to present the community benefits plan, that has really little in it however, there is an obligation to present that to each community. That was never done. Where do we go? There was an obligation to do a traditional knowledge study. That was never done. That was never presented. In fact, some of these documents are supposed to be in the hands of the Minister and I gather that he does not have them, at least not from his answers in question period.

We do not see any training plans. The Government of the Northwest Territories was notified two years ago that we have to start training before oil and gas hits. Now we are scrambling to find training dollars. We are scrambling to find enough floor hands to fill the demands that are being placed by the oil companies. We do not have enough people to meet that demand. We are putting on safety training after safety training trying to squeeze everything into one year. Those things should have been done, if not by this government then at least by the oil company.

I am certainly disappointed that we have not been able to force the oil company to come to agreement on a participation agreement. I think that is something that should be required from every company that deals in oil and gas. It is certainly something that this government was quick to address when it came to diamond companies. Why is the same consideration not given to oil and gas companies? They are both resource development companies. In fact, this government put up millions of dollars to ensure that those agreements were honoured.

I am very disappointed and not happy with what is interpreted as consultation. I think there has to be a definition of what is considered adequate consultation with the communities. There is a duty here that RWED has to recognize. RWED is the department that is responsible for resources, wildlife and economic development, and you cannot ask the communities to tell us what you want. It is fine to continue to say it over and over again when current legislation is not being followed and when we do not have the resources in the communities to hire people to put these things together. Where do we go? RWED is the department that has the people on the ground and they have to start picking up the slack. If it is not adequate, then we have to start seeing more people hired that can do it.

I have asked the Minister to pass on these concerns to the Minister, but I would like to see him do more than that. I would like to see him stand up and defend us, and stand up to the federal government and state that this territorial government wants to see certain things in place, and we are going to put certain legislation in place. It is not good enough for us to just stand back, throw our hands in the air and say, "When devolution comes then we will deal with it." If that is the case, then this government should not be promoting oil and gas if they are not going to help the communities to deal with oil and gas.

I have other questions regarding campgrounds. My concern again is that there has to be campground development and campground expansion. There has to be proper and adequate consultation with the communities. We have a current problem in the community of Enterprise. There is concern there. We have a problem in the community of Fort Providence. I think that we as MLAs have to play a bigger role when it comes to addressing priorities within our own ridings. I am very tired and frustrated to have to be chasing down the dollars of where the campground projects are, and having to explain to the communities why one campground is taking precedence over another, especially when they have had community meetings and were led to believe that things were in order.

Another issue that I would like to touch on is the issue of ammonium nitrate stored in the community of Enterprise. They are still very upset with the fact that no one has informed them. There are many departments that deal with the issue of dangerous goods. However, RWED is the one that deals with the environment.

I would like to see some of these issues dealt with at the community level. I can only bring it up so many times in this House without... I mean, the department has to respond. They have to go into the communities. They have to follow up on our concerns. I see I am out of time, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. We can always come back. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, the first concern with oil and gas and the activity that is going on there. There are a lot of things that people in the communities, the different organizations in the communities that want to get involved in oil and gas need in terms of resources and people. These communities are different from each other. There are different opportunities that exist adjacent to some of the communities.

We see that there is a desire by the communities in the Deh Cho, some of them, to start getting themselves organized to try to take advantage of oil and gas activities in their region. In other communities, such as in Fort Liard, they have been involved in it for four or five years and they seem to have done really well.

Hopefully, other communities that are beginning to get involved will do as well or even better. There is a template there that exists on how things evolve in certain areas. Perhaps we can learn from other areas in the North that have experienced oil and gas development and the people there have been able to benefit from it.

That is the purpose, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we know oil and gas is happening. It is coming on stream. The aboriginal leaders throughout the North have told us if there is going to be resource development that they want to maximize the benefits of the opportunities that come out of it. We as a government are trying to do that.

RWED is working in conjunction with the other departments, namely Education, Culture and Employment, on the training aspects, trying to get people ready. That responsibility rests with them. I am sure that as the Minister does his budget next week he will probably expand on what Education, Culture and

Employment is doing with training. I know there is a substantial amount going on.

With our role in RWED, I think there are a lot of things that we still have to do. There is the oil and gas coming into some of our communities and regions. Each community seems to be approaching it on their own and there needs to be a coordinated approach. Perhaps we, as a government, hopefully working with the MLAs, we need to see what has been going on to date, assess that and see how we can organize ourselves.

Other jurisdictions south of us have been dealing with a lot of resource development. There are First Nations in the south that have found a way to work with industry in the oil and gas. We need to learn from their experience as well. There is a lot of work that we have to do to do that.

In regard to resources, yes, we need to examine what has happened with putting the petroleum officers in place. We have positions that are not filled. There is an explanation for the position in the Deh Cho. The position is not filled and we have to fill it. This government, this department has been trying to work with the Deh Cho First Nation for the last two years and we are not able to come to an agreement in how to fill this position. I think out of frustration and need for someone to be put in place, I would suggest that RWED move ahead and fill this position. That is one way of dealing with that problem.

The federal government has a lot of responsibility in this area. They need to look at their responsibilities, what they have to do in regard to their legislation that guides them. They are responsible for the oil and gas leases and the permitting and the conditions surrounding it. We as the Government of the Northwest Territories would have to work with them and we have to assess which area and how we can influence them when they allow oil and gas into our area.

Whenever we as a government meet with oil and gas companies we give them a general message that these resources belong to the people of the North and we are in aboriginal people's traditional backyards and communities. If there is oil and gas development going on then the people in the area and the North have to maximize the benefit of this development.

This is a general message and statement that we have been giving to oil and gas companies. I guess what we have to do now is take it a step further and see exactly what ways we can maximize the opportunities that are there for us.

Just recently there was a conference in the Deh Cho put on by the tri-council in Fort Simpson and representatives from the surrounding communities came. The concern that the honourable Member expressed was also raised there. There is also a need for people in communities and regions to assess what has happened to date.

This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of oil and gas exploration in all of our areas. In order to understand what is going on and to get ready for it we need to assess where we are at and formalize a strategy together to move from here. I agree fully with the honourable Member's frustration and concern and we will try to, as RWED, we have certain positions and resources that are available and are there for use of the people.

In terms of sending people into the communities, providing training, we have that and need to work more closely with the communities and the regions; the Deh Cho First Nation, the different First Nations in the Deh Cho, the Metis, we need to do that. It is here. It is starting to happen and we need to do this together. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I too would like to follow up on the Member for the Deh Cho's concerns. I feel that we as a government do have obligations to the people of the Northwest Territories in ensuring that they are protected and have the resources to be able to have a fair hearing, be fairly compensated and fairly treated when they deal with development in the Northwest Territories.

I think that as a government we have precedents where we have had socio-economic agreements with the mining companies, especially the diamond companies and I think that we have a responsibility to allow for a similar practice to take place when we deal with oil and gas companies for the communities are affected socially and economically. We as a government realize we have a responsibility to ensure the well being of the residents, that they are being treated fairly, that we do not see them being manipulated by big business or the people within the oil and gas industry, or even when it comes down to pipelines, that we do not find ourselves in situations.

This happened in the last 20 years, where we have all of the developments happening, but at the end of the day, our communities are left holding the bag when there is a boom-bust scenario, and then people do not really see a benefit to development, and it becomes more of a hindrance.

I think we have to start looking at developments in the different areas. We are spending money to have people trained in the different segments. We have to have people dealing with the housing crisis and problems in our communities. We are seeing social impacts with regard to the developments that are taking place.

I think that we as a government cannot sit back and wait for devolution or the Northern Accord to happen, because it may take some time. We have to find ways to ensure that we do have the resources not just sitting here in Yellowknife, but sitting in the communities and being there as a resource. I mean, you cannot take an economic development officer and turn around and make him an oil and gas specialist. You are not doing justice to the position or the individual who was given that responsibility.

Oil and gas is a specialized field where you need to have people there who have a degree with regard to knowing the geographics and geology and other aspects of oil and gas, knowing the responsibilities to be followed with regard to oil and gas regulations. What is the National Energy Board's responsibility? Someone looking at the different regulations that are in place in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Act, or looking at other areas regarding information that should be compiled and provided to communities.

Land use planning was, in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Act, one of the means of compiling information by communities to identify exactly what is out there, which areas are being used, what activities are taking place so that you do not have

overlapping conflicts between oil and gas development and harvesters.

There has to be a mechanism in place to ensure that this government does not lose sight of its obligations. We are responsible for wildlife, forestry, and we should seriously take a look at exactly what information is being catalogued and who is collecting that information and how is that information being used.

Also, as a government, we have to ensure that we have a means of sending a message, not only to the federal government, but to the oil and gas companies. Telling them that they do have obligations, not just in regard to the oil and gas regulations, but to the Government of the Northwest Territories and to the communities. We have land claims, regional land claim groups, geographical boundaries that are in place now for this government. This government has to ensure there is a mechanism in place to force industry to realize that they do have obligations, that they do not just come in and exploit the land, do what they want and then leave, and that is the end of it. They take the gas, put it into a pipeline and they are gone.

There has to be a long-term investment in place for this government to ensure that we look at all aspects of development, not just looking at the moral or financial aspect, but look at the social aspect that comes with development.

I think it is important as a government that we do, especially at this point in time where we are hearing from different pipeline companies talk about submitting an application to build pipelines. There are about two or three that have been thrown around. You have the different lands being opened up to the different areas. I think we as a government have to enhance the area of oil and gas in this government, to ensure that we have qualified people in the different areas who are available to the communities to work with communities to develop socio-economic agreements, benefit agreements, even in some cases access agreements, developing a consultation process that is spelled out in black and white, so industry knows where they are going.

I would just like to ask the Minister, where exactly do we see ourselves going as a government in that area?

Another area I have a concern about with this government is the number of vacancies in this department. In the hearings that took place, it was mentioned there were 70 vacancies within the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. I have a real problem when I find out that those vacancies are vacancies in my constituency, where we have positions that are there to assist communities, but are not being filled, economic development officers.

We also have to ensure that we have resources in all our communities and that we do not see these resources or funds being exploited to a point where the dollars, instead of filling positions, are being spent within the bureaucracy to run other programs and services, that we are not filling those positions in this department by spending the money elsewhere.

We should have a policy or a guideline in place whereby if that money is not spent for what it has been voted on in the budget process, that those dollars go back into the general revenue fund so those dollars could be used to help out in other areas where we need resources, either through the education

system, health care, whatever. We should not continue to see dollars being lapsed or carried over or not being expended where they were earmarked for and where the human resources, the positions that we have identified are not being filled. I think that is another area I feel the Minister should answer to, to say why this practice continues to be carried on and what they are doing as a government to ensure that they are looking at it and they are going to change how they deal with that. I would like to ask the Minister what is being done in those different positions?

With regard to the affirmative action policies that are in place, you seem to have a lot of people at the lower level of the department, especially in the area of human resource officers and people in the forestry area, but I think we have to find people within the North to fill senior positions within this government, especially human resources. That is an area that people can specialize in. We have people in university taking the different programs and courses at universities that we can hire in these different areas, especially oil and gas and mining.

With that, I would like to ask the Minister if he can respond to some of those general questions I was asking.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to quickly say that when Mr. McLeod made his presentation, he talked about ammonia nitrate and I forgot to respond to it, so quickly, we understand the situation. We have to work with the Department of Transportation, MACA and RWED. RWED is responsible for the environment, so we need to -- I have also met with the mayor of Enterprise, so we are working on it. I guess the problem there was that nobody in the government or industry that was responsible for this ammonium nitrate notified the community that this ammonium nitrate was stored in the community. We will have to look at that and make sure that in the future, dangerous goods are well advertised and explained well to the communities, whenever the stuff is going through their community.

The other one was in regard to capital plans for the Deh Cho. I just recently sent off a letter to the honourable Member for Deh Cho regarding some of the concerns with parks and the funding for the different programs. I think I would like to leave it at that.

Regarding the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko's concern with oil and gas, again, yes, I hear what he is saying. As the Government of the Northwest Territories we undertook a project called the Mackenzie Valley development project. This project was formed as a senior level working group. This steering committee of the Mackenzie Valley development project is coordinating the preparation for the development of oil and gas in the Mackenzie and Liard areas. This group meets regularly to update on activity in the oil and gas sector.

There is a Mackenzie Valley development project division now within the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development that coordinates a wide range of activities, as directed by the steering committee.

We do work with the aboriginal partnerships. This key area supports business development, human resource development benefits and technical negotiations. To date we have

contributed to about four different aboriginal organizations for this purpose, namely the IRC, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, and various communities in the Deh Cho also benefited from this arrangement.

One initiative in this area that is in the final development is the Fort Liard assessment project. This assessment looked at the six key areas of development impacts over the past several years in Fort Liard. Like I mentioned earlier, Fort Liard has gone through some oil and gas in the last six years and this Fort Liard assessment project is on the request of the community to take an assessment of what has happened to the community in terms of oil and gas, how it was approached and what the benefits and problems are. That can be used in other areas that will be getting into oil and gas activity.

We have been doing that work. In human resource development, we work with Education, Culture and Employment in developing programs for both entry level and more advanced positions in the oil and gas sector. There have been initiatives over the past year including safety orientation programs offered at regional community levels. We also worked on the Inuvik rig training program that was initiated through the Mackenzie Valley development project. We have supported rig training for various communities in the Deh Cho.

Various allocations through the Maximizing Northern Employment program are directed towards training people in the North for jobs in the oil and gas sector. This includes projects in the private sector and partnership with the aboriginal development corporations and worker mobility programs. We have helped out in this in paying for workers from one community to move into the job and so forth. There is work going on through this government in trying to address some of the issues in oil and gas. We are not just sitting back and letting all this development happen around us. There is a plan we are putting in place and we are working with it.

As for financing projects, there are some different projects that come on stream and as the different corporations and organizations from the community want to get involved we have programs in place that will look at helping them finance these projects so they will have some equity participation in some of these projects.

We are also looking at the Mackenzie Valley pipeline application processes, keeping an eye on that. There is a western Northwest Territories biophysical study consortium that this Mackenzie Valley development process has a lead role in. This one here, we will be looking at all the work and research that has been done on our environment to date. Wherever there are gaps we need to do more baseline study. This biophysical study consortium of aboriginal organizations, industry, environmental groups, our government as well as the federal government have been asked to participate in this. This will be similar to the West Kitikmeot/Slave study that has taken place quite successfully northeast of here in the diamond area, the barren lands there.

We are also looking at health and social services impacts of development. A working group has been organized to determine requirements so we are better prepared for the health and social impacts of development.

Another thing this Mackenzie Valley development project provides is information for services for government

departments, community groups, other interested parties, and we work jointly with the Department of Transportation to try and identify what kinds of pressures are going to be on our transportation system and try to prepare for the impacts that are associated with it.

This Mackenzie Valley development project is a coordinated approach formed by a senior level working group to coordinate our preparation for oil and gas development in the Mackenzie and Liard sector.

The honourable Member also talked about vacancies in this department. There are 60 positions not filled, I am told. Looking closely at it, about 30 of them are seasonal positions. They are not permanent. It is for summer fire fighting seasons. The other positions are filled with summer students. Some of the positions were kept open for flexibility for the department.

I guess we should take a look at these positions to identify the real positions, to try and clean it up and perhaps whatever positions that are not real positions, we are going to eliminate them so there is a clear understanding of what positions are there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Minister for providing me with the longest answers to questions I asked yesterday. Mahsi cho, Mr. Minister. I do have some follow up questions.

Your answer on the eco-site used to do environmental assessment of the Pine Point Area. The eco-site used was that of northern Alberta. Pine Point being a unique area, because of its history of development with the Pine Point mines, should be considered when an eco-site is compared for compatibility.

Furthermore, the Minister himself stated that what is happening in the areas of exploration today is just the tip of the iceberg. Following that philosophy, we can assume that there is going to be major development in the Northwest Territories. If that is going to be the case, we should know what is going on, what is out there in the environment. The only way we are going to know is by using exact ecosites like the Northwest Territories, not someplace that is compatible to the Northwest Territories just because it is easier.

Would the Minister give me an answer on that suggestion? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are going to be doing an analysis of the forest in the Pine Point area. Once we get that we will be using the true source of information for that area. Hopefully we start the work this summer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is good that the department is committing to do an analysis of the forest. I think it is long overdue. I think it is something that should have been done in past years with people of the community of Fort Resolution who know the area the best. I would like to see if the Minister would commit to expanding the

environmental assessment or doing a baseline information gathering in that area in light of the fact there is a group of people interested in reopening the site for mining and expanding on the old site.

The traditional knowledge component to that data collection and development of a baseline would be very useful and would be very helpful to the community of Fort Resolution. The people there would be very appreciative, I am pretty sure. The elders who are living with us would contribute greatly. As you know, Mr. Chairman, the inventory of oil and gas we have seen in the last few years is alarming and it will not live forever. Our resources and the knowledge that our elders have are on schedule, I guess you can call it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, once we do the work in the Pine Point area we are going to be using the local companies, the Fort Resolution companies there, to do the inventory work. I am told by departmental officials that this practice has happened in the past where we will be utilizing the local people to do the work.

With regard to an environment assessment, usually that happens whenever there is a project like a mining proposal that comes forward. Then an environment assessment opportunity is there through the regulatory process. That will probably come into play if there is an application for a mine in the Pine Point area. As for traditional knowledge, I am told that through the environment assessment process there is an opportunity to provide traditional knowledge as a basis for baseline data. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that the local people are used to do a forest inventory assessment. On the environmental baseline and the analysis of that study, if we are going to have to wait for development we might be waiting for a while and if it is going to happen that is going to be a component.

I was hoping that the department might be a little bit more proactive, especially in light of the fact that there was a project there already, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I should ask the department if an environmental assessment has ever been done post-Pine Point, post-mine. That is one area. The other area that I wanted to cover with the Minister today is the area of responsibility of the department, whether it is perceived or real. We have industry coming to the Northwest Territories on a regular basis. Industry is no different than government in a lot of ways. They do try to get the best deals they can. That is human nature and the nature of business.

When it is time to deal with First Nation organizations, unfortunately sometimes the divide and conquer method is utilized. When you have an organization such as the Akaitcho who is playing an integral role in devolution of the Northwest Territories and their participation is necessary in the discussion at the Intergovernmental Forum level towards devolution, towards revenue sharing – in fact towards provincehood – the Government of the Northwest Territories should play more of a monitoring and advocacy role on behalf of First Nations who are negotiating with industry. Whether it is Paramount Resources, whether it is Diavik or whether it is DeBeers, it should not be left up to them entirely to decide who they can

and who they will negotiate with on these impact benefit agreements and participation agreements.

This is something that was forced upon these aboriginal organizations by the federal government and this government with a three-month deadline to negotiate, which is the BHP IBA. There is a lot more riding on the responsibility of the department than would be seen if we just look at the surface.

On the area of traditional knowledge studies and how the studies are done, I would like to ask the department if they have a policy on how traditional knowledge information is gathered. There are some questions. People have been asked a few questions on the streets here and there. They have been asked ten questions and that is supposed to be a traditional knowledge study. That has been said in the past. I would like to know from the Minister if there is a policy.

On the issue of the role of the department in monitoring the Mackenzie Valley Business Management Act, the people that I represent feel it is an imposition on them. It is an agreement between the settled land claims and the federal government and this government. There is a federal lawsuit by a land claim organization for the federal government to establish Mackenzie data. The Akaitcho, the Deh Cho, the South Slave Metis and the Dogrib are part of the process in a very limited way. They are not voting members. The beneficiaries of any development in the Northwest Territories are those with settled land claims, so it is to their benefit to agree to development outside their land claim areas because they do get a percentage of the royalties from there.

If development is going to happen in the traditional territory of a First Nation, they do not even have the power to intervene, whereas the governments in their infinite wisdom determine that the mayor and settlement council have that power, even though they do not have any responsibility outside their municipal boundaries. There is confusion there.

Those are some of the concerns that I have and I hope that the Minister will address them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Government of the Northwest Territories, aside from the land outside the municipal boundaries and the resources out there, has the responsibility for forestry. Our responsibility lies in trying to develop a good forestry management program. In the forestry management program we talk about doing a timber analysis of how many resources are out there and where they are at. I think our responsibility lies only in that aspect. For us to do an environmental baseline study on our own is something that I am going to have to check on.

I understand that is still a federal responsibility until we are able to negotiate devolution through the Intergovernmental Forum. That is one of the aspects of it. We want to win the people of the North, the different governments in the North, the ability to take control of our natural resources and our lands which the federal government currently controls through the Crown lands. The land out there where Pine Point is still Crown land unless it is all staked out and leased out. It is still the responsibility of the federal government. In order to do a baseline study we will have to get the federal government involved.

That is the reason why, when I replied that the only way I could see it happening now is if there is going to be a proposal to put a mine out there, then we would do part of the environmental impact review process would be an opportunity to have an environmental assessment of the place, so you can get the baseline of it. So you have baseline information of that area.

I am not trying to be non-proactive, that is the situation that we find ourselves in as the government. If we did have control of all the land out there, yes we would probably have the power and the ability to go out and do these environmental assessments wherever we wanted to do them. We do not have that now.

I would also like to reply to some of your concerns by saying in the Akaitcho, through the framework agreement and subsequently through the interim measures agreement, there are provisions in there for the Government of the Northwest Territories to be involved in dealing with communities when it comes to talking about what kind of resource development that the communities are going to allow in their traditional areas. So there is a mechanism there through the IMA to deal with the communities in this regard.

In terms of impact benefit agreements, that is something that happened and there were deadlines put in place by industry and the federal government and we did everything that we could as the Government of the Northwest Territories to support the communities in trying to get the best benefits out of it as we could.

We feel that as a government, when communities are impacted and have concerns about it we will work with the communities to try and reach some better arrangements from the industry, once this has happened. This is how I would like to reply to the honourable Member's concerns. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in regard to the number of vacancies within the government, I would like to ask the Minister, since we have so many vacancies in our community and it seems like we are lapsing these positions every year where we are not filling them, I would like to ask the Minister, is there a possibility that communities that do not have a renewable resource officer within the community -- I will use Tsiigehtchic for an example. That community has been requesting a renewable resource officer for some time. They are also in the line of the pipeline. They are going to be impacted by development.

I would like to ask the Minister, will the Minister considering the vacancies within your department, the money is not being expended to fill those positions, so will you consider looking at the possibility of ensuring that personnel like renewable resource officers are implemented into those communities that do not have it in place to date? So that they can have someone in their community to assist them on renewable resource issues.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. The economic development officer position in the communities, we have been transferring these positions to the municipalities in the past. We are prepared to look at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will take the economic development officer any day, but I was asking about renewable resource officers where there are none in some communities, such as Tsiigehtchic.

They definitely need an economic development officer; I will take that one, but what about the renewable resource officer's position?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman the renewable resource officer from Fort McPherson is responsible for Tsiigehtchic. I want to refer back to my earlier comments when the honourable Member started questioning in this line about the 70 vacant positions within this department. I did reply that we are going to take a look at those positions.

The practice of this department was to fill these positions on a seasonal basis. About 30 of the 70 are seasonal positions for summer work and some of the remaining are for summer students and some of them are open positions so that Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is flexible from time to time when they need additional people to help them out on a part-time seasonal basis. So that was the practice of this department. If the 70 positions are a problem, then I said we would clean it up. The department is going to identify the real positions that are there, the positions that we need. Whatever is left over we will eliminate. That is the way that I replied.

In regard to taking some of these unfilled positions that there are dollars that have not been expended, if that is the case, then the honourable Member is saying lets put these positions in some of the communities where there are no positions. Economic development officer positions are one area where we have been turning them over to municipalities.

In regard to renewable resource officer positions that is a different matter. That I would have to seriously consider before I could reply to the honourable Member, because the renewable resource officer from Fort McPherson is responsible for the work in the Fort McPherson area including Tsiigehtchic. If I do it for one community like that then I will have to do it for all the other communities in the Northwest Territories including the Dogrib areas and the Sahtu area and the Deh Cho area as well and the Akaitcho territory area too, where there are no renewable resource officer positions.

To do that that means we, as a department, in this section, will have to take a close look at the renewable resource officers that we currently have and look at the positions that are there, and look at the communities that do have people stationed there. It is a big question to ask and for me to consider. I need time to think about it and talk to my department. I will have to get back to the Member on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I hear where the Minister is coming from, but I think the point is that in this day and age and the year that we are in, communities want to take on more responsibility. They want to be independent. They do not want to continue to have to depend on other communities or other regional centres for resource people. They want to be able to have personnel and resource people in

the communities to serve the communities so that they are accessible day in and day out. You do not have to wait until the schedule is up on the board before you can see a renewable resource officer or an economic development officer.

I think that as the Minister responsible for economic development and renewable resources, maybe you should consider the possibility of looking at amalgamating those two positions, or resources for those two positions, to have it filled by one individual who will carry out the responsibility as an economic development officer and a renewable resource officer. You have someone there who can work with the community in the summer regarding the fire retention program. During the winter season, they could work in the area of oil and gas or assist the communities developing economic development proposals or applications so that they have an individual so you are not funding two individuals, you are funding one individual with two responsibilities. In order to continue to have to have half positions or one-quarter of a position, I think it is time that we gave those communities resources the human resources to carry out these positions.

I think communities, especially the community of Tsiigehtchic, are frustrated that they are always put into the position of, because of the population and the size of the community, they will continue to have to depend on Inuvik or McPherson for their services.

I think in this case, there is money being given to the community, like you mentioned regarding the renewable resource officer position. In the summer months, you have people stationed there to work on the forestry stuff. I think that in the winter month, you mentioned that there is money there for the economic development position.

I would just like to ask the Minister, will you consider the possibility where we are already accessing or have service agreements with communities for these different positions, if we can amalgamate those positions to formulate one position so the community can have somebody stationed in the communities to carry out those responsibilities? That could be a way for you to assist the smaller communities to receive the services that they are asking for, but also at no extra cost to the government because we are already paying for those positions through contractual arrangements. Will the Minister consider looking at that as a possible option to assist small communities to have these positions located in the smaller communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member makes a very good point there. I think if we are going to do that, for example, in Tsiigehtchic, then we need to talk with the municipalities of the monies that we already committed. If they are supportive of it, then we will have to explore those possibilities. So yes, I am committed to look at it very seriously. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding a question I asked earlier to the Minister regarding the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Under clause 115, under guiding principles, it clearly states that:

The process established by this Part shall be carried out in a timely and expeditious manner and shall have regard to:

- (a) the protection of the environment from the significant adverse impacts of proposed developments; and
- (b) the protection of the social, cultural and economic well being of residents and communities in the Mackenzie Valley.

I think as a Minister, if we as a government have a responsibility to the social and economic and cultural well being of communities where we do have the mandate to carry that out, and as a government, have we ever looked at this clause in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Act, to ensure that the communities are aware of this chapter and that we as a government present a position to the oil and gas developers and to communities that we have a position on the socio-economic agreements, like we have with the oil and gas or the mining companies?

This is a section that clearly states the well being of residents and communities in the Mackenzie Valley. That clause is directed at this government.

I would like to ask the Minister, what are you doing as a government to ensure that we are carrying out the responsibilities in this agreement to ensure that the well being, the social and cultural economic well being of the residents are being taken care of through these different activities that are happening through oil and gas, mining or anything that is coming forth by means of, say, environmental reviews or an application process?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is an act that is in place to look at the land and the water in the Mackenzie River area, when development comes in there.

There are provisions in there that we are fully aware of. We have been currently dealing with the producer group, the Mackenzie Delta Producers Group, indicating that there has to be a socio-economic agreement. Hopefully, that deals with the social and cultural aspect of the act the honourable Member is quoting.

Yes, we are familiar with it and we are doing whatever we can to represent people in the North when it comes to dealing with the producer groups.

As for the numerous other smaller exploration and drilling companies, that is a little more difficult to push this idea there, but with the producer groups, we have undertaken dialogue with them regarding a socio-economic agreement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know Mr. McLeod touched on it, and I think it is the area in regard to the whole aspect of traditional knowledge and the use of traditional knowledge as a baseline data to be collected for information. I think that this government has stated that they are developing a policy or procedure regarding how traditional knowledge is

being used and exactly how it can be used with regard to environmental assessment processes, or in regard to collecting information and data.

I think a lot of people in the North do not have the written skill. I think the whole aspect of traditional knowledge is to ensure that people who have knowledge that pre-dates scientific knowledge regarding the environment, the water, the snow, that it is a fundamental means of collecting that information, so that people, especially our elders, are able to participate in the different review processes.

I think that as a government, we have to establish a policy and we do have to ensure that we, even as a government, start using traditional knowledge as information that we can use when we collect information, and that we should ensure that we do live up to obligations regarding developments that are taking place.

I think right now, one thing that I do not see much happening regarding environmental protection or environmental monitoring or collection of baseline data is right now we are talking about pipelines, major oil and gas developments, but there is very little information by way of establishing land use plans that some work has been done, but we do not have a library of information that we can use or can present through public hearings or information that communities may be accessing because of the information that has been given, but it is either stored or not catalogued in a place that it is usable.

I think that as a government we do have an obligation to ensure that we not only look at scientific data, but we also look at traditional knowledge and other information that has been compiled, either by communities or by cultural groups regarding social and cultural institutes, and be able to use that information in regard to developments that are taking place and present that information on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories to ensure that we do have a reflection of environmental reviews, process and also the regulatory processes that are out there. So that we can ensure it better reflects the Northwest Territories regarding the information that we use. We do not say that we do not have the information or we do not know that the information is there or that we even make an effort to find that information and ensure that it is being catalogued and compiled and that it is usable.

What is the department doing to ensure that the traditional knowledge of regulation or policy of this government is usable and people are using that information in regard to what studies or research is being carried out, either by this government or by the regulatory regimes of the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, traditional knowledge is the knowledge that the aboriginal people in the North have and have handed down through generations and through experience and so forth regarding the land that we live in through their way of life which was spending all their time on the land in all seasons and different parts of the country. So they are aware of the land and different animals, seasons and so forth.

Traditional knowledge is really important for me as well as it should be important for everybody here in the North, because we have a good knowledge of it from the traditional

background. Having said that, as a government this department has been pursuing the inclusion of traditional knowledge in all the studies that have been going on. In the West Kitikmeot Study Area traditional knowledge provided through aboriginal governments that were involved in industry and all governments were included in that study, north and east of us.

The Western Northwest Territories Biophysical Study Consortium that I mentioned is proposing that again a consortium of organizations, the aboriginal governments, the industry proponents, the environmental groups, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government, we are going to be proposing that a research interest in the development areas along the Mackenzie Valley and wherever there is going to be oil and gas exploration be done. We create this consortium. The geographic region for this work includes current and proposed exploration areas and where the pipeline corridor is going to go.

Through the involvement of aboriginal governments we hope to have our elders involved to provide their traditional knowledge in regard to this proposed development. Mahsi, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Minister Antoine. It seems that we are going beyond a general nature in our general comments. So there are some areas that we have touched on that are in detail. I would like to ask the Members if they want to get into the specifics that they wait for detail. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Detail, corporate management, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$15,126,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was not sure from the activity description because I was not on GED and did not have a chance to find this out earlier, but does the process of the revision of the Wildlife Act fall under this activity or under resource management and economic development?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. That would fall under resource management.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I will bring my questions up under that activity then, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Activity summary, corporate management, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$15,126,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 11-10, Corporate management, grants and contributions, total contributions \$1,906,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if we can find out from the Minister why the Maximizing Northern Employment contribution is going down by \$500,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was a budget allocation, a budget exercise and what we are going to do here is if there is a request for funding through the year above and beyond the \$500,000 I have agreement that I could bring it forward, hopefully from everybody here. I think that this is a very important initiative that we need to work with the aboriginal governments, private sector and this fund.

Last year the budget amount was used up, but this year through the budgeting exercise it was knocked down to half of the amount from last year. If the requests are substantial then I would like to bring it forward at that time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would agree with the Minister that I think Maximizing Northern Employment initiative is an important one. I think it is one that we should be emphasizing. I must express my displeasure at seeing the amount dropped here.

What really leads to the concern is if you look at the total grants and contributions under this activity we have gone from \$78 million in last year's main estimates to \$1.9 million in this year's main estimates so there has been a huge increase in grants and contributions, but we are seeing a significant reduction in the amount between what was actually spent this year and what is proposed to be spent next year in this area. We are seeing a huge change in emphasis, we are putting a lot more money into new projects, it would appear, next year as compared to this year. I am having trouble understanding how that does not represent a shift in priorities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the huge increase is because of all the oil and gas activity that has been happening all around us, the Mackenzie Valley development contributions, to try to get ready for oil and gas through the training program, through both the oil and gas and entrepreneurial as well as monitoring the biophysical and the social and economic initiatives. Those sorts of activities have really increased and that is the reason for it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that I said \$78 million was in the main estimates last year. In fact it was only \$78,000. So we had \$78,000 in last year's main estimates. In the course of the year we approved \$1.3 million in supplementaries, \$1 million of that for Maximizing Northern Employment and \$300,000 for the Mackenzie Valley development contributions. We are asked to approve a significant increase over that \$1.3 million to \$1.9 million and yet we are seeing a decrease in Maximizing Northern Employment.

The Minister just said that we need to get ready for oil and gas development. I agree with him 100 percent, but I think that we have to make sure that our residents in those areas who are going to be impacted by oil and gas development in particular are ready to take advantage of those opportunities. That is what I understood the Maximizing Northern Employment program to be. So why would we not keep the money in that program if that was the goal here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman last year it was \$78,000 that was approved in the main estimates. The Mackenzie River Basin Board had some money going to it and there was a Diavik monitoring agency. Together, that was \$78,000. Over the year, we added dollars to it. We added approximately a million dollars to the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy last year to bring the number up along with the Mackenzie Valley development contribution.

Together, the contribution there jumped up to an additional \$1.3 million above the \$78,000. This year, we are contributing additional dollars to the Diavik socio-economic agreement, along with Maximizing Northern Employment, as you can see in the information. The Mackenzie Valley development contribution as well jumped substantially this year.

So because of budget allocations, perhaps the Maximizing Northern Employment is cut by half. In the Maximizing Northern Employment, like I said, Mr. Chairman, if that figure looks low, we have talked about it. We think that we can manage with the budget allocations. Hopefully, that is substantial enough, but if not, then we are going to have to make some budget adjustments as we go along through the year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to hear the Minister say he will look at budget adjustments. I had hoped that you would find areas within your department's budget to increase the funding to Maximizing Northern Employment. I would think this is an important area to make sure we have adequate funding in. I guess really the question comes down to one of priorities and have we picked the right priorities for where we are putting our money?

Not having been on the committee that reviewed the budget in detail, I guess I am right now questioning whether or not this was a good move. I am really hoping that, although I do not have the background that others might in this department, I am hoping that we will find some way to bring that money back and not through supplementary. I think we should first of all look within.

I would like to also say that we seem to have made a dramatic shift too, going from nothing in last year's main estimates to over a million dollars for Mackenzie Valley contributions. The description here says that it is related to the Non-Renewable Resources Development Strategy.

I had understood that the NRRDS strategy was a strategy that we had tabled with the federal government, demonstrating to them how there would be a significant payback for Canada if they were to invest in helping us be better prepared for development in the North. The fact that we have now started to pay for it, does that mean that we have given up on getting the federal monies? Have we basically lost and we are saying now that we are going to have to do it on our own?

If so, what sort of strategies are we funding on an ongoing basis, or putting new funding into with this \$1 million that we are looking at here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have not given up on the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy. I think it is a good strategy. We are going to continue to try to get federal money to contribute to the NRRDS program. There is a lobby effort going to Ottawa, as we all know, with industry and aboriginal groups next week. With Ministerial participation, hopefully we make an impact in Ottawa to move the NRRDS proposal forward.

In the meantime, the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy was looking at the requirements that we would need to get ourselves ready here in the North for resource development. That is going to happen in the next few years in terms of our infrastructure, in terms of our training needs and the business development.

While we are kind of advocating and trying to promote this NRRDS program and trying to get the feds to buy in and give us some dollars for it, and it is not going very quickly, so in the meantime, we still have to look at oil and gas training programs, look at socio-economic initiatives and monitor the biophysical initiatives for the different training that we need.

We have not given up on NRRDS, but at the same time, we have to put some money towards getting our people ready. We heard today from other MLAs who are urging us to do more. These additional dollars into the Mackenzie Valley Development Contributions would be the contributions that would be required to help out the communities that want to get themselves ready for resource development. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Corporate management, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$1,906,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Environmental protection services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$2,165,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under environmental protection services, looking at the graph supplied by the department earlier on in the document, shows by activity expenditure, environmental protection, 2.59 percent. Looking at that, and in light of the Premier's address to the people of the Northwest Territories made on January 11th, 2002, where he talks about, "We will continue to work to expand community and regional capacity, to manage and monitor the environment," I would like to know from the Minister, in this sector, what is being done to improve this section when it comes to environmental monitoring and protection? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have been looking very seriously in this area in the environmental protection services. It is a key focus for us in the Northwest Territories. In the area where we have the responsibilities, it is kind of limited, but in the meantime, our people in the North are telling us we have to be very vigilant with the water, the land and the air quality. We have been told to also take into consideration the wildlife that is there.

That is what we are doing. We are looking at the environment, the wildlife area. We are doing some work towards climate

change. We hope to have a workshop by elders this year to talk about climate change. At the same time, we have air monitoring stations now, one in Fort Liard. We plan to put one in Norman Wells, as well as in Inuvik, because of the increase in oil and gas activity that is going on. We want to keep an eye on the air quality. We have an interim resource management assistance program that we have put into place.

In the environmental protection area, we are looking at baseline and cumulative effects monitoring. We have put regional environmental protection officers in a couple of places through the North. So we have done a number of initiatives to try to put some emphasis in that area. There is a renewed interest in our environment over the last year and we as a department are looking at putting together some initiatives that have been out there, that have been suggested to us. Hopefully, in the near future, we will come forward with some other initiatives that are out there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just further in this area, it is good to hear there is some activity going on to try to improve some of the areas of environmental monitoring. Let me give an example. Right now, in the Beaufort Delta, for example, through the Inuvialuit environmental, or lands administration, they have a land monitoring and wildlife monitoring situation where they have hired people to check on the impacts that are happening in the Delta as a result of the seismic work and the activity that is happening there.

That is something that has been worked out between the land claims group and the companies involved. They have worked it out and monitoring is occurring, actual monitoring on projects. What is occurring in areas where they do not have that in place? Who is out to monitor these sites to ensure spillages are not occurring or damage to the land itself, or to habitat is not occurring, or if it is occurring, being reported? That way, it can be rectified when clean up starts to occur.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned earlier on to other MLAs, our responsibility as the Government of the Northwest Territories, in terms of being out on the land there is mainly through the forest management responsibilities that we have. It is limited to that. The federal government is responsible for the Crown lands and the other jurisdictions that are out there. We are aware of what is going on. We also helped different communities monitor the area. We have helped financially in the Aklavik area, in doing some monitoring of the activity that is going on in there area.

Who is out there? The federal government is out there. They have Fisheries and Oceans, who are very vigilant, as well as the Northern Affairs officers. I understand they are beefing up their office up in Inuvik to provide that service. We are aware of that and we try to keep close contact with them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister touched on working along with him. How does that occur at this point, working along with the federal officials who are on the ground in the communities and regions, to try to ensure that the monitoring is occurring and reporting is happening when things do happen? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department has regular contacts with them. They work closely together. They work together in areas like the oil spill alliance. There are different working arrangements that they have worked out between our department and the federal agencies. So it is built on understanding and working together.

We as a government here, we have a good working relationship with the director general of Indian and Northern Affairs here, so whenever there is a problem, then we raise it with them. There are frequent meetings with the director general and that ensures that we have a good working relationship with DIAND. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, in this area, my question is in line with just ensuring that we have adequate resources on the ground to ensure the environmental side of the equation is being monitored and protected. Not to say that we need to go out and find a whole bunch of new regulations or establish new policies that would make things even more convoluted. One of the concerns is that there are many bodies out there doing their own work in different areas. Sometimes it is a matter of working together and having some, if it is, people on staff to ensure that the reporting and the contact is happening on a very regular basis and to ensure that those contacts are being utilized, that is one thing. If we find ourselves short-staffed in other regulatory bodies out there and squeeze by all the activity that is happening in the Northwest Territories now, that puts other issues on the back burner and it takes time to get the processes moving. I think that is one area as well that we need to keep apprised of. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that is good advice. I think we need to be vigilant and as these sort of activities are around us, we want to make sure that we protect our environment and want to make sure that we have a good working relationship with those who are responsible for monitoring and keeping an eye, make sure that our environment does not get damaged by the development that is going on around us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to just mention a couple of things under environmental protection services. I am not clear right now on who is doing the environmental monitoring when it comes to oil and gas projects in the North. Could the Minister please answer that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: The responsibility is mainly with DIAND. Through the permitting processes, there are land use permits and water licenses that they have to acquire to do exploration. In those, there are provisions for environmental monitoring. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I know in the case of Cameron Hills, several people have been

hired as environmental monitors. From what the Minister is stating, I guess they are working for the federal government. Is that what his understanding is?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, they are federal employees. They do it for the federal government. We do it on the forestry side of it, like I said before. Whenever there are forestry operations going on, we are responsible for the environmental monitoring, over the waters, the creeks and so forth. In the case of Cameron Hills, it would be the federal government's responsibility. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is my concern. I know these people that got hired and it is good to see them get jobs and they are community members. However, it takes an educational process to learn about contaminants and how to deal with contaminants and how to clean up spills properly. I have not seen any course provided or any instruction provided to these individuals. I am concerned that we do not have any training program for environmental monitoring or environmental observers. I think this government should be incorporating some type of training program or Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development should be looking at a mechanism to train them on the job or send them to a southern institution so that we have our own people.

I am very concerned that the territorial government has no presence in the Cameron Hills and I would like to ask the Minister if he can give me a break down, how many times have any of his officers gone up to the Cameron Hills, or anybody from the territorial government for that matter, gone up there to take a look at what is going on? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. In terms of training environmental monitoring officers, I agree with the Member that whoever is going to be doing that kind of work must have some training. I know that there are different First Nations that have started environmental services they have gone joint with someone who is already established in the industry and provides training to get the First Nation people partners aware and trained up for the task at hand.

I think in our government Education, Culture and Employment is probably aware of the need for training our people in having this knowledge so that they can do their work properly and protect our environment.

As for our presence in the Cameron Hills, I am told that we are there not all the time, but on a regular basis. There is a fire camp up there. So in the summer time they use the camp on the Cameron Hills. I guess in that way there is a presence of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development employees up there. To specifically be involved in the oil and gas activity, I think some of our officers, on a regular basis, are there to see what is going on, to monitor the wildlife as well as making sure that the forest issue is dealt with, because when they do cut lines they do cut down a lot of forest.

To be specific I will have to ask members in the department to give me a break down as to who has been there, which officers

and at what time, which days and for which reasons. I need to get more specific information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. The Minister is assuming that Education, Culture and Employment has programs to train environmental monitors or environmental observers, I do not believe that is the case.

I think that there will have to be some better communications between the two departments. It is pretty typical of what is happening in terms of resource development and the lack of support we are getting. The more people that we can get into these types of positions from the community would certainly help us as a territorial government. To have somebody on the ground monitoring what is happening. We have to have people who are trained in that area.

I would ask if the Minister could provide me with the dates, times and purpose that his officers or his employees have gone up into the Cameron Hills. I am really curious to see that. When have they gone? Why have they gone? And what kind of reports do they bring back? If he is telling us that he has a fire camp up in the Cameron Hills and they use that during the summers, well, I would contest that, because the fire camp has not been opened in the last ten to 15 years. If we are counting on people in that camp to monitor what is going on, well, there is nobody there.

I would like to see those things. It really troubles me that there is a real void here of information when it comes to dealing with the oil and gas situation in Cameron Hills and our own people that are charged with looking at the situation and are responsible for it are not there. We do not have the information, we do not have the baseline studies. We do not have the timber inventories yet.

Yet the doors are opened. I realize it is a federal initiative that is putting us in this situation, but we should insist on the baseline studies. We do not have stream trthing yet. We do not know what streams are being affected by oil companies and if we do not have people up there watching what is going on and especially if we have federal people in the position to do environmental monitoring, they are not trained, they do not know what they are suppose to be looking for. They do not know what kind of clean up that they should be looking at. In reality we do not know what is going on up there, not from this government's standpoint.

I would like to know if the Minister could tell me that he is going to take a serious stab at changing of how things are being handled.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all I want to clarify when I mentioned the Education, Culture and Employment I am just making reference that this is one area of training that the department has to look at. I am not saying that they are providing this service at this point in time.

As for who is up there, we can do that. Who has been there and for what reason and when they were there, we can get that

information. As for the fire camp I just made a point that we do have a fire camp up there. Perhaps we use it, I do not know, but we do have that asset, that facility up there.

This is really a federal government initiative. Perhaps the honourable Member wants us to do the work of the federal government. If not then do we have to pressure the federal government to provide us with all the information that is going on up there? If we need to have our presence known up there to keep an eye on what is going on, I will have to look at that.

As for the monitoring group, this is a new initiative. The Cameron Hills operation is just starting to fire up now and they just got the necessary permits approved to go ahead to do the gathering of sites and to start building the pipeline, then they are going to continue to do some exploration there. So there is a lot of activity going on up there, I agree. Not knowing what is going on is very frustrating, I agree. We will do whatever we can to get all the necessary information about the whole Cameron Hills situation.

I mentioned before in other parts of this meeting earlier today that yes, I agree that there is a reality that Cameron Hills, with Paramount there, they are beginning to work towards building a pipeline. They are going to continue to do some exploration. What has happened to date in regard to the people in the Northwest Territories involved in that project and how it came about, what kind of benefits that we are going to get, I would like to look at the whole thing myself to have a better idea of what is going on so that we learn from it. If this is any indication of what is to come it is a really bad start. I think that we have to be better informed and prepare ourselves better as a result of this experience. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. We are dealing with environmental protection services. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I echo the concerns that the Member raised on the territorial government's involvement in the areas of environmental protection. As a government we are spending a considerable amount of both financial and human resources and encouraging resource companies to come up here for development. Encouraging the federal government to assist us in development, but we do not seem to have the same gumption to go after the responsibility of the environment.

Environment is a very sensitive issue in the Northwest Territories. The people that I represent are very environmentally conscious, that is in their nature. That is the Dene way. The ecosystem up here is fragile, we all know, so protection of the environment should be paramount on the minds of those who are charged with that responsibility. Even if they have to get into faces of the federal government and what they are doing they should be aware of what is going on.

If this government's desires for devolution and taking on the responsibility of non-renewable resources then we better have an idea of what is out there. We better have an understanding of the different streams, the different ecosystems. Saying that it is not our responsibility and using that as an excuse not to be involved, maybe not to the extent that we want to be involved, does not negate the responsibility of knowing what is going on. If we do not know what is going on then it is pretty hard for us to react to anything.

We have one Member in the Parliament that is representing the entire Northwest Territories. It is a huge territory, Mr. Chairman. I would like to know what contingency plans the federal government has for spills on the Mackenzie River or for major oil spills on the winter road system. Or if there is an exploration camp in Cameron Hills and there is a spill over there or an environmental catastrophe, what are the contingency plans that the federal government has? What is the role of the government of the Northwest Territories? Those are the kinds of things that we should know about.

When I talk about the environmental assessment that should be done in Fort Resolution, there are elders over there that feel that the water problems of the pits are seeping into their stream system. It is not the environmental protection service of this government or the responsibility that the federal government has. The beavers seem to have dammed up the rivers and are clouding up the bad water from the pits that runs into the stream from getting into the Great Slave. Those are some of the observations that elders have in that area.

I do not know if there has been a post-environmental assessment done on that area by the federal government or this government. Even with the discussion of a possibility of reopening that site for redevelopment, that should initiate an environmental assessment. Even if there is nothing, based on the fact that there was major development, that there was a community there at one time it should necessitate that an environmental assessment be done so that we have an understanding what is there today. What is different from the immediate surroundings as compared to there?

On the area for training for oil and gas in questioning the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment today knowing the fact that the education level is different from regional centres and the communities. We talk about SNAP and the apprenticeship programs. Our students cannot even qualify for these apprenticeship programs because they do not even have the education system. The education system failed them.

I would like to encourage them to learn from the diamond area and the training that is done there and improve upon it. This is more a statement than a question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you Mr. Nitah. We are dealing with the environmental protection services. Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: I thank you for the suggestion and the statement. I just want to say that the environmental protection is the federal government's responsibility. We are fully aware of it, but we are also very concerned about our environment, because it is our environment.

We are going to be here into the future with our people. So the environment is here. Whatever happens with it today we are going to have to live with it. So we are very aware of it. We need to keep on pursuing for devolution through the Intergovernmental Forum. This is a long-term goal for us, that we want to take control of our land and resources up here, so that we call the shots on it and then we can no longer have to say that it is a federal responsibility, but it will be our responsibility eventually. That is what we are going for.

We need to have regular reporting from the federal government who are responsible. Either DIAND or Oceans and Fisheries, but it is mainly DIAND because the permits for the mines and

the oil and gas, they give water licences. So through those processes there are conditions in there for environmental protection through those permitting and licensing the mining or the oil and gas exploration or even the pipeline, they have to have their own contingency plans if there is a spill. I know that Enbridge pipeline that crosses the river up stream from Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie, they practice for eventual possibilities for oil spills every year and they have a plan. They have the equipment there. So I know that every company that is operating on our land knows the concern that we have and these are very strict environmental possibilities surrounding that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Comments in regard to environmental protection services. Budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$2,165,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Environmental protection services, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions \$630,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given the importance of energy conservation in the Northwest Territories and the cost of energy, why are we reducing the contribution under the energy conservation program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The decrease in that is due to the funds moving to minor capital. So there is a difference of \$64,000. The energy program was transferred to O and M under the minor capital. It has not left the program it has just moved to another area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you Mr. Minister. Environmental protection services, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$630,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total grants and contributions, \$630,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Agreed. Resource management and economic development, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$35,597,000. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask a question here regarding oil and gas and realizing opportunities from resource extraction activities in the North, as the fifth paragraph states here. For many, many years, we have known in the communities, I am sure this government must have known -- I was not here so I cannot speak about that part of it. I do know since I became elected, I have been raising the concept of oil and gas. There has always been discussion about the benefits of oil and gas and it has even been compared to the jobs and the value-added activities that we have seen in the diamond industry. I know the territorial government, RWED, has put a lot of energy, many dollars and many resources towards developing the diamond industry. I am just wondering if they are looking at oil and gas and some of the benefits that we could see in terms of value-added.

I think we have lost some opportunity because nobody is really watching and monitoring. There is a pipeline being built in the Cameron Hills. For many years, many of us assumed that we would be looking at a refinery. However, there was no discussion on that idea, no discussion on that concept. I wanted to know if this department had done any research or cost/benefit analysis, or had raised this issue at any time, regarding the potential for a refinery in the Cameron Hills.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the secondary industries and value-added activities study regarding the Mackenzie Valley Development Planning Committee is looking at the different resource development that is starting to occur in our area. The planning committee that I mentioned did a study, as I indicated, on the secondary industries and value-added activity. In that study, they did look at the possibility of a refinery as a result of Cameron Hills activity. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have not seen the contents of that study. I am not familiar with it. However, I am very concerned that we are treating the oil and gas sector a lot differently than we treat the other sectors. We do not allow the timber industry to take the merchantable timber out of the North whole. We insist that they machine them up here.

We are fighting. We see the Premier on the news, in the media fighting to keep the diamonds in the North so that we can have them polished in the North. We do not want unpolished diamonds to go south. We are not doing anything about oil and gas. We are allowing them to come in and build a pipeline without even consideration for a refinery.

I would like to get a commitment from the Minister that we are going to start to look at these things seriously. I also want to ask him who sits on this planning committee? I am not familiar with who the membership is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Chairman, I will ask the deputy minister to reply to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister indicated, we have the Mackenzie Valley development project team that has been set up. It involves all departments of our government. It also involves aboriginal governments that participate on a regular basis. There are a number of committees that have been tasked with dealing with different issues. One of the committees has been looking at value-added. It involves people from the different departments. We had people from RWED, people from Transportation and from the Financial Management Board services. We commissioned a study that was done and presented to the Mackenzie Valley

project team. That study was circulated to all of the standing committee members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask one final question regarding the number of planning committees. I cannot keep track of everybody who is on every committee. However, I received a call from one of my constituents, who raised a concern that RWED has put the president of Paramount Resources on one of their planning committees, Clay Rydell. Is that indeed the case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister. Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: I am not aware of it, unless he is representing some of the industry members. Perhaps he might be representing an oil and gas industry group, but I am not aware of it as such, but we can check on it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on the Business Credit Corporation, if that is okay. I wanted to know about the criteria for getting loans from the Business Credit Corporation and in particular, the market disruption section. I would like to know, what is the extent of research that people do to figure out whether or not a specific loan application in question has any impact on existing markets in Yellowknife specifically?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the deputy minister to reply to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Generally, if it involves a loan, we let the private sector, or the market, take care of itself. We do not take any market disruption factors into consideration.

However, when it comes to grants and contributions that are made available by our government, if there is market disruption, we generally do not make the grant or contribution available, unless the company that is being affected agrees that is okay for us to give them the money. Generally, that is the rule of thumb that we operate under.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Just to be clear, Mr. Chairman, am I to understand that for the loan section, there is no consideration about market disruption? It does not matter about whether or not there is already a company or entity that is providing the exact same service?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, because there is really no benefit from getting a loan through our corporations because we charge a higher rate than the banks, and we are a lender of last resort, so generally, we do not lend to -- first of all, they have to have a viable project. Secondly, they have to have a rejection from the bank in order to get a loan from us, so I do not think there is a significant benefit.

Although, as I say, it is more risk venture areas that we are into. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder, what is the going rate that the credit corporation charges on a loan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The rate varies. Generally, I believe it is two points above the bank rate. It is adjusted on a quarterly basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have an indication as to the range of size of loans that are commonly approved by the Business Credit Corporation? Is there a minimum/maximum range of loan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The deputy minister, Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do put out an annual report. Generally, the Community Futures groups can lend up to \$75,000, as a rule of thumb. Our trained investment managers can lend up to \$250,000. The Business Credit Corporation board itself can lend up to \$500,000. The maximum is \$2 million, which was just recently adjusted. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know that there is any point in getting into it now. We are going to have to quit right away, so I will make a motion to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will rise and report progress. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses out, please?

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 2, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah, seconds the motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of Accountability and

Oversight, as well as Cabinet House Strategy; at 11:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 28, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 3-14(5), Message to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada Mr. Ootes
 - Motion 4-14(5), Appointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner
 - Motion 5-14(5), To Amend the Mandate of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and Family Law Act
 - Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003

- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

- Committee Report 1-14(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 2-14(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 3-14(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates

- Motion 1-14(5), Establishment of a Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 28, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:05 p.m.