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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 28, 2005****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome to another week of work on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 98-15(3): Residential Tenancies Act Consultation**

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice is beginning public consultations on proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. The proposed amendments would modernize the act and make it more focused. They would also ensure that disputes are resolved more quickly and make sure landlords and tenants have effective remedies. I will table the document "Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act Consultation Paper" later today.

The Residential Tenancies Act regulates the relationship between residential landlords and tenants. It strikes a balance between the interests of tenants and landlords. It also provides for the resolution of disputes between landlords and tenants by a rental officer.

We are proposing a number of amendments to the act. Many are minor and are essentially housekeeping items. They correct errors and outdated references. Other proposed changes are intended to introduce new remedies to protect landlords and tenants. A few changes are intended to shorten administrative processes, including the time required to determine undisputed applications for unpaid rent, and permit the rental officer to issue eviction orders.

The consultation paper is being distributed to stakeholders and is also on the Department of Justice web site. The paper contains a brief overview of tenancy issues in the NWT, suggests changes and poses questions for discussion. The department is inviting written responses until the end of April. Ads will be placed in NWT newspapers to inform the public that they can participate. A phone number is available to anyone with questions. This will be followed by focused stakeholder and public consultations later this spring. The department wants to hear from landlords, tenants, non-government organizations and anyone who can offer suggestions about the proposed amendments.

Also, the department welcomes general comments about the Residential Tenancies Act. Given the recent concerns expressed about increases to rental rates, this is also an opportunity for landlords and tenants to express opinions

on rent controls in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Performance Of A Cabinet Member**

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about performance of Cabinet Ministers and our expectations on this side of the House. A Cabinet Minister in our consensus government is someone selected from amongst us to oversee and lead in areas of our government's actions and responses to the needs of our constituents. Although traditionally we tend to elect people with experience to these leadership roles, there is more than experience to take into account. As a Regular Member, I expect our Premier and Cabinet Ministers to take the authority and leadership with which they have been entrusted very seriously and bring their very best efforts to that role and, for the most part, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have been pleased with our choices.

Our four-year terms are relatively short. It's not much time to bring the aspirations and mark of this Assembly to bear on the matters which we were elected to govern. We can't afford to waste time. It takes more than a maintainer or manager approach to show the kind of leadership that we want to see. This is particularly important in areas which impact our people to the extent of Education, Culture and Employment and Justice.

In an earlier statement in March, I served notice of my concerns about Ministers who had been warming chairs on that side of the House in the past and are back. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, we are more than one year into our mandate and I still see Mr. Dent performing his duties in a hands-off, that's-not-my-role, that's-what-my-officials-tell-me way. Bottom line; I am not satisfied with Mr. Dent's performance as Minister of ECE and Justice and I honestly haven't talked to too many people who are.

It is no one's God-given right to sit on Cabinet. It was a privilege given to one from amongst us, at the pleasure of this House, based on that person being representative of the collective will and direction of Members as we endeavour to obtain positive outcomes on behalf of our constituents. So, to me, it's simple. People either perform to that standard or we find someone who will. There is no shortage of talent amongst the Yellowknife Members. I believe the handling of the North Slave Correctional

Centre concern should have been cause enough to send an alarm about competence and the confidence that we placed in Mr. Dent. The dialogue over the Justice cuts his department proposed for this year's budget has proven they are not readily defensible. The information is questionable. It's the Minister's job to answer to these decisions. The buck stops with him, not his officials, not his advisors and not the Finance Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I am not satisfied. I want to revisit Mr. Dent's participation in Cabinet. The work that we have on behalf of northerners in the area of Justice and Education are too important for that role to be occupied by someone just doing a job. I want passion, heart, creativity, accountability, responsiveness and, most of all, leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Future Of The Deh Cho Hall

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, last Friday, I was asking some questions about the government's plan to shut down the Deh Cho Hall. It's in Fort Simpson. I just wanted to address this issue today in a Member's statement. The Department of Public Works and Services and Education, Culture and Employment are meeting to decide the fate of the hall today. Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from the Village of Fort Simpson and they are concerned that Public Works and Services is going to tear down the Deh Cho Hall in 2006, based on some phantom report that no one in my community has ever seen.

This is a very serious issue for my constituents, Mr. Speaker. We are talking about 30,000 square feet of prime real estate. I am glad the departments are meeting about the building because they talk about shutting it down, but we need community input too, Mr. Speaker.

To all the people of Fort Simpson, Mr. Speaker, Deh Cho Hall isn't just some line item on a department's to do list. When Simpson looks at the hall, we don't see a dilapidated old building. We see a place where our people can go to get training in order to make better lives for themselves and their families. The people in Fort Simpson say the hall's foundation is good and with a little fixing up, we see that hall standing for another 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, I think we will be sending a bad message to the community in order to tear down a perfectly good building, especially when our need for infrastructure in Nahendeh is so high. Mr. Speaker, wasn't it the Premier who said not so long ago that he can't understand why there are so many buildings left empty in communities when they could be fixed up for families to live in. I would use the same argument for Deh Cho Hall. I can't understand why this government would abandon a perfectly serviceable building when it, too, could be fixed up.

Deh Cho Hall, to my constituents, represents 30,000 square feet of training space and we want to see the government do everything possible to save it. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Human Resource Review At The North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I would like to thank the Minister of Justice for finally recognizing there was a problem at North Slave Correctional Centre and acting on it.

From day one of this Assembly, some Members of this side of the House had been speaking out about human resource issues at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Low morale, high staff turnover, wrongful dismissal suits and other problems were brought to our attention, that were a result of poor management and leadership at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Repeatedly, some of us hounded the Minister of Justice to take action demanding a review. For the longest time, he refused to acknowledge that there might be some serious problems at the North Slave Correctional Centre. On June 2nd of last year, referring to the North Slave Correctional Centre, he said, "I have every confidence that the training and supervision is adequate at the centre." On May 27th, he said, "I am satisfied that, other than the usual problems you can expect when one facility shuts down and people are moved into a new facility, there is nothing out of line there, so I don't see the need for it right now." On October 24th, he said, "I have no inside knowledge that there are problems. I believe that the issues are being raised by individuals, and I do believe that a majority of the staff in corrections are satisfied with their jobs and the way in which the department is running." When the Minister finally conceded to an internal review, the findings pointed to far more pervasive problems than any of these statements would have led us to believe. A total of 36 recommendations to improve human resource functions came out of the review; a review that, until last June, the Minister adamantly stated was not required.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister owes an apology to the employees at North Slave Correctional Centre who had the backbone to come forward with their concerns and persist, despite the department's initial refusal to even consider there might be cause for concern. Where was the leadership? I suggest it was sadly lacking, Mr. Speaker, at the political level and at the management level within the department.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand how management could stand by and allow the working conditions and morale to deteriorate to such a state. I don't understand how a Minister could dismiss the concerns of Members and say that a review was not required in June, and yet have one take place in August. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know what has happened to the employees who allowed this to happen under their watch. Are they still with this government? Mr. Speaker, I will be following up with questions at the appropriate time today. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Participants At The Sport North Symposium

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, I attended a reception for coaches from across the NWT who were in town for a coaching symposium. These are highly dedicated volunteers who don't get paid and only do what they do so athletes can have the programs and proper coaching. So many times, Mr. Speaker, the people who choose to coach get flack from many different angles and many different issues. These folks do a thankless job and are volunteers. Without them, many support programs would have a hard time getting off the ground.

Many coaches feel that if they can influence the decision of one young person to make good choices and live a healthy and productive lifestyle, then everything they do is worth it.

I would like to use this opportunity in this forum to thank and acknowledge the people who sacrifice their time and try to make a difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Qualification For Homeownership

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the benefits of our booming economy is that people never had a chance for many years to have year-round employment. That means people who only could work seasonally, or on and off, now have the opportunity for great paying jobs. But there are a lot of people whose economic circumstances keep them handcuffed from moving forward. Many people owe a lot of money to our local housing authorities and whatnot because of their circumstances from years before, such as unemployment and, again, seasonal work.

Mr. Speaker, now that they have jobs, in some particular cases, if they are in housing authorities, rents have drastically skyrocketed and it gives these people a very difficult chance to pay back some of these arrears. In many cases, they were not getting back the arrears. Mr. Speaker, the point that I am raising is many people can afford mortgages out there to get homes, but they need the assistance to bridge that opportunity. They cannot qualify at this time for mortgages through our NWT Housing Corporation because they owe money. Simply, they are excluded because they have owed money from before, and we are not finding ways to work with them.

Mr. Speaker, in some cases, I can assure you personally that I know that rent is higher than what they would probably pay in a mortgage. What are we doing? We need a program that is flexible that will work with the people. We need a program and a policy that will go forward to help them purchase their houses, if that is the

case and the direction that they want to go and need to go. We need a program that adjusts with the times.

Mr. Speaker, if you owe money from the past to a local housing authority, you can't even get on the list to qualify for social housing. We need to find a way that helps bridge payments and opportunity together. Mr. Speaker, this government needs to do something to help assist the way arrears flow into the government because, as it stands right now, the money is not flooding in.

Mr. Speaker, let's help the people who want to help themselves. That is the bottom line. That is why we are here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

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

Member's Statement On North Slave Sports Report

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to give the sports report from the North Slave. Mr. Speaker, I attended the Great Slave Snowmobile Association's 2nd Annual Behcho Ko Extreme Snowmobile Racing event that was held over the weekend in Rae. Unfortunately, the cross-country race from Rae to Wha Ti had to be cancelled due to weather on Sunday. However, Mr. Speaker, many other races and events did go ahead and were very successful.

The event was well attended by North Slave residents and also attracted people from Yellowknife and around the lake and, I believe, even from Alberta. Everyone had a good time and enjoyed all of the races that occurred over the weekend.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the sponsors, organizers and volunteers for putting together another successful event. I look forward to next year's snowmobile event again. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Independent Appeals Tribunal For The Workers' Compensation Board

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Workers' Compensation Board does a lot of really good work in a number of areas. It has been established with the partnership of employers and workers to help keep accident rates down. When accidents do happen, they deal with them in an effective and responsible manner.

Mr. Speaker, in the last Assembly, we changed some legislation here that would enable the Appeals Tribunal of the Workers' Compensation Board to be much more appropriately set up as a truly and, in very practical terms, an arm's length and an independent system from the regular workings of the WCB. The idea here is when an injured worker does have an issue with the decision of the regular compensation board program, that there is a process that they can trust will completely, thoroughly and independently assess the decision and the process and take action to correct it if they so find.

But, Mr. Speaker, our NWT/Nunavut Appeals Tribunal has not gone the fullest extent, I believe, in terms of establishing itself as truly independent. We still have, Mr. Speaker, an administration for the Appeals Tribunal that is, in effect, the Workers' Compensation Board administration. We still have physical offices and other such connections that are still in place. This is not appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I note from talking with some injured workers, that when decisions are rendered by the Appeals Tribunal, they can take several months before implementation begins. Perhaps a more significant problem is that decisions, as rendered by the Appeals Tribunal, go back to the WCB; in effect, back to be implemented and sometimes interpreted by the same people who may have caused the worker to file an appeal in the first place. So there are significant issues of a legislative and an administrative and a governance role, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, need to be addressed within our Workers' Compensation Board. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Critical Assessment Of Ministers' Performance

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Taking off on the statements that the Members for Hay River South and Kam Lake made, I would like to say a few things that the Ministers across the floor have done that I am not happy with either.

Mr. Speaker, first, let me start with Minister Miltenberger. Thus far, he spent three years studying the Supplementary Health Benefits Program and he is asking for some more time. So many of his projects are under study. I think that we need to keep him in his job for at least 10 more years before we see any kind of results.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, secondly, the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation has, thus far, not heeded any of my suggestions or outrage to revisit the second phase of the market housing initiative, even though the department has not provided any compelling evidence to suggest that we should move on to the second phase. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister is actively pursuing the possibility of buying out all of the trailers that the oil companies bring up. I think he is going to change the name of NWT to NWT Trailer Park.

Mr. Speaker, thirdly, I can speak to all the nasty things that Minister Floyd Roland said in his budget about the poor people who can't get off their butts to get a job in this booming economy. I know he has been going through many briefings from the experts and the NGOs in communities to see the new light on the matter.

Mr. Speaker, Minister McLeod dared to give a permit to the Yellowknives to do a seismic study within the Yellowknife boundary, without giving a notice to the city government. For that, I think his head should roll.

Mr. Speaker, fifthly, I have made it clear how displeased I am with the way Minister Bell has created 22 new jobs in the department at a cost of almost \$3 million a year, even though, for years, we have been asking for more money for the tourism industry and all sorts of things we talked about.

Mr. Speaker, I have a whole list of things to say about the Premier, but I don't have enough time today.

---Laughter

And, of course, Mr. Dent. Anyhow, for that, all the heads should roll. I understand this is a tough job and the debate will continue. I expect the Ministers to pull up their socks and do a better job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier today, until June of last year, the Minister of Justice adamantly refused to even consider that there might be a problem with human resources at the North Slave Correctional Centre. In August, the deputy minister called for a comprehensive, independent internal review. My question for the Minister of Justice is what changed between June and August of last year to cause his 180-degree shift in position? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I previously said, the questions by the Member and by the Member for Range Lake played a part in that. It also became clear that the issues went far beyond the usual turmoil that you would expect from moving from one facility to a new facility and a change in the model. At one time, that was what we thought was the largest part of the problem, but, when the issues persisted after the change, it became clear that we had to look deeper for what the problem might be. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the Minister was completely unaware of internal problems at the North Slave Correctional Centre, problems that have been subsequently revealed by the internal review, does the Minister now question the quality of information coming to him from his own department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the department does a good job of getting the information that I need. There is no question that, in the case of the morale issues at North Slave and in human resources in the department as a whole, there was room for improvement. That has been set out in the report that was released in November. We are working to correct those issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the gross mismanagement that occurred at the North Slave Correctional Centre and the recommendations that have come out of the review, I am wondering if the Minister can tell us who was removed and where they are today. Are the individuals who were responsible for the mismanagement at the centre still working for the government today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The human resources report suggested that there were some issues with how things could be done better. I am not sure if the report used the word mismanagement. I don't believe it did. So changes have been made. The management at the North Slave Correctional Centre has been changed. There have been private personnel changes. It is not normal for us to talk about what has happened to individuals in this House, so I will just have to say that changes have been made. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is clear to me that there was a dysfunctional management structure in place at the North Slave Correctional Centre, whether the Minister may want to admit to it or not. I am wondering if the Minister could, at the very least, apologize to the employees that are out at the North Slave Correctional Centre, because I believe they are owed an apology, at the very least. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 494-15(3): Human Resource Review Of North Slave Correctional Centre

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report that was completed on human resource practices in Justice clearly indicated that there were some problem areas. It is regrettable that that situation arose. I think that we have moved very quickly to deal with the issues since the report has been released.

As I said, it is not a situation that I hope to see happen again. It is clearly regrettable any time that government policies and procedures are not followed and that people are not satisfied that they can get the training and support that they should. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. I will start off today talking about an excerpt from Hansard from Friday, in unedited Hansard, with respect to Dene K'onia. Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a message being put out there to justify these cuts which I don't like the tone of, and I don't think it is presented accurately and clearly. I quote from Hansard, "Mr. Speaker, in the last few weeks, we have had one, sometimes two, young inmates there from south of the lake. So spending \$1.5 million a year for that number of inmates is not a good expenditure of taxpayers' dollars." Mr. Speaker, anybody reading this or listening to this would be led to think that the Minister is suggesting that we are spending \$1.5 million a year on the one or two inmates from south of the lake. In fact, that is not true. I would like to ask the Minister, isn't it actually true that the Dene K'onia has been at or near capacity for the last year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that I, also in Hansard, did agree to that. That was the situation when the Member asked the question on Friday. I would have to review Hansard. But I did say that what we have done, since March of last year, is put all of our young offender inmates into Dene K'onia. So, yes, Dene K'onia has been operating at greater than one or two capacity. However, one of the arguments that has been advanced for us to consider keeping Dene K'onia open is to keep clients close to their families. If we were to take that same argument for families who are not from that region, then we would have to keep them in the Yellowknife facility. We have a situation where we have two facilities right now. We can save more money if we close down Dene K'onia. It is simply a matter of economics. It has nothing to do with numbers or usage. It is a matter of where we can save the most money. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in trying to portray this to the public and to the Members of this House and even to his fellow Members of Cabinet, because I have an excerpt here of the Premier. I don't fault the Premier for saying this, but this is all any of us were ever hearing. But in front of the Dene Nation, the

chiefs on the Hay River Reserve, at a recent meeting even the Premier joins in the same song as the Justice Minister and says, "So we have a situation where there are 22 staff looking after, I believe, today, there is only one person from the South Slave in that institution. I might be wrong. It changes a bit day to day." This message creates a picture of 22 people in an institution at \$1.5 million a year looking after one kid. It is an incorrect picture. It is done in order to justify this reduction. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice if, in fact, every justice system facility you have here in the Northwest Territories does not collect or receive residents or inmates or clients territory-wide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would note that the quote that the Member provided did note the resident was from the South Slave. Again, it comes from the issue of keeping clients close to home. That is why that number or that reference has been used on a regular basis. Do we have clients in all of our facilities from all across the Territories? The answer is yes, we do.

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

Supplementary To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Minister would agree that it would make sense, in terms of us trying to defend our facilities to bring up the issue of, where possible, keeping clients close to the home communities and close to their families. We bring that up as a means of defending our position, but it isn't the only consideration. So I think that the Minister has put out this picture again, may I say, of 22 people looking after one kid and yet they add south of the lake as a little caveat onto the issue. But the Minister has put out an incorrect picture. On that subject, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't the Minister concur that it would be optimum to keep clients close to their homes, close to their families and close to their communities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll answer Mrs. Groenewegen's second question. Yes, it is always better to keep the clients as close to their families as possible. We will endeavour to do that in the future. But the bottom line is that we have two facilities in operation in the Northwest Territories for young males. By closing one of them, we can accommodate all of the young males that we have in custody, and we can save a significant amount of money. That is what this is all about. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad that we are getting to what this is all about, because this is not about 22 people looking after one young offender south of the lake at the cost of \$1.5 million a year. This is about taking a service territory-wide that was delivered in Hay River and moving it to Yellowknife. Isn't that the correct truth? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 495-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not exactly. We had been operating two facilities for the Territories, but, as a cost-savings measure, we tried not operating the one in the North Slave for a while and discovered that we can't save nearly as much money as we can if we shut the one down in Hay River. As I said, the issue of where the clients came from isn't something that was raised by the department when the issue was put before the standing committee and the business plans. Where the clients came from was not talked about as part of the justification in the initial incidence. That has been talked about only since it became an issue, after it became publicly known that the facility was slated for closure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I mentioned the issue of people who have arrears with the Housing Corporation and have difficulty paying off their debts right away and then they find it a difficult situation where they are not eligible for Housing Corporation programs. Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation is what ways is he going to address the need that those people who can help themselves are able to help themselves? In what way will we have a policy that addresses the time and that need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have processes in place to assist people with arrears. You can work out a payment plan with the local housing authority to come in and say you are willing to pay down your arrears over a period of time; make biweekly payments or monthly payments. Out of that arrangement, then your name can get back on the list for public housing, but you have to sign an agreement committing yourself to pay down those arrears. I think the whole policy we have in the government, or since I got in as a Minister, is that we have to bring down those arrears that are out there. The majority of our LHOs have a 90

percent rate in ensuring that they collect those rents. The majority of our local authorities are doing that. But, again, there are options there for people with arrears to work out a payment plan with the local housing authorities so that they can get back into public housing.

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

Supplementary To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be very specific, when the Minister says pay back those arrears in conjunction with dealing with the housing authorities on the local level, do they still qualify for housing while they still have outstanding arrears regardless if a payment program happens? As I understand it, they are excluded from public housing until those arrears are completely cleared away. Could the Minister explain that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the idea is that in order to get into public housing, you must not have arrears. The idea is, through this payback plan, to make sure that people who have been evicted because of not paying their arrears can come back to the local authority and work out a payment plan to pay off those arrears. Then their name will be put back on the list for public housing. Again, you have to remember that we have a lot of people on the waiting list to get into public housing. So you can't jump the queue because you got evicted and then come back. You basically have to wait until your name is put back on that list. The whole idea is to have a fair housing program in which we have to accommodate our social clients. Again, we do have programs and policies there to assist people, such as I mentioned in regard to the payment plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the clear answer from the Minister on that particular case, but what the Minister has basically described is if we have a family at risk and they owe money in arrears, I can't see it any other way. How do they make a payment plan when they have no money? The other thing is if you have no money and you can't make a payment plan, where are you to go? Social housing is to be there for those people who fall in that bracket of nowhere to go. We have people in jeopardy who are at risk. Will the Minister agree that, at this time, he could look into a policy that can address this social housing need to get these folks off the street or are in at-risk situations and build that in such a way that we can say, okay, welcome to social housing, but you have to be on a payment plan? Will he look at a policy that deals with that problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have programs by way of income support. If you are talking about clients who are in need of support, we do have support mechanisms in place. But, again, I have to point out to the Member that the whole idea of social housing is that we have been given direction that we have to do better in collecting our arrears that are out there, and bringing down those percentages. Like I said, we have a base set for local housing authorities. We expect them to collect 90 percent of the arrears. They are doing that. But, again, we do have policies in place to get people back in housing, and we do fund other social agencies in regard to the transitional housing here in Yellowknife. We do have other programs that are there to help people. I would just like to point out to the Member that we have to be fair to all of our clients. We cannot do one thing and force people to pay their arrears but, on the other hand, leave an open door. So we do have these policies. There is income support to assist people by way of social programs that we have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think what we have heard is government at work at its finest. One hand of the government is paying the other hand of the government, and we are no further ahead. So people who have arrears we're allowing income support, I think as I understood it, to pay their housing arrears. At that point, I am really lost. Why are we bothering with the administrative work then, if that is what the Minister was trying to say? I applaud his effort by his saying that we are going to try to deal with arrears. I applaud that effort, but if you don't have anything and you are asking to pay something and you have nothing to give, well, at the end of the day, we have nothing. These folks are struggling out there. We need a policy that clearly says if you owe money, you can still qualify for social housing. But to get social housing, you have to engage in an active payment program plan. We don't have a policy that addresses that. You clearly said earlier that you have to pay off your arrears before you qualify for social housing. So there's a problem. Will he address that problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 496-15(3): Eligibility For Public Housing

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, we do have programs there to assist people. If they did have arrears, they come into the local housing authority and meet with the counsellor at the office and say I would like to get back into social housing, I know I have arrears. By showing commitment by that person, by signing a payment plan and saying okay, I agree to pay down my arrears...I know it is not going to happen overnight. It can happen over two years or four years, but at least make the attempt to come in and make that commitment. That's all we ask.

We ask for them to make the commitment, because it's not fair to our other tenants who are making their payments and are in good standing. But in order to be evicted and not pay your arrears means you have an outstanding debt you did not pay. So there is that program to ensure they get back in. But again, if the Member would like to talk to me about this individual, I would like to sit down and explain to him or sit down with the local housing authority to work with this former client to get them back into social housing. Again, they have to make that commitment. Thank you.

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

Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions this afternoon are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko, in relation to my Member's statement regarding the independence of the Appeals Tribunal process from the Workers' Compensation Board itself. Mr. Speaker, does the Appeals Tribunal still, indeed, have administrative and staffing links to the WCB workings? Thank you very much.

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

Return To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we still do have a system where the board basically deals with a person's appeal. A decision is made and if they don't like the decision, they appeal it. It can be appealed by the individual through the Appeals Tribunal, but there is still some management link just by way of administration in that corporation to oversee the process. Again, we are looking under phase two to allow the clarity and identify the transparencies so we have that independency, because there have been overlaps in regard to how appeals have been handled, but also how the Workers' Compensation Board responded to those appeals. Again, we are working through that by the second phase of the legislation. Once we bring forward the second phase of the legislation, hopefully we can have more transparency to separate the independence of these two boards. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, so there are still legislative changes; we still have work to do on the floor of this Assembly in order to enable this to really take hold. To what extent, Mr. Speaker, are we connected with our colleagues in Nunavut in order to enable this to happen, and is the Minister's counterpart in Nunavut onside with this and working collaboratively to help this happen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's critical that we continue to work with our colleagues in the East because we do share the same Workers' Compensation Board. I met with my counterpart on January 25th in Iqaluit, where we went over looking at the draft legislation for phase two. We have raised concerns in regard to transparency, but also to look at how we are trying to expand our authority. We have appointed an active position in Iqaluit to work with the workers' advisor. So the workers' advisor here in Yellowknife now has someone he can work with in Iqaluit. So we have developed that position. So those are the types of transitional processes we're working on. Again, I have been working with my counterpart in Nunavut to ensure that we are both online with these amendments to this legislation. So we will be bringing forward collectively and allow both legislatures to have an open debate on those changes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the workers in Nunavut will be very pleased to know that they have a counterpart to the workers' advisor here. Mr. Speaker, are there significant costs and staffing issues related to creating this more independent group, and is that seen as a difficulty or a barrier in establishing this independence? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the key components of how we work together is the membership we have on our different boards. Two members are appointed to the Workers' Compensation Board, but we also have members on the Appeals Tribunal who are now from Nunavut, which they are still requesting more representation on those bodies. I think by ensuring we have people on these boards from Nunavut, is basically to ensure they have input in regard to how these appeals happen. So we are working to ensure that we have more involvement from people from Nunavut by having a board that's basically made up of representatives from the East. So again, that's one of the things we're working on, is to have a balance between the representation of that board and also ensuring we have a voice from both territories.

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

Supplementary To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, one of the significant challenges or problems that injured workers encountered in the last few years, at least, was the backlog of cases before the Appeals Tribunal. How are we doing in that neighbourhood today, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps more specifically, how many cases are before the Appeals

Tribunal today and what is the average turnover or turnaround in waiting times for those appeals? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 497-15(3): WCB Appeals Tribunal

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from the information that I've seen, the appeals, in a number of cases, have gone down in the past number of years. Because it's such an open-ended question, I'll take it as notice and get that information to the Member so that we can get some clearer percentages and numbers that are accurate. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is for the Minister of Justice. I believe the coroner falls under his domain. I'd just like to ask what our role is in the government for our coroners. What structure does the coroner have within the Department of Justice? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The coroner is a contractor who is hired by the Department of Justice and operates in an office out of a building in downtown Yellowknife. He is assisted in his work by volunteer coroners across the Northwest Territories and in all communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am just wondering if the Minister can tell me if we have coroners or helpers in the communities and what role they play in the coroner's office. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The coroners in the communities play an extremely important role. We have coroners in most of the communities in the Northwest Territories and I said they work as volunteers because their pay is about \$150 a body. In effect, for the amount of work that they do, which on average is about 25 hours a case, that amounts to a volunteer position and it's something that we are looking to right now on whether or not it needs to be revised. But the coroners will investigate an accidental death. They will make recommendations if there's a need for regulation changes

or safety issues that need to be dealt with. They often go above and beyond what their expected duties are, Mr. Speaker, by helping families deal with bodies. That really is outside the scope of their job, but many do the work of what would otherwise be seen as an undertaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to thank the Minister for that answer and I'd like to say hello and thank you to all the unsung heroes out in the communities being volunteer coroners. They do fulfill a meaningful role in society as a whole, Mr. Speaker. It's something they are doing out there that's not learned; it's a particular skill set that makes a person a coroner. However, I understand what learning they do need, Mr. Speaker, is that our department may cut that out. They may cut out some coroner training. Can I get an answer on that from the Minister, please?

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

Further Return To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I met with the coroners at their recent training session about two weeks ago, the question was raised and I had to admit to the coroners that in the budget that's before the House right now, the money for their training session is not included. But I did commit to them that I was confident that before the end of the fiscal year, I would be able to find the funds to make sure that that training is offered. That is the commitment that I intend to stand by.

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

Supplementary To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to hear that commitment from the Minister because, indeed, like I said, it's an unsung hero's position in the communities. Would this commitment include, did the Minister say, a training position, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 498-15(3): Coroner's Relationship To The Department Of Justice

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of training has been discussed with the chief coroner. What we will endeavour to do is to work with the chief coroner and make sure that a training session can be offered for the community coroners in the course of the next year, just as we've done this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for Minister Dent in his responsibility as the Minister responsible for day care programs. I've asked a lot of questions in the past pre-federal budget about the details of this National Childcare Program and the Minister was waiting to see what was going to be included in the budget. So in light of the budget having been delivered, could the Minister report to the House as to what that means for us in the Territories? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now it's a bit of a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that the federal government did commit \$5 billion to early learning and childcare. The bad news is that they only committed the first year on a per capita basis. That's \$700 million across Canada. So that means to us a very small portion of money and it's going to be a challenge for us to live up to the expectations of the public, given the expectations set by the federal government. We're going to have to examine whether or not it's intended that this agreement be on a per capita basis through its life. If it is, then there will be some discussion between the three territories about whether or not this national vision stops at the 60th parallel. Because if the national vision of Canada stops at the 60th parallel, we may not be in a position to sign onto this deal. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Supplementary To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding was that it was already suggested that the funding was on a per capita basis, but perhaps there is room yet to negotiate and decide. If that's the case, could the Minister indicate what he's doing to advance our territory's position to make a difference in this formula? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're hanging our hopes on the wording of the detail to the budget, which says that for the first year and until the framework is signed off that the funding will be distributed on a per capita basis. We are going to keep after the federal government to find out if that means in years two, three, four and five that the funding formula could be different. I was supposed to have a conversation with Minister Dryden yesterday but, unfortunately, we didn't connect. My staff are working at setting up another conversation where we can follow through on that. Our deputies have spoken in the past week by phone and we

think that we have some support for a base funding plus per capita distribution in most jurisdictions, but Ontario remains totally opposed to that. So we are going to keep pushing the issue with the federal government and with our partners across Canada. As I said, we will decide in discussion with our territorial colleagues whether or not this really is a deal that we can sign onto. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it sounds like there are lots and lots of details to this deal that still need to be worked out. I understand that the Minister has been working on a draft memorandum of understanding or some kind of agreement between all of the Ministers. Could I ask the Minister about the time frame of this? Now that the budget has been delivered, are we to expect details to be worked out within the next two weeks or three weeks and whether or not the funding formula is the only point of dispute at this stage? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Northwest Territories, the funding formula is the area of contention. The other areas we are satisfied with. There are provinces that have some difficulty with some of the issues, but, by and large, we can live with the agreement the way it is structured now. But we are not satisfied at all with the funding. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate more about the path for the NWT or the jurisdictions north of 60 who are not happy? For the governments in the North who are not happy with what is happening, what are we to do? What is the Minister planning on doing, other than talking to Mr. Dryden? Are there any other things planned to make sure that we get our bigger share of the announcement? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 499-15(3): Details Of The National Childcare Program

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member has pointed out, yes, I'm going to follow up quite aggressively with the federal Minister. The three territorial Ministers talk on a regular basis about strategy. We have all agreed that our Premiers need to discuss this issue and it's on the agenda for the Premiers' meeting next month. I have spoken to Premier Handley about perhaps taking this issue to the Prime Minister, because I think that it's something that if we can't get passed it, there's a real problem with expectation. The people of Canada expect that we're going to be able to have a similar sort of situation all across Canada when it comes to early

learning and childcare, but if our funding is only based on per capita, then the North isn't participating on an equitable basis.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of RWED. I'd like to ask the Minister if he agrees that the Beaufort-Delta is the anchor field for the oil and gas industry. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the Mackenzie gas project, there are three fields that we refer to as anchor fields that really have justified the project in the eyes of producers: Parsons Lake, Niglintgak, and Taglu. But I think what you'll see, and we're starting to see this now in the Sahtu region, a lot of exploration and some potential development on the horizon. We have other oil and gas exploration and development and gas flowing south of 60 from the Cameron Hills. So there are other pockets of activity. Our expectation is that once this pipeline, this conduit to market is built, we'll see exploration all up and down the valley. Right now in terms of the known quantity, not taking into account potential offshore, the three anchor fields in the Member's riding are what's really underpinning the economics of this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

MR. MCLEOD: I'll thank the Minister for that and if he thinks that the Beaufort-Delta is the anchor field for now, then why is there not an oil and gas division office located there? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. I think the Member has certainly hit on a point that I think many, many agree with, and that is that as a government we're challenged and we don't have adequate resources to deal with the scale, at this point, of oil and gas development now and certainly not going forward, and that's something that we have to come to grips with. I've asked my department to go back and come to me with several options for more adequately resourcing the department in terms of positions up and down the valley. I think the Inuvik area is obvious, but so are positions required, I believe, or an approach required in Norman Wells and in Simpson, certainly from those regions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit to his visiting the possibility of moving the office to Inuvik where it rightfully belongs. Thanks a lot.

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

Further Return To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'm a little unclear as to whether or not the Member is referring to the minerals, oil and gas division. We've had some discussion in and around that. I know the mayor has raised that in correspondence with me. I've made the point that there's a lot to minerals, oil and gas that is outside the realm of oil and gas and much of it does a lot of work with the Geoscience Centre here in Yellowknife, and has broad responsibility for the entire territory across a number of different areas. So, no, I'm not entertaining moving the minerals, oil and gas division to Inuvik, and I'm not entertaining moving the MVPO to Inuvik. I am entertaining looking at options for more adequately resourcing oil and gas development in the entire valley, and that includes Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking more specifically to the oil and gas division of the minerals, oil and gas office. The minerals office you can keep here, but the minerals, oil and gas office I would like to see moved to the Beaufort-Delta. Now is the Minister going to look at that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 500-15(3): Anchor Field Of The Mackenzie Gas Project

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think what you'd find if you looked a little bit closely at our minerals, oil and gas division is that there aren't very many people in that division and you have one director who, for instance, shares a number of different responsibilities across minerals, oil and gas. So it would be difficult to take one director and carve that person up and move half of them one way and keep another half of them in another area. I think the real answer here and the real issue is our vastly limited resources here and the potential that we see on the horizon. Do we need to create an approach and positions for the Inuvik area, as well as Norman Wells and Simpson? I believe we do and that's why I've asked the department to go back and present me with options that I can then take to Regular Members and to Cabinet and see if we can't find a way to fund those, because we are under-resourced. We are under-resourced in the Inuvik area as well, and I'm looking to deal with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, the Minister, when he talks about closing down the Dene K'onia, talks about a savings of \$1.5 million. Again, we're not given anything to compare that to on the other side because we still need a place for open custody young offenders and we don't talk about how much it's going to cost to provide those services here in Yellowknife. I would assume that a lot of that \$1.5 million was in fact spent on human resources and people. So the savings must be in the infrastructure or the cost of the building. I don't think it's going to take less people to look after the young offenders here. So when we're comparing the costs, let's put the numbers on the other side of the table too. What is it going to cost to operate the open custody young offenders wing here in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the cost of operating that section of that building with me. The Member is right; the biggest savings for the closure of the operation is in human resources, but the issue is we can't shut down the whole building here in Yellowknife because we have to keep the secure custody portion open. So the magnitude of the savings that we can achieve here are not as big as the ones we can achieve by totally shutting down a facility. As I said, I don't have with me the specific numbers that the Member has requested. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we're going to keep talking about \$1.5 million, we should be talking about the number on the other side of the equation. Maybe it's \$1 million, maybe it's \$1.2 million. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know that number. It's not something that has been readily spoken of. Mr. Speaker, on that note, when we talk about policies of this government and then how we organize ourselves to deliver programs and services, it says that in the decentralization of programs and services the Government of the Northwest Territories shall maintain standards and levels of service, and it also says that they may be prepared to pay a reasonable premium in support of an equitable distribution of benefits. How would we know what that premium might be to offer that service south of the lake in Hay River if we never hear what it costs as the alternative here in the North Slave? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be clear; the budget has been reduced by \$1.5 million. The budget that's before the House has declared \$1.5 million that was originally budgeted for Dene K'onia taken out of it. So that entire amount is shown as a savings right now. So that's what we are talking about. It's not in the budget. So it's not as if we are asking for any extra money to run a facility in Yellowknife. That money has been in the budget, it stays in the budget. The savings are the elimination of that facility in Hay River when it's operated. So the savings really are \$1.5 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the savings really are \$1.5 million, then it costs \$1.5 million more to offer open custody young offender services in Hay River than it does in Yellowknife, but it doesn't cost anything in Yellowknife. It costs something to have the provision of staff and services and support for young offenders in Yellowknife. It doesn't cost zero. So is the Minister saying that it costs \$1.5 million more in Hay River than it would cost in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that it costs \$1.5 million more to operate two facilities than it does to operate one. The one that we can achieve that level of savings on is by shutting down Dene K'onia. We can't achieve that level of savings by not staffing on a partial basis the one facility we have left in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

MRS. GROENEWGEN: Mr. Speaker, so is the Minister then saying that right now or prior to the closure of Dene K'onia, that you have a full complement of staff in place ready to go with programming and facilities for open custody young offenders at the North Slave Correctional Centre? Is that what he's saying, that that is all in place now? Because he's saying he's adding nothing in this year's budget. So is that what he's saying? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 501-15(3): Closure Of The Dene K'onia Young Offenders Facility

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm saying we're not adding anything in the budget that isn't there for the North Slave Correctional Centre. What has

happened over the last year, and it goes back to the questions that Mr. Ramsay was asking, was that we had increased costs at the North Slave centre because of overtime and other issues, increased use of casuals. So as a cost-savings measure, we reduced some of the staffing in this last year in order to try and save some money. That's one of the reasons that the facility has been used more than it would otherwise have been used in Hay River. The issue is that we have two facilities in operation right now and we don't have as many clients as we need to operate two facilities, so we're looking at shutting one of them down.

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

Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I had questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation and I'm going to continue because I can appreciate his crafty way of saying no, because at times I thought he was going to say yes and then he whipped it around and gave me a no at the last second. Mr. Speaker, I will say I appreciate the Minister's willingness to give me a one-off, but the fact is we don't have a clear and consistent policy that demonstrates consistency. Mr. Speaker, we have some people who can receive housing mortgage assistance though their loans that their arrears get rolled in and then, on the other hand, we have those it doesn't apply to, so they can't get this. So would the Minister be willing to address this in a consistent policy to provide everyone, who is able, that opportunity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member says we don't have policies. Well, we do, and one of the policies is that you cannot be in public housing if you have arrears. In order to get around that policy, there is also a provision that allows for people to work a payment plan out with the local authorities to pay down those arrears. I'm not saying you pay it off overnight. Make an attempt to pay down those arrears over a period of time to get your name back on the waiting list for public housing. In regard to the Member's question, right now we are looking at the mandate of the corporation and we are going to look at the whole idea of our programs and also looking at our procedures and policies. So we are open to that but, again, we do have to follow existing policies that we do have and the policy is clear: You cannot be in public housing or get into public housing with outstanding arrears. So that is the policy.

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

Supplementary To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't need a long preamble. The Minister just said exactly the problem.

You have arrears, we have a policy, you can't be in public housing. That's the problem; you have to pay it all off before you qualify. Would the Minister be willing to look at a policy that will allow people to qualify for public housing who have arrears who are willing to make those types of payments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know I'm going to be repeating myself, but we do have a provision that allows for people with arrears to get back into public housing; by signing a payment plan with the local housing authority to make it clear they are going to commit themselves to paying down those outstanding arrears while they're in public housing. So they can get back into public housing, but they have to work out a plan with the local housing authority to ensure that they live up to their obligation to pay down those arrears while they're in public housing. So there is a way you can get back in, but you also have to commit yourself to making those payments. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister just said something different than what we've been talking about. I've been to his office on this very issue. Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister just said you can be part of a payment plan and in housing. So I'm a little confused on what is actually happening here because I was upstairs dealing with a constituent and it was completely the reverse. So could we get it very clear today? If you have arrears and you start a payment program, regardless of what the number is, can you qualify to be in public housing at that time that you're paying your arrears; not excluded until they're paid for? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the tenant has arrears and they're given notice of eviction, if they make an attempt to work out with the local housing authority to pay down those arrears...Knowing there's a possibility of being evicted, in most cases they will work out this payment plan. The idea is to assist these people in social housing to remain in social housing as long as they make the attempt to pay down their arrears. But once your appeal goes forward, with regard to the tenants act and you're being evicted and then you are evicted, then in order to get back in you have to basically ensure that you've paid off those arrears to get back into public housing. But if you're a tenant, there is a provision that if you're given notice of being evicted, if you come forward and say, okay, I'm willing to work out a payment plan to pay off my arrears not to get evicted, that is the way you remain in public housing. But again, you can't have both. You have to have consistency in our policies for people who are good tenants. Like I

said, 90 percent of people in most public housing pay their rent. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't talking about people being on the eviction list where we're sending the leg-breakers down and saying pay tonight or else. I'm talking about the people who have arrears who are not in public housing who are at risk. Those folks need to get into public housing, but as it's designed right now, if you have arrears, you can't get into social housing. As it's designed now, you have to make a special deal to qualify to get your arrears rolled into a mortgage so that could be paid. I'm talking about when we're not getting any money from folks, let's set up a plan so we can get money coming in on the arrears side, as the Minister had said. Would the Minister look at that type of policy with that type of flexibility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 502-15(3): Consistency In Dealing With Clients In Arrears

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at alternatives for people to work themselves back into public housing but, again, they have to attempt to pay off a portion of those arrears before we'll consider allowing them back into public housing. We are open to that idea, as long as they make that attempt to pay down those arrears. Thank you.

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

Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for Mr. Bell, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It concerns the recent issues surrounding the management of the Bathurst caribou herd. Mr. Speaker, you know we're well into the age of consultation and inclusion in the Northwest Territories on management and co-management issues. Indeed, on wildlife, we have invested extraordinary amounts of money and time in trying to make sure we're covering all the bases. But I've been advised when it comes to this particular herd, or for caribou management overall, that the Barren Ground Caribou Outfitters Association does not have a voice at this table. I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that there's a lot of expertise and a lot at stake with this organization and they should be at the table. So, Mr. Speaker, why hasn't the Barren Ground Caribou Outfitters Association been invited to sit on the Bathurst Caribou Management Committee? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a large number of stakeholders who have an interest in management or in maintenance of this herd. Resident hunters, non-resident hunters, outfitters in the region, outfitters in other regions, hunters in other regions. The membership of the Bathurst Caribou Management Plan is made up of departmental officials from RWED, federal government officials and representatives from First Nations who have a responsibility for co-management of this herd. The Bathurst Caribou Management Plan was drafted and has been submitted to government for consideration. Our next step is to go out and have a broader consultation where we engage stakeholders, including the group the Member has just referred to. Again, no decisions have been made to reduce tags or anything of this nature, and wouldn't be done without consultation and certainly discussion with the group the Member has referred to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I think the point should be argued there are some groups that really do have a principal, fundamental, front-line role in this kind of thing. Mr. Speaker, this group of business people brings, through their clients, several millions of dollars into the NWT a year. They harvest less than one percent of the kill. Each animal they take is estimated to have a value to the Northwest Territories economy of \$4,000. What influence can the Minister use to make sure that their voice is included, at a more formal and earlier stage, in these management planning exercises? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I've indicated this spring we're going to consult with stakeholders and it's at that point that I would propose that we meet with Barren Ground outfitters; meet with all the outfitters who have an interest in the viability of this herd, Mr. Speaker. But the membership of the planning committee can't be changed and I think the membership of the planning committee is valid. As I indicated, and I'll go through the partners again: DIAND, RWED, Dogrib Treaty 11, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Lutselk'e Dene First Nation, KIA, Kitikmeot Hunters and Trappers, Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and NTI. These are groups with the responsibility, under land claims provisions and under our legislation, for co-management of this herd. The Barren Ground outfitters don't have that same responsibility. I'm not trying to diminish the role they play or the interest they have in it, and certainly we intend to consult and involve them in management of this herd, but in terms of a legislated requirement for co-management, these other groups that make up the membership of this committee have that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, who is bringing their interests to the table? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They will be bringing their own interests to the table as we consult them. RWED has a broader interest for people of the Northwest Territories. When we sit at this table and sit on this board, we are there to ensure that the interests of all residents are understood, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

MR. BRADEN: So, Mr. Speaker, then if I hear this correctly, if RWED has the designation to take the interests of the outfitters to this table, has then RWED ever formally asked and gotten the outfitters' full story from them? Has anybody approached these people at all to get their side of the story? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 503-15(3): Bathurst Caribou Management Plan

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if we should be looking at this from the perspective of their side of the story. I think much of what's in this report, much of the work that these groups have done, would be verified. I think we all have the same interests. I know the outfitters have the same interest and that's in maintaining the viability of this herd and adequate management of this herd. Again, in the coming months this spring, we will sit down and go through the plan with stakeholders. The Barren Ground outfitters will be included in that. Mr. Ramsay, I believe maybe Ms. Lee, in the House last week raised some concerns that they felt some shortcomings they felt in terms of the plan. I want to remind Members that this is a recommendation to government. We now intend to go out and consult with stakeholders to ensure that this plan makes sense and discuss the various options under the terms of the plan. Nothing has been done; there are no reductions in tags at this point, and there will be adequate consultation. I can't give the Member much more certainty than that or much more assurance than that, but I think that's certainly adequate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 504-15(3): Update On Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my next question goes to the Minister of Health and Social

Services and it's in regard to the inter-provincial Ministers meeting that he attended in Victoria regarding the important issue of FASD. Could the Minister advise this House what was being talked about and the implications for the North? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 504-15(3): Update On Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this meeting of the Canada Northwest FASD Partnership was to do one main thing and that was to have the first formal meeting of the board of directors of the research centre that's being set up to focus on all the related areas that pertain to FASD, located out of B.C. with a sub-office in Calgary. They have a very strong list of directors; a CEO who is a world leader in the study of FASD. That was the primary function. As well, there was a world conference on FASD attended by people from around the world. There were over 1,200 delegates at this conference in Victoria when we were there, as well. So there was a tremendous focus while we were down there on this issue and all the related work that's being done. They had practitioners and judges, they had doctors, they had a whole host of very high-profile speakers in this area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 504-15(3): Update On Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister be more specific about the NWT and the GNWT and what role they play with respect to this whole infrastructure that's being built? I understand it's a think tank. I would assume that it's going to be doing studies that are going to be relevant to the people on the ground. Are there specific questions that we're asking them to look into, for example, or do we have a say on the membership of the board? Could he make some linkages to the North? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 504-15(3): Update On Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this whole partnership has a tremendous value for the Northwest Territories. If you accept the number put out by Health Canada, that nine in 1,000 babies are born with FASD, and round that up even to 10 in the North, then if you do the numbers, in terms of the number of children born with FASD, then it's significant. This partnership represents seven jurisdictions; four provinces and three territories. Sixty percent of the country, basically, is partnered up to try to focus resources and attention on this particular area. We all have huge issues with this. We all have northern issues, rural remote issues, aboriginal issues. So this area is very important. There is going to be a benefit to the Northwest Territories. If I can arrange it, I intend to do a Minister's statement in this House updating the Assembly on what exactly transpired, plus I'd be more than happy to pull together a package for the Members that gives you more detailed background on this whole area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The time for oral questions has expired; however, I will allow the Member her supplementary questions. Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 504-15(3): Update On Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that we're talking in generalities here, but could the Minister just indicate what policy output there might be with this meeting? How could it impact on what this government does and does not do and what the NGOs do and do not do with regard to FASD in the North? I'm still not seeing what specific policy output there might be. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 504-15(3): Update On Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the research network that is part of this partnership is intended to achieve coordinated funding for research projects, network development and capacity building both across and within jurisdictions. The evidence-based information provided by the network will assist in the development of a progressive and inclusive policy, ultimately bettering the lives of individuals and families affected by the disorder. Plans are currently under way to conduct consultations with stakeholders in the partnership jurisdictions, including the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The time for oral questions has expired. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to have two individuals in the gallery, especially these two ladies who have been instrumental with regard to our programs by way of the Ti'oondih healing programs and also community wellness programs and crime prevention programs. Hazel Nerysoo and Ms. Caynes have been instrumental in getting programs and services for the people in the Mackenzie Delta, by accessing federal programs. So, at this time, I'd like to thank them for their hard work and wish them well as they all continue working forward. I know that they're here to see the Minister of Justice, but we will be talking to them later. Again, thank you very much and welcome to the House.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11,

reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 115-15(3): Amendments To The Residential Tenancies Act: A Consultation Paper, March 2005

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act: A Consultation Paper, March 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act; Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006; Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005; Committee Report 9-15(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates; Committee Report 10-15(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates; Committee Report 11-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates; Committee Report 12-15(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2003 General Election; Minister's Statement 86-15(3), Northern Strategy; Minister's Statement 88-15(3), Update on Oil and Gas Development in the NWT; Minister's Statement 89-15(3), Community Leaders' Conference Report: Preparing for the Pipeline; Minister's Statement 90-15(3), Social Impacts of the Mackenzie Gas Project; Minister's Statement 91-15(3), Preparation for the Mackenzie Gas Project; and, Tabled Document 108-15(3), Nation Building: Framework for a Northern Strategy. By the authority given me as Speaker, by Motion 2-15(3), I hereby resolve the House into Committee of the Whole to sit beyond the hour of adjournment until such time as the committee is ready to report progress, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have lots of things on our agenda today. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, for the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): That's it? Well, we will do that after we take a well-deserved break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We are on

Transportation. I will ask committee if Mr. McLeod can bring in witnesses.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the witness table.

Minister McLeod, for the record, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, with me I have Russell Neudorf, the deputy minister; and I also have Mrs. Lynn Cook, director of corporate services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. When we left off on Friday, we had the opening comments from the Minister and the response from the standing committee. We are now on general comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, today it's a pleasure to bring forward comments on behalf of Mr. Pokiak who is not able to deliver them here today, specifically regarding what's lacking in the Minister's opening statement.

There is nothing in the opening comments or this Transportation budget that is very specific to the Tuk-Inuvik highway or the lack thereof. Madam Chair, this project has been in concept, who knows where, for 30 years. Would the Minister speak directly to how we are addressing the lack of the Tuk-Inuvik highway and what investment is he willing to make or what does he plan to make? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will ask Members if they will refrain from making reference to Ministers or Members who may not be in the Chamber. Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the issue of the Tuk-Inuvik highway has been on our radar screen for some time. We have been looking at ways we can find the funding to put this project on the table. It was in our earlier submission as part of Corridors for Canada. However, the funding was not adequately funded as part of this initiative. We have not brought this issue forward to the federal government for some time. I should point out that the responsibilities for any new roads in the NWT are still under the responsibility of the federal government. We have not brought this issue forward to the federal government. We have had some discussions with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. We have provided the information to them and we plan to look at this initiative again as part of our review this coming year. We plan to update our Highway Strategy.

We also plan to compile information required to look at putting together our need through the next while in terms of new roads, new projects and make another submission. Our focus will be a little different this time. Last time, our Corridors for Canada submission was focused in the areas of resource development and the potential gas pipeline. This time we still have the issue of resource development, but we also want to look at focussing on connecting our communities this time around and trying to do some reconstruction to the areas that have not seen

investment in the last go-around for federal funding. Thanks.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was really good to hear that. It almost sounds like it's going to be a priority for the next Corridors for Canada document. Can the Minister confirm that, because I think he described two areas that didn't receive money connecting communities? Can he reaffirm if it will be a priority in the next document presented to Canada with regard to the responsibility for new roads?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it is one of our priorities. It has been something we tried to deal with a while ago. We are compiling new information to put a submission together. At the same time, we are still having discussions with the Mackenzie gas project proponents. We would like to bring forward a number of initiatives that are potential to see as legacy projects. We have a very lengthy list put together and this is one of the projects we would like to put on the table for discussion with them. Our list is well over \$600 million right now. So there is still a lot of work to be done. There are still many projects in the North that we have to be able to find some way to attach financing to these projects. So we are working on it from a number of different angles. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that the Minister calls it a priority. My only concern is, is it a priority of one out of thousands, or one out of 10, or one out of five? The reason I say this is because it was good to hear him say words like legacy project. This Mackenzie gas project is going to be one of our wonderful opportunities to create tripartite agreements between federal funding opportunities, industry opportunities, as well as territorial opportunities to link our communities year-round. I wouldn't fathom to guess how many trucks will be driving up and down the road between Wrigley to Inuvik, but I will say there will be a lot.

That being said, the Tuk-Inuvik highway is still a critical issue specifically for that region. You have, for example, Tuktoyaktuk that has no gravel source and yet gravel is only 20 kilometres away. I don't think Mr. Pokiak's point was to do the whole highway all in one jump, but I think we need a formal strategic priority and plan that addresses that, because within 20 kilometres away, we need that special asset called gravel. That is a key to that community. So if we could work towards meeting that 20-kilometre initiative by saying we can start it and truly we will not accomplish it in one year, but we need to start the project and get it moving forward. In my colleague's words, he demonstrates that we spend hundreds of thousands on ice roads every year that just melt away. It's an investment that doesn't last. This is a type of legacy project. I would like to hear today that you will consult this side of the House about support for legacy projects that go from Wrigley all the way to Tuk, because that will connect our communities permanently. I agree with you, it is a federal responsibility and I won't assume it isn't; but

along those access points, once we establish a firm highway, a lot of economic opportunity can then be reborn. This Mackenzie project is a window of 20 to 25 years. This is the next project. Once we open up those corridors, we can look at what's going to come on the heels of this one. Once we open up those year-round opportunities for people to explore those areas, we can have a lot of development for many years and spread out the boom and bust economy.

Can I get some commitment from this Minister, although it's not in this budget, that he will consult with this side of the House about treating it as a significant priority? I think there are many Members on this side who would like to see those goat trails of highways we had north of Wrigley become true infrastructure and this is our opportunity to have industry, the federal government, as well as this side of the House on board and for creating true infrastructure for benefiting all our citizens year-round. Can we get that type of commitment from the Minister? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are probably around a dozen initiatives that we are looking at. We still are costing out some of these projects that we need to address and we are still deciding which projects we will bring forward and the methodology we will use to submit that to the federal government.

I want to point out that this project the Member has referred to, a gravel source, is a \$15 million project. To have the highway go from Tuk to Inuvik is \$100 million. So there really has to be a commitment and we have to have the federal government onside to do that. We have had discussions, as I said earlier, with the federal government some time ago and we would like to do that again.

There are different areas of the North that have needs in terms of new roads. There is the Slave Geological Province, the Mackenzie Valley roads and the Inuvik-Tuk highway, as well as others coming forward requesting us to look at connecting their communities to part of their highways. So there is a lot of work we have to do. We are talking to industry about trying to put some of these initiatives under legacy projects. We are talking to the federal government. Hopefully we will have some positive results in the future.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the willingness of the Minister. Can we get the Minister to at least commit today...Let's first be very clear. We know this wouldn't be done all at once. That's a fair observation. We know nobody is going to give us all the money all at once to do whatever we want. I recognize that and the Minister recognizes that. That's just the reality. What we could commit to is the fact that we want to do these things. I think we need the commitment here today that we will want to do these things. When we say it's a priority, it's not just one in 1,000 priorities. We can only have so many priority number ones and that's my concern. Everything is a priority; but I think this is truly a great opportunity and seize it in the legacy project, as coined by the Minister.

We need new corridors for Canada. This will open up a lot of known and proven areas of potential mineral and oil and gas development opportunities. So this will certainly be a legacy, just not for the short term, but to connect our communities as well. I don't have to go on at length about how our citizens have to drive all the way around through the Yukon and down to B.C., just to get back to the NWT. This will reaffirm our little sovereignty in the Northwest Territories. So this is just one little element of government working for the people. I just want to have the assurance that the Minister will truly make this a priority of this government and engage Regular Members on the importance of this.

The last point which I want to emphasize is by no means would I assume the whole Tuk-Inuvik highway would be done all in one year or in one push. That may be hopeful and may be what we ultimately want, but let's recognize the first surge from that community area is getting to that gravel source and working towards it. Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could get those types of acknowledgements from the Minister of those true priorities, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. We certainly consider the Tuk-Inuvik highway as an area we have to develop at some point. We, of course, have to identify the resources to do it. It is a priority. We will commit to engaging the Regular Members in our discussions as we develop our proposal and package. We will share that with Regular Members.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am looking forward to going through this budget line by line. There are several responsibilities under this Minister that have lots of implications towards communities in my riding. When we look at airports, they are a concern and it still is for runway lights, particularly in Jean Marie. There were lights that were damaged and had to be repaired. I am not sure how far that's gotten to date. As well, Trout Lake was interested in their own set of runway lights. Particularly in Trout Lake, there is bird's eye view talk about establishing a new airport. Perhaps I could get the Minister to comment on that and see where he wants to assist our communities.

As well, there is an airport extension requested by the community of Nahanni Butte. I am not sure what stage that discussion is at. I would like to have the Minister comment on that, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is right; we have had some discussion in the last while with the community of Trout Lake. There is, and has been, a problem for some while with the wind directions at the airport with crosswinds and also the number of residents or houses that have been built in the immediate area. We have heard the community voice their concern over the issue. There has been a request for us to look at a new location. We are talking with the community about potential sites and will continue to do so.

In Nahanni Butte, we are looking at working with them and we have included, in this year's budget, some dollars for their access road that they have been working on for some time.

So we were in the community, along with the Member, and we did have a public meeting. At the meeting, there was concern raised and there was a request for us to travel on that road. I did personally drive on the road. There was a lot of work put into that stretch of road. The base is all there and everything else is put in place, including the drainage. Right now, there is still a requirement for some gravel to stabilize the road, so we have agreed that there needs to be an investment and we have included it in this year's budget.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to Nahanni Butte and the highway, it was really great and the community was really pleased to see an addition of \$200,000, but the Minister is aware that to do a \$200,000 program in today's dollars, it doesn't go very far. I imagine there will be some work scheduled for this year. Is there a way to leverage our dollars to get more work done once we begin building that road this year in terms of gas tax money or road money? I imagine Nahanni Butte, as a settlement, is eligible for some funding to help improve their access roads through the MRIF funding. Is there a way to speed up their road that they have been requesting for many, many years? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are a number of options available to the community. The community can be as creative as they want to be. There are also avenues to use in approaching the federal government or DIAND on some requests for additional funding. There is potential for them to access and use some dollars through the gas tax or other new funding coming forward. We don't have a definite formula of how the communities are going to draw down on the gas tax. That's something we would have to wait and see about. So there are a number of avenues.

Where does the community want to go with this? From our standpoint, we have put some money towards it over a number of years; \$200,000 for five years. We will continue to work on this initiative with the community, but there are other avenues and we are hoping the communities will be able to put in some of those requests too.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Speaking of roads, the Minister was just in Fort Simpson. We had a nice roundtable discussion with the community in Fort Simpson and the issue of roads did come up, particularly Highway No. 1. It wasn't very clear, but people were asking what the long-term initiatives were by the department for Highway No. 1. I know there's some extra money there. Are we rebasing it? Are we eventually looking at paving Highway No. 1? As well, while we're on paving, in terms of Highway No. 7, the Liard Highway, the

section that got destroyed by weather; when is the community looking at getting that done up? The B.C. government did it up to the border right now and they're wondering when we're going to redo ours. There must be money to redo ours. At what point will it be redone? Will it be this year, Madam Chair? If I can direct those to the Minister, please.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. There were a couple questions there. First of all, I think it should be clear that at this point we're not planning to pave Highway No. 1 or Highway No. 7. We were for some time hoping that we'd be able to include the reconstruction and paving of Highway No. 1 as part of our legacy requests. We hadn't planned to put any investment on Highway No. 1 until we knew for sure there was a pipeline and there were going to be industry dollars attached to it. However, as resource development has really started to happen in that area and the traffic volumes on Highway No. 1 have increased, we had to respond to some of the situations and some of the erosion on that road as a result of heavy traffic volumes. We did reallocate some money last year. We reallocated \$1 million to improve the base and do some drainage work. We also did some engineering last year, and this year we plan to continue on that initiative to improve the base, continue to work on improving the drainage and the foundation of that road to build it up in some areas. We've targeted new monies for a multi-year program on Highway No. 1 and we've also done the same with Highway No. 7.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Would some of the new infrastructure money be targeted or in addition to Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 7, in and around the Nahendeh riding, Madam Chair? I just want to know if there is some extra funding there while they look at speeding up some of the projects that are on the books in terms of the highway. Is the department looking at that, Madam Chair?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure what the Member is asking for by speeding up the projects. Right now we have budgeted a total of \$9 million for Highway No. 1 to reconstruct and firm up the base and develop the engineering work that needs to be done in that area, including drainage. We've also budgeted a total of \$11.5 million for Highway No. 7 from the B.C. border to Fort Liard. That work is to start this year. We budgeted multi-year funding to do work on both those roads, so I'm not totally clear on what the Member is asking. If he's asking us to put more money into earlier years, I might need some clarity on that request.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just saying that Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 7, the \$11 million the Minister refers to is kind of spread out over three years or five years. I'm not quite sure. But if there's a way that some of the new MRIF or the gas tax money is

applied to the roads, there probably might be a chance or an opportunity to speed up some of the projects and do a lot of the work today rather than later. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as Transportation Minister, of course I would love to have the gas tax money spent on the highways, but I think that might be a problem as we look at it from a community standpoint. The gas tax right now is geared towards community infrastructure and there's certain criteria that comes with it. I don't know if that would be flexible enough to put on a territorial highway. We can certainly have that discussion and take a look at it, but right now we're looking at a four-year program to invest in Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 1. We are also having our discussions with the pipeline proponents and we have certain needs we want to bring forward and there are certain legacy discussions we want to have with them and see where that goes and how that unfolds in the future.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a few general comments for the Department of Transportation. It's nice to see Mr. Neudorf and Mr. McLeod here, and Ms. Cook, as well.

I know the Minister of Transportation is not responsible for this file, but since I have the department officials here, and the floor on the Department of Transportation, I wanted to talk, for just a minute, on the Deh Cho Bridge project. I do look forward to a briefing that's coming up soon. We have a recommendation that's coming forward, too, in this process. One of the things that I feel, as a Regular Member, is that we should be more involved in what's happening with the Deh Cho Bridge project. I don't know whether this briefing that we're going to be getting is going to get us there; that remains to be seen. But in the past year we haven't been that involved in what's happening. I don't know exactly what's happened to get us to where we're at today.

The concession agreements are the key piece to all of this. I think Regular Members deserve and should be involved in the concession agreements. I know they're a private business deal between the government and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, but ultimately the government represents the people of the Northwest Territories and I think we certainly need to be a part of the rollout of the concession agreements. So that's one thing I wanted to mention to the Minister.

The other thing I wanted to mention to the Minister, as well, is the airport development, and how important that is to the future of the city of Yellowknife, but also to the Northwest Territories. Yellowknife is the air traffic hub of the entire Northwest Territories and we've got, as the Minister is well aware, interest in a parcel of land immediately adjacent to land that the Department of Transportation has identified as future need for growth for the Yellowknife Airport. That causes me some great concern that we may end up having a residential development in close proximity to our airport development, and this combined services building will be right across the street from a residential neighbourhood. Not to mention the access road that has been much talked

about to Kam Lake Industrial Park and whether it has to move further down Highway No. 3 or maybe go straight through a residential neighbourhood. Who knows? Those are some pretty big issues that the Minister has to pay close attention to.

I talked during committee meetings about the combined services building and the fact that it might...I know there's money in the budget going forward here for a few years on that combined services building, but one of the things that comes to mind is that it's a combined services building, right? So whether it's the Department of Transportation looking after airports or looking after highways, I think if you housed your heavy equipment in one yard it might be more advantageous or beneficial, from a cost perspective anyway. Not to mention the fact that it gets your Quonset off the highway into town. It's kind of out of public view if it's off and contained in a combined services area with the airports equipment and the highways equipment. There's going to be a nice road put into the combined services area. I know there was some talk of having an RV area where the present Transportation yard is on the corner of the access road to the golf course and Highway No. 3. That's something that I think maybe should be looked at a little bit. Other than that, I think that's probably about it, Madam Chair. Again, I thank the Minister for paying attention to those comments. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I'm sure the Member would agree that this whole airport area has become a very complex and important area in terms of land development with the city, with the Department of Transportation airports division, with the Yellowknives Dene, and also there's been an indication of interest by DND. So my responsibility is to ensure that we have a process where we can deal with all these requests and plans. The city is working with the Department of Transportation on an MOU for the bypass road. We also have an application that's come forward by the Department of Transportation to increase the reserve area, and that will be processed and go through to the city for their comments and review. The YK Dene have come forward with a request to the city for land in the sandpits area, and we also understand there may be interest by other groups for land in that same area. At the same time, I'm obligated to respect and follow the interim measures agreement, and we also have in that same area a huge scientific reserve. So it's a very difficult and challenging scenario that we have to deal with and we are working with all the different organizations. So far, it looks like we'll have positive results. We think that everybody can be accommodated. Of course, the city has a huge role to play in this. They have a land development plan that includes zoning and includes their areas of how they see the city developing. We have to respect that and we will respect that.

We also, as part of the question I guess, have been working to develop the west side of the airport. This year we are looking at a combined services building in that immediate area. We are interested in looking at that facility to be expanded, at some time in the future, to include our highways operation. That's very possible. Right now we don't plan to do that. The facility that the houses our highways operation is still very functional and, when it comes to the end of the life of that facility, of those

facilities in that area, we will certainly consider moving it over. There's also consideration that there might be a possibility that this could be a good area or location for a new fire hall or something of that nature. So all those things, as they come forward, we will consider. Right now we have many issues to deal with and I'm hoping that we will have some resolution, or at least a process to deal with them in the next while.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was wondering if I could ask the Minister what advice or recommendations his officials are giving him in terms of this proposed residential development in that close a proximity to the Yellowknife Airport, and how it might affect future growth plans for the Yellowknife Airport. What are his officials telling him? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the request that has come forward for land in that area has come forward to the city for residential development. Our involvement, as the Member knows, was to grant access for some geotech work in that immediate area. There was an additional request that has come forward to do some legal surveying of the properties in that area. We have refused that request as we felt it was premature for us to consider that, and that's something that should be dealt with through the city. So the city, right now, has not provided us any information on the application that has come forward. Our discussions with my officials here have been around Transportation's desire to develop on the west side of the airport and increasing our land reserve, and developing the information and engineering and all the information that's required for that area.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I know the Minister has to, and if he hasn't had this discussion with his officials then I think this is something that has to happen. His officials have to be telling him what type of impacts will be felt by residential developments in that close a proximity to the Yellowknife Airport. If they aren't telling him that, and I'm sure they have, I mean, they spent how many hundreds of thousands of dollars on this airport master development plan and there has to be an impact. You don't have a residential neighbourhood next to this airport. I'm wondering what type of discussions the Minister has had with his staff regarding that type of development being that close to the airport. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the area that the Yellowknives Dene have expressed interest in is along Highway No. 3, a ways from the airport development plan that we have. There are no conflicting overlaps at this point. There is residential that's probably closer that's already there. So I'm sure if that's a concern, it would be a concern to the residents who are living in that area. Aside from that, we have not seen an

application come to us. We have had a discussion in terms of our needs and this does not conflict with it.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make some general comments. I haven't made comments on this department in a while, it seems. I want to make comments on the bridge, on Highway No. 3, on the airport, and the Kam Lake access road.

With respect to the bridge, Madam Chair, I have been a strong, enthusiastic supporter of this bridge from day one and I know that the Minister has been, as well, from the beginning, supporting this. I think we are very close to seeing the completion of this project, so I am interested in knowing what the latest development is in that area and when we should be expecting to be, or if we are still expecting to be, turning the soil on that this fall.

Highway No. 3, Madam Chair, was in really rough shape five years ago. I spoke in favour of getting that completed for a long time, but I haven't lately because I had received commitments over the years that it is almost close to being finished. But for some reason, I thought that the last part of Highway No. 3 was to be done by this fall. But I think the construction completion date is now next fall. So I'm just wondering if there has been a change in that plan. The last time I drove over that was in December, and we are pretty close to getting it done. There is still the last 30 kilometres or so left. So I'd like to know if there have been any changes to that, or if it has always been that way. I seem to recall that it was going to be done about a year after the last election.

The third one is to do with the Kam Lake access road. I really think that it is becoming an urgent issue that we have to somehow create an access road that bypasses the Old Airport Road. It's becoming really dangerous between 8:30 a.m. or 8:15 a.m. for that 20-minute or 30-minute rush hour in the morning, and in the afternoon it's just bumper to bumper from almost the airport turnoff to the residential area. We had an accident on the other side of the Highway No. 3 turnoff. It has to be difficult for the trucking industry to be operating when they have to wait for a long time to turn off on that road, never mind the safety questions to the drivers of small cars. But for the truck drivers, it's not very convenient for them either. They have to negotiate and sit there and wait for an opportunity to turn, especially in winter months. Maybe during the winter months the department could look at creating a winter road access, at least in the meantime, where the Kam Lake bypass could be, if that came to reality. Maybe we could have a winter road access there in January and February when the truck traffic is at the highest. I realize there are lots of layers of issues involved in this, but the use there is great and it requires action on that road.

My fourth issue has to do with the airport. Last fall, Mr. Chairman, we had lots of discussions about this airport expansion plan and I know that the Minister revisited this plan. A new proposal went out with some amendments. I'd like to know, I guess first of all, what the expansion will look like, and then go from there. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of questions there. In terms of the Deh Cho Bridge, the concession agreement has been worked on over the last several months. Also the environmental assessment was done and that has gone to the federal government with a recommendation to approve. The design has been worked on for some time now. It's down to a couple small issues. We're hoping to have agreement on that issue fairly quickly. The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation indicates to us that they have their lenders in place. With all those issues in mind, we're anticipating that we probably could have a concession agreement signed in the next couple of weeks, maybe even sooner than that. We are hoping that we will have a final agreement on the concession agreement once everything is in place, and that is targeted for some time this spring. The current schedule is still something that we're hoping to see followed through, with construction starting some time later on this summer, with a completion date of 2006. So those are the targeted dates and things seem to still be on line with the bridge negotiations and discussions.

Highway No. 3 is targeted for completion, including the pavement, for fall of this year. We had accelerated this project when we got new dollars from the federal government. That seems to be going on schedule. The last contract was broken down into two phases, so everything seems to be falling into place and we should have everything completed by fall of this coming fiscal year.

The Kam Lake access road is a little more complicated. We have been talking to the city for some time. We are in the same position as the city; we'd like to see the road in place. There are safety issues. There are noise issues. There is a lot of traffic coming down the road in terms of the resource development that's happening in this area. We are working on an MOU. We have had the first draft brought forward by the city over to our department. We are reviewing it. We are going to be adding our comments on the draft very shortly and have those discussions continue. We also have not, as a department, done an evaluation or any engineering work on this project. There is an assessed estimation brought forward by the city. It's a \$5 million project. We are committed right now to do the portion that would allow us to get access to the west side with our project for the development of that area. The city wants us to expand that. We're looking at what it would cost. We're looking at doing some engineering work, some estimations, and having further discussion.

With the winter road portion, we have not really had a lot of discussion around that issue. We could do that. It was not raised by ourselves or the city, so that's something we'd have to commit to doing. We certainly could follow through with that. It might be a solution for the short term, anyway. We will commit to having that discussion with the city.

The airport expansion is going ahead. We have all our contracts tendered out and allocated. There are a couple of issues that we've managed to resolve. We had done a study. We did some questionnaires. We talked to the people that were using the terminal facility. We talked to some of the people that were in the facility. We did a number of things. We had a consultant do a whole study for us. They came back with some new recommendations, some options for us, especially in the area of the restaurant. They came back and recommended to us to

leave the facility where it is located and made some other suggestions. We're following through with that. The parking lot has been done. I think most of the work there has been completed. The site clearing and preparation began last fall for the apron. The contractor has been working on this project. We're anticipating that portion will be done by late 2005.

The contract was recently awarded in December for the passenger terminal building. The actual work will start in April of this year. That includes the CATSA portion. The CATSA reimbursement agreement, I should point out, has also been signed and we are also working on the other portion, which is the annex. That has also gone out to contract in December of this year. That annex portion will be done, I'm told, the summer of this year also. So overall, the project completion is scheduled for the fall of 2006.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I have Mr. Braden next.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The two topics that come to my radar screen with this department I think have already received some attention here, and I will continue on with a bit more information about the implementation and rollout of the cost of the Yellowknife Airport expansion and how that is going to be administered or managed by the department; more specifically, Mr. Chairman, whether the department has, at this point, any more of a detailed plan on how these costs are going to be passed on to the customers at the airport. The last bit of information that I had was that the \$6.6 million project cost that the GNWT was going to assume responsibility for was going to be passed on entirely to the customers through increases in landing fees, and that was to be done over the next 10 years. So that is the last information that I had. Has anything further been developed in just how the traveling public will be affected? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the cost recovery on the Yellowknife Airport expansion project is going to be through a couple of ways. We are looking at incorporating two new fees starting 2006-07 and that would be in the form of increasing the terminal fees by 100 percent and we're also looking at increasing the landing fees 33 percent. This will result in a recovery of \$616,000 a year over a 10-year period.

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

MR. BRADEN: Right. So both of those fees are due to take effect on the 1st of April 2006. Okay, I'm seeing nods yes confirming that. I've been talking to some of the airlines, Mr. Chairman, who are the principle customers, the tenants, if you will, of the airport and the terminal building, and of late they were just getting this information and beginning to incorporate it into their fee schedules or having a look at how they incorporate it, seeing whether or not there was something they could absorb. Of course, I'm not going to ask the department to speak on behalf of the airlines; they can do this on their own. The department must have some kind of a pro forma forecast on how this is going to affect the traveling public. Both the flying passengers and I would also suggest the freight customers. So what kind of speculation or information

could the Minister provide on how they think this is going to increase the cost of air travel? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have also been talking to the air carriers. We have had numerous discussions I guess over the last while with NATA and we informed them that we were going to do this formally in December of this year. We've also been consulting with the air carrier consultation committee that we've been talking to in the last while. So the industry knew and has known of our plans. How they impact will be felt by industry I guess is dependent on how the carriers pass on those costs. We're assuming it will be passed on to the traveling public, and our estimation is that on average we will probably see tickets go up by three or four dollars.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't ask the Minister to speculate anymore on what the direct costs are going to be. We'll see how the airlines choose to manage that in due course. But, the department chose, as far as I know, Mr. Chairman, to pass on 100 percent of these costs to the public and, unless I'm wrong, we're not absorbing any of these whatsoever. It's a bit of mantra of mine, Mr. Chairman, that whatever this government does to increase the cost of living and the cost of doing business in the Northwest Territories must be something that we consider very, very carefully. That is where I'd like to ask what other options do we have, Mr. Chairman, other than simply passing off 100 percent of these costs to the traveling public? Is there no other venue or avenue that we have to help absorb this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, we did have a lot of discussion around this issue. It wasn't our first preference to incorporate any new costs to the traveling public. However, in this case, we needed to have additional resources to invest in the expansion that's required in this facility. Out of the \$11.2 million that this project is costed at, the Government of the Northwest Territories' portion is \$6.6 million. We did look at a number of ways that we could raise that revenue. We considered an airport improvement fee and we had some discussion around that. We did not think that at this point it would be appropriate for us to move forward. It is something that we are looking at maybe the possibility of reviewing the Airports Act to consider that for some time maybe in the future as part of other issues around that.

The Member mentioned other avenues. The other avenue would have been to have the Government of the Northwest Territories pay for the whole Government of the Northwest Territories' portion and we did have that discussion. However, it was felt that because our fees, general terminal fees and landing fees, were significantly lower and will continue to be lower than other jurisdictions that we could use that avenue to raise some revenue to recover some of our costs and we had agreed to that.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Here is an area where I have to take exception with the department and at times other areas of our public service as well that we make comparisons with other jurisdictions and that is a very legitimate part of our job. We should know what we're doing in relation to the rest of the world, but it does not for me, Mr. Chairman, and in all cases all the time justify whether we do something in a certain way just because this is what the landing fees are in Ottawa or Halifax or Saskatoon because they are airports that may have a similar number of landings or air traffic movements or passengers or this kind of thing.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that we can't just be compared across the board all the time with these other jurisdictions. We are not in the same operating environment. We are in an isolated place. We don't have the options of rail or perhaps multiple road connections or sea or all of these kinds of things. Our dependence on air travel and the amount of money that we put out for it professionally in our businesses and personally is quite high. For that reason I just really downplay, I don't reject altogether, Mr. Chairman, but I downplay these ideas that if this is what happens in the rest of Canada for an operation of our scale, this is what we can do up here too. I don't buy that. Let's do what we need to do to serve our needs. Whether or not it jibes with the way someone else does it doesn't really matter. This is where I go back to my point that I don't believe the Department of Transportation has really looked hard enough or pushed all the buttons hard enough to give the traveling public these other options.

I've gone over my time here, Mr. Chairman. I'll stop now with that point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Braden. That was more of a comment. I'll go now to Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, may I encapsulate the last phrase that Mr. Braden was sort of asking or ranting about, which is we are a unique market and if I can encapsulate that by then proceeding to my questions, emphasizing that we are a unique market in the Northwest Territories. We are a unique market in Yellowknife and the runway addresses a unique market. It's a very strong market concept that could be quite useful to the territory, as well as Canada as a whole. Yellowknife Airport has been identified as a landing spot for emergency cases, but yet our airport is not of the size to address emergency situations, whereas the airport in Whitehorse can, as well as Iqaluit's airport can. So from a safety point of view, what is holding the territorial government back from addressing the safety need, as well as the long-term growth need when it comes to expanding the Yellowknife Airport runway? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Yellowknife Airport runway is a consideration that we have in the long-term Yellowknife Airport plan. Right now we don't feel there is a real need for it. Down the road there may be a need for larger aircraft to use the airport in terms of bringing in more tourism trade or tourism traffic through this airport. There is some concern over the

safety factor. We still have been nominated as an emergency airport. We've seen a number of aircraft land, but we've had the discussion with the federal government and we will continue to do so. At this point, we don't have any immediate plans to lengthen the runway except for requesting or applying for land to reserve that area as part of our application for future consideration. For extension, we are not planning to do anything in that specific area.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, again from the safety perspective before I proceed on to another direction of the airport, would the Minister be able to quote on how many in the last 10 years oversized airplanes have landed at this airport? Would the Minister be able to acknowledge and quote that? I know that we've had some that have arrived with very interesting circumstances, yet they needed to land in the emergency context at the Yellowknife Airport. So if he could quote that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we would have to commit to providing that information for a 10-year period. We do know that over the last year, we've had three polar flights land at the Yellowknife Airport and we're probably going to see more over the next while. We are talking to Transport Canada and we have been, for some time, raising concern that these planes are landing at our airports that are not designed to accommodate these huge aircraft and the federal Minister has also heard from other jurisdictions, Nunavut and the Yukon that have the same problems. We have requested that we look at a mechanism to help us cover the costs of our staff, our crews that have to be called out if it is off hours. We have to pay for those costs. I mean, we can bill them back, but we should be able to deal with it better. We also want to have the federal Transportation department talk about ways that we can increase the size of our runways if we have to accommodate these large planes. So we have had those discussions. But as to the actual number, I'd have to commit to get that for the Member.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister. You led very nicely into my next line of questioning regarding the airport, which is with regard to the polar flights. Mr. Chairman, I believe it was last week our federal Transportation Minister, as well as the U.S. Secretariat have agreed to engage in opening up the skies in North America, which will slowly proceed to again reaffirm the importance of the polar flight route. Again, emphasizing the importance of the Yellowknife Airport, in which we only had three emergency calls last year; safety goes beyond actuals. It's the reality that we have to be there and recognize some of those points raised just a moment ago; how we are engaging on our federal counterparts about again reaffirming that we are an emergency airport on the polar flight routes, because these are opening up every day and we'd be foolish to think they're going to get slower. If anything, people are going to be flying here on a regular basis over our skies. As well, maybe the Minister could emphasize the area of whether the territorial government has any dialogue at all

with their air transportation folks with, say, understanding or at least some acknowledgement of who flies over the territorial skies. Do they have to engage the Northwest Territories government Transportation section in any way if the polar flights cross our airspace? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we indicated that there were three large aircraft that landed and used our runway in Yellowknife this past year, but it should be noted that there were a lot more calls that came in where there was potential that they wanted to use the airport and didn't actually use it.

The question regarding whether there is a need for these planes to contact the Yellowknife Airport when they are crossing airspace or our area is a good point. It's also a real sore point with us, because there is no requirement for the air carriers or the companies to contact us. There's not even a requirement, at this point, for the companies to inform us that we have been nominated or selected as an emergency landing facility. So there are really no early indicators, until we get a call that there is a need to use the airport and land. We have met with the federal Minister, Mr. Lapierre, on a number of occasions now. We have also met with our counterparts from the other territories. They have the same concerns and we've raised it with the federal government on many occasions. Transport Canada has recently indicated to us that they are undertaking to do their own assessment of the airport requirements in the northern part of Canada on what the requirements are to support international, polar and high altitude traffic and we're still waiting for that report. I'll stand corrected on that issue, Mr. Chairman. The deputy minister indicates that the report has just come in. So we have it now and we will be reviewing it.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, by no way am I implying we need to discourage northern travel and the Minister didn't allude to that, but I want to make that quite clear that this is a reality of our future and we need to embrace this opportunity, as well as enhance it. That being said, I appreciate his acknowledgement of the flying over and the sense I get was they call us five minutes in advance. I mean, this is more of a metaphor, but they call us and say be ready because we may be coming to your airport. So whether it's a 15-minute radio-in or it's an hour radio-in isn't so much the point. The fact is we know when they're coming, but we don't know when they're going over us.

I would certainly like a debate on policy in the context of putting forward a unanimous position, which is we want to be kept in the loop. From the sound of what I think the Minister was alluding to, other territories are having the same problem. We're left out of the loop and whether it means that they're flying over, they should at least acknowledge they're in our airspace. I don't believe in being silent on northern sovereignty. I think that's an issue that this House leaves by the wayside a lot of times. I would like to hear it screamed and trumpeted much more and with that sort of little rant, I say on the side I tip my hat at Mr. Danny Williams showing sovereignty in the Newfoundland perspective. Although, I have to admit I

was a little concerned on the flag lowering side, but very happy to see them raising it again.

I think our government needs to emphasize our position in Canada. I think it always has to be kept in a respectful context. It almost appears as if it's on a need-to-know basis at this regard and I'm very concerned about that. I would like to hear today that the Minister is working towards that so we can break down that wall, again to reaffirm and assert continually our northern sovereignty and our northern position, because I feel that we should be part of this equation. Again, to encourage them not to discourage these flights, but also I go back to what I was saying earlier, which is I'm taking the point of view of a safety perspective that if the Northwest Territories or Yellowknife is being nominated as a potential landing zone for these types of flights, I have serious concern that we're not dealing with something over the long run.

I will acknowledge and I would emphasize my appreciation that the Minister has made clear that he quoted three last year. That probably means wheels on the ground, but I hope you also include the potential call-ins that we may have. Again, I think this builds a case just on the emergency side. I haven't even begun to talk about the tourism side or just the national side of what this would bring, the international side which would bring maybe more Americans here, or the international side which bring the Japanese here. I mentioned last week or the week before about my enthusiasm about bringing them here to the Northwest Territories.

That being said, my long little-winded rant, I would like to hear that the Minister will engage clearly on the federal level that we have a sovereignty issue here. We would like to be in the loop. I would like to hear the Minister emphasize today that if the word priority isn't a word, I would like to hear him emphasize that this is a priority, that we want to do something with this. I know it's not a budget item, but I certainly would like to hear that we are going to address this as a priority because, from an emergency point of view, I think it's quite a solid anchor that could have massive economic spin-offs that benefit the whole Northwest Territories. Lastly, I would like to hear some encouragement from the Minister about his consultation with Regular Members. I know this is a good Minister and he does engage Members from time to time and I would like to hear that as well.

So those three major points and he can slide in a few extra good comments, I'm sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this issue only became a problem a very short time ago. The issue of polar flights and us being nominated as an emergency landing airport probably came about three years ago and it has been a problem and it has been growing ever since. I want to assure the Member that we have had good discussions with the federal Minister. We've been very clear that it's a concern that we have to deal with. We no longer can tolerate short notice on some of these emergency landings and the costs incorporated with it and we want to see that resolved. Having said that, it's not our position to say no to any of the aircraft that have an emergency. I mean, we'd never even go there, but we want to ensure if the

aircraft are going to land, then they should cover our costs and we should be in a position where our facility is safe. If it takes expanding the runway in order for our facility to be safe, then that should be something we have a way to pay for. We certainly don't want to be in a position where we'd have to incorporate a new fee or something of that nature to cover an expansion that aircrafts from other areas or other parts of the world are going to be utilizing in emergency situations. So we'd like to see a way for the federal government to do that. We have raised it with the Transportation Ministers. They know our situation, I spoke to it personally. Other Ministers from the northern regions have also spoken to it. So the federal Transportation department is very engaged on this issue. They know our situation and they have assured us that it's something they want to deal with now; have a report on it and we will be looking at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I've got Mrs. Groenewegen next, then Mr. Zoe and then Ms. Lee. Mrs. Groenewegen

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to Transportation general comments, I'd like to start off by telling a little story about a trip I took to Hay River before Christmas. I was on my way home to attend some constituency events and merely driving down the road towards Fort Providence, only to get there to find out that the ferry had been out of the water for several hours and had not been operating and there was quite a large number of people congregated in Fort Providence at the Big River Service Centre and outside and around and within Fort Providence.

Mr. Chairman, the point of this story is the fact that the information to the traveling public with respect to the ferry operations at that time consisted of a 1-800 number or an Internet site on which to check to find out if the ferry was operational. So fortunately for me I was able to arrange for alternate transportation to Hay River, leaving my vehicle in Fort Providence and getting home for the weekend to attend the events I was going to. Not so fortunate for lots of other people who were stuck in Fort Providence at that time. In fact, two or three busloads of little hockey players had driven all the way from Yellowknife to Fort Providence to find out the ferry had been out for six or seven hours prior to that. I'm sure that quite a few people that were stranded in Fort Providence that night could have had a story to tell. Some were off on vacations. They were catching planes south out of Hay River and there were a number of interesting stories at Big River that night.

So I subsequently was at the Hay River Airport on a Sunday night and constituents were complaining to me, saying that they had called the 1-800 number and that was Sunday evening and the last time it had been updated was that this is information effective Friday, 1:00 p.m., and Sunday night they were still getting that recording. It wasn't a long weekend, but that was the information on Sunday night. So it brought to light a communications problem with respect to the ferry operations. When it's 40 below and it's dark and you're driving down a road that could have buffalo on there, it's not a very pleasant prospect to have to turn around and drive back to Yellowknife. In my case, there would have been no flights out of Yellowknife again to Hay River until Sunday evening. This was on a Friday night.

So when I got back, I took it upon myself to suggest to the Minister that this was not a satisfactory and timely source of information for the traveling public and suggested that a sign flashing brightly at the outskirts of Yellowknife, letting people know if the ferry was operational or not operational, might be more appropriate. So I can say that on my next visit to Yellowknife I was pleasantly surprised to see there was indeed a large lit sign, which gave the status of the ferry at Fort Providence Mackenzie River crossing on the highway. There is one thing though, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that would have been a better placement for that sign would not have been prior to getting to the airport turnoff, it would be after the airport turnoff because conceivably you could turn to go to the airport on the other side, on the backside of Kingland Ford, go to the airport, drop off a parcel or a person, go onto the highway and you would have completely missed the sign. So I would say the only place you could put it where you would not be able to miss it, would be beyond any turnoff into the airport. So that's the only recommendation I would like to make on that. However, I would like to commend the department that finally, in this modern day of technology, we do have that source of information available in a timely manner now. So I was pleased with the response to it and that was the only amendment to it that I would have suggested.

Mr. Chairman, the other issues that I would like to bring up have to do with the operations of maintenance at the airports. There was a proposed change to the hours of maintenance for the runways in Hay River, which I will speak to specifically. Any callouts after those hours of operation would have been at the expense of the air carrier. I didn't think that these hours worked very well for Hay River. It would seem that the winter hours would be Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 on Sundays, with no scheduled maintenance on Saturdays and there would be no scheduled flights into Hay River on Saturday. I guess in the summertime, it wouldn't be a problem but if it was winter and there was a requirement for snow removal, then I would suggest with the timing of the flights in and out of Hay River, these hours might make it difficult. I would like to ask the Minister if the carriers that use the Hay River Airport were consulted on these hours of operation for maintenance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am from Fort Providence and I certainly can share a lot of the issues around the closing of the ferry. It's actually something we have all grown to expect and we've seen and we all have our share of stories about how people have been stranded. We are hoping when the bridge is done, we will alleviate that whole issue. In the interim, we certainly welcome the recommendation made by the Member to post a sign so that people are not caught or don't have their radio on or don't phone the 1-800 number or don't check on the Internet. We don't want to see people travelling all the way to the Mackenzie River Crossing, to find out the ferry is not running.

We have had a sign for some time on the south side, at the Enterprise turnoff. We were able, after reports came forward, to access a lit sign and we have located that just on this side of the airport leaving the city of Yellowknife. We will again take the Member's recommendation. It's a solar-powered sign, so we can move it. There is a good

point that there is potential for some traffic to be leaving the airport and not see the sign. We don't want that to happen.

On the issue of the airport operation and maintenance, I am not sure of the hours the Member is looking at. There was some discussion and we had planned to change our hours of operation. In the last while, we have had discussions with all the airports, all the operators and some of the carriers, and we've decided to set up our hours of service as published to accommodate all the scheduled flights. So I am not sure of the document the Member is looking at, at this point. We adjusted our hours so we can accommodate all the airports in the South Slave, as to the flight schedules.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. That's good to know. I believe, in terms of general comments, that's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I have Mr. Zoe and then Ms. Lee. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I am going to touch on a number of issues, rather than deal with specific issues.

First of all, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation, I concur with the committee's report in relation to the comments they made. I am in agreement that the cost is escalating and the current estimate was \$57 million, but it could go as high as \$75 million, by what we hear. I would like to caution the department that, at the end of the day, we are going to end up paying for that bridge. If the cost escalates as they are predicting now, it's going to be us, the travellers, because the toll they are going to put on there is going to be more. I concur with what the standing committee is saying on this and we have to nail down a number we can stick to, a maximum dollar figure, so we know what the costs are going to be.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to airports, I want to make a few comments. I agree with what the committee said with regard to the combined-service building that is anticipated to be done at the airport here in Yellowknife. I guess the department should also consider the highway camp, so it's all in the same general area. I think the committee, if I read the report right, is suggesting that too.

With regard to the CARS program, Community Aerodrome Radio Station program, Madam Chair, it's going to be given over to a private contractor effective April 1st. I would like to encourage the department to work closely with NAV Canada and whoever the new contractor is going to be, to ensure that services continue to be delivered at a high level; and, that the northern contractors and northern employees are used to carry out this work as we have been doing with our government.

The other area I wanted to touch on with regard to airports is I wanted to know, Madam Chair, if the department had any discussions with the Dogrib Rae Band pertaining to the airport they have at the Edzo site. I know it's a privately-owned airport, but has there been any consultation or discussion to see if we could turn it into a public airport, as Wha Ti or Rae Lakes or Wekweti? The initiative has been taken on by the community, because the department was reluctant to put in an airport. This is

one of the few communities that bend over backwards to get their airports off the ground and they have done it successfully. I am just wondering if the department has discussed this with them. It takes money to operate a private airport. I want to know if there has been any discussion at all to see if we could move or assist them in terms of funding with their O and M or even to try to make it into a public airport, as we do in other communities.

With regard to highways, Madam Chair, and winter roads, I know the department is doing a lot of work in this area in other regions. I am more interested in the North Slave area. The winter road goes to the outlying communities of Wha Ti and Rae Lakes and also to Wekweti. My understanding is that Wekweti does not get a winter road on an annual basis. It's usually every other year, if I recall right. I wonder if the department had any discussions with the community, because I know that at one time the community was suggesting that maybe a new route should be undertaken, so that they would be connecting onto the other winter road that we have going to Wha Ti and Gameti, rather than going through the mine right now; going through Lupin. I wonder if the department had any discussions with regard to that.

The other area I wanted to touch on, Madam Chair, is highways; again, pertaining to our highway camp that we had in Edzo. Over a number of years, the department has been reducing the PYs in that particular camp. The people who are currently there have managed to stay quiet and not go against the department with what they are doing, but my understanding is they don't have a mechanic to service their equipment there, they don't have a clerk to do the paperwork there. They have a supervisor and, if I recall right, there are only four or five permanent jobs there.

I was there this weekend and I had the opportunity to talk with some of the staff. They would love to have it back as we did years ago when we weren't in a financial constraint with our government, but they never got those positions back and they are hurting right now. They are coping with what they have now. When equipment breaks, they will have to either bring it to Yellowknife or get someone out there. That's a big concern to me.

I am going to be following up in the next go-around, Madam Chair, so that we enhance that particular camp to the level we have here in the Yellowknife camp. My understanding is the Yellowknife camp has more PYs than we do at the Edzo camp. Even in the Minister's riding, his camp has more people than we do here.

So I just wanted to put the Minister on notice that, even though the department has been requesting that they reinstate these positions, nothing has been happening. I hope, through the next business cycle we go through, he takes a serious look at implementing these PYs back into that camp; especially the mechanic and the clerk position. There are other operators or trades people that were cut previously.

I am really concerned about the services that are being provided from that particular highway camp and the number of people who are doing the job. They are doing the job from Edzo all the way to Chan Lake and beyond. They are limited with the number of people over there.

Moving on, Madam Chair, I just wanted to say that I am glad that this Highway No. 3 work is going to continue on.

Finally, it's going to be finished within another year and there will be a paving program starting at the other end, with the work that's been done this past summer. We are going to be seeing the conclusion, finally, of Highway No. 3 coming into Yellowknife.

Madam Chair, those are some of my general comments, but once we get into detail, I may have more comments. For now, I would like to ask the Minister to respond to some of the issues that I raised. Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for his comments. On the first issue regarding the Deh Cho Bridge cost overruns, I want to point out, first of all, we are not at a point where we have any final estimates. The true cost will come about in the form of a construction tender. That's when we will know where we actually are. There has been a lot of discussion over this issue. I should point out that we have an MOI, or memorandum of intent, that spells out that the cost be restricted to a point that can be accommodated to a \$5 to \$6 per ton charge. So we already have guidelines in place. Prior to us or this government signing a concession agreement, there would be a requirement to know the actual cost. We would have to see the actual tender before we could sign the deal for a concession agreement. We would not do that without firm prices. So I want to reassure the Member that there are some safeguards in place.

Regarding relocating the camp with the combined services building, that is something that we already agreed to. At the time the highways camps reach the end of their life, we could certainly consider relocating them to a more suitable location. If that location is the combined services area, we would do that. There are other facilities that probably could be accommodated in that area.

With CARS contracts with NAV Canada, that transition has been working out very well. The contract has been allocated by NAV Canada to a company called ATS Services. I believe they have a base here in Yellowknife and also in Fort Smith and they have an office also in Ottawa. So the transition there has been going good.

With the issue about the Edzo airport, we have not had any discussion with the community regarding that issue. We have not talked with the leadership from that community. We should also point out we have not had any requests to embark on a discussion regarding the airport itself.

The contracts for providing the winter roads in the North Slave area are expiring this year. We will be looking at the winter roads and doing an assessment and reviewing that whole contract again and going out to select a new contractor as our requirements have it.

The Wekweti road has always been a concern. We are very dependent on what happens at Colomac Mine in terms of cleanup in that area. As to having the resources to provide the road into Wekweti. There are very low traffic volumes coming to this community; I think they average about 18 vehicles a year. It's always the cost of providing that last stretch of road from the Colomac Mine to the community that has been distributed amongst the people who are bringing in resupply to that area. It's basically a

cat train road. We have had some contact with the community leaders. In fact, we have a meeting set up for this Thursday, with the chief and some of his representatives, to discuss the future of this road and the situation we are in with this road.

The Rae-Edzo highways camp, I would need more information as to the Member's comments on reductions at this camp. We have not made any reductions in that camp. We just tried to do a quick analysis from our staff here on when the last time there was a reduction at this camp. It's got to be at least six or seven years ago, or further. We have no plans to reduce any staff at that camp. We do not have a mechanic at that camp. The mechanic work is done here in Yellowknife. Maybe we could sit down with the Member and try to deal with some of the concerns he has with the Rae-Edzo camp. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The next person I have on my list for general comments is Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have a lot to add, but since I last spoke a few speakers ago, I just wanted to thank the Minister for the updates on the various projects that I had asked him about. One thing...

---Interjection

MS. LEE: He's still on my list.

---Laughter

The one thing I had asked him about was the possibility of a winter road for the Kam Lake access road, in the interim, as a temporary measure to address the traffic jam and the safety issues that are prevalent on the Old Airport Road during winter months during rush hour. I have been around long enough to know that it's hard to come up with original ideas and I find it hard to believe that the Minister has never heard of this possibility before; and, if he hasn't, the Minister did indicate that he would be interested in talking to the city about that. But, before that, could he get his staff to look at the feasibility and the cost and share that information with us? I think the winter road technology is one that is very well known. It's done a lot in the North and provides a means of transportation in the winter months. I am assuming that there is all of the knowledge and expertise within the department. I wouldn't mind having information on the possibility of that before he goes and discusses that. Perhaps he has already discussed this possibility already. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, my point was that this was not an issue that was raised to us for discussion at this point. We certainly have heard of it informally. We will commit to having that discussion with the city. I want to point out, though, that the city still calls the shots on the bypass roads. We have an interest. We want to work with the city, but it has to be a joint initiative. We don't want to make decisions without the city's involvement. When we have discussions on the Kam Lake bypass road as a whole, we will raise it as part of our discussions.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. I appreciate that. I am glad that the Minister has stated repeatedly that he would consult with the city on various issues. It is just that I don't know what kind of work is involved in that. I just want to get some information on that possibility. Would that be a scope of work that would take a lot of work to find out what would be involved in that? I don't want to ask the Minister to do a whole lot of work on this feasibility, but I find it hard to believe that the department doesn't have this already done up or somebody there has thought about it. Maybe the city has brought it up. I don't know. Anyway, I do appreciate the Minister saying that there is a process going on with the city. He did indicate earlier that there is a memorandum of understanding being drawn up. I don't want to interfere with the process that is in place already. More than anything, I am curious as to the possibility of that winter road. Anything the Minister could provide in that regard, I would appreciate it.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, it would probably be a very relatively easy exercise to cost out this project and what is required to be done in order to have this happen. The toughest part will be to ensure that we have the availability of the land and sorting out the land issue for building a winter road. We will certainly commit to having those discussions with the city.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list for general comments is Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Further to my questions earlier on the cost and transferring the cost of the Yellowknife Airport expansion to consumers, I wanted to pursue this a bit more. We are looking at a 10-year picture here of financing this according to what the department has provided, about \$660,000 a year coming from the people who use the aviation industry. I know the department was involved in some very intense negotiations with the CATSA folks, Canadian Air Transport Security Agency.

Madam Chair, I had heard from some folks on the private sector side of the airline industry here in Yellowknife that our department did, indeed, really go to bat and fought the good fight. I think that is worth acknowledging here. That tells me that they certainly didn't take this lightly, and they know what the impacts are going to be. But, I want to keep on pressing this, Madam Chair, as taking \$6.5 million out of the business and the public's pockets is not something that I do lightly and that this Assembly should take lightly.

What other avenues can we pursue to try and find some other places to collect some of those revenues? I am quite prepared, I think, to speak on behalf of my constituents and say that we are ready to pay some for having a safe, secure and a convenient airport facility. But, we are a very small market. In fact, I think, Madam Chair, if you peel back the layers, there is quite a small number of people in businesses who use the services of that airport quite extensively. So we are really putting a lot of the cost of this on the backs of a smaller population

than we might think. Where else can we go to get even some help with this \$6.6 million?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, I pointed out earlier that we did look at a number of options. In my opinion, I think we have exhausted all avenues of raising this revenue, short of an airport improvement fee. That is something that probably could be considered. We had moved away from that concept because we felt that landing fees and terminal fees were at a level where we could raise them and still be on par with other jurisdictions. We negotiated well over a year with CATSA. We really made the point. We were very adamant on our position, that we pointed out all kinds of arguments in terms of how and why we should be funded. We did make some success. We made some headway. The end result was that we still had to cover a \$6.6 million price tag. I really wouldn't know where else to turn to have new revenues. We went to FMB. The direction was cost recovery. At the end of the day, whether we covered through landing fees, terminal fees that are paid by the actual passengers or we go to the government, it is all going to be covered by the taxpayer's dollar. But, I don't know where else to go. I certainly would consider going to other places. It wasn't our desire to incorporate a new cost-recovery fee, but that was the position we were in. We certainly didn't want to compromise the project. We realize that there is a need for more space, and we had to do this and put in a system that would be able to pay for this expansion. This is one of probably the 20th busiest airports in Canada. There is a requirement for additional space. We've gone everywhere that we can think of to get new dollars so we wouldn't have to incorporate a fee. I guess it is our last resort. If the Member has any suggestions, we certainly welcome them.

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

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair, I will certainly keep my eye out for any other potential source of revenue. I hope that we are going to keep this cost centre open and look for ways in which it can be reduced or shortened somehow or some time if there is something that we can do. Airport landing fees and things of this nature -- taxes, levies and tolls -- have this bad habit, Madam Chair, of becoming permanent. We tend to like them around. We become dependent on them. We forget why they were originally there. So this is something that 10 years from now, I hope there is someone within this department or on the floor of the Legislature who is going to have a look at something and say that was paid off. I guess we can actually help the traveling public somewhere along the line. So let's keep that one open.

Madam Chair, the one other area that I wanted to explore, and then that will be it for me for general comments, is the really exciting and innovative program that the department led in the strategy to reduce impaired driving. There were a number of events in the last few months here and across the territory that showed that we do mean business about the impact of impaired driving and especially about the message that we need to get across to youth. I think just about every Member of this Assembly, at one point or another, had a chance to participate and compliment the department. I certainly compliment the organizations like St. Pat's Students Against Drinking and Driving who were

real motivators. I wanted to ask the department, Madam Chair, I thought I saw somewhere on some piece of paper -- we get a lot of paper flying around here -- that said that there was a sunset that we were reducing our investment in the strategy to reduce impaired driving. Is that the case, Madam Chair? Are we tuning down the message? Are we turning down the volume on this? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct; we are sunsetting some money for the program. It is in the area in communications that we set up for the introduction and incorporation of this program. It is \$85,000. However, we have funding budgeted for ongoing communications in that area.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the Minister give me a snapshot or refer me to what the ongoing plan is? I want to be satisfied, Madam Chair, that we are not just having a big flash and letting this message go. This is the kind of thing that, from my point of view, is a regular maintenance message. It must be put out there, and we've got to be aggressive and consistent in the message. Can the Minister advise me if we are meeting those kinds of benchmarks? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it is our intent to continue bringing this message forward. It is an important one. I think the whole program has been very well received. We will continue to provide good communications with the residents of the Northwest Territories for the long term. One of the things we are working on doing is providing signs in and around communities so that people don't lose sight of this initiative and it doesn't become taken for granted. We will continue, as we move along, to build in an initiative so that this message is out there.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. General comments on Transportation. Do I hear detail? Does the committee agree that we proceed? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just looking at the time and the amount of time the witnesses have been in their chairs. I thought that a break might be appropriate in the very near future.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. That seems like a good idea, so we will take a short break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): I will call the committee back to order. Welcome back, everyone. If the committee is agreed, we will go now to detail.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We are on page 10-13, activity summary, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$7.964 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mrs. Groenewegen.

Committee Motion 23-15(3): Recommendation Regarding The Deh Cho Bridge Concession Agreement, Carried

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development be given the opportunity to review the concession agreement between the government and the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation before it is finalized and that the government declares a maximum dollar figure above which it will reconsider its involvement in this project. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The motion is just being circulated now. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you. Back to page 10-13, corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$7.964 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-14, corporate services, continued on page 10-15, corporate services, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-17, activity summary, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$22.484 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-19, activity summary, airports, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Pages 10-20 and 10-21, airports, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-23, activity summary, highways. Mr. Hawkins.

Committee Motion 24-15(3) Recommendation To Divert Funds From Chipseal Projects To Highway Reconstruction, Carried

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Transportation revisit their chipseal overlay project and look at diverting these funds to much needed highway reconstruction projects. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is being circulated. Thank you. The motion is in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you. Page 10-23, highways, operations expenditure summary, \$37,587 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-24, activity summary, highways. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I might refer to winter roads, it's \$1.882 million. If the Minister could provide me the amount spent on the Tuk-Inuvik highway, could I have the breakout of that? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The amount for the Tuk winter ice road is roughly half-a-million dollars a year.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. At this time, that will be fine. I did mean to say Tuk-Inuvik winter road. Although, if I keep saying highway maybe the government will change their mind eventually. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Back to page 10-24, committee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Pages 10-26 and 10-27, highways, active positions. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: As I indicated earlier in my general comments, Mr. Chairman, with regard to positions, particularly in the Tlichu section under page 10-26, we have only five full-time and two casuals that are budgeted, for a total of seven. I guess my question to the Minister is, a number of years ago, I don't know the exact year, but the highway camp at Edzo had a mechanic position and a clerk position. For some reason the department had wiped that off the org chart for that particular camp. I recall those mechanics being there and I knew them years ago, but they haven't been filled and all of a sudden I'm looking for them and they're not even on the org chart. They had a clerk position to do paperwork, to answer the phones, to pick up mail for the camp office there and to do errands and so forth. These two positions were never filled and I'm wondering why they all of a sudden disappeared from the Tlichu camp.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we'd need to get more information on the actual positions that he's referring to. It must have been some time ago. We don't

have those positions listed for this coming year; we didn't have them for the last year or last couple of years. So I'm assuming it's possibly further than seven or eight years ago. Right now we do not have those positions on our books. We're not reducing the Tlicho positions or the North Slave positions for highways.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Follow-up, Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Well, maybe I'll get our research department to look into it so I can maybe assist the Minister and show it on the org chart and what year the changes occurred. I'm sure his department can find that out, too. But it is those two positions and I'd like to ask the Minister if he would consider reinstating those two particular positions. The reason I'm saying this, Mr. Chairman, is that these two positions were very fundamental to the operation of the camp and the five people we have there in permanent positions, a lot of them usually go on holidays and we have to hire more casuals. Especially now, Mr. Chairman, with the mining industry and tourism industry, they're taking up all kinds of people and it's hard for our camp to maintain the operators. I think right now is a critical time to reinstate those two positions for that particular camp.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we certainly can commit to looking back in our records to see what year the Member is referring to. At this point, we've been operating without those positions for, by my estimation, about six or seven years. In order for us to reinstate those positions, we'd have to be able to identify those dollars. However, the Member has raised concerns about the camp and the impact that resource development may be having. We will commit to reviewing the situation and take a look at what our staff positions are. As part of this exercise, Mr. Chairman, we have looked at all our positions. We have, of course, had to undergo reduction exercises, also. But I will certainly commit that we will take another look at it and focus on the Rae-Edzo base camp and have those discussions with the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding was because of our fiscal restraint, that all of a sudden it disappeared. But we're in a different situation now. For the last few years your camp over there in my area has been crying, but nobody's been listening to them because the top-down people weren't talking to them and listening to them, even though they were crying. Now they're starting to cry. I see them day to day over here. So hopefully the Minister will seriously consider reinstating the need for that particular camp. If he could do it in this 2005-06 fiscal year, good; but, if not, then the next business cycle. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I can't commit to anything further than having the discussions and taking a look at the base camp in Rae-Edzo. We just went through a real exercise of reducing a number of positions. I'm certainly not in a position to commit to increasing any of the highway camps at this point, unless there's a real

justification for it. I would have to take that to my Cabinet colleagues and FMBS for that. So I certainly will, as I indicated before, commit to the Member that we will take a look and see why the positions were cut historically and have a discussion amongst ourselves to see if there is a need for an additional position or two, as the Member has indicated. That's as far as I can commit at this point.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Now you're going to hear from me speaking on this issue. Mr. Chairman, you know, I've asked the Minister to make a certain commitment and he's reluctant to right now. Other Ministers in this House have made commitments; for instance, Hay River. It's always the small communities that are getting hit, especially with PYs being cut. Here we are, asking this particular Minister if he can do that. If the other government Ministers are doing that for the city of Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, why not for the smaller communities? The smaller communities have been asking you to do this kind of stuff and now I would like to ask the Minister if he would make that kind of commitment right now. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, this is the first time we've heard this request to increase the staffing at the Rae-Edzo base camp because there is a shortage of staff in that camp. I'm certainly not in a position to say yes we're going to increase it, when we have to justify the need, we have to be able to identify the resources in terms of the finances. I can't commit to that. I did commit that we'd look at the situation and we'd share that information. If there is a need, we will look at how we can accommodate it. If there isn't, then we will demonstrate why there isn't a requirement for additional staff. That's as far as I can go, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Mr. Chairman, you know, if the Minister takes a review of those two positions I'm talking about, it could be easily justified. I can tell you that. It's needed. I know it's needed because those positions were there before and now, all of a sudden, it's been taken out. I'm asking again if the Minister would, after you do your research, reconsider reinstating those two PYs. Every other department does. RWED did it. They got a brand-new split department with how many positions coming to Yellowknife? It is the same with the Housing Corporation and the same with Education, Justice; particularly in Justice. It's only two little PYs I'm talking about. If you can't do that, why can't you stand up to the other Ministers who are doing that for their own departments? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it's not a matter of standing up to anybody. It's a matter of quantifying if there's a need in that area. I'm committed to doing that. As a first step, if there is a demonstrated need in that area for more PYs, we'll certainly commit to taking that forward for additional money or resources, as

required. But, first of all, we have to take a look at the situation. We haven't had any other requests up to now. This is the first time we're hearing about it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Well, the reason being, Mr. Chairman, is because departmental staff at headquarters are not listening to the people at the frontline. That's the reason. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. That was a comment. We'll move on to pages 10-26 and 10-27, highways, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-29, activity summary, ferries, operations expenditure summary, \$5.374 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Pages 10-32 and 10-33, ferries, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-35, activity summary, community marine infrastructure, operations expenditure summary, \$129,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-37, community marine infrastructure, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-39, activity summary, community local access roads, operations expenditure summary, \$387,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-41, activity summary, community local access roads, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$337,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 10-43, activity summary, road licensing and safety, operations expenditure summary, \$3.468 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Pages 10-46 and 10-47, road licensing and safety, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Pages 10-48 and 10-49, work performed on behalf of others, \$758,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): We'll go back to page 10-7, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$77.393 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, committee. We'll now go to infrastructure acquisition, page 8-4, in volume II. Give committee a second. We're on page 8-4. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Transportation infrastructure related to airports, is this where any reference shows up to new equipment required to meet the CATSA requirements?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, yes, the CATSA requirements do show up under this section.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when the CATSA equipment is installed and in operation at the airport, is there going to be any requirement for upgrades to security equipment or any renovations related to security in other airports in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I just confirmed that at this point there are no security requirements at other airports. There may be at some time in the future in consideration for emergency equipment but in terms of security requirements, Yellowknife is the only airport that we have on our list at this point and it's the only one that CATSA has brought forward. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the CATSA equipment is in place at the Yellowknife Airport, will other communities, I can't think of one other than Hay River, but will there be direct flights allowed from those airports in the Northwest Territories to southern destinations? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the flights from other communities will be allowed to go to southern destinations. However, to stop in one airport, for example in Edmonton, to carry on further than that, there would be a requirement for the passengers to go through a screening at that airport.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So you could fly out of Hay River to Edmonton, but you can't fly out of Yellowknife to Edmonton without going through the X-ray for explosives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, you could fly directly from Hay River to Edmonton without going through a screening device; however, if you were to fly from Hay River to Yellowknife and then on to Edmonton, you would be required to offload and go through the screening.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was mostly concerned about the potential economic impact of people not being able to fly directly out of Hay River to Edmonton and avoiding or bypassing Yellowknife altogether, and you've answered my question and my constituents will be very glad to hear that there will be no loss of flights direct to international airports. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We're on page 8-4, activity summary, airports, infrastructure investment summary, total net book value of work in progress, \$97.447 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Page 8-5, infrastructure acquisition plan, airports. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this page I'd just like to ask the Minister with regard to Norman Wells runway, taxiway, apron, rehab for the current year of 2005-06, we have \$2.8 million going into that project. The overall cost is going to be, for the next three years anyway, \$7.8 million. But Mr. Chairman, for prior years it's not noted right now, but I recall Norman Wells always getting something. If it's not a new terminal, it's paving or an extension. There's always everything there. I realize it was the ex-Premier's riding. But every year everything is always happening. I want to ask the Minister why or how this particular community has always had a major project in that particular community. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't speak for the expansions that happened historically. At this point, we are working with Transport Canada on this initiative. It is targeted towards improving the runway, the taxiway and the apron. This is dollars that have been requested to the ACAP program, Airport Capital Assistance Program, that's run by the federal government. It's all full recovery from the federal government and although we do not have at this point a confirmed yes, we expect to hear within the next couple weeks. Provided we get a positive answer, we'll go ahead. If we don't have approval for this, again we'll have to defer it. It has already been deferred for two years.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. That's good. I'll go to Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just with regard to airports, I was in Trout Lake in January and they brought to me a request for a snow blower. I kind of thought, okay, they probably want to advance a snow blower. But I don't see it in the capital plan here under airports, a snow blower for Trout Lake, at all. Perhaps I could ask the Minister, Mr. Chairman, what his plans are with regard to a snow blower in Trout Lake.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we have to check to see where it is in the capital plans. At this point we have no snow blower in our capital plan, as the Member has pointed out. It's a level of detail I don't know if we have at this point. We'd have to commit to getting back to the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll take the Minister's commitment to get back to me on exactly where that snow blower is. One of the members of the community was in Fort Smith and, I don't know, maybe the Minister could comment on this; there's an extra snow blower in Fort Smith that could be possibly reallocated to Trout Lake for the time being.

---Interjection

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, my staff just informed me that they don't believe there's an extra snow blower in Fort Smith. If there was one sitting at the airport, I don't know who it would belong to, but, at this point, we don't have an extra snow blower.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much. Maybe if the Minister could check that out as well when he's checking into the snow blower in the capital plan for Trout Lake. Can I get the Minister to do that for me? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We'll do that, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on the theme of the snow blower, speaking to the snow blower being replaced in the 2005-06 budget for Tulita, is it a replacement or is it a new snow blower in this particular regard? Are they replacing an existing asset? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, it's a replacement with a new snow blower.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That being said, if it's a replacement, obviously at \$250,000 that's a brand-new snow blower, what happens to the old snow blower that it's replacing?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this instance, the snow blower we're replacing is 21 years old. We will probably consider whether it's worth rehabilitating and we'll decide from there its future. At this point, we're replacing it with a new snow blower and we'll decide what we're going to do with the old one.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Then in the spirit of good will for the communities, of course, can we get a commitment from the Minister to look at maybe sending it to Trout Lake until we can deal with the Trout Lake problem down the road? An old snow blower on its last legs would probably be worth a lot more than no snow blower in Trout Lake. Could we get that commitment from this Minister to look at that problem? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we'll take that recommendation under advisement. We don't know the actual condition at this point. I can't commit to giving it to anyone. It really depends what the situation is, whether we would take it and refurbish it and look at that avenue. It may be in a condition that we can't do that. We would have to take this recommendation under advisement.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for confirmation, I guess, at this stage, is that snow blower in Tulita, the one that we're replacing at \$250,000? Does the one that exists at this time run? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, I believe it's still running. The new one is in next fiscal year's budget to replace the current one.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Then just for final clarification from this Minister, can we get that clear commitment that he'll be in communiqué with all Regular Members, especially the Member for Nahendeh, regarding the possible relocation of that, again, reaffirming what he said on the possible relocation of that snow blower from Tulita. If we could get him to confirm that he'll keep in correspondence with all Regular Members.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, I'd like to request that the Member repeat his question. I didn't catch all of it.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just basically am asking if the Minister will communicate with all Members to inform us. Obviously several of us have an interest in this issue and would like to see the Minister let us know what happens with that mystery snow blower in Tulita, whether it's fit for service in Trout Lake or fit for service at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll gladly provide that information to the Member or any other Members who are interested.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. We are on page 8-5, infrastructure acquisition plan, airports, tangible capital assets. It goes over to page 8-6, total tangible capital assets, \$10.065 million, total activity, \$10.065 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just wondering in terms of the air terminal building in Yellowknife. I know the total project was at \$11.2 million the last time we had discussed it and I'm wondering, from an accounting standpoint, if you take the money that CATSA is giving you and then show it as an expenditure here? Is that how you are doing it? It's not actually our money, so I'm wondering why you would account for it this way. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, our process is to spend the money up front and then claim it back from CATSA in this case.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. If that is the case and you are expending the funds, does the Minister have some type of guarantee from CATSA that they are going to fund the project to the tune that they've said they would? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Madam Chair. We do have an agreement with CATSA. They signed an agreement that commits them to providing this funding.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Total tangible capital assets, \$10.065 million, total activity, \$10.065 million, agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. On to page 8-7, highways, infrastructure investment summary, total net book value and work in progress, \$472.870 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make an observation here. There are some expenditures coming up in 2006-07 in regard to highway pullouts in the Northwest Territories. One of the things from a visitor's standpoint, oftentimes the roadside

pullouts are the first place they pull in or they stop to go to the washroom or to empty their garbage, and I think it's very important that we maintain the roadside pullouts much like we maintain the parks or anything else. Like I said, oftentimes visitors are pulling into these sites and, myself, when I'm traveling in or out of the Northwest Territories, you pull into some of these places and they are not maintained in a very high fashion, that's for sure. I know in many cases, obviously, they are hundreds of kilometres away from the nearest community. So it is a challenge to maintain them, but I think it's incumbent upon the government and the Department of Transportation to ensure that they are maintained to a certain degree, and that garbage isn't overflowing into the bushes around the receptacles and they're kept as nice as they can be. I know it's a challenge, but I just wanted to provide that. Maybe the Minister has a comment for that. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, we have had some discussion with the Department of RWED where we share some responsibility on these issues as to the garbage issue and also for the outhouses. So we are having those discussions and we want to have a more coordinated approach for future years.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the other things in a lot of these roadside turnouts, there are the information maps, and in some cases they've been shot at or they've been defaced or whatever. If we're not going to maintain them, I'd rather see them out of there rather than be in the state that they're in. I think it gives a negative impression to visitors entering our territory or driving around our territory, that we don't take care of what we have in place. I know it's a real challenge when you put these nice signs up that show you where you are at on the Mackenzie Highway and people come around and shoot them and deface them and it's a real shame. But if we are not going to maintain them, maybe we should just take them out. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, we are discussing that issue also with RWED. Some of the signs belong to RWED. Some of them belong to the Department of Transportation and some of the signs we're not planning to replace. However, there are others that we have to replace; the ones that indicate speed and other information signs. So we will be addressing that issue. We will be removing some signs and we will be replacing others. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Ramsay caused me to think of a concern a constituent brought forward to me. It is in regard to traveling along the highways and the lack of washrooms. I think the Minister did reply with a letter and I remember there was some discussion about trying to find new ways to establish roadside pullout toilet areas that could, well, I wouldn't want to say be safer from the shotgun, but certainly in a

scenario where I think the Minister basically implied it's difficult to keep these washrooms along the highway from public abuse. Has the Minister ever engaged into looking at solving some of that problem or looking at alternative ways of making sure we have a lot of washroom pullouts along the highway between here and Alberta? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, this is, as I indicated earlier, part of the same problem we have with the garbage and cleanliness of the pullouts, and we're looking at all the issues around the pullouts, including outhouses and washrooms.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would definitely say that this is a key issue with some of my constituents who do prefer to drive and do like the comfort of these facilities being along there. What does the Minister mean by "we're looking at," if he could elaborate? Does it mean it would be a strategy this year, to take a serious look at this problem and maybe consider an alternative to the delivery of needs or whatnot? If the Minister could comment on what we're looking at.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, we indicated earlier that we're having the discussions regarding the roadside pullouts with RWED. The bulk of the washrooms or outhouse facilities belong to RWED and we have concern regarding the garbage and the condition of these units. Also, there is a requirement for regular maintenance in the cleanliness of the washrooms. So we have committed to having those discussions. We've had some early discussions and we'll continue to do that and come forward with a solution for garbage and washrooms and overall cleanliness of the roadside pullouts.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a small comment and it's actually not directed at the Minister, it's more directed at those who thought this was funny. I do have some older constituents who truly rely on these facilities, who feel very uncomfortable needing to use the washroom in the woods and don't feel safe or comfortable. So anyone who thinks this is a funny issue...Some of my senior constituents who are in the older years just don't feel comfortable. So to them it's a very important thing; and those who think it's a funny issue, I'm disappointed they would find this funny. I can appreciate that at times we make light of many issues here, but they listen to these things and they follow our Hansard. So I'm very disappointed that we'd find something of this type of nature funny. It's an important issue and I'm not talking about the young teens who can go pee in the woods, I'm talking about the seniors who have a little bit of discomfort over the issue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll take that as a comment, unless Mr. McLeod

would like to respond to that. Alright, then we're still on page 8-7, total net book value and work in progress, \$472.870 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. On pages 8-8 and 8-9, infrastructure acquisition plan, highways, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$40.151 million, total activity, \$40.151 million. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to make a comment for the Minister, and I know his staff is here as well and I've also got the ear of the Minister of RWED over there. I've heard the Minister say he's working with the Minister of RWED. One of the things that I think that the highway system could use and I know when you are traveling north into the Northwest Territories and you go through the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary you're liable, obviously, to see bison on the road. I think if we had a look at developing some type of interpretive centre on the highway, maybe we could even fence in some bison so that people could actually stop there and have a look at the bison instead of just hit and miss if you run into them or not. But I think it's an idea that has some merit, and I wouldn't mind if maybe the Minister and the Minister of Transportation might have a look at this and see if it's at all possible to develop something like that. When you are traveling that long road, there's not too much to see or to stop at. That's quite a distance from Fort Providence to Rae and then into Yellowknife. So if there was something between Fort Providence and Rae, a bison interpretive centre, I think that would be really nice for visitors on the road system. I don't know if it would be feasible at all, but it would be nice. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To that idea, Mr. McLeod.

---Laughter

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I know that RWED had some discussions over the years on the very issue regarding an interpretive centre. I'm not sure if those discussions included having it located on the highway system. I think there was some interest from the community, from some residents in setting up something as a commercial venture. I could certainly follow that issue up with the Minister of RWED.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the tourists that do use the road system, and now that Highway No. 3 is going to be completed and paved, I think they'll be looking for some product on the trip. Whether it's into Rae-Edzo or into Yellowknife, being the end of the road and having something like that I think would be nice. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, we agree that it would be nice and probably a good attraction for tourism, and we will have that discussion with RWED.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Highways, total tangible capital assets, total activity, \$40.151 million. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just with respect to the highway into Trout Lake; recently they put in a request to get the road, I think it was straightened out a bit, and I noted that the department does have some plans this month or, actually, in March. But is it actually a capital expenditure to upgrade that road to make it straighter, straighten it out, take out some of the 90 degree corners and make it a safer road that way, Madam Chair? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, we are planning to do some work on the Trout Lake road; some minor realignment on that piece of road. The money we are planning to use on that road would come from O and M, rather than capital. We are also talking with the proponent of the pipeline regarding this stretch of road, to see if we can have them invest some dollars in the realignment and upgrading of this winter road.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just with respect to the public highway access road to Jean Marie, the \$75,000 in the next three years. Can the Minister kind of detail exactly what that is earmarked for?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, if you can just give us a minute, we have to find that information.

Madam Chair, the amount of money that's allocated or earmarked for the Jean Marie road is to do some grade improvement and also some drainage work on that road.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd like to thank the Minister for that. With respect to pullouts or lookout towers, is it a capital expenditure? On the way to Wrigley there's a nice area where you get a nice view of the mountains, but if you're able to make a lookout tower above the treeline, which is another 20 feet higher, that would be a nice tourist view. Does the department have any plans for that, or would it fit under their pullout program that's listed here, Madam Chair?

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, our pullouts are designed for safety reasons. Towers and tourist attraction facilities for tourists would have to fall under a different Minister, the Minister of RWED.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I know where to go with this now. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, thank you. Highways, total activity under total cap, tangible capital assets, total activity, \$40.151 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Also, the item that proposed lease assets Deh Cho Bridge, it's for future, 2006-07, \$57 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Page 8-10, ferries, infrastructure investment summary, total net book value and work in progress, \$9.386 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 8-11, infrastructure acquisition plan, ferries, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$410,000, total activity, \$410,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Page 8-12, community marine infrastructure, infrastructure investment summary, total net book value and work in progress, \$293,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Road licensing and safety, total net book value and work in progress, \$2.470 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 8-14, road licensing and safety, infrastructure acquisition plan, tangible capital assets, total tangible capital assets, \$750,000, total activity, \$750,000, total department, \$51.376 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Could we please go back to page 8-3? Department summary, infrastructure investment summary, total net book value and work in progress, \$582.467 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Does the committee agree that that concludes consideration of the Department of Transportation main estimates for 2005-06?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Thank you, Mr. Neufeld and Ms. Cook. At this time what is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Opening comments for MACA.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask Mr. McLeod if he would please proceed with his opening comments on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I am pleased to present the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' main estimates for the fiscal year 2005-06.

The department is requesting \$82.5 million in operating expenses, and approximately \$26.2 million for capital acquisitions for the 2005-06 fiscal year. The O and M budget for 2005-06 represents an increase of six percent from the 2004-2005 Main Estimates and the capital budget reflects an increase of 87 percent from 2004-05. Sixty-two million five-hundred thousand dollars, or almost 76 percent, of the operating budget is in the form of grants and contributions, the bulk of which go to key stakeholders: community governments in the Northwest Territories. This includes formula funding for community government operations and additional funding for sport and recreation programs, water and sewer services, municipal insurance, grants-in-lieu of property taxes, infrastructure projects and community development.

MACA's budget supports the critically important role community governments play in serving the needs and interests of the people of the Northwest Territories. Virtually all of the proposed forced growth and new initiative support is in direct support of community governments. Specifically, additional funding has been requested to increase community government formula funding; to provide property tax revenues to communities in the general taxation area; to address water and sewer training and funding pressures; to assist in dealing with resource development; to build community capacity for managing infrastructure; and to support communities in leveraging additional resources for infrastructure and other priorities. By working in partnership with community governments, the department supports good governance to enhance the quality of life for all residents in the Northwest Territories.

As Members of this Assembly are aware from the budget address, the Municipal and Community Affairs' budget contains some exciting developments around the new deal for Northwest Territories community governments that will result in direct additional support for communities. First of all, effective April 1st, we are introducing the Property Taxation Revenue Grant Program where a total of \$350,000 will be transferred to non-tax-based community governments. This amount represents the taxes collected last year within community boundaries in the general taxation area. This is an interim step towards our work with hamlets and charter communities to become municipal taxation authorities. The taxation revenues flowed to the community governments will be on an unconditional basis; however, communities will be encouraged to use the funding for infrastructure development or related operating costs.

In addition, the department's budget includes \$1 million for planning and design work that is required in 2005-06 to prepare for the establishment of a separate community public infrastructure allocation. Beginning in 2006-07, MACA will allocate a total of \$22.5 million for infrastructure in non-tax-based communities, an increase of \$13 million from 2004-05, as well as an additional \$3 million for tax-based communities, through a formula allocation to be

developed in consultation with communities. This will result in a stable, predictable funding base of \$25.5 million per year for infrastructure development in our communities. This is in addition to our ongoing program of \$2.5 million each year to support water and sewer infrastructure in tax-based communities. It is a significant change to the current manner in which we do business and one that has been a long time coming.

Complementing this are some recent federal announcements regarding support for community infrastructure. In mid-January, I signed the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Agreement with Infrastructure Canada, on behalf of the territorial government, which will result in \$16 million over the next four years for community infrastructure. Subsequently, the federal government has confirmed plans to share a portion of the gas tax with community governments. Northwest Territories community governments will receive revenues of \$37.5 million over the next five years, with the total amount stabilizing at \$15 million annually after that. I am pleased to be able to bring forward these significant proposals, which will help all Northwest Territories communities deal with their infrastructure shortfalls.

While the new deal is MACA's flagship initiative for 2005-06, there are a number of other priorities that may result in changes to the department's funding allocation in the upcoming fiscal year. As a government, we will need to consider our support for the 2008 Arctic Winter Games, which are being hosted by the Northwest Territories. Once a host community is selected by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, the government will need to allocate funds to provide support to the community that is selected to host the games. In addition, the concept of the Northwest Territories Games will require further consideration by this Assembly to see if this should be continued after the inaugural event takes place March 18th to 21st in Fort Smith.

Overall, I am very pleased to confirm that MACA's 2005-2006 Main Estimates allocates the department's resources in support of the priorities outlined in the 2005-2008 Business Plan. To touch upon a few highlights:

- As I mentioned, development and implementation of the new deal continues to be a top priority in order to provide community governments with greater autonomy and decision-making on the issues that directly impact their operations. A key component will be to ensure community governments are adequately supported and resourced in order to be able to manage new responsibilities.
- MACA continues to support the evolution of community governments, especially with the implementation of various self-government arrangements on the horizon. To support the Tlicho implementation, the department has set up a dedicated task team to lead the department's work with the leadership and community governments in the region. MACA recognizes the importance of ensuring full engagement and support during the critically important pre-implementation and implementation phases.
- The impact of resource development on communities is another area where MACA is working to provide support to community governments. The Preparing for the Pipeline Conference, which was held in

December 2004 in Inuvik, provided a great opportunity to identify issues and opportunities for communities related to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, and the department continues to work on supporting community governments throughout the environmental assessment and regulatory review process. In this budget, we are seeking approval for funds to establish a community resource development planning position in our Sahtu regional office. This will complement positions in the Inuvik and Deh Cho regions, which are directly working with communities to provide advice and support.

- The importance of healthy choices is a key priority that is reflected in our work with the social envelope departments in support of sport and recreation, youth, active living and volunteerism.
- The department will work with the proposed Department of Environment and Natural Resources to address issues related to the environmental remediation of abandoned mine sites. Because many of these mines are on Commissioner's land, MACA has a role to play in assisting the regulators on matters related to the surface lands associated with the mines.
- MACA continues to see the value in brokering partnerships with community governments, the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, other governments and the private sector. The municipal rural infrastructure fund and the federal new deal are two examples where partnership has resulted in leveraging opportunities and increased revenues that support key priorities. The Building Healthy Communities document, released in partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, which outlines the current community infrastructure deficit, is one of the tools we are using to raise the profile of this issue and the benefits of collaborating to resolve it.

In conclusion, I want to confirm that MACA's 2005-2006 Main Estimates reflect the allocation of resources to the key priorities of the department and aim to build on momentum to date so we can advance priorities in partnership with our key stakeholders, the community governments. Community leaders and administrators have made it clear they want to work with the government to address challenges and opportunities facing the Northwest Territories. Initiatives such as the new deal for community governments are building momentum and garnering widespread interest and support. The investments government makes in communities will result in a payback of stable, good governance through the Northwest Territories and quality of life for all residents. I look forward to your comments on the department's main estimates and any questions or comments you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Minister McLeod. I'll now go to Mrs. Groenewegen for the committee's comments. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and his staff on January 14, 2005, to review the department's Draft Main Estimates for 2005-2006.

The mandate of MACA is to provide community governments with the support to deliver public programs and services essential to sound community life, to assist with the development and maintenance of community governments, and to provide the resources necessary to achieve community goals.

Arctic Winter Games

The Arctic Winter Games will be hosted by the NWT in 2008 and will provide an excellent opportunity for northern athletes to compete. The international committee will make an announcement late this spring as to whether Yellowknife or the South Slave will host the Arctic Winter Games. In 2005-06, MACA will be allocating funds to support the NWT's role as host for three fiscal years. The committee noted that funding for the Arctic Winter Games was missing from the MACA's draft main estimates and that the announcement with regards to funding will be made after the host community is chosen.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, the committee suggests the department announce funding for this initiative before the international committee makes their decision.

The New Deal

The new deal is a proposal from MACA to the communities which is to provide communities with greater control and decision-making over community infrastructure, including planning and decision-making for capital projects.

Capital projects can run into difficulty and require all kinds of expensive advice in the form of legal, engineering and contracts expertise, to name only a few. The committee is pleased to see that MACA is committed to working with the NWT Association of Communities, NWTAC, to make the new deal a graduated process for communities. The committee feels there needs to be a central pool of professionals for communities to access. Most importantly, communities also require guaranteed funding to help them budget for long-term capital projects.

Currently, although community government funding is based on a three-year projection, it is only guaranteed year-to-year because of the Financial Administration Act requirements.

The committee recommends that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs continue to press the Financial Management Board Secretariat to find a means to guarantee multi-year funding for community infrastructure.

Municipal And Rural Infrastructure Funding

The Northwest Territories will receive \$16 million towards green municipal infrastructure over four years, starting in 2005-06. After receiving this news, MACA has been working in partnership with the NWT Association of Communities to seek the association's input on priorities for application of the fund, as well as the application formula.

The funding will be devoted mainly to water and sewer repair. Fifty-five percent of the funding will go to non-tax-based communities and forty-five percent will go to the tax

based communities, who MACA and the NWTAC feel are better able to fund their own projects.

Before any additional federal funding is announced, in the interests of transparency and accountability, the committee urges MACA to decide on and communicate in advance a fair and equitable approach to distributing funding. The approach should be based on criteria such as remoteness of a community, the cost of doing business in the community, the age of existing infrastructure, impact of population demand and the impact of resource development.

Granular Materials

There are many departments working in the various communities that have gravel requirements. Each department has to look after its own gravel requirements. There are roughly eight communities that require gravel for projects such as lot, airport and road development. In light of these requirements, the committee expressed concerns regarding MACA's proposed \$250,000 budget cut to granular materials.

The committee is pleased to hear that rather than simply making this budget reduction, MACA will take the lead in determining all the departments that require the use of gravel in the different communities, their future requirements and how those will be met. The department advised it would have a plan for review within the next month.

That concludes our report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen. Sorry; Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order. It is not debatable. All those in favour? Those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, and Committee Report 10-15(3), and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. There is a motion on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. It is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 15: Tlicho Community Services Agency Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that Bill 15, Tlicho Community Services Agency Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Bill 15 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, March 1st, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 17, Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation Act

- Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006
- Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005
- Committee Report 9-15(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 10-15(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 11-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2005-2006 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 12-15(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2003 General Election
- Minister's Statement 86-15(3), Northern Strategy
- Minister's Statement 88-15(3), Update on Oil and Gas Development in the NWT
- Minister's Statement 89-15(3), Community Leaders' Conference Report: Preparing for the Pipeline
- Minister's Statement 90-15(3), Social Impacts of the Mackenzie Gas Project
- Minister's Statement 91-15(3), Preparations for the Mackenzie Gas Project
- Tabled Document 108-15(3), Nation Building: Framework for a Northern Strategy

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

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

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

