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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Roger Allen, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

--Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): I would like to inform the House that the Honourable Speaker is absent today due to a long-standing commitment within his constituency. I trust you will extend to me the same understanding that you have demonstrated to date towards Speaker Whitford. Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 23-14(2): NWT Power Corporation Receives National Recognition for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to report to you today that a Northwest Territories Crown Corporation, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, has won three of the highest environmental honours available from a national environmental organization. The awards come from VCR Inc., a voluntary, non-profit organization in Ottawa designed to celebrate the achievements of members in limiting their greenhouse gas emissions.

The Power Corporation has attained Gold Level Champion Reporter status for excellence in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Members can earn bronze and silver awards for accounting for and reporting emissions, but only those members who actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions can achieve gold level. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the Northwest Territories Power Corporation has gone the extra mile and actually decreased its greenhouse gas emissions to below 1991 levels. Of some 980 registered members nationwide, the corporation is one of only 45 gold level champions.

The corporation was further awarded first place in the Best New Submission category, and an honourable mention in the Electric Utilities category. The Power Corporation's prize-winning submission outlined a detailed and successful plan to reduce greenhouse gasses.

The initiatives introduced by the corporation to reduce greenhouse gases include: development of hydro projects; recycling residual heat; improving efficiency of existing plants; replacing old-style streetlights; converting the Inuvik plant to natural gas; and installing wind energy conservation systems. Employing these methods, the Power Corporation has decreased greenhouse gas emissions by almost 14 percent since 1991.

Mr. Speaker, this achievement is particularly impressive when you take into consideration the difficulties associated with generating power in our harsh climate. It is my hope that the

leadership the Northwest Territories Power Corporation has shown will encourage other northern organizations to follow suit and voluntarily record and reduce their greenhouse gases. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 24-14(2): Maintenance Priorities on NWT Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to clear up what I believe is a misunderstanding about the priority of maintenance operations on different sections of the territorial highway system. The Department of Transportation has only one maintenance priority, and that is to keep the highway system in safe travelling condition. In every region and on every highway, the department's maintenance staff works to achieve the same goal of a safe highway system.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, maintenance routines and requirements do change from one part of the highway system to another. Geographic differences in physical terrain and seasonal weather patterns call for different kinds of maintenance treatment. More importantly, differences in traffic volumes create different maintenance standards. The Department of Transportation's Highway Maintenance Manual identifies five categories of maintenance standards based on traffic volumes.

- Highway No. 3 between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife is in maintenance category no. 2, with a traffic volume of between 250 and 500 vehicles a day.
- The Dempster Highway between the Yukon border and the Tsiigehtchic River Crossing is a maintenance category no. 3 highway, with a traffic volume of between 150 and 250 vehicles a day.
- With fewer than 80 vehicles a day, the Liard Highway between Nahanni Butte and the Junction with Highway No. 1 is in maintenance category no. 5.

For the reasons of terrain, climate and traffic, some sections of highway are much more difficult and expensive to maintain than others. Maintenance costs vary from a high of \$21,300 per kilometre annually on the Dempster Highway through the Richardson Mountains, to a low of \$3,100 per kilometre on Highway No. 1 between the N'dulee ferry crossing and Wrigley. The high cost of the Dempster is caused by high winds and drifting snow in the mountains. Highway No. 1 north of the N'dulee crossing has a low cost because it has very little traffic.

Among the most difficult and expensive sections to maintain is Highway No. 3 between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife. This is for two reasons. First of all, this part of Highway No. 3 was built

over muskeg and permafrost. Secondly, it carries the highest volume of rural traffic in the Northwest Territories' highway system. Other difficult sections of highway to maintain are all of Highway No. 6 from the Buffalo River Junction to Fort Resolution, Highway No. 1 from its junction with Highway No. 7 to Fort Simpson and the Ingraham Trail.

The department's maintenance crews all do their best to keep these sections of highway in safe travelling condition. The different sections of highway do not all have the same budget because they each need different types and amounts of maintenance work. The maintenance priority always remains the same: keeping the highways in a good, safe operation condition. Across the system, that cost can vary tremendously. Again, Mr. Speaker, the Dempster Highway near the Yukon border costs seven times more to maintain than the Mackenzie Highway north of the N'dulee crossing. Yet they are both kept in a safe condition. One costs a lot more than the other, and that is the only difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Proposal for Community Response to Yellowknife Housing Needs

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I received a copy of a proposal called the Community Response to Housing Needs: Emergency, Transitional, and Hard-to-House. Mr. Speaker, this proposal was put together by the Young Women's Christian Association of Yellowknife, the Yellowknife Women's Centre, the Salvation Army, and the Side Door. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the four non-government organizations in Yellowknife who worked to put this proposal together.

Amidst a time of fiscal restraint, this type of co-operative effort needs to be recognized and encouraged. The YWCA, the Women's Centre, the Salvation Army, and the Side Door have joined forces to recommend a strategy for responding to the housing needs of at risk people living in or moving to Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, as an urban centre, Yellowknife has recently experienced a significant increase in the number of high needs individuals and families moving here that require specialized housing and support services.

A large number of these people come from the communities, and the greatest increase has been in young people with no permanent homes. Mr. Speaker, the housing services in Yellowknife are provided by a number of agencies, but there is a lack of co-ordination between non-government organizations and social agencies, which results in gaps in service and some duplication.

Mr. Speaker, the YWCA, the Yellowknife Women's Centre, the Salvation Army and the Side Door want to work together with their partners within the Government of the Northwest Territories to develop a long-term strategy to address the special needs of hard-to-house people. I think the need to do this, Mr. Speaker, was highlighted by some of the reports we heard about one centre closing down here, perhaps within the next few days, in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to point out that these groups are not looking, and I repeat, not looking, for an increase in funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories. They are looking for a co-ordinated approach to develop the inter-agency protocols, identify ongoing needs, and to maximize the current resources. A strong partnership would also be more effective in accessing federal funding and surplus federal housing. Mr. Speaker, a strategic long-term plan must be developed to address homelessness, particularly in this city. I will be forwarding this proposal to the Ministers responsible, asking that they meet together with the representatives from these agencies to consider it. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You have unanimous consent, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, honourable Members, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be forwarding this proposal to the Ministers responsible. I will be asking them to meet with representatives of these organizations, together, along with the Ministers from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Education, Culture and Employment, and Health and Social Services.

Now that these non-government organizations are making a co-ordinated effort to work together, I will be encouraging and watching to ensure that the departments of this government do the same. This is no time for turf wars, or protectionist stances. By working together and maximizing our resources, government and non-government partners will be able to find real solutions for the betterment of our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak briefly about the Western Arctic Leadership Program. Last week, the leadership program wrote letters to all of the Members, outlining their situation and asking for assistance. Mr. Speaker, in 1990, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, under the direction of the government Minister, Mr. Kakwi, created the Western Arctic Leadership Program, based on his vision and his desire to see a program that would be a residence and an opportunity for children from small communities to learn and develop their leadership skills and to graduate from high school. It was modelled after the very successful environment of the former Grandin College, which was also located in Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, the students from this program study at the local high school, while they reside in a residence in Fort Smith. The program has very active house parents, and they focus both on the academic and on developing outdoor skills and leadership skills on the land. Over the past decade, dozens of students have passed through the program, and all but two of them have gone on to post-secondary education. Mr. Speaker, the first ever graduates from communities like Colville Lake, Fort Liard and Trout Lake were Western Arctic Leadership Program students. It is a successful program, Mr. Speaker, and I believe it has proven itself after ten years. It has a very blue

chip board, if I may use that term. The former director for Grandin College, Father Pochat, is on the board.

The one problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the leadership program is facing funding problems. For the past half-dozen or so years, the board has had to cobble together sufficient resources every year to meet its budgetary needs, in order to keep the program running. They have money from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has also thrown in some money to help promote the wilderness and leadership training on the land. Our Member of Parliament has also been very supportive.

However, it is a funding process that is very hard to sustain. The board has reached the point where it does not believe it can continue under that particular approach. In their letter to the Minister responsible for Education, they have asked for a more realistic funding commitment based on the proven track record of the leadership program, and the intent of the government, which I still believe is there.

Mr. Speaker, the leadership program has been an important part of the educational scene in the Northwest Territories. I hope the government will recognize the value of this program, and find ways to provide the support it needs. Thank you.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on North Slave Medical Travel Contracts

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I talked to the director of operations of the Stanton Regional Health Board. I had concerns about how the contracts for medical travel are given out. Right now, these contracts are done as a package. The successful bidder provides medical transportation services to several communities. North Slave contractors are concerned that they do not have the same opportunities to bid on these contracts as Yellowknife contractors.

I looked into this matter, and the way the contracts are tendered, small contractors do not have a chance to be successful on their bids. In particular, it does not make sense for the government to pay for Yellowknife cabs to pick up a person in Rae to bring them to the hospital. Later, the patient is returned to Rae, and the cab comes back empty to Yellowknife. Essentially, two empty trips are made for each patient from Rae who calls for medical transportation. I am sure that a more cost-effective service can be provided. At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services regarding this matter. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Second Annual Territorial Skills Competition

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a very important event which will take place in April

and May, in both Yellowknife and Fort Smith. Mr. Speaker, ten years ago in Barrie, Ontario, Skills Canada, employers, educators, labour groups and governments began their program, working to ensure that students are exposed to, and will consider, jobs in the skilled trades and technology fields.

Through trial and error, it has been discovered that competitions make these occupations more visible and real for students, teachers and parents. In the past decade over 100,000 students have been directly influenced by the program. In 1999, the first Territorial Skills Competition was held in Fort Smith and Yellowknife. Over 80 students and apprentices from the Northwest Territories and Nunavut participated. A team of 53 competitors and team leaders went on to represent Team Nunavut/NWT at the Canadian Skills Competition in Kitchener. Mr. Speaker, we received five top five finishes, including two silver and a bronze medal.

The employers of our apprentices have been generous in providing paid leave for the competitors. At the national competitions, many of the competitors are offered jobs onsite.

Mr. Speaker, the goals of Skills Canada NWT should be the goals of all of us. To have more regional participation in these competitions at the high school level, to increase participation of young women in skilled trades and technology careers, and to have more companies registering and hiring apprentices.

In an effort to help Skills Canada NWT get established, HRDC has funded this program for the past two years. Additionally, in the past year alone, approximately \$100,000 in-kind contributions were received in the form of equipment and materials, from local industry, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Aurora College.

This year the second Skills Canada NWT Competition will be held April 19th and 20th in Fort Smith, and May 11th in Yellowknife, to select Team NWT for the national skills competition this June. Territorial industry is facing a critical shortage of skilled labour. Opportunities are being lost in current oil, gas and mineral development. More youth participating in Skills Canada NWT competitions is a win-win situation. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to fund and continue their support of this worthwhile project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement on Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak on the Western Arctic Leadership Program in Fort Smith. Mr. Speaker, grades up to 12 are available to our students in most of our smaller communities in the Northwest Territories. However, the resources are limited. A high school class may consist of a teacher teaching two or three students, from grades nine through to grade twelve.

The Western Arctic Leadership Program offers an option to those students who want more than what can be offered in the communities. Some students want to be educated in an environment with computer labs and science labs or where the sports programs have the facilities and qualified gym teachers.

Mr. Speaker, the program in Fort Smith has been in operation since 1990. It was designed to develop the qualities of the youth of the Northwest Territories. This program, in its infancy, was initially funded by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Lately, this program and its board of directors have had to struggle from year to year to deal with the ever-dwindling financial support from the government.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, the board of directors of the Western Arctic Leadership Program have made many attempts to secure funding from different sources. They have applied to foundations across Canada, as well as to major corporations within and outside the Northwest Territories. They have also lobbied our government and the Government of Canada to no avail.

Mr. Speaker, the Western Arctic Leadership Program has had a very good success rate over the past ten years, and has produced many students who are now in our workforce or in post-secondary institutions in the south. This program has seen students from many communities across the North, and has played an important role in furthering their education. This program has proven to be an excellent service to our youth. This program gives the youth of the Northwest Territories the opportunity to advance their education through sources that are not available to them in their own communities. I hope this government can come up with the required support this program needs to continue. I will be asking questions on this issue during question period.

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

Member's Statement on Hunting License Residency Requirements

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For years now, this government has been deferring a response to concerns regarding the current residency requirements to obtain a hunting licence in the North. I am aware this has been an ongoing issue for many, many years and there have been repeated requests by Members of this Assembly to have the regulations changed in the Wildlife Act. These changes are being requested to allow members of the Military and RCMP the privilege of hunting without having to wait the current two-year period.

Last Friday, Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mr. Dent, asked questions relating to our current legislation, which does not recognize the limitations and restrictions of DND and RCMP staff. My colleague also questioned the Minister responsible for the Wildlife Act on whether or not new amendments will recognize the employment restrictions these two groups of federal employees have.

I am very concerned, Mr. Speaker, that this government will fail to recognize the calls for legislative revisions to allow members of these two groups to ever hunt in the North. I have reviewed Hansards of the previous Assembly and a great deal of previous correspondence relating to repeated requests to add provisions to address the residence requirement of RCMP and DND officials.

I was disappointed when I read the response of the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development in the unedited Hansard from Friday's question

period. He had suggested, and I quote, "it would probably be a lot faster if they just extended their stay, so they would not have to leave the Northwest Territories before enjoying the hunting privileges everyone else enjoys through their extended stays."

Mr. Speaker, we all know RCMP and DND staff often do not have any say as to where the federal government stations them. Many are posted for only two-year placements. This time limit is out of their hands. Mr. Speaker, we should take this request seriously and change our hunting regulations to accommodate these individuals in public service. This should be changed out of respect and appreciation for these federal servants and to bring legislation in line with many other jurisdictions in Canada. We need to make these changes, Mr. Speaker.

On Friday, the Minister stated such an exemption could violate the provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Again, Mr. Speaker, I have to seriously question what would make our hunting regulations so unique. There has not been a challenge to the Charter of Rights in any other jurisdiction in Canada on this matter. Later today, I will be directing my questions to Premier Kakfwi, the Minister responsible for this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement on Yellowknife Arts Scene

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement this afternoon is on the arts. This past weekend, I attended two performances here in Yellowknife that demonstrate the diversity and ambition of creative people in the North. On Friday night, northern filmmaker Dennis Allen premiered his film called *Someplace Better*. It dealt in thought-provoking ways, Mr. Speaker, with the issues of elder abuse, suicide, alcohol abuse and prejudice in northern society. It was produced with the assistance of many local sponsors, and starred a number of Yellowknife personalities including John Holman, Ben Nind, and elder Helen Tobie of Dettah.

On Sunday, my family and I took in an afternoon matinee production of a children's fantasy called *The Education of the Snow King*. It was written by a local playwright, Bruce Valpy, and starring his royal highness, the Snow King, Tony Foliot, at the Snow King's Castle on the ice of Yellowknife Bay.

Yellowknifers of all walks of life, Mr. Speaker, and thousands of visitors to our town in the winter, marvelled at, and even helped to build, this castle down on the bay. For the past several years, Mr. Foliot and his friends have created an amazing attraction, and a celebration of winter. I salute their efforts, and those of other northern artisans, passionate and creative individuals all, and the colour and contribution they make to our lives and our lifestyles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a friend and constituent from Fort Smith, Ms. Bea Campbell. She is the co-chair of the Fort Smith Board of Health, as well as president of the Senior's Society for Fort Smith. Thank you.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in gallery. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize representatives of three of the four groups that I spoke of in my Member's statement today. From the Women's Centre, Ms. Arlene Hache. From the Salvation Army, Ms. Karen Hoeft. And from the YWCA, Ms. Lyda Fuller.

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in gallery. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge a visitor to the gallery, the executive director of the NWT Seniors' Society, Ms. Barb Hood.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in gallery. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to recognize Beatrice Campbell, as chairperson, and Barbara Hood as the executive director of the NWT Seniors' Society.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Oral Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife**

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today goes to Minister Kakfwi, and it is in response to enquiries that I have received from concerned parents in Yellowknife. It is regarding the possibility of arsenic being carried in the transportation trucks between Giant Mine and Miramar Con Mine. I believe there is a great deal of information on this, and I wonder if the Minister could inform us as to whether there is any dangerous arsenic being carried in the trucks carrying ore between the mines.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the ore is not processed. It is simply being trucked. Because it has not been processed, there is no dangerous form of arsenic present. It is in a stable form and does not pose a risk whatsoever.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could assure the House as to whether there is ongoing monitoring by his department or the federal officials responsible, to monitor and to make sure there is no harmful arsenic being transported. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not our responsibility, but I will enquire and inform the Members as to whether or not there is any form of monitoring going on. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's answer. I wonder if I could confirm that he is taking this question as notice and he will respond to us in writing so that I can make it available to my constituents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Clarification, Mr. Minister?

Further Return to Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that is correct. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Oral Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Premier. It follows up on some questions that were asked last week by Mr. Braden about the Northwest Territories Family Counselling Services. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Family Counselling Services provides many important services and programs for the community, such as family life education and community support for family advocacy.

The cuts they will take now as a result of the change in this governments' contracting on the Employee and Family Assistance Program will effect programs at the YWCA, the Women's Centre, the Aboriginal Community Healing Circle, and individuals in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, with the recent awarding of the contract for the GNWT Employee and Family Assistance Program to a new consortium that is twice the cost

of the proposal the Northwest Territories Family Counselling Services had offered, they have now lost a good portion of their funding. They will be about \$140,000 short for the coming fiscal year.

I would like to ask the Premier if he will commit to finding funding that would allow Northwest Territories Family Counselling Services to continue to offer these crucial programs to the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Premier, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi.

Return to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not possible to make a commitment at this time. It would be one of many considerations that the Cabinet and Ministers would make in the course of developing our business plans, which we plan to get into as soon as this session is over. I am unable to make a commitment on financial support and core funding type of support to this organization at this time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to confirm what the Minister said, while he said that he would make no commitment right now, did I hear him say that his Cabinet would consider such a commitment in the preparation of the business plans?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Cabinet will be in some discussions and deliberations over the next few weeks to decide what priorities, initiatives, reductions, and reallocations should be made of the existing resources, as well as how to make better use of existing resources in the preparation of the business plans for this year, the balance of the year that is not taken care of by the interim appropriation.

Further, a little later in the year, starting in June, we will also be developing our business plans for the year 2001-2002, so all things will be considered. Some briefly, some I am sure extensively and intensively.

But it is difficult to make any type of commitments. The nature of the geography, the demographics, the priorities that different MLAs and regions as well as our communities have will all have to be considered with dwindling resources. We will have to take everything into consideration. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make note that that brief answer really made no commitment to do as I thought the Minister had offered to do at first.

Mr. Speaker, as of March 31, 2000, the GNWT will no longer pay for employee and family counselling services provided by the Northwest Territories Family Counselling Services. They were given only one week to notify their clients. I have concerns about this request and I suspect it could be disruptive and upsetting for clients to change counsellors and agencies in the middle of their treatment.

Mr. Speaker, in the best interest of the Government of the Northwest Territories employee and family counselling plans, will the Premier consider continuing to support these clients of Northwest Territories Family Counselling Services until the completion of their therapy?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funding shortfall that the organization will face because of the awarding of the contract to a different agency will create some hardship. There is no doubt about that. However, it is not possible for this government to make a commitment to make up the shortfall simply on that basis.

The NWT Family Services has been enjoying funding from this government for a number of years, which I understand is a type of core funding that is in range of a couple hundred thousand dollars. That is expected to continue. There is no way that we can commit at this time to compensate for the shortfall they will face as a result of the recent contract. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Final supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are getting closer and closer to no, as we have gone through this process of answering the question. It is frustrating to know that important social programs are being down-graded in this community while we have time upstairs to make all sorts of renovations to the Ministers offices, to add personnel to this government in the Executive, and all the while we are cutting social programs.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister if he would consider in the interest of fairness for employees currently undertaking counselling at NWT Family Counselling Services, will he agree to allow that counselling to continue as long as the treatment is in progress, or until those clients can be concluded in the treatment process, rather than having to switch halfway through a program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 139-14(2): NWT Family Counselling Services

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no way to please the Member. As you would gather, anytime there is an increase of resources centred anywhere within ten miles of Yellowknife, there is a huge outcry in the outlying communities.

The fact is, this organization is already funded in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 by this government. We expect we will be able to maintain that. They have lost a contract. They are no longer required by this government to provide that service.

And if they were any other type of business organization, we would expect them to try to re-organize and maintain under existing resources. I have tried to refrain from indicating that we shut the door on the possibility that they may enjoy additional resources. It is not in my prerogative to decide by myself where funding should be allocated.

I have suggested that I would like to leave that until Cabinet has met and had time to decide where the limited resources we have should be best allocated. Talking about what is going on in different parts of the government is of no help at all. If the Member wishes to flail away, then there is little I can do about it. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Just a reminder to the Members that your main question is where you are trying to seek information. Your supplementary is where you try to ask more questions on that information. I do not think we should be getting out of the range of your original oral question to seek information. If we could keep that in mind, please.

To the Ministers, if you could be precise to assist in the supplementaries by trying to answer the questions being raised by the Members. If we could follow that process, hopefully we will get through it today.

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Oral Question 140-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Allen.

On the weekend, I had the pleasure of attending a brunch with the Let's Write Leadership Program with Mr. Allen. Although he was in town for just a private weekend, he agreed to go to the leadership program. At the leadership program, he met with all the students, the mayor, as well as the house-parents. At that brunch, the Minister indicated he had a talk with the Premier, and he gave some very heartening words to the students. I would like to ask the Minister if he would care to repeat in this forum those words he gave to the students that gave them hope that the program has a future.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 140-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I must confirm with the Member that I did make an address on our behalf to the leadership, parents, as well as the Member, and also with the mayor of Fort Smith in attendance.

I did advise the leadership home that I would continue to play a role with the Premier, as he was the original founder of this great idea of the schools. It brings back memories of my own days as a resident of the school system. I also indicated to the group that I would be in communication with the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, to discuss continued funding beyond a year-to-year interval. We felt that a longer term of funding would give us more stability in the program. That is the message I have delivered on behalf of our government. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 140-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the leadership program, the board, and the parents have indicated in the letter they wrote to all the MLAs that they are under certain time constraints. They have to make a decision early in April as to whether they are going to be able to recruit again for the coming year. I would like to ask the Minister whether he would be able to, by that time, discuss this matter with his colleagues and have some sort of signal sent back to the leadership board, as to whether they are going to be able to continue on? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 140-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is important that we get together with the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment to try to find out where we can get additional funding.

As I said in my remarks to the school on Saturday, we would look at funding beyond a year-to-year interval. I can assure the Member that I will continue to investigate that option. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 140-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that reply. There was just one part missing. Could the Minister indicate how early in April some communication could be had with the leadership program itself, so they may know whether or not they should be advertising and recruiting for the program for next year? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 140-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you can see, I am conferring with the Minister of Education, trying to find some resolution to the question. I would just like to assure the Member that they can go ahead and recruit for next year. I am sure in the interim, we will be able to discuss the needed funding to continue to support the leadership program. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 141-14(2): Medical Travel in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in my statement in the House, I mentioned that the Dogrib Treaty 11 Comprehensive Claim negotiations are in the final stages. An important part of this comprehensive land claim agreement is that it includes land claim and self-government matters.

One area that needs to be addressed between the government and the Dogrib Community Services Board is the issue of medical travel. Right now, the Stanton Regional Health Board is preparing a contract for transportation of patients from Rae to Stanton, Providence to Stanton and for patients within Yellowknife.

I can certainly understand the Stanton Regional Health Board issuing a contract for medical travel for patients in Yellowknife. However, I cannot understand why the same contractor would be responsible for providing transportation services to Rae.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services tell me whether the Dogrib Community Services Board was consulted as to their wishes for medical travel to and from Rae?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 141-14(2): Medical Travel in the Dogrib Region

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware whether or not the Stanton Regional Health Board consulted the Dogrib Community Services Board with respect to the provision of the service.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 141-14(2): Medical Travel in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For over a year, the Dogrib Community Services Board has tried to get the Stanton Regional Health Board to transfer medical travel funds to their board. Would the Minister consider this, as there are at least three contractors that are available in Rae for this service?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 141-14(2): Medical Travel in the Dogrib Region

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to discuss that with the new chair of the Stanton Board, Mr. Larry Elkin. That is, whether or not the board would consider the services that are available originating in Rae. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 141-14(2): Medical Travel in the Dogrib Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Separating the North Slave from the contract with Stanton Regional Hospital can save the government a lot of money in the future. Is the Minister willing to make changes to future contracts so that all communities can be involved in future contracts? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 141-14(2): Medical Travel in the Dogrib Region

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to enter into a dialogue with communities who would wish to repatriate medical travel services from the Stanton Regional Health Board to their communities or other regional health boards. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Oral Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in reference to the Member's statement I made earlier, and directed to the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes.

Mr. Speaker, the Western Arctic Leadership Program, in its infancy, was fully funded by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Now, as a result of limited funding, there have been reductions in programs and activities for the students. To further reduce funding would take away from the intent of this valuable program.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the comments by the Minister responsible for Youth, can the Minister confirm that there will be funding committed to the Western Arctic Leadership Program so it may continue?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Return to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the Western Arctic Leadership Program that is conducted in Fort Smith. As the Members have stated, it started ten years ago and was initiated by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. It has been funded by this department, as well as receiving funding from other sources.

The program has had a certain amount of good success. It was originally started on the basis of providing an opportunity for aboriginal graduates to develop self-confidence and leadership skills.

The program has graduated a number of people over the years. I have some statistics here on it, Mr. Speaker. The funding that has been provided to date contributed about \$105,000 for program costs, and \$61,000 for utility and maintenance costs. I understand that the funding from other sources has been reduced, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to the Member's question, I believe we would have to consider that as part of the business planning process. I cannot make a commitment at this particular time on that.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Youth indicated earlier that the program should go ahead and recruit. Am I hearing the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment advising against this commitment?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Further Return to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Minister had stated that he would discuss this matter with me. We would do so at the earliest opportunity. In all likelihood, very early next week.

I think we have to follow the process of business planning, as we do with all other programs, Mr. Speaker. I do not think we can go outside of that at this particular point. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am hearing two different things along the same line of questioning. Am I to understand that the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is renegeing on a commitment made by the Minister responsible for Youth?

-- Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Further Return to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I said earlier was that this process has to follow the regular process of funding that we follow with all programs that we operate in the government. That is the business evaluation process.

We are very interested in looking at this program and seeing what can be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one final question then. Can I ask the Minister if the program can go ahead and recruit this year? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Further Return to Question 142-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, the Minister for Youth had committed to meet with me next week. We will discuss this matter. I do have to follow the rules and regulations of methodologies of funding. We will proceed with that process through the business planning process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Oral Question 143-14(2): Resident Hunter Requirements

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with the Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development regarding my Member's statement today.

Could the Minister advise this House whether he supports the numerous requests of RCMP and DND officials to have the residency requirement of two years waived or possibly adjusted for these two groups? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 143-14(2): Resident Hunter Requirements

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Wildlife Act and its provisions are provisions that are of fundamental importance to aboriginal groups. The existing provisions are provisions that, historically, aboriginal leaders and Members of the Legislature have paid a very high priority to. Any type of change that would imply changes to the

residency requirement for obtaining a hunting license will have to be discussed with aboriginal groups and the general public.

How I personally feel about it has very little to do with it. I know we had put a question to the Department of Justice last year asking if there was a way, in a hypothetical situation, to provide an exemption for the two-year residency requirement under the Wildlife Act for members of the RCMP and the Armed Forces.

The response was that the Charter of Rights provisions would make it difficult to make viable exemption provisions under the law. We could be subject to challenge. If it was challenged, then the exemptions would not be able to be sustained.

Those are the comments by which I think we are guided. If we could do it and the aboriginal leaders and organizations were in support, it would then not be so difficult to forward changes to the residency requirement. Generally speaking, we seem to be of the view that the changes to the residency requirement would have to apply to everyone in the public. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 143-14(2): Resident Hunter Requirements

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister referred to concerns regarding a possible challenge to the Charter of Rights that such an exemption would cause. Could the Minister provide me with some clarification on what grounds the challenge to the Charter of Rights would be made? I was not clear.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 143-14(2): Resident Hunter Requirements

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Charter of Rights provides that everyone should be treated equally under the laws of this country. To provide for exemptions, are provided in only certain parts of the Charter.

In the case of hunting rights, because we are a public government, our laws have to reflect equal treatment to everyone. I believe there are provisions under the Constitution for special rights for aboriginal people. Other than that, everyone expects to be treated equally.

So to advance the notion for provisions that would provide an exemption, different treatment to certain members of the public such as the RCMP and the Armed Forces, would be seen as being treated unequally. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 143-14(2): Resident Hunter Requirements

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Premier for his response. But I am aware that seven other provinces in the country have made the type of exemptions we are talking about here today for DND and RCMP officials. To

date, there has not been a single challenge to the Charter of Rights on this issue. I am wondering if the Premier feels this would be a different story here in the North than it has been across Canada. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 143-14(2): Resident Hunter Requirements

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I think we have a very different circumstance here in the Northwest Territories. The possibility that we could have a court challenge is very real. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Oral Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, we had the benefit of seeing the Students Against Drinking and Driving put on a presentation. I must thank the Minister responsible for Transportation and the Minister of Youth for letting this occur and supporting the initiative.

My question is to the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Seeing that this is Students Against Drinking and Driving, could the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment inform us if his department is at all involved in this area? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. I have attended the meeting the students had with the Yellowknife MLAs several weeks ago. Of course, I was there today for lunch. It is a very important program, and one that I am certainly very interested in. I also advised the officials from the SADD organization if they could contact me so we could possibly look at areas where we can participate in this particular program, to see if it could be applied in other areas, as well as seeing what kind of support we can provide to this program as a department.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the Minister has informed us that as of today, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is not involved in supporting the SADD organization. I think that is a very big concern. I think the school system could be involved in this process, because there are schools in every community. This could be an outlet for starting a SADD organization in every community. Could the Minister confirm that to date, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is not involved in the SADD program?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Further Return to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an indirect way, I suppose the department is involved because we fund the schools through the district education councils and the school boards here in Yellowknife. In that sense, we are involved. I have to be honest with the Member, I am not sure if we have our people here at headquarters working on this particular program. That I do not know.

What I am saying to the Member is that I am interested in this particular program. I am interested, as I said to the individual today, in knowing more about this program and seeing if we can use this to apply it elsewhere.

I spoke to some of the students about this before and also to some of the officials about it. No action has been taken on that yet because I am waiting for some further response from them. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us that when some action is being looked at or beginning to be taken, he will inform the Members of this House? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Further Return to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I have just spoken to them again today about this. I think you will see us follow through with this in the next short while.

I recognize that this is an extremely important area. We do have problems throughout the North with sobriety. I think if we can introduce a successful program like the SADD program, and involve more of our students, all the better. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister, on my previous supplementaries, has said that it is a good program. We agree with that. But I have asked the Minister if he can inform the Members when he will be able to start something with this and get back to the Members? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes

Further Return to Question 144-14(2): Involvement in SADD

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what the intricacies and details of running a program of this nature are. We are certainly prepared to look at it. I will ask the department to do that immediately. But I do not know at what stage we can expand this particular program.

The program is somewhat unique here in Yellowknife at the moment. But I think it is important to extend it wherever we can. To repeat myself, I am interested and I am going to pursue it with the department. We are going to work on it as quickly as we can. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Oral Question 145-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The leadership program is one of the legacies the Premier has left during his term as the Minister responsible for Education. The Minister of Youth consulted to his left and right and said yes, go ahead and recruit and we will try to work out the financial arrangements once you have a chance to proceed a little more formally.

When my colleague for the Deh Cho asked the Minister responsible for Education to confirm that, we received a fairly interesting lesson in evasion. I would like to ask the Minister, based on commitments made, would he confirm, preferably in writing, that the leadership program should go ahead and recruit this year, and that you will in fact consult with your colleagues as you said, to work out the arrangements later. But for the coming year, they should go ahead and recruit. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I am not clear which Minister your question is directed to. You mentioned the Minister on the right, the Minister on the left, but you did not state which Minister your question is directed to.

-- Laughter

MR. MILTENBERGER: In my enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker, I was addressing it to Cabinet. In particular, the Minister of obfuscation and evasion, Mr. Ootes.

-- Laughter

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Miltenberger, could you be specific and name the Minister you are directing your question to please?

MR. MILTENBERGER: The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 145-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although I am not the Minister of evasion. I want to put that on the table right now, Mr. Speaker.

-- Laughter

The question was, can the school go ahead and recruit. There are complications with this process, Mr. Speaker. Recruit how many, what is the cost of it and so forth. At the moment, we contribute \$110,000 plus \$65,000, I believe.

The difficulty comes in because the school is asking for more money and to increase the funding, to my understanding. Therein lies the problem. How much more money can we come up with? I would suggest to the Member to go ahead and recruit. But there will be limitations that we face and some process problems we face as well. I hope that answers the Member's question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 145-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Minister. Would you be prepared, once you have considered Hansard and thought about this, to put that in writing so the leadership program would, in fact, have that comfort knowing we are prepared to address this? And that they should recruit for the coming year and give you time to look at it in more detail? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 145-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not being evasive, but my word is good.

-- Laughter

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 145-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not doubt the word of the Minister, just his reluctance to put it in writing. Is he suggesting that the leadership program read Hansard and take it from there? I would ask that the Minister put it out clearly. It is one thing for me to read Hansard and interpret it, but I think the leadership program board deserves the courtesy of some clarity in writing. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 145-14(2): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Member's point now. I will put it in writing. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 146-14(2): Emergency and Transitional Housing Proposal

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, and it relates to the proposal for emergency and transitional housing, and for hard-to-house people I spoke of in my Member's statement today.

Mr. Speaker, in the past few years, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Housing Corporation have contributed significantly to finding solutions for emergency and transitional housing in the Northwest Territories, particularly in Yellowknife.

The Department of Health and Social Services has sometimes not come to the table with all of the resources that might be brought to bear. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services if she will commit to, in this instance, ensuring that she meets with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and the Minister for the Housing Corporation, along with the representatives of the four Yellowknife agencies that are proposing this solution and ensure that she brings some resources to the table. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 146-14(2): Emergency and Transitional Housing Proposal

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to meeting with the other Members. I cannot commit at this time to bringing resources to the table. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 146-14(2): Emergency and Transitional Housing Proposal

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister at least commit that the Department of Health and Social Services, particularly on the social services side, does have some responsibility to deal with people who are having housing difficulty, and therefore her department needs to be an integral part of any solution that might be proposed?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 146-14(2): Emergency and Transitional Housing Proposal

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in as much as I could be of any assistance in discussing these matters with the other two Ministers that are responsible, I would be prepared to do that. I think we need to look at what is already available in the community, what has been available in the past that may not be available now and also look at how we can gauge the needs of the future. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 146-14(2): Emergency and Transitional Housing Proposal

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement, we need to look at solutions that bring everybody to the table. There needs to be a tremendous amount of co-operation. But there also needs to be some resources. I would like to make sure the Minister is prepared to come to the table and will bring with her some of her dedicated staff who can perhaps help her find some resources; I am talking about money.

I would like to know that the Minister is prepared to keep an open mind and will look for solutions that include money after this meeting. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 146-14(2): Emergency and Transitional Housing Proposal

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be accused of being the Minister of evasion and...what was that word?

-- Interjection

It is not in the dictionary, Mr. Miltenberger. I apologize, we are not supposed to speak to Members across the floor.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mrs. Groenewegen, could you answer the question that was directed to you by Mr. Dent?

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the issue of homelessness may be one that may require various departments to put their heads together on. I cannot commit in terms of what financial resources may be available at this time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, returns to 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, report of committees on the review of bills. 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. Minister's Statement 1-14(2), Sessional Statement; Tabled Document 14-14(2), Our Communities, Our Decisions "Let's Get on With It!", Final Report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act; Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act; Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001; Committee Report 2-14(2), Accountability and Oversight on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation; Committee Report 3-14(2), Governance and Economic Development on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation; Committee Report 4-14(2), Social Programs on 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation, with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee to order. We left off yesterday with the Department of Transportation and the Honourable Mr. Steen. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that the committee continue consideration of Bill 6, along with Committee Reports 2, 3, and 4 concurrently. Specifically to continue consideration of the Department of Transportation's interim appropriation followed by Education, Culture and Employment, and the Department of Finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We will take a short break and come back with the Minister of Transportation.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are reviewing the interim appropriation with the Department of Transportation, and the Honourable Mr. Steen. Mr. Steen, would you like to call in your witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Steen, if you could, for the record, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. VINCE STEEN: On my right is Lynn Cook, director of finance and on my left is Peter Vician, deputy minister of Transportation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have gone through the interim appropriation for Transportation. I have read it forwards, backwards and I used black light to see if there is anything hidden in there that I missed. I used lemon juice to see if there is any invisible ink. No matter how many times or how I read it, there was no reference to Highway No. 5. This is the fifth year that I will put my concerns on the record that there is road in the South Slave and specifically for me, the Highway No. 5 component that still sits there. There are some requirements to upgrading. There is the chip seal. There has not been one inch of chip seal from the salt mountain in five years.

Mr. Chairman, we are reasonable people. We do not want the full highways' budget. We do not want millions of dollars of the highways' budget. But we would like a few shekels dedicated towards Highway No. 5, so that we are not totally forgotten. The concern I have is that after five years, there is a growing sense that we have been forgotten. We have very modest expectations and requests. We figure that for \$200,000 a year, we could move five to ten kilometres of chip sealing a year. After five years, the level of impatience and frustration is

growing. I know that there are demands. I know there is a tremendous pressure to put all the money into Highway No. 3. But the realities are, there are thousands of taxpayers south of the lake as well. Thousands.

I would be remiss if I did not mention my colleague from Tu Nedhe as well, who says Highway No. 6 is in a similar circumstance. I made a Member's statement about this. I want to go on record once again pointing out that there is nothing in here, there is no hint that it will ever be in here. Yet it is something I have to bring up.

I will have to ask the Minister when we can expect to see even the most modest investment in Highway No. 5. Any efficiencies that are recognized in the region, they seem to identify the money through their variance processes and the money is siphoned off somewhere else. There is very little incentive that appears to be efficient and tries to use money within their budget and move it into capital improvements.

For the fifth time, I think it is the fourth Minister of Transportation, I would like to get some indication. This is a new century. We are sitting here in the 21st century still asking for the same thing. Will there be an opportunity here that people can count on where there will be recognition that there is Highway No. 5 in the South Slave that needs some attention as well? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for his comments. I realize every Member in the south at some point has been asking for recognition of their highways in their ridings, by having some capital directed towards a particular highway. As Members know, the department is faced with reductions in our budget, rather than increases. As a result, there is no way the department can go forward with all of its plans for improvements to the highway systems.

I could give an example...even if we were prepared at some point in the last two years to start directing more resources towards Highway No. 5, along came the oil and gas industry on Highway No. 7, and impacted that highway. We have to respond to situations over there before the highway totally disappears.

We are caught in a situation where we keep trying to identify capital improvements to all the highways, but at the same time we are being asked to reduce our capital expenditures to meet our fiscal situation. I would like to point out to the Members, Mr. Chairman, the department was hit with an overall 15 percent reduction in capital. Even though it levels off at 10 percent across the board in all departments, this particular department has been reduced by over 15 percent in capital.

In order to give the Members some idea as to whether or not we have future plans for Highway No. 5, I will ask the deputy minister to speak towards that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the Fort Smith Highway No. 5, in a specific section the Member refers to between Salt Mountain and Sandy Lake which is currently still gravel, the department does not have planning funds identified

for that section of road in the short-term. The challenge we have right now is that our funding appropriation, as it is communicated in the interim appropriation, is around \$14 million specifically for highways, probably around \$16 million in terms of a planning figure, and \$1 million for highways overall for this coming fiscal year.

It is a difficult number to see sustaining our highway system in the long-term. We are very challenged right now just to preserve the system as it exists in the long-term. In terms of Highway No. 5, our assessments of the condition of that gravel road between Salt Mountain and Sandy Lake is that, it is in fair condition and we would like nothing better than to improve the paved surface. But we are targeting those roads that are literally falling apart. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate, if we look at existing resources even in the Fort Smith area or the South Slave region, what opportunities are there should some deficiencies be realized and not all operations and maintenance funds are expended? If by good management, they do recognize some surplus, is there an opportunity to keep that money within the area and actually do some road upgrading to that avenue? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vician is directly involved in the planning of the highway maintenance programs and upgrading programs. I will ask Mr. Vician to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of economies and efficiencies and re-investing those dollars wherever possible, that is a continual effort on the part of the department. The key target, of course, is to identify where the dollars are most needed throughout the highway system. That is the process that is used within the department. Dollars that are identified for savings in one specific area do not naturally end up being spent if they are available in that same area. I will use the example of calcium, as we previously communicated. The objective of the department is to improve gravel roads by improving the amount of dust control we have on gravel roads throughout the system. We would like to see those gravel roads have more calcium. There are still sections of the highway that are not treated. That would be the type of area we would make further investment in.

Specific to the question, at this point, we do not have specific plans to look at economies from one specific area, such as the Fort Smith beat, and re-invest it directly back into the Fort Smith beat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister confirm if that means that in the coming summer, for example, if those deficiencies are recognized, we could get a commitment that we would be able to keep it in there and put it to use as opposed to having it re-allocated? Otherwise, it

seems to me there is not much incentive from a local point of view for managers to really save a lot of money in their region if it is going to be taken away from them. It seems to me that the incentive would be to spend it on other things. If you cannot spend it on chip seal, you might as well buy equipment. You might as well buy whatever else you need to beef up your own operation.

Could the Minister clarify the deputy's comments? At this point? What does that mean? Would that mean there would be some comfort or assurance knowing that if the highway's operation around Fort Smith is efficient and realizes some savings, they would be to able put it to use in Fort Smith on that section of road from Sandy Lake to Salt Mountain? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Vician to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of making a direct commitment to re-invest any economies and savings that we may have in one specific beat, that would not be in the best interest of the overall highway system. That has not been our practice in the past. During the year, if one area is suffering a little tougher condition, let us say one region, such as the Inuvik region, ends up with some tougher winter or summer conditions, such as heavier rains, the Deh Cho dealing with some rougher conditions, in Liard, gravel problems, other drainage problems, the department needs to allow itself to adjust those funds throughout the year right to the end of March, to manage where the need is greatest. That is the approach that is used.

Managers are encouraged to save where possible. They alone are in a difficult position just trying to keep up their sections of maintenance. We are rarely seeing significant savings that are available out of one given area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very depressing kind of discussion, where on every turn we are basically stifled. If there is money that will probably be taken if efficiencies are realized, if there is capital money, we are down the list and basically off the page. Is there anything in terms of any other creative solutions that the Minister or deputy can offer, other than this bleak proclamation that you are out of luck for the future and forever more?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am sure the Member realizes the difficulty in trying to respond to that particular question. The only possible suggestion that I could put forward is that Members would do whatever they could to support the mission of the government to obtain more funding for Highway No.3 from the federal government. That would, as the Member knows, provide funding that we could apply elsewhere on our highway systems. At this point, that is the only conceivable bright spot in the future that I can put forward as a suggestion of possible further funding.

As the deputy suggested, the funding has to be in such a manner that wherever we save in some regions, we put it towards needs in other regions. I am sure the Members are well aware that the department has been doing this, of course with the input from the Members. It is a necessity to have that input. We must also keep in mind that in order to attract or to put in place chip-sealing on the highways, the highways have to be first brought up to standards to be able to maintain the chip seal. That in itself is not a small project. So if we are talking savings in some area that we could put towards hard-topping or chip-sealing, we are looking at a fair amount before we can have enough to go out and suggest chip-sealing on portions of the highway, without specific amounts that would appear sufficient to attract a contractor. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments, questions. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to go on record and express similar concerns as those expressed by my honourable colleague, Mr. Miltenberger, about Highway No. 5. There has been no mention of Highway No. 6 in the interim budget, or in any other budget that I have seen for the Department of Transportation.

I know our financial constraints as a government do not put us in very good status, as it has been mentioned within this department. However, there is a section on Highway No. 6, just past Buffalo River, about 15 to 20 kilometres outside of Fort Resolution, which has very poor drainage. It is costing the department quite a bit to maintain every year. It is also a safety hazard. Now, with the safety issue, I think the department should really take a close look at that particular area of the road and send in some engineers to see if they could do something about the drainage problems. There are people in the highway system, who are in High Level, outside of Yellowknife, who have claimed that that area is at low lake level. As such, there have been a few vehicle accidents over the last little while. There is great concern by the members of the Fort Resolution community. That is the only transportation link into the community. There are no scheduled flights that fly into the community.

Hay River is a major help for them in terms of supply, fuel, and other goods and products. I would strongly suggest to the Minister that the department have a close look at that particular stretch of road, and indeed the whole 90 kilometre stretch from the old Pine Point side, which is where the pavement ends, to the community of Fort Resolution. To date, there are no chip-seals. There is no crushing. There are only 52 kilometres of that 90 kilometre road under dust control. This may not be a time to ask for any type of commitment from the Minister on this issue, but I would like to hear his thoughts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Member for bringing this issue to the attention of the department. I have already had some discussions with the Member on this particular issue. I would like to give him my assurance that the department will be taking into consideration his concerns. Regardless of whether we have anything in our capital to identify towards Highway No. 6, the fact of the matter is that we have said we would keep our highways in safe driving conditions. If this particular stretch of

highway requires immediate attention of capital, we will do everything we have to do in order to bring the highway back into safe standards. With that, I can convince my department to work with the Member, and we will try to address the particular issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the assurances of the Minister on this issue. However, I would like to bring to light a paper summary of exposure by highway prepared by the Department of Transportation. Annual costs, per kilometre of that road, are \$12,000, with adjusted expenditures of \$1.076 million. The policy of keeping the highway system within the Northwest Territories safe is a great one, but just to maintain and fix it up for a few months, then let it go again to be complained about the following year is not sufficient. I urge the department to take a good look at that stretch of the road, and look towards fixing the problem, not maintaining the problem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Steen, any comments on that?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, as I said, if fixing the problem is necessary, we will do it to bring it to safe standards. We will work with the Member to assure that the particular area that is referred to is what we are going to be directing our attention to. Again, I would have to emphasize that the department has the ability, if necessary, to request supplementary funds in order to address specific emergencies and repairs to the highways. But, again, I say that it would depend on the condition of the highway and whether or not the situation demands that type of funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister for a bit of clarification on an item that is on page 205 on the notes that we were given about the regional distribution of funds. Under headquarters, there is a line that says new road planning studies, preliminary planning target for the year, \$335,000 and \$235,000 for the interim period. Does this refer to studies for new or future roads? Or is this new studies on existing roads? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, the program was tied in with the Northwest Territories highway strategy which included new roads. As I mentioned yesterday, it would include your own highway, north into the slave geological basin, as well as a road from Wrigley north, right to the Beaufort sea. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Then it is continuing work on new highway initiatives from the highway strategy, without some sense from industry or this government as to where our priorities are. I am wondering if the Minister could say what further work or plans will be advanced by these additional studies. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, referencing the highways north of Wrigley, the studies would include consultations that we had with the communities and further consultations with the federal government as to what options we would have and what ways the federal government could assist us with new loans. We must keep in mind that the policy of the government is that the territorial government is not responsible for construction in new roads. That is the responsibility of the federal government. We have to continue pressuring the federal government to come forward and put in place their mandate of constructing new roads as needed.

In reference to the geological basin, the road which would be or could be depending on the plan, the further extension of Highway No. 4 or it could lead off from Rae. It depends what the people and the stakeholders agree to, as to which route that will be taken. However, what we are doing is looking into the possibilities of other options of paying for construction of the road and the resources. Those options include suggested road authority, or some form of joint venture between the governments and industry, as to exactly how we could construct a road into the geological basin without the public having to pay for the capital and for the maintenance. We are looking into all options right now. The department is seriously considering different options as to how we can involve the industry, as well as the federal government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will these continuing rounds of studies then result in a document or a proposal that would come before this government, or before Northerners, with clear recommendations on where the next priorities will be for new road construction? Can the Minister give us a sense of just what these studies will produce for us, and help us make the next decision?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the general public has indicated that they do not want studies to be paid for and then shelved. And in particular, I do not favour the study taking forever to be produced and for the stakeholders to have a final input into it, and then disagree on the outcome. We will ensure the stakeholders and this government have opportunities, including the Legislative Assembly, in deciding exactly how we are going to proceed after the studies have been completed. For the timelines and the studies, I will ask the deputy minister to respond as to when we can expect to have these final reports in the hands of the stakeholders. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of progress on the work the Minister referred to in the Highways Strategy, we are expecting to take a few more months to complete a couple of outstanding studies, particularly those that speak to economic viability of some resource development projects, such as the Slave Province Project, for a road into the South Slave province, and similarly a road in the Mackenzie Valley.

The purpose of the various component studies is that they lead to a comprehensive highway strategy for new roads in the Northwest Territories. That strategy is part of our broader economic strategy for the GNWT, which is similarly nearing its

completion and should be read in concert with the other strategies.

We are very close to this document being available for the House to consider. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back a question I had yesterday about how the department kept turning over services, like municipal boundaries, to the communities. I just did a calculation on your study of traffic volume on Highways No. 3, No. 4 and the Yellowknife local.

I received the traffic volume report for Rae, on Highway No. 3. For 90 kilometres, the daily traffic volume average is 5,480. They are getting \$52,085 for maintenance, compared to Highway No. 4 to Prelude, which is only 66.2 kilometres. The cost to maintain that, and I am talking about winter maintenance, is \$64,960 for 66 kilometres. The traffic is only 1,460 average daily. Then I come down to the Yellowknife local, where I am saying the contract should be turned over on a formula basis, like Municipal and Community Affairs does for the communities, because the cost for ten kilometres for Yellowknife local roads is \$59,024.

It is more than 90 kilometres of highway to Rae for maintenance. Just looking at this and looking at our territorial deficit, we can see where the problem is. Our department is not operating efficiently. Our people are not doing their job. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, as I have said yesterday, and I will repeat myself again, I feel the department is doing whatever is necessary to maintain the highways with the crews that we have. The crews are, in fact, maintaining the sections they have been assigned to. I stand behind the department that we are maintaining the highways. As a matter of fact, I am getting to the point where I will be happy to supply the Member exactly where the graders were on a certain time and a certain date, whether or not they were, in fact, maintaining the highways. Whether in fact the plow truck was running.

But to further respond to the Member's concerns as to whether or not we could contract out to municipalities, I will refer that to the department as to what our policy is on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician, did you wish to respond?

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As far as policy in terms of devolution of highways within municipal boundaries goes, our policy is to work with communities that identify an interest in terms of taking over roads and public highways within municipal boundaries. That discussion has not brought forward many changes in the highways system in the past years. The door is open. I know certain communities have resisted that for whatever reason they choose.

In terms of turning over those roads, there are some economies of scale that perhaps are lost in taking over a small section of road when one highway camp is assigned hundreds of kilometres of road to maintain, and has a fleet that is assigned to do so. By all means, if specific communities wish to discuss the roads within their municipal boundaries, the

department is open to that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I am saying here is we could save a lot of money for the departments if the ten kilometres were turned over to Yellowknife on the Municipal and Community Affairs formula funding, which I know is not that much. I worked for the hamlet of Rae. We were receiving minimum dollars, barely enough to run those roads. By giving \$59,000 to the Yellowknife local, it does not seem fair to all the other communities that are formula funded to maintain their roads. I am saying that maybe this is one place where the department can look at to save some money.

By doing this, I think it would be fair to everyone else and Highway No. 3. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: I thank the Member for his suggestion. I can assure him that the department will, in fact, seriously consider his suggestions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to raise a question I had asked the Minister some time ago. The Minister indicated at the time he would get back to me. I am sure I will receive a response any day now. My question is regarding the concern that the travelling public has with bison on the highway close to the community of Fort Providence. Every year we have anywhere from a dozen to 20 collisions with the drive through traffic. Up to now, we have been fortunate there have been no fatalities.

The problem there is obvious. It is speed. There is very little enforcement. I believe, as do many people in the community I represent, that a lot of this can be solved if we have the presence of a highway patrol officer there. It would increase the employment opportunities in the community. This year, we also had a near disaster on the ice bridge with the semi-truck going through the ice. There was no monitoring. There are no people making sure that the traffic is not coming onto the ice bridge. There is nobody checking to see how fast they are travelling.

I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing in response to the request of Fort Providence to have a highway patrol office stationed there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I know we have had some requests from Fort Providence to have some kind of patrol on the ice crossing. I think it would be appropriate for the deputy minister to respond to see how we can accommodate the Member's concern in this area as far as safety goes. As far as increasing our highway patrol in that area, I will ask Mr. Vician if he could respond to that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of added enforcement to maintain the controls and motor vehicle rules of the road in the Providence area, we currently administer or

cover that area by enforcement officers, an enforcement office that works out of Yellowknife and then our patrols that work out of the Enterprise site and Hay River. The challenge we have is that it is many kilometres of highway, and the traffic volumes at certain times of the day are not very high. The speed issue on Highway No. 3 was addressed in this Assembly last summer, and amendments were made to the Motor Vehicles Act and the Public Highways Act, to reflect those changes. The highway is now posted at 100 kilometres an hour. The problem is people often do not abide by the posted speed. We have had many occasions, as the Member indicated, of bison hits on the Highway No. 3 section.

That has been a challenge for us. We do not believe that added enforcement during various times of day is going to change that incident as much as we hope. We have a challenge here as well, in terms of resources and the number of positions we have available to dispatch from our motor vehicles branch. We have also taken the measure to encourage the RCMP to step up their patrols. It is a responsibility of the RCMP as well to patrol the highway system. We have asked them to pursue further enforcement of the Motor Vehicles Act on the highways as well, and will continue to do so, as well as deploying a staff that we currently have to where they are most needed. Obviously, the incident in Fort Providence clearly points to some stepped up enforcement needed by our patrols out of the Enterprise area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the deputy minister when he states there are many kilometres to patrol. The officers are not able to cover it. Being from Fort Providence, I realize that the presence there is very few and far between. I do not think that we have even addressed how to deal with the bison issue. Raising the kilometre speed limit is surely not one way to do it. The community and I are very concerned that for over two years now, we have had near disasters. I am looking for an answer as to how the department is going to deal with that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I can commit that the department will review the issue, and I can respond to the Member on it. Perhaps by the time we deal with the mains, I will be able to give the Member some kind of response as to how we could possibly improve our presence at that particular stretch of highway. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The detail we received from the department under the region various territorial, we showed \$300,000 in this interim for bridge rehabilitation, various. If we are actually going to spend this money in the next three months or so, we must know where these rehab projects are taking place. I was wondering if we could get that information from the department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will defer that to the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This program is ongoing and has been for many years since the transfer of the highways from the federal government. The purpose of the program is to ensure the existing bridge structures on the system are properly repaired and maintained to protect them for the long term. Normally, bridges are intended to last sixty plus years.

The scope of work for 2000-2001 specifically requested through the interim is on two specific projects. On Highway No. 5, on kilometre 55 at the Buffalo River Bridge, we are proceeding with deck rehabilitation and some bearing repairs, which will preserve the structure for the long term. Deck rehabilitation, typically speaking to the wearing deck, which often spoils and the concrete starts to wear off and needs to be rehabilitated. The bearings, which we do not see, are the points where the bridge super structure actually sits on the abutments.

The second project under this interim bill request is for Highway No. 1, the Trout River Bridge, kilometre 324. In that location, the bridge rails need to be replaced. They do not meet up to bridge code standard. The new concrete approach slabs and some guard rail replacements, which is a safety issue for operation of the structure. Those two projects will proceed subject to approval of the interim. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right under that in our documents is a major culvert replacement, again various. I was wondering if we could find out where, since the department is planning \$400,000 here, if they could tell us where those culverts will be replaced.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The deputy minister could respond to that one as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Similarly, this program targets major culvert structures, not the normal small pipes that you see under the road for drainage purposes, but rather large structural pipes on the system.

Two projects are proposed which have been identified in our multi-year inventory replacement plan. Those projects are on Highway No. 1 at kilometre 514 and on Highway No. 1 at kilometre 525. Two large pipes, I believe they are three or four metre structures at the location that are multi-plate structural plates that are being replaced. These specific ones were identified together to optimize the economy. Actually, one site near another to replace. They were next on our needs base. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A little further on, I see there is an amount in there for the overlay of runway 1533 and some other work in the amount of \$175,000. I cannot believe that you can do much of an overlay for that price. What exactly is this plan? Is this just for minor repairs on that runway? Or is it for a complete overlay?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vician will respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member indicated, no, this would not be the type of funding required to do a complete overlay of the major runway at the Yellowknife Airport. That would be a multi-million dollar project. This specific work is a repair project on the runway, on 1533, which is the primary runway at the Yellowknife Airport. We have had some localized settlement of the runway surface. Air carriers have indicated concerns with regards to that. Our engineering staff has looked at that and identified the need to do a patch repair. That is what the project is dealing with, for this summer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering, what is the base like on that runway? I understand that 0927 was overlaid not that long ago. I hear it has developed some very serious frost heaves and cracking in the fairly recent past. Is there a situation here where we have a problem with the bases, that we are going to be faced with a major problem in the not too distant future?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Vician will continue to respond to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member indicated, the crosswind runway, 0927 and the primary runway, which is 1533, have provided some difficulty in the past years. About four years ago, if I recall correctly, an overlay was done near the intersection on the crosswind runway.

There is a location near that which has been giving transport a problem prior to the airport being transferred. That was identified as part of the deficiencies in the airport that long-term concerns existed. The nature of that problem is still being investigated. We suspect, and the engineers that have looked at it suspect, that it is related to some permafrost activity in the immediate location. The approach to repairs has been consistent with the approach to repairing that permafrost problem.

In terms of the long-term risk, my assessment from the department would be that these repairs are consistent with the long-term life of the airport. We are not expecting a serious problem beyond what we have been dealing with here in ongoing repairs. There are some other runways in the system that are quite different than that would be.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Any more comments or questions? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are dealing with the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation. We are on tab 6, page 6. Department of Transportation, total operations and maintenance, \$22,212,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): On page 8, total capital, \$17,731,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. You may be excused. The committee has agreed to move on to the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the Minister have any opening comments?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's interim appropriation request totals \$68,011,000. This amount includes \$62,533,000 in operations and maintenance funding and \$5,478,000 for capital expenditures.

As the Members are aware, the department has not yet had the opportunity to prepare a full business plan. The full business plan will be prepared for consideration by the Members of this Assembly in May and early June.

The information being presented is limited to support for ongoing departmental activities as well as adjustments for forced growth that will occur during the period of the interim allocation. Limited monies for activities that require additional expenditures in the early portion of the year and previously approved budget adjustments have also been included in the request.

Members of this Assembly are all aware that we are faced with some very difficult choices during this initial capital budgeting process. This has certainly been true for both operations and maintenance as well as capital activity in our department. As a result, many activities that we may have liked to undertake are now not possible. However, we are confident that the plan that is being presented addresses the areas of greatest priority.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed interim appropriation for the department. I will be pleased to answer questions that the Members might have on the appropriation request.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Does the Standing Committee on Social Programs have any comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met with the Minister and his officials on March 16, 2000, and offers the following comments on the review of the department's interim appropriations.

Income Support and Disability Payments

The committee is very concerned about the adequacy of income support for residents with disabilities. Committee members have been told that the amounts available were no longer in line with benefits available to disabled residents of other Canadian jurisdictions. The committee was pleased to hear the Minister commit to reviewing the amounts provided by other Canadian jurisdictions for disabilities under income

support programs. The committee looks forward to reviewing this survey with the Minister and working together with the department to adjust income support levels for disabled persons should it be warranted.

Committee members are also concerned that there has not been an adjustment made to the food basket price, which is used to determine the dollar amounts for income support, in quite some time.

Members of the committee were somewhat pleased to hear that there will be a review of the food basket price in the upcoming fiscal year. However, members would prefer to see this review done sooner than later so that the impact of potential increases to income support payments might be examined in conjunction with the business plan and main estimates.

Adult Basic Education Funding

The committee members are extremely concerned that the majority of funding for basic adult education programs sunsets at the end of March and that there are no apparent programs to replace this funding. Committee members cannot fathom how this government expects residents to take advantage of employment opportunities in our burgeoning resource sector with the minimal education levels that exist in some of our smaller communities.

There may be some validity to the department's argument that money for adult basic education did not have to be in the interim appropriation because these programs are not typically offered in the summer months. However, committee members strongly believe that this lack of available funding come April 1, 2000, may impact on the ability of smaller non-governmental organizations to survive until such a time as funding may be forthcoming.

Committee members believe that the issue of adult basic education is so important that it merits the same consideration shown to the Working Together Program and should be included in the interim appropriation.

Digital Communication Network, ArdiCom Ltd.

Committee members heard from the Minister that the department spends approximately \$2 million in supporting the digital communication network. Whether the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment moves to a charge back model and makes other departments pay their fair share of the costs involved does not affect the stated issue that there is insufficient bandwidth to meet the needs of government.

The committee strongly recommends that the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment work in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services and the Financial Management Board Secretariat to resolve the issues with the digital communications network.

Special Needs in the Classroom

In light of the proposed increase in special needs funding encapsulated in Bill 1, it is apparent to committee members that the department must develop policies and a formula to ensure that the increased funding is dispersed wisely and equitably to all district education authorities. Committee members hope that the formula could take into account the tendency of families

with children having learning disabilities to migrate to "magnet communities".

Committee members look forward to reviewing the formulas and policies that the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment develops to ensure the equitable distribution of special needs funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Does the Minister wish to call in any witnesses? Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Will the Sergeant-at-Arms escort the witnesses in?

The Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Ootes, could you introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me on my immediate right is Mark Cleveland, the deputy minister for the department and on my far right is Mr. Paul Devitt, the director of management services for the department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Any comments or questions for the Minister? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, like other departments, is doing relatively well in terms of funding with the collective agreement being completed and Bill 1 soon to be passed and \$15 million or so, \$4.6 million a year being put into the budget. Hopefully, the Minister will be able to come back and tell us tomorrow that there is an addition of \$450,000 for student financial assistance.

All of this under the expert direction of the current Minister. I think he is to be commended on his ability to make things happen in such an expedient short time.

I would like to ask the Minister a question in regard to his statements, on the fourth paragraph in the second last sentence, "As a result, many activities that we may have liked to undertake are now not possible". With the exception of the adult education, which we already know about at this point, can the Minister elaborate on what activities he is referring to? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member knows, it has been a short time since we have taken over the department but there are many areas that could potentially be tackled in terms of additional funding.

Without getting specific into programs, because I have not had an opportunity to deal with the very specific programs, but for example, let me deal with early childhood development. That is an area that could potentially use more money. But we do not seem to be able to identify a lot more funding. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am going to have to ask the Minister to do better than that. He makes a very clear statement. Many activities that we may have liked to undertake are now not possible. I am reading this as if they are not scaling back, but that they are not going to do some things.

So can you tell us what those activities are that are now not possible to do?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were some areas identified in the strategic plan, for example, and it may not be possible for us to do all the items in the strategic plan. I referenced early childhood development. I do not have a listing in front of me that we can say this many programs.

As I explained earlier, it would have been my hope and desire to have an opportunity to be able to identify each of the specific areas in this department. There are many like the early childhood development, the school programs, and the post-secondary education area. Certainly the area of culture is one that we could potentially look at, for it is very marginally funded. Those are the types of areas that I would have liked to have looked at, and look at possible programs to enhance and develop. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, it is still not clear to me. We are going to be giving a considerable amount of money to the schools for pupil-teacher ratio and special needs. We are going to be looking at hopefully beefing up student financial assistance. There have been deals signed with the federal government in terms of funding. While it does not increase, it is not minimized. So the only one I heard was early childhood development, which I am not sure what specific area the Minister is referring to. Given the amount of money we are putting into and the way we are trying to protect education, that particular line in his statement causes me concern.

I do not think the Minister has done a clear job of elaborating what he means by that statement. What is at risk here that we have to be apprised of, other than the adult education, which sunsets midnight on Friday? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an interim appropriation and we were hopeful of looking at areas of potential to address. We are not confident that we are going to be able to get money for additional programs. We may be able to look at some. In my opinion, there may have been a potential to look at a lot of areas where we to have access to a substantial amount of funding. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, on a comparative basis, I am not sure how much more Education would like to have compared to how much less other departments are probably going to be getting.

I would not raise this issue if the Minister had not put it in his statement. It raises all sorts of red flags with me. You are saying you would like to have more money, and if you do not have more money, there are a number of things that are at risk other than adult education, which is the only clear one that I know is being sunsetted. What other things are possibly at risk that you are not going to be able to do, that are not now possible?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to remind Members to address their questions to the chair. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Chairman, I did not state that programs were at risk. What I stated was that many of the activities we may have liked to undertake are now not possible. I speak there without having details in my hand of areas like the culture program, which is one area that is very lowly funded. That is the type of area that could be looked at and said okay, we need more funding in this area and that area. It does not mean that the programs that are in existence now are in jeopardy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate if they are going to pay the same kind of attention to adult education with the sunsetting of the community for skills program that sunsets on Friday at midnight, as they did for student employment coming up for this summer?

It is an equally critical program and focuses on a different clientele, but it has always been deemed to be a very significant program with many NGOs who may not have funding available after April 1st. NGOs that rely on that money, as do the adults requiring the programs that are offered. Do they have any plans at this point to rise to the challenge as they did with the student employment program? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just would like to make reference to the fact that there is still \$2.5 million in the college program to address adult basic education programs. With regard to the Community Skills for Work program, we are looking at that to see if we can deal with that in the budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that the college money is geared more for access years in the college as opposed to the upgrading component.

There are a lot of programs like the YWCA, especially in Yellowknife. I know in Fort Smith with the band, they would have programs as well that deal with a lower grade and the more basic upgrading.

Will the Minister be putting some budget estimates in the main estimate come June? Is that what I heard him say? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are looking at and examining the possibility of the Community Skills for Work program. As we know, it, like the Working Together program, was funded on a one-time basis. It sunsetted last year. We are looking at it and seeing if we can put that funding into the budget for this upcoming year for June.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, can we take the comment of the phrase of examining the possibility to mean that there will be, in the main estimates, some allowance for this adult education funding that was sunsetted?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I cannot make that commitment that it will be in. What I am saying is we are examining the possibility of seeing if we can get it in.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does that mean then that the issue of adult education and funding for adult education will be in the business plans?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. In our business plans, we naturally will address all areas of our responsibilities, including adult education.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to pick up on something that Mr. Miltenberger left on. I am very concerned about the sunsetting of the Community Skills for Work program. I guess to a larger degree the whole monies available for adult basic education. I think in committee, we heard either the Minister or the deputy tell us that it is possible, if you live in a small community, to wait two to three years for adult basic education.

We have heard the problem in Yellowknife, as I believe the deputy told us, is not so much a problem of waiting lists, but whether or not the course is offered at a given time. I would argue that this is essentially the same problem for students who are looking to upgrade their education and get their high school diplomas.

Now, if I am 24 or 25 years old and I have left school without graduating and now I want to go back to get my high school diploma, I would like to ask the Minister what options are available for me? As I understand it, there is nothing available in the evening for me to get my high school diploma if I choose to go that route.

So, what I am saying is, if I would like to stay employed during the day so I can pay the bills, and go to school in the evenings, this is not available. Essentially, what I have to do is quit my

job, go on income support and attend the college. The Minister has told us, even though the community skills for work program has sunsetted or will sunset, they are going to look at possibly reinstating it. That is great. He reassures us that there is \$2.5 million a year for ABE available through the college, but as Mr. Miltenberger mentioned, this typically addresses programs like nursing or business, or specifically programs like this that allow you to do some upgrading to get into college, but does not provide the necessary course to get a high school diploma.

If I am interested in just getting the basics, just getting a high school diploma but I missed the boat, quit school for whatever reasons when I was younger, I am now really stuck if I am in my 20's or 30's. I can go back to high school, but how many 30 year olds really feel comfortable going back to high school during the day? I do not think this is realistic.

I think we can see that we need some evening programs available for people who would like to get their high school, and I would like to have the Minister address this concern and tell us what he plans to do about ABE, especially to allow students to get a high school diploma. The very basic, simplest thing here, nothing fancy.

I would also like to discuss student financial assistance. In this regard, I understand we are looking at various semesters that we might allow students to access funding for. We do not provide any student financial assistance for those who might be middle aged, have to leave work to go back to get an education to get a high school diploma. That is my understanding. If the Minister could address a couple of those questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member raises a good point, and there are some challenges here with respect to individuals being able to access programs. In regard to the evening courses, I met with the college last Saturday to discuss this. Part of their problem is their ability to fund these programs. As well, I did raise a concern as to whether they can offer evening courses. Their response was that they could not offer evening courses without additional funding. In the high school program itself, you understand that there are 250 adults in the high school system. With regard to the student financial assistance, it is not available to students who are in the ABE program. However, they can access income support in case of need.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just suggest that income support certainly does not provide sufficient money for someone to go to school and quit their job. I think that we find, typically, people on income support rely on it to top up the amount of money that they receive from working in order to make ends meet. That may be little comfort, but I think we should certainly look at extending student financial assistance to people who are taking ABE. I think it only makes sense.

I do not know why we would start to talk semesters for student financial assistance and talk about how many semesters of university you are eligible for under the student financial assistance program when we will not allow it to extend to the simple, basic need for a high school diploma. The Minister mentioned that we have 250 adults in the ABE program. I would just like him to clarify, is this 250 adults who are currently going to get a high school diploma? If so, I assume they would

be trying to get their high school diploma during the day, because there are no evening courses offered. If the Minister could just confirm, are 250 adults going for their high school diplomas during the day? Or is he referring to adults who are getting into nursing, getting into business, getting into other specific things where they will not necessarily receive a high school diploma? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are 250 adults over the age of 20 enrolled in high schools.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell

MR. BELL: That is great and I am glad to hear that. However, I would suggest that if I am 30 or 40 or 50 years old, I do not really want to be in high school during the day with 15 and 16-year old kids. I guess it would be necessary if you want to access a physics lab or a chemistry lab, then I guess that you have to suck it up and head back to school in order to get these kinds of courses. We know they are not available in the evenings.

I do not think that this makes sense. I think we have to make a real effort to focus some of our money on ABE, specifically getting adults up to that basic high school diploma level before we start worrying about these other things that may just be icing on the cake.

I am not at all knocking the programs the college has. The nursing program and the business program are all very valuable. However, there are people who just want to get a basic high school diploma. I think it is important that we focus some more money in this area specifically for night programs. My understanding is that, in the past, when these things have been offered, they had to turn students away because there has been such a high demand. I would like us to take a closer look at that.

I would also like to ask the Minister, on March 31, 2000, when the funding for community skills and for this ABE sunsets, can the Minister tell us exactly which programs and which communities this funding sunset will affect?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the issue of accessing high school versus night school, you know that there is a broad base of needs amongst adults. There is no question that it would be nice to be able to meet all of the needs. However, it becomes a question of balancing the use of the funds we have available to us, Mr. Chairman. Sometimes there are difficult decisions to be made. For the second part of the question, perhaps I could ask Mr. Cleveland or Mr. Devitt to answer that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We certainly can provide a listing of the community programs that are affected by the sunset of the community skills for work. We will identify it and get it to the Member as quickly as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This line of questioning is going to spark interest in many communities. I think that hopefully that information will be available as we are going through this process today, because it will have a significant impact in many communities, I fear. I am particularly wondering about the program being held in Inuvik and how that will be impacted as of Friday at midnight. There are other areas as well, Mr. Chairman, that I have questions on.

In the community of Inuvik, there has been an alternative school program started up. That has been assisted by the community in a number of ways, as well as the school board, to try and put and keep students in school who are having problems in the main system. Students who would otherwise end up suspended or put out of school and become a burden in other ways. There are a number of students attending this alternate schooling program.

My understanding was that funding was going to be made available in the upcoming year to provide them a teacher and so on. I want to know if there are dollars identified in this area. It is pretty hard to tell by the numbers provided here, because they are fairly big numbers and I would not be able to pull them out of here. I think that it would fall under the area of education and culture. I would like to know how would I identify that, and then I will go on to the capital side of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Funding for this particular program is done through the district education council, through the formula that is devised by the department with the education council. I understand a small contribution in the area of \$20,000 was made this year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know it received some funding from a number of organizations, including the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board. Many volunteers have worked hard to make sure that this program stayed operational, even in difficult financial times. Is there any other way, if communities took the initiative to try to make sure students stay in school, that they could access funding? Or is it all directly from within the transfers to the board? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding is done through a formula with the divisional education councils. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the other side of the coin is the capital within the department and, in reviewing the material available, the only capital I see in the Inuvik region is the Holman Helen Kalvik school addition. Are there no other capital programs for the Inuvik area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no capital available in the interim.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform us, of the plan that has been put forward here, have there been any changes from the five-year capital plan that was there? Were there deferrals from the community and region? Were there changes? I see one project and that is it for the area. Can the Minister provide a little more information in that area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, there have been some changes in Inuvik for the college campus, the Aurora campus. That was being considered as a P3 project, and the cost of the project was escalating. It was decided that this would not proceed as a P3 project and would instead be put in as a capital project as part of the department down the road.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the conversion from a P3 to a capital, or from a regular capital project, when did that occur?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it has just occurred through the budget review process, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When did that decision occur through the process? Was it early on? Maybe we need some more clarification on the actual budget review process. Has it been within the department itself? Just within the time that the letters went out instructing preparation for the interim budget, or has it been during the capital review that was ongoing? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We looked at the P3 review at the time we reviewed all of the capital projects with all of the departments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very good. You reviewed it when other departments reviewed it. When was that, 1992, 1999, 2000? May I have a date? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am unclear of the exact number of weeks ago, but it was approximately a month ago.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hopefully, it was shortly after the fact when the Minister sent me a letter, after I wrote him a letter concerning the P3 project at Aurora Campus.

He was going to look into it. Now it is no longer a P3, it has gone to a capital. It is going to be in the plan sometime down the road. I am very concerned with that "sometime down the road". The existing facility is living on borrowed time. I would like to know a little more as to when is "sometime down the road"? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The project was originally considered as a P3. The costs were rising. It rose to about \$10.5 million. In light of some recent enrolments, the project may have been larger than what was needed. In the course of reviewing the budgets, the department was directed to review its capital in the P3 projects.

The schedule for the design will be in 2003, and construction in 2004. Our understanding is that it will follow the completion of the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the Minister's last response, I have a number of other questions I would like to direct. I might have time a little later. The year 2003-2004, has this been discussed with the people involved with the project, or is this a new initiative? Because I am sure if there were changes in the program, I would have received a number of calls. I know they are very interested in the program and thought things were moving ahead. They were slightly nervous, and justifiably so I see, that this was going to be put back.

Our big concern from the north end of the country is that we are going to be the lonely snow-bunnies to the north while things continue to prosper in the southern part of the Territory. Hopefully, that is not the case.

It is amazing what happens when the coin is flipped. Now that I am sitting on this side of the table, to find out there has been a massive change in direction in this project from the time I was aware of it just a couple of months ago... I will be pursuing this with vigor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will be consulting with the various parties on this now that we have a revised plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Based on your letter, which indicates you are faced with some difficult choices and the plan that is being presented addresses areas of greater priority, I am given to understand that we will be looking at some cuts and some programs will be sunsetted.

I would like to ask if there are any programs or projects that will be cut in my riding of the Deh Cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not aware of any specific projects. In programs, there may be impacts such as the Community Skills for Work program,

depending on whether or not we can get that into the main estimates. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask, when will we know the status of these programs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will be bringing forward business plans for the committees to review within a month and a half to two months. At that point, Members will be aware of the programs we will proceed with.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in Mr. Handley's Minister's statement yesterday on the interim budget, he mentioned that he had directed that the departments reduce capital spending by \$10 million. Can this department tell us which projects have been deferred from their capital plan this year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Deninoo School in Fort Resolution has been deferred by one year. The Thebacha Campus paving has been deferred. Capital equipment for the college has been reduced. The Aurora Campus in Inuvik has been deferred. The roof on the Aurora Research Centre has been deferred. Planning for Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik has been deferred by one year. That is it, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was pleased to see the Minister respond favourably to Members' request that the funding for student summer employment be added back into this budget.

I am hoping that perhaps because the Minister had not heard about how important Members thought adult basic education was, he would now be prepared to consider doing the same thing in the mains. I think Members feel it is important to ensure we are able to carry out adult basic education.

Knowing there are no additional funds for the Skills for Work program in this interim budget, and knowing all funding for this program will end this Friday, do the non-government organizations that are currently delivering these programs know that there will be no funding available as of next week?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the funding is issued, they are advised that it is until March 31st of the following year. They are aware that funding ends as of that date.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Oftentimes, Mr. Chairman, non-government organizations know that government monies are voted for April 1st to March 31st. They

know that funding can only be granted to the end of March. But they expect that the programs are going to continue as base-funded programs. Therefore, they will be able to send their applications in and qualify for funds. Does the Minister believe that most non-government organizations know that there will be no funding for this kind of program after March 31st? Or has he heard from a number of organizations and the lobbying started from them, so that he knows that they are aware that the funding will not be there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is my impression that we have been clear with the NGOs on the funding that does expire on March 31st. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am surprised that we have not heard more from non-government organizations, expecting that they will be able to get more funding. I would like to reiterate for the Minister that I believe the Members in this House feel as strongly about adult basic education as we do about student summer employment. So I hope that will be reflected in the mains.

Looking again at the student summer employment program, there is \$150,000 in this interim budget for that program. During our committee review, we were advised that this was felt to be enough money to ensure that all payments that would be required until we passed the mains would be able to be met. That would mean the invoices that were sent in for the first couple of months, but likely not amounts that might be required to run the program through July, even. My question is, when an employer comes to the department now and offers to hire a student and is looking for that waive subsidy, will the department sign a four-month, five-month or six-month agreement to take the employer and the student through to September? Or will the contracts all be ending in July, because we have an interim appropriation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I will ask Mr. Cleveland to address that question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this point with the interim, assuming approval of the interim allocation, the contracts with employers would be for the period for which funding is available. It may be that some of them carry over a bit within the existing funding, but we would only do it within the amount that is available in the interim. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Well, Mr. Chairman, we are expecting employers to offer students half a job and the students are not going to be happy with that, so they could be out of work at the end of June and not be able to find another job. Mr. Chairman, I do not think that is acceptable. I think that is a rather poor approach. I think we need to hear the Minister commit to finding money from whatever source, to ensure that this program is fully

funded throughout this year. If that means changes along the way, he will have to make them.

You cannot expect an employer to tell a student that they are going to hire them through the end of June, and then hope the program is renewed so that they can hire them again for July and August. It is not reasonable to expect a student to take a job for that period of time.

Will the Minister agree, while he only has \$150,000 in this interim budget for this program, that he will commit to re-allocation of funds if necessary, to ensure that the department can go ahead and sign contracts for the entire summer period? Let us take our students through with the jobs to the end of August into early September, so they know they will have enough money to go back to school.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Member obviously knows, we have to finalize the amount that will be required and approved in the budget. We can certainly re-allocate and make a commitment to do that so that we can clarify the situation for employers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to go on record and say that the deferral of the Deninoo School for the 2001-2002 main estimates from 2000-2001 is not satisfactory to me, obviously. I believe there is a forced growth in that community also. That was one of the campaign issues that I had to deal with. I understand this government is not doing too well financially. I have spoken with my honourable colleague, Mr. Ootes, on this issue on a number of occasions. He has given me his personal commitment that project would still be in the five-year plan, in the main estimates. I would like to get his personal and departmental commitment at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the school remains a very high priority for us. It is a deferral for one year. It is our intention to proceed next year with that particular project. Naturally, we require the approval of the budget to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must thank one of my other colleagues for asking more about deferred projects, because when I asked, I have the Aurora Campus here, but also the Sam School has been deferred, The Aurora Research Centre roof has been deferred. Can the Minister inform me as to how long the deferral is? Is it the next cycle, is it 2003-2004? It would be nice to know.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is deferred by one year. It is planning money that has been deferred. Just to carry one, the roof on the research institute has been deferred two years.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has there been any work done in the areas of the worthiness of both buildings? Has there been new work on the Aurora Campus and the Research roof? I know, specifically in the Aurora Campus situation, as a Member of the 13th Assembly meeting with the proponents of that project and those involved in reviewing it, there was a lot of concern raised as to the worthiness of that facility. It is one of the earliest buildings that was built when the Canadian Armed Forces were in Inuvik. It is one of those building that is on piles. Again, we are having a lot of problems within the community. We went from thinking that this thing might be a possibility this past year to now being informed it is 2003-2004.

In another question the Minister made about consulting with people, from my end, I will inform the Minister I will be consulting with my constituents as soon we are done in this House. I am sure they will help me in preparing many questions for the Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are aware of the technical situation of the campus and the monitoring of it is ongoing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform me if, in fact, the campus staff up there are at all close to being aware of the situation that has occurred here? Were they in discussions with them to let them know that this had been reviewed and that decisions were being changed? Or are they being given the same notice that I have been given, with a budget put in front of them and being told that it is being delayed for three years?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The staff are not usually involved in discussions with regard to capital projects. The department works with the college's staff. They in turn communicate with staff at headquarters. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: The Minister is informing us that, in fact, someone in the college system was aware that this was being deferred to 2003-2004? Can you confirm that please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did discuss this with the board last week. I advised them of the change and that it was deferred. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can he tell us whether he informed the Aurora College Board of Governors of the deferral? Did he give them the specifics of the deferral?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not believe I did. I stand to be corrected on that. I do not believe I gave them the timing of deferral.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to raise further concerns in this area. Knowing we are the 14th Assembly, and heading in a new direction, I am getting a little concerned with the direction we are going in. There used to be a heads up if something was coming up. However, we are finding out in this forum. That does not leave one with a good feeling. It leaves a very grey, overcast situation, as I see it. I understand the difficulties with funding, but that was one of the issues of going with P3, knowing that you did not have to outlay a huge amount of dollars to begin with.

Changing it into a capital program has, the way I see it, definitely put this program back. I still do not believe this is wise decision. I register my strongest concerns with what has happened here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. That was mostly a comment. Does the Minister wish to respond to that?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are hard decisions that have to be made, Mr. Chairman. We were advised by FMBS that we needed to meet certain requirements. Those decisions are tough to make. I appreciate the Member's concern about notification. I understand his comments. I certainly apologize to him for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the debate, questions and discussions in the House on this particular department definitely rekindles my strong concern about the fact that we are once again seeing clear demonstrations of a double standard. We are going to have before us soon a department where it is going to come up with 22 percent new growth. We have the Executive on hold because of the credible growth there. We are seeing MLA after MLA around this table raising concerns and being ready for cuts in their communities. To me, I cannot fathom that kind of approach or that kind of expectation. What are we supposed to do in the communities? Are we supposed to sit here quietly and accept this? We have to deal with all these over-expenditures in other areas.

There are going to be problems with this adult education program. Friday at 5:00 p.m. will be their last day. I would like the Minister to clarify, do they know that there is no money in the budget and that there are no plans to put money into the budget and that Friday is their last day? When will the Minister provide a list of the communities that will have programs affected in their constituencies? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will hopefully have the list for the Members tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will repeat the first part of the question. I know there is a standard clause in every contract or funding agreement with the NGOs. The

clause says it is dependent on funding availability. In this particular case, there are programs being run, for which the funding stops three days from now at midnight.

Has the department made the effort to let them know? Hopefully, we are not just relying on people, or these NGOs checking their agreement and realizing that they have to see if there is going to be any more funding. Do they know? Are they being given some heads up, so that at the very least, they can try to brace themselves for the cut? So they can do whatever they have to do, in terms of some sort of transition to alternate funding, if it is available, or wrap up of their program? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am informed that the department has been very clear with the NGOs. We are certainly prepared to check with NGOs for their awareness of this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister clarify what he means by "the department has been clear"? Have they been talked to recently in the last week? Has there been any kind of formal correspondence? I am not sure what "the department has been clear" means. Did they just highlight the clause when they signed the agreement a year ago? I am not sure what that means. Could the Minister elaborate, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no formal process. When the funding was made, it was very clear it was a one year funding and that the program was sunsetting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: The Minister is telling me that there was contact a year ago, and that is the last clarification that was provided by the department. Is that what he is saying?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is regular contact with the NGOs to discuss delivery and monitor delivery of their particular programs. It is not as though no contact is made throughout the year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are talking about a very specific issue. We are not talking about the general state of the program or how the program content is. We are talking about a very specific funding issue. The Minister said they were talked to about a year ago, and that is the last time they were talked to.

This government is talking about ceasing funding Friday at midnight to a whole host of NGOs in many constituencies across the Northwest Territories. It would seem to me that expecting NGOs a year ago to keep in mind that there may not be any funding is not really adequate. It is not really compassionate. It is not a sufficient heads-up that in three and a half days, we are going to cut the legs out from under a number of critical adult education programs that caters to a very specific need and a segment of our population that, for the most part, is under-privileged and comes from difficult circumstances. The best we can say is they should have known about it because they signed an agreement a year ago.

The politics have changed. There is a new government here. There is some bad news coming down the pipe. I would like some clarification from the Minister that they are being a little more compassionate in terms of letting people down. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I mentioned, there has been regular contact with the NGOs along the way. I appreciate what Mr. Miltenberger is saying, and certainly it is of concern. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister says it is a concern, but he acknowledges that on a financial point of view, it had not been talked to for a year. He has made no offer to suggest that while we can attempt...there is three and a half days left until their funding expires. They are probably going to hear about it in the news at this point.

Given that this is a program department, a department that deals with people, I am taken aback, to say the least, by the relatively callous, high-handed, apparently cavalier approach to these programs that get by on a shoe string, trying to do good work for those people in need, being treated in such a dismissive manner.

It defies belief for me that we would be doing that. They are the people we are here to represent. Can I ask the Minister if he can at least make some attempt to show some compassion here? I know they are not going to put any money in, but let us not sandbag these poor people.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we are facing some extreme difficulties financially. I think, as the Member well knows, as all Members know, we are working on seeing what we can do with regard to programs and contact. We will check with our regional offices and with our staff to see what kind of contact has been made and to touch base with the NGOs, and ensure they are well aware of the issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that, but given the difficulty and listening to his humane

response, I would just like to get confirmation from the Minister that he would ensure that this is done starting tomorrow, so they are not getting called on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday after the axe has fallen and they are lying bruised and bleeding in the street because the money is gone. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will undertake to do that tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dent had some questions about the Working Together program, and as he got a little further into it, I started to have some real concerns. I have a few questions for the Minister.

I am wondering if the Minister can tell me how many jobs the Working Together program provided last year? How many jobs is he proposing this \$150,000 will provide for this year? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just looking for the exact number of totals last year. I believe it was 500 and something, somewhere in that area. The contract would permit for a full amount of 75 employees, for 75 contracts. Mr. Chairman, that would be for the full summer for the amount of allocation we have right now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, we know you are not letting these contracts for the full summer. We have already established that. So can the Minister tell me how many jobs this money will provide for? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. I would just like to remind the Members to address their comments to the chair, please. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I cannot answer the question in terms of the numbers of what this would pay for at this particular time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like some clarification on this. There is \$150,000 in here, we do not know how many students this is going to provide for. I am just wondering if the Minister can get back to us before we conclude his department to let us know how many contracts he is proposing this \$150,000 will buy us.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will not know how many until the actual contracts are written, until we know how many people will access the program.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can appreciate that we may not know until the contracts are written, but surely the Minister can see that we have four months where the funding is

of any use to students: May; June; July; and August. We are going to approve this interim at the end of March. So they will put these contracts out and have roughly one month to decide where the money is going and how many contracts this is buying, et cetera. The money will run out in June. At that point, they are proposing, since they cannot go any further than June, that at the end of June when we approve the mains, they are going to turn around and do another set of contracting? Or are they just going to extend the existing contracts?

If it is going to take them a month, from the beginning of April to the end of April, before they can be ready for May, where is that month going to come at the end of June for these students? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are going to advertise this. In some cases, contracts start at a certain time and other contracts start at a later date. We can make commitments for those contracts for \$150,000, as a result of the interim appropriation. We do expect that with the mains, from the sounds of the Members, that there will be approval for the funding for this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is basically saying then that they are going to be able to commit to 74 jobs this year because we cannot make commitments past the end of June, and roughly the money had provided 500 and some odd plus jobs last year. He is saying he is pretty sure we will approve additional funding in the mains, but are we talking about additional funding for only 74 jobs, since we cannot commit higher than 74 positions? That is what I think I am hearing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The bulk of the work is July through August. We expect that we will receive further funding for this. We are vying for further funding. We expect that this will be available through the approval of the mains. We anticipate we will be able to meet most needs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: I can appreciate that the bulk of the work might be done in July or August. That is when high school students are out. Kids on their way to their first year of university might be trying to access the funding only for July and August. But for May and June, for the university students who are listening and are going to read about this in the newspaper, having to prepare for final exams and these kinds of things, hoping they will be able to find employment when they come back here...we do not have much of a response for these students. We can basically say to them we can do a little better in July and August. Are we suggesting they stay down south and look for work? It looks pretty bleak.

I think we need to be able to assure students coming back that we are not going to provide only 74 jobs with this \$150,000. We are going to make the commitment to hire more students than that with the understanding that we will approve the funding in the mains. Certainly we commit to year-long contracts in other areas. I do not think this commitment is out of line with what we see in just about every department. We make year-long

commitments. This is a four-month commitment. I do not see why we could not make the commitment for the length of the time. Even going back, if it means getting more money in this interim, more than \$150,000, then we do it. I think that it is ridiculous to say to students we can provide a job for a few of you but only for a couple of months, and then you are on your own. Whether or not you will have employment or can find any employment for the last two months of the summer, we do not know. We cannot help you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our experience has been that the \$150,000 will tide us over for the demand to the end of June and into July. It is our intention, as I said earlier, to seek further funding for this. We anticipate and hope that it will receive approval. That will take care of the rest of the summer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That sounds good. I am hoping that we are then going to realize that since that is the department's intention, we are not just talking about 74 jobs here. Since it is the intention to get funding in the mains for the rest of the summer, we might as well let out contracts for 500 jobs, or some number higher than 74, because I think that is just a drop in the bucket of what we really need.

Since we are going for the funding in the mains anyway, I just think that we let out the same number of contracts that we have in years past with the understanding that the funding will be made available in the mains. There are many other year-long contracts, many other contracts in this interim that extend over a length of time greater than the interim, and we commit to that. It is just understood that money will be there in the mains to follow up.

We certainly do not expect to hire a consultant who might have a year long contract and tell them that this is the amount of money for you in the interim. We cannot tell you what is going to happen half way through a project when we get to the mains. You will have to come and talk to us then. I think that is the same approach we are taking with the students.

The department has to be a little more upfront in saying we are going to take care of the students. We are not just going to stick to the number of 74, or whatever the \$150,000 justifies, and commit to contracts for the duration of the summer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Comments mostly. Did the Minister want to respond to that?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The 75 contracts would be for funding for the full amount. As I mentioned, we are anticipating, and our previous experience was, that \$150,000 would tide us over until the end of June. It is our intent to seek further funding for this particular program. It is unfortunate that this program was sunsetted. Perhaps it should be looked at in other ways. It has landed on us in terms of a sunsetted program.

We feel that the \$150,000 will tide us over and we will, providing we get the funding, be able to meet the demands of most students. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some other areas that I would like to raise here. In the area of Community Skills for Work, which some Members had raised earlier, is that a federal program or a territorial program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. It was originally, if I recall correctly, a two-year program funded by the federal government. That ended, and then the territorial government established it as a new program last year, which sunsetted as of March 31st this year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister was saying earlier that everybody knew that as of March 31st, this program was ending. As with every other contract within government, March 31st is the natural end date until there are new approvals.

My concern is that, for example, the Aurora Campus in Inuvik deals with 13 communities. This specific program covers them for six out of that 13. If this program is no longer in existence, we are going to have six communities that will not be covered by this. That means having to drop those programs in those communities. That is what it comes down to.

One of our goals is to try to make sure our people are workable and that they come off of the side of social assistance, or as they call it, income support. In fact, we do not seem to be helping that. It is in the smaller communities that it benefits the most, yet those are the ones that are going to be hit by this.

Does the Minister have any further information on which specific areas or regions are going to be negatively impacted by this decision? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will be providing a list. I believe we are going to have that tomorrow. I stand corrected on a previous comment. Apparently, the territorial government has run this program for three years. It was indicated that it was sunsetting and was funded on that basis. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When was it identified that it was being sunsetted? Again, trying to interpret what has been said here, the Government of the Northwest Territories has carried this on for three years. When were the organizations told that it was indeed being sunsetted?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two years ago, it was funded as a separate program and it was sunsetted that year. Then it was again renewed, and it was sunsetted for March 31st of this year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So for example, Aurora Campus and the college system were aware that the

funding that was available was ending on the 31st of this year and there were no extensions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it was made very clear that it would sunset and that it would not be extended. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform us of what other areas of his department in this interim appropriation have reduced expenditures?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask the deputy minister to answer that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are several areas of reduction. The Minister has mentioned several in the discussion up to this point. They include the Working Together Program that was sunsetted as we have been discussing.

Secondly, the Community Skills for Work was sunsetted for the end of March. Third, there is a sunsetting of a Training on the Job subsidy for Sirius Diamonds. That is a third specific area, Mr. Chairman, where there has been a reduction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With these areas of reductions, it is Working Together, Community Skills for Work, Training on the Job and capital reductions, is that the total area of reductions from within the department? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will let Mr. Cleveland take the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are the specific areas of reduction that we have identified in the interim appropriation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Taking from that comment, that is the specific areas of reduction, so are there some unspecific areas that reductions are occurring in? Is there an overall reduction in some other places that are sort of sitting out there, or is that it? Those are the reductions. We will not be caught by a surprise right-hook, as they say.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I do not believe there are others. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister a few questions about the digital communications network and how it is affected, specifically in this interim, but more specifically overall as the department sees it in its ongoing plans.

I know we see a lot of uses for the digital communications network in education, specifically distance learning is obviously going to be very valuable. This government has made a conscious decision to get into what we call grade extensions in the communities, where we would like to provide high school courses in the smaller communities, instead of shipping the kids away from home. I think that distance learning will certainly be a huge asset in this area. Specialized courses can probably now be offered in some of the small communities where there may not be a physics or chemistry teacher. As well, additional training for teachers can be ongoing. They can get online training over the digital communications network.

But we know we heard problems from all departments. We have heard problems from this department that we have a lack of bandwidth. It would cost us a lot of money to upgrade the service, to make it useable in this area. I would like to get a handle on what kind of money would have to be sunk into the digital communications network to make distance learning a reality, because I think it is a very valuable initiative.

First, I would like to ask the Minister how much money the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment has spent in this area to date on this initiative, in both capital and operations and maintenance?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our expenditure this year on the digital communications network is approximately \$1.5 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. So this is an ongoing \$1.5 million per year, roughly. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me how much money we have sunk into this project since the onset of the project, in both capital and operations and maintenance? The total bill to date.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have supported it for approximately three years. The first two years, it was approximately \$2 million. This year it is approximately \$1.5 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. Is that a grand total of \$3.5 million or a grand total of \$5 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a total of \$5.5 million. That included Nunavut for the first two years, of course, before division.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me if he is satisfied with the state of distance learning in the North and satisfied with the performance we are getting out of our \$5.5 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Bell, that is asking an opinion. Maybe you would like to rephrase your question.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We spent \$5.5 million on this initiative. I am wondering if the money has been spent effectively and efficiently. I am wondering if we have received our money's worth out of the project.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to mention that the digital communications network is not only used for the delivery of programs, but also used by libraries, schools and colleges. They are all connected. There are eight income support delivery offices using this as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest, in the department's words, we are essentially an anchor tenant. It is important that this project be working for this department.

Whether there are other departments using it, and certainly there are, Telehealth and other applications the Minister has mentioned, but I would suggest we have heard that there are some problems, especially with bandwidth. We know we spent \$5.5 million. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me what kind of programs we are offering in distance learning? What are the communities now able to tap into as a result of our \$5.5 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. We have offered a pilot project for Northern Studies 10, and it was initiated out of Norman Wells to various communities. We do need, and feel it is timely, to expand the program and expand the high school offerings. As well, schools are using the DCN to access the Internet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. The Minister said he feels it is time to expand the program. I am wondering if the Minister can lay out his plan for expansion of this program for us and tell us what that entails. Does it entail purchasing more bandwidth? Does it entail hiring the expertise to be able to take advantage of this? What is the Minister proposing to do to expand the program and what will it cost?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are surveying school districts on this. We anticipate that we can be offering additional programs by the fall. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: We are going to be looking at additional programs, so more than just the Northern Studies 10 that we are currently getting and you mentioned one other. In order to operate these

additional programs, it is my understanding we are going to have to purchase some bandwidth, because that is what is holding us back here. Can the Minister tell us exactly how much bandwidth he intends to purchase, dollar-wise? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is not clear that the department will require additional bandwidth to deliver these particular programs, but we are examining that at the moment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Just some clarification. The Minister mentioned that we have Northern Studies 10 currently being offered by distance learning. Can you tell me, out of Norman Wells to what communities that is being offered?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask the deputy minister to answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Cleveland.

MR. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not able to give the Member the specific names of communities. There are several communities involved in the pilot. We elected to deliver from Norman Wells to these other communities. The idea was to not only deliver the program, but also test the delivery model. As a result we are working very closely with the instructor, the teacher, and also the divisional education council to measure what the best way to do this is.

There are several different approaches that can be used to deliver programs. In some cases a teacher in one location is supported by other mentors in the student's home location. Those are the kinds of things that we are testing at this point in time. The intention, as the Minister indicated, is to also, while we are doing this, identify other key areas where communities feel that they need, where they would best benefit from courses delivered through the DCN. That is the listing the Minister mentioned that will be prepared in the next couple of months and will serve as the basis for courses that are available through the DCN for the fall. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Cleveland. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister turning to the culture and language side of the portfolio. Looking at the information that was provided to the committee and trying to relate it to what was forecast for spending in the current fiscal year of 1999-2000, I am wondering if the Minister could help. Is the kind of spending that would perhaps be normally considered culture and language and performance oriented included under Museums and Heritage? Is that the dollar? What are we looking at for that dollar amount?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They are under the division called culture, heritage and languages within the education and culture branch. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to look at the cultural side of things and, without a lot of specific information here, is the department anticipating that it will be having a status quo approach to funding programs such as the Northwest Territories Arts Council, northern performers, cultural organizations, community broadcasting grants? Are we looking at the same or similar level of spending forecasted for the coming year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are intending to maintain the funding for those programs. We are also looking for partnerships in this, for example, with the federal government, in possible areas that we can access funding from.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to hear that in this area the department is holding the line. More of a comment, Mr. Chairman. In a discussion with an organization here in Yellowknife, the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre has experienced a fairly dramatic erosion over the years in the kind of support the government has been able to put into it. This has especially affected their ability to serve as a territory-wide cultural institution. They have done an amazing job of striking up partnerships.

I would reflect on what the Minister was just saying. We have partnerships with the business community, the private sector and with volunteers. So if our government is pursuing a similar kind of approach with Ottawa, I look forward to the news that we are not only maintaining the status quo, but hopefully we can turn this around because there has been severe erosion of the contributions that these kind of programs make.

I would like to ask a more education oriented question, Mr. Chairman. This focuses on per student funding commitments. My understanding is that funding to schools is based on a per student allocation that is struck at the end of September, based on enrolment at the end of September. Maybe I will stop there and ask for confirmation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the allocation system is done to the divisional education councils based on student enrolment as of September 31st.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Further to that, yesterday morning, Mr. Chairman, I spent three delightful hours, probably three of the best hours I have spent on the job so far, with the N'Dilo Community School here on a kind of job shadowing invitation. I learned that in this tiny school, their student allotment at the end of September was funded for 17 students that were enrolled. Today, Mr. Chairman, they have 26 students in their school. Their own enrolment is growing. These are students

who have come into the N'Dilo school, Mr. Chairman, from other jurisdictions in the Northwest Territories.

I know this is also a situation in the Yellowknife school system here, which we are advised their student population remains relatively stable. However, over the course of the year, the population can turn over by as much as a third. There is an administrative burden, plus that of new students coming into the school. My question, Mr. Chairman, is what measures is the department taking to assist school divisions in adjusting for changes in school population beyond that September 30th deadline? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a mechanism for extraordinary enrolments if they exceed a certain percentage. There is a formula for that. I am not quite sure of the formula. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you for that information on extraordinary enrolment. I would like to see if the department is pursuing, though, something which can accommodate the normal to and fro, the normal turn-over that our school systems seem to be experiencing. We are not just talking about, say five or ten percent of the school population changing in the course of the year, but as much as a third. I think the administrative burden this places on some of our boards is extraordinary in itself. Is the department able to look at that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that Mr. Braden may be referring to a situation that is occurring specifically in some of the Yellowknife schools where there is an in-and-out situation. Students attend, they come to Yellowknife, they may attend for a month or two months or three months, and it is creating difficulties for the school boards. I have asked the school boards to do an analysis of this. I should be specific there. I have asked the school board that has raised the issue with me for further information on this and to advise me of the types and volumes of changes that take place.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Great. I am pleased to hear the department is following through on that. That is the extent of my questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak to the issue of the campus once again. The Minister earlier said that one of the reasons for it changing was the escalating costs and the low enrolments. I want to make a couple of points here. After recovering from such a blow, I have had a chance to go over some of the thoughts here and, in fact, that program, when it was first discussed, was well over \$13 million. Then the Deh Cho went to an option that was \$8.5 million. In that \$8.5 million, there was not even any closet space in the campus.

I have looked at the plans that were presented for that figure. I had instructors from the campus coming to me, telling me they

were very concerned that in fact we were building a centre that was already too small. It is interesting to hear the Minister saying it might be too large, when in fact I am aware that...for example, in September, there will be 13 courses being put on, and the campus only has room for ten. So we are going to be leasing space or the campus will be leasing space to put on some of the programs.

I cannot really blame other people who want to go other places, because that is an old building to be going to school in. It sure does not give you a positive outlook and give you energy for the day to go through your programming. I just wanted to put that out there. When this project was initially discussed, the value of the project, and this was estimated by the Department of Public Works and Services, and it ranged from a number of options which included renovating the old Grollier Hall facility or a new building. The cheapest scenario that came out was to build a new facility, not renovate an old one. You are looking at the years of life of the building and one of the options put forward was \$13 million plus. Saying that it was an \$8.5 million project with escalating costs as one of the reasons it had to be looked at, does not reflect the history of the project. I wanted to state that for the record. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does the Minister want to respond to those comments?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I would just like to thank the Member for his comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I have no names on my list. What is the wish of the committee? Detail? Okay, we are dealing with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, interim appropriation. We are on page 6, tab 6, page 6, total operations and maintenance, \$62,533,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8, total capital, and \$5,478,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): With that, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. We will take a short break, and come back with the Department of Finance.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I will call the committee back to order. We have the Minister of Finance. Opening remarks, please.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Finance's interim appropriation to the committee. The Department of Finance is requesting funding to operate through the first four months of fiscal year 2000-2001 until the main estimates are prepared and presented for approval.

The department is requesting approval for \$1,190,000 for normal salary and normal operating expenses, or approximately one-third of the annual amount of these expenses. In addition, the department requires \$271,000 to fund the salaries and wages of the liquor commission that are paid from commission profits, but use the Government of the

Northwest Territories pay system. This funding is only required until the annual Liquor Commission main estimates are loaded into the payroll system. At that time, this appropriation will be removed.

Also requested is \$571,000 for the estimated interest costs of borrowing to meet the government's short-term requirements during the period covered by the interim appropriation. The government's insurance policies require that premiums be paid in full on April 1st each year. Therefore, the interim appropriation includes \$2,231,000 for the premiums.

The final item included in the interim appropriation request by the Department of Finance is \$56,000 for the four-month additional costs of the federal government's changes to the Public Service Superannuation Act. These requirements add up to \$4,319,000.

The Department of Finance has no capital budget, so it is requesting no capital funding as part of the interim appropriation.

Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to respond to any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Do I have any committee reports? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: The committee met with the Minister and his staff on March 16, 2000, to review the proposed 2000-2001 interim appropriation for the department. The committee made note of the following issues.

Short Term Interest Expense

Committee members were concerned with the cost of short term interest expense. The department replied that some funding requirements are more economically met with short term financing. This methodology would result in more savings than, for example, a long term borrowing obligation to meet a short-term need.

Insurance Costs

The committee was also concerned with the high cost of insurance and the very high deductible of \$1 million. The department replied that our insurance costs are ours alone and do not reflect any obligations from Nunavut and, further to the committee's concerns, the department explained that the Department of Finance, under the Financial Administration Act, had to increase economies of scale, is responsible for purchasing insurance for all government departments. The department responded that the current deductible is the most cost-effective, especially given our severe loss record.

Committee members asked the Minister if there are initiatives under way to improve security in schools and other large capital assets to help bring down our insurance costs. The Minister replied, that the government's insurance policy covers all our assets and schools only represent a portion of the total portfolio. He agreed to look at other alternatives for reducing insurance costs, but insurance costs will most likely decline in the short term.

He further added that departments, including Municipal and Community Affairs, Public Works and Services and Education,

Culture and Employment are working together to come up with more alternatives to reduce insurance costs.

Tangible Capital Assets And Insurance Costs

The committee asked the Minister if the proposed tangible capital assets reporting program would entail problems for the government's insurance coverage in corresponding premiums payable. The department replied that if valuations made by the reporting system based on amortized or depreciated value are more substantial in more than the insurance company's, which is based on replacement value, the department may drop the asset from the list of insured assets. Part of the tangible capital assets program entails the amortization of an asset over a prescribed time period or depreciation. If insurance only covers the depreciated value of an asset, then the government may most likely not receive enough insurance reimbursement to replace the asset. Currently, this hypothetical situation is avoided, as the government's insurance policy is based on replacement value.

Mr. Chairman, that ends the committee's report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Does the Minister wish to bring witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses in? Can the Minister please introduce the witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, on my right is Margaret Melhorn, the deputy minister of Finance. On my left, Bill Setchill, director of finance and administration for the Department of Finance.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): The Department of Finance, total Finance, operations and maintenance, \$4,319,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, witnesses. We will now go to the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Mr. Minister, do you wish to make any opening comments?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the 2000-2001 interim appropriation request for the Financial Management Board Secretariat is based on the guidelines you have been briefed on and totals 52.3 percent of the original 1999-2000 main estimates. The high percentage, in comparison to last year's main estimates is primarily due to the inclusion of a number of special requirements in the interim bill which were funded through supplementary appropriations last year. Specifically, these are: equal pay litigation; pension reform work; collective bargaining; and implementation of tangible capital assets accounting.

In addition, the Financial Management Board Secretariat, like all other departments, has been required to include the higher employer pension costs for 2000-2001 in this year's appropriation. Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to answer any questions Members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee have any comments? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee met with the chair of the Financial Management Board Secretariat and his staff on March 16, 2000 to review the proposed 2000-2001 interim appropriation for the department. The committee made note of the following issues.

Continuing Legal Costs

Committee members were concerned about continuing legal costs for equal pay litigation, pension reform and collective bargaining. The committee asked the Minister how long we would continue to incur legal costs to settle the aforementioned issues. The Minister explained that the pay equity settlement is still being negotiated with PSAC. The government is under the understanding that 83 percent of the potential litigants have reached settlement and a further \$33 million may be necessary to reach settlements with the remainder. However, the union is of the position that the settlements are partial payments and the final, overall settlement should be \$300 million.

The proposed funding for research and consultation surrounding the pension reform issue is a one-time activity and collective bargaining will always be an ongoing process.

Pension Reform

The committee was also concerned with the funding necessary for pension reform and succeeding fiscal years to ensure the superannuation plan for Government of the Northwest Territories employees is fully funded. The Minister replied that the government is working with the union on cost-effective alternatives to the current pension scheme.

PeopleSoft

Committee members were also concerned with the additional funding requested for the PeopleSoft program. The department informed the committee that the proposed funding is for system upgrades and to fulfill the remainder of the government's contract obligations for PeopleSoft.

Tangible Capital Assets

The committee was concerned with further requests for funding for the tangible capital assets reporting system. Committee members commented that most government departments might not have the qualified staff to ensure their contribution to the valuation and reporting process is met. The Minister replied that the system would be up and running and auditable by March 31, 2001. He further added that departments have qualified staff to complete the necessary tasks for the program. Furthermore, he explained that this initiative might be an ongoing item as the government continually procures or divests infrastructure.

Staff Housing

Committee members were concerned with the ongoing costs for staff housing. The committee was of the understanding that the government was predicting to be out of the staff housing program years ago. The Minister will provide the committee with an inventory of all staff housing units, their locations, their respective appraised values and maintenance costs.

Financial Information System

The committee noted that GHRS, Government Human Resources System, and HRIS, Human Resources Information System components of the FIS recording system formerly utilized by the government, have now been replaced with the new PeopleSoft system. Committee members were concerned why additional funding has been requested for the FIS program. The government accounting activity requested \$65,000 in funding for FIS maintenance and contract report.

The Minister, at the request of the committee, will determine if the proposed funding for FIS is for the entire fiscal year or for the interim period and report back to the committee.

That concludes the committee's comments, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I would like to ask the Minister if he wishes to bring in any witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes I would, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Would the Sergeant-At-Arms escort the witness in please?

Minister Handley, please introduce your witness to the committee.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): General comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to compliment the Minister on his tie. It may be the only new money we have, is that what you are telling us?

I have some very brief comments. I see from looking at the budget that there are a lot of non-discretionary items. There are some that I have concerns about. I would like some clarification, mainly under the directorate.

Could the Minister indicate with staff housing contracts for \$1.8 million...is this for housing that we still own? This may be repetitive, but I was not at the Jedi committee meeting, so I am interested in knowing where these contracts are. Are they all occupied housing?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A list of all of the houses and locations was given to the standing committee. Since the Member is not a member of that, I will just go through it very quickly. The costs are for both owned and leased units. By region, in the South Slave, we still have 25 units that are owned and none leased. In the Western Arctic, there are eight

owned and nine leased. In the North Slave, ten owned, 16 that are leased for a total of 68 units throughout the Northwest Territories.

The department is continually downsizing and working at transferring the units to hamlets and communities as quickly as we can, but it takes some time. The leased units are units which the government entered into long term leases some time ago. We have them on our hands until the lease runs out or we are able to transfer that lease elsewhere. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This may be too detailed a question. Could the Minister indicate, are there units in communities where there are also problems with housing for essential services? Do we know that? I am thinking of nurses and teachers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There may be some communities. I am not sure where we have a need for housing for particular purposes. In the case of nurses, any units that are attached to a health centre are not included in the numbers that I gave you here.

It is possible we could have a situation where a house is available, but on the other hand, we have housing needs. The house may not be occupied for some other purpose at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate what the anticipated time is to sell off the remaining houses? I appreciate that the leases may be with us for a while, but of the 68 units that are up for sale on the private market, do they have any idea when we will be out from this particular expense?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We expect to be out of most of them in a year, but it will be probably two years until we can say substantially that we are out of the housing business.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate whether Yellowknife is included in the North Slave for this department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have any houses in Yellowknife, so it is not included.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get some clarification as well on this knowledge

management strategy for \$190,000. Can the Minister indicate what that is? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will let Mr. Voytilla explain this one. It is fairly technical.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The knowledge management strategy is really our informatics strategy that we are updating. We hope to have that done by June.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So informatics is now a knowledge management strategy. Is this \$190,000 just for Financial Management Board Secretariat, or is this for some sort of government wide knowledge management strategy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$190,000 is to put together a comprehensive government wide, knowledge management strategy, informatics strategy by another term, so we will be able to assess what our ongoing needs are. It will give us a planning framework. It will help us decide what capacity we need in bandwidth. It has multiple purposes, but it will be for the whole government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the government has been labouring long and hard for many years on their informatics strategy. Has that been scrapped? Is this yet another phase of more planning? There has been no real conclusion. In a lot of cases, we are spending a lot on strategy, but the actual implementation in informatics across the government is not very good. We have very inadequate, and in some cases terrible for the size of operation that we have, information systems that are not connected and not very modern. We have systems where you still have to count by hand, depending on what you are doing.

I would like some assurance here that we are going to get past spending six figures on strategies and actually get to the implementation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last informatics strategy we put together for the government was about five years ago. It was a comprehensive strategy at the time. It guided a lot of our investments over the last few years.

It was through that strategy that we determined that a government wide digital communications network would be necessary for us to take advantage of technology development. That strategy was in place, but because of the speed with which technology changes these days, no strategy has a shelf life that is longer than three to five years. What we have found

ourselves with in the last few years was a strategy that no longer met all of the government needs and requirements.

We have determined that it is time, a critical time, to update that strategy and put into place a framework that will help us make decisions and plan for technology for the next number of years.

The current investment that we are making in the strategy of \$180,000 is relatively small in comparison to what the government actually invests each year in systems and communication and data processing. In fact, we are probably spending well in excess of \$10 million a year on that kind of development. We see this as a significant, but still appropriate, level of investment to come up with a strategy that will help us manage that better.

I think we had been making a lot of progress in the last few years with respect to our systems. I know a tremendous amount of work was done on our systems, upgrading them in the last two or three years as we prepared for the year 2000. We see significant opportunity to reap the benefits of further technology advances over the next two years. That is why this strategy is considered important to the government.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The years in the last Assembly, when I sat on the social programs committee and we went through department by department on the informatics strategies, they had a strategy but as I recall, they made very little progress in implementing it.

I am thinking of health in a lot of cases. I am thinking of education with their systems. The ability for departments to communicate and to transfer information. The ability within departments like health where they have, and I have seen them, numbers of different systems within each department that are all different and unconnected, let alone connecting with all the NGOs and non-government agencies the government is tied into.

While I am not necessarily opposed to a plan, we need a plan that is going to go somewhere so you do not have to hand count your numbers. You do not have to double check your numbers. If you want child welfare information on how many kids you have in a group home, you have to route around in filing cabinets.

The deputy said we are spending \$10 million a year on information technology. A lot of it was geared to a specific event at a point in time, the year 2000. The reality is, as a government, as a corporation, I think our information systems are wholly inadequate.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is right. There are many systems that still need to be upgraded and developed. Many of our systems are outdated. Hopefully, through this strategy, we will be able to co-ordinate the investment we make in fixing some of those problems.

I would mention that we have invested, and all of our departments have invested in a lot of systems improvements in

the last few years. There has been work done on a new student financial assistance system. There are case management systems that are being developed. We are attempting to co-ordinate all of that development through a co-ordinating committee of deputies, as well as initiatives as bringing in and updating our informatics strategy.

I would be the last one to say that all of our systems are state of the art and meeting all of our needs. Keeping your systems current, getting the information out of them that you need to get and getting information into them is a constant struggle. That is something you have to keep working on.

The key thing is to work on it in a coordinated fashion, so you solve the problem of systems not being able to talk to each other and data being captured inconsistently. Those are certainly our goals. I think the Member raises a good point, which is we are not there yet.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. General comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could the Minister elaborate on this knowledge management strategy? The deputy indicated that it is going to be completed by June. I am assuming this is a contract. Who is the contract with?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The contract will be completed by this summer. The contractor has not been selected yet. A request for a proposal has just gone out.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The request for a proposal has gone out. When will it will close? I am interested now in the length of time. What kind of comprehensive review can you do for the whole government, from the 60th parallel to the Beaufort Delta, especially over the summer when a lot of people are not going to be around? Are they going to make use of the existing informatics strategic plan that is there, so they are not reinventing the wheel? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The plan was to have the request for proposal out by the end of March. I am not sure if it has gone out yet, but it will be going out very shortly. The intention is that during the month of June we would have the research done, the report written up in July and something available by August. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since I have not seen the terms and conditions of the RFP, I would like some clarification. It is one thing to upgrade the systems we have and put in new computers and all that, but there are some broader systems issues in terms of we have too many systems, too many different systems, too many different, unconnected systems. And we also have health boards, divisional boards of education...are they going to be tied in?

I would like some clarification that we are not just going to be going around putting in a bunch of new computers. We are going to look from a structural point of view of the systems requirement of this government to have a 21st century information system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I think what we are doing is exactly what the Member is suggesting. Basically, the strategy will identify the current state of our information technology function. It will take a look at what the desired state should be. It will define a strategy for achieving this ideal state. It will also give us a bit of a strategy on dealing with the changing nature of information technology.

So it is more than just upgrading. It is really looking at our whole strategy and what do we need and how we will best get a system that enables us to keep up with the changing technology. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate how does the government intend to deal with the broader more fundamental issues related to systems development, which is the working relationship between departments and linking the programs? Making sure there are doorways between departments, so there is that interdepartmental cooperation. That there is compatibility, not only up and down and vertically through the organization but horizontally. And the ability to transfer information with the appropriate checks and balances and fire walls and all those other necessary mechanisms we need.

But how do you get the staff? If in fact you have a system that will work together and the staff does not, will there be any point to it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the strategy will help us to answer those kinds of questions in terms of how do we interface? How do we manage the systems? What kind of bandwidth do we need and so on. That is the major purpose of the strategy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: I will restate this a little, to get further clarification. One of the concerns I have is that you have departments right now where it is very difficult, even in their social envelope, to get the Ministers in the same room to talk about issues, let alone to develop their departments and their programs so there are links where there are natural connections. And that as a government, there are a lot of areas where there should be connections but there are none, because we have stove pipe operations, where there has been no pressure or no requirement on managers and deputies to in fact make that big step.

It is all well and good to have a knowledge strategy for the mechanics and technical side, but what about the people side that is going to make that system work? How do you intend to tie that into this strategy? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I will ask Mr. Voytilla to explain that piece. He may do better than I did.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A deputy ministers committee called the Informatics Policy Committee coordinates the development and information management in the territorial government, which is mandated by the Financial Management Board Secretariat to try to bring interdepartmental coordination and a government wide approach to the way we use and develop technology.

That committee has flagged some of the very issues the Member has raised about interdepartmental coordination, standardization and common approaches as a problem area that does have to be addressed.

We recently commissioned a study of how we were using the digital communication network and what some of the issues were associated with that. In that report, they also echoed the concern that we as an organization need to bring a greater level of consistency and standardization and overall management to the IT function in the government.

Part of the strategy will be designed to look at exactly that issue. Knowing that we have to do that, what is the best way to organize, to be able to achieve those greater efficiencies and that better coordination and standardization. And what does that mean with respect to what authorities each department has with respect to their systems versus what parts or aspects of their systems they have to defer to a common standard for government? What level of authority do they have to initiate systems work and manage those projects?

That is a fundamental aspect of what we are trying to address. It may lead to some organizational change. It will probably lead to some recommendations for a change in authorities over systems. I will not presume on what the final recommendations will be. That is why we are doing the study. It is certainly recognized as a problem and recognized that it has to be addressed thoroughly in this process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this RFP, is there going to be a requirement for the contractor to travel outside of Yellowknife to take a look at what is out there? Not just in regional centres, but in as many of the communities in the North as possible, to see the varying stages and levels of technological capabilities in the communities? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes. The contractor will travel outside of Yellowknife to a representative selection of communities and centres. Those have not been identified as of yet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will this knowledge management strategy also look at the issue that has come up, I know it has come up with every department in the social envelope, and that is the capability of the digital

communication network to handle the new technologies and complexity and bandwidth demands.

Will that \$190,000 cover that particular key aspect of the technological systems? If we do not have the capability to carry information between our systems, then we are not much further ahead. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes, it should tell us how and when to make those types of adjustments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland, general comments?

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of areas I would like to go into with this department. The earlier discussions and questions going on versus the knowledge management strategy and the old term that use to be called informatics strategy. It is good to hear the department is looking at coordination. I recall during my term in the 13th Assembly that we raised those very issues when it came forward, that we needed to have some coordination here. We were told that it would definitely be something that would be considered and looked into. We were told we needed to do all this work. It is good to see that it has finally come through and surfaced.

But unfortunately, we have expended millions of dollars on separate systems. Each department has gone and hired their own informatics staff and their own programs. They have dedicated rooms in each of their buildings that are hardwired, as they call it, to these new computer systems that are up and running.

Hopefully, we will get something that will get these systems to talk to each other, not throw them out and get a whole new set of systems for millions of dollars once again.

But the areas I would like to concentrate on are very similar. It is one of the upgrades that happened. It is called the PeopleSoft area. The committee made a report on that system, that it was to take over two other systems. Can the Minister confirm that the PeopleSoft system was to take over the Government Human Resources System and Human Resources Information System? And they are both components of the FIS, I believe. Can that be confirmed? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, the PeopleSoft program will take over the GHRS, the human resources system and also the highline pay system. Neither of these systems are part of FIS. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So it will take over the highline pay system and the human resources system. We have seen over the last bit the expenditures on the PeopleSoft area and the increase in the staff that is required to operate the PeopleSoft system. I have seen a lot of training occur in

regions as well to bring them online with this PeopleSoft system.

What is the net change from this government human system and the highline pay system? There has to be existing staff in those areas. So in fact with addition of new positions for the PeopleSoft system and these other two systems that are going to be retired, I take it, is there a net growth in staff to operate the PeopleSoft system? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in terms of the Member's question with regard to people and the number of staff who work to operate these systems, we are still working through some of the difficulties with the PeopleSoft system. But once it is up and running, we expect it should be able to be managed and operated with the same number of people we currently have.

I might add that as well as taking over the two programs, it also has more capacity than the other two did combined or separately. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, two points here for clarification. One is, we will be able to operate with any existing staff that is there. Is that existing, that is under PeopleSoft alone or is that existing with PeopleSoft and the staff that is running these two other systems?

The other question is, when there is more capacity that is a concern as well because that capacity takes up a lot of bandwidth, I believe, when it comes to dealing with communities and regions. Is that the case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the PeopleSoft, once it is up and running, will be able to be operated using the same number of people that we are currently using for the highline and the GHRS system, so there are no additional people required.

In terms of the extra capacity, I do not think that it takes up extra bandwidth, I just think that the system is able to do more than the other two systems.

Maybe I will just ask Mr. Voytilla to add a bit more to what I said. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just by way of clarity, the former highline payroll system and the government human resource system were centralized systems. They resided in one place on the mainframe computer. PeopleSoft is what they call a client server system. It has decentralized its computing power to a certain extent that is closer to users, so there is more traffic, data traffic over the visual communication network than there was with the other systems because they did not operate in that way. So, PeopleSoft does consume some DCN bandwidth, but frankly we have been able to get its requirement down to what we think are pretty reasonable levels.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other area I would like to get more clarification on was the information the Minister provided to the committee regarding the staff housing situation. There is an area here where there is provision for resolution of historical excess building under discussion with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Can the Minister update the Members as to this little note of the building situation with the Housing Corporation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there has been an ongoing disagreement or dispute with the Housing Corporation going back to 1996-1997, in terms of what is billable. I believe that over the years since 1996-1997, there is about \$1 million that is in dispute. We believe that we can settle that dispute for the amount that is included in the interim. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it the same dispute communities have when they take over a building that has been transferred to them? I have heard Mr. Nitah on a number of occasions in this forum and in committee talk about the housing transferred to communities. They find that they do not have enough dollars to maintain them. Maybe the Minister could update us on that.

As well, one other comment, Mr. Chairman. The Minister stated that within the existing staff that run the highline pay system and the government human resources system, they would be able to run the PeopleSoft program. What does that mean for the new staff that was taken on for the PeopleSoft system, seeing that this government has the unofficial no-layoff policy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Roland. That was two questions, I think. Does the Minister wish to answer them both?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will answer the first one and then maybe get clarification on the second one. In terms of the billing dispute between the Housing Corporation and Financial Management Board Secretariat, the dispute comes about because the agreement with the Housing Corporation requires that they provide actual information on the cost of operating the housing units. The Housing Corporation has not been able to provide those. Instead what they do is average out the costs with the housing associations and provide that, but we are not confident that is exactly the cost of maintaining the government owned housing units as compared to the ones that the Housing Corporation uses. It is more the method that is used for calculating the billing costs. I am not sure that is the same dispute that communities have. It may, in some cases, be the same and other cases may be different.

The second question, Mr. Chairman, I was not clear on. I would appreciate clarification. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I will let this one go ahead. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: You are so kind, Mr. Chairman. The second one was the PeopleSoft program and the staff that were hired to implement and get this program up and running. The Minister stated earlier that the current staff that run the highline

pay system and the government human resources system can operate the PeopleSoft system. We know, as well, that there have been new hires for getting the PeopleSoft program up and going.

Knowing this government has an unofficial no-layoff policy, what is going to happen when this program is up and running? We are going to have more than enough people to run the system, from what I am gathering, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification, we only have one contractor left. I do not think that one will be an issue. The other people whose positions will be up as the system is in place are on secondment. We expect that those people would go back to the job from which they were seconded. If necessary, then we will do some readjustment, restructuring within Financial Management Board Secretariat to accommodate the changes. There should be no need to lay-off anyone. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of questions. Of the 68 units of the staff housing contracts, how much revenue is generated from that? This \$1.8 million is to cover off lease costs and operations and maintenance and such, but I was just curious. I am assuming that a big portion of these are rented, so what kind of revenue is generated to offset this \$1.8 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we do not have that information with us. We would have to provide it tomorrow. I apologize for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: So, we know how much we need to honour the lease payments and cover these other costs, but we do not know if the 68 units are operating in the red or in the black. Is this an offsetting expenditure, like \$1.8 million or is it going to be close to that? Where would we see that reflected in the interim appropriation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the million dollars that is shown for lease costs and operations and maintenance is the total of the lease costs. We are not collecting anywhere near that amount in rent, so, yes, this is being operated at a loss.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will tack this on as a preamble to another question, then. So, you will provide that information to see what kind of revenue is generated. I would be interested to know that. I would also be interested to know who negotiates our leases or the government's leases, if they are that generous that we operate at a loss.

I would also like to know, is the knowledge management strategy looking at the PeopleSoft system as well? The system

we have just invested so much in and of which I have heard so many complaints about?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. That was two questions. Does the Minister wish to answer them both?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we will provide the information on the income from the houses, as was requested. We will do that tomorrow.

Second, with regard to the contract on the information technology side, the contract will look at the framework for all of our systems and that will include, I suppose in a way, the PeopleSoft. They will not be looking at how the PeopleSoft program itself functions, more the framework. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just checked through the last provided contract document. I just made a point of tallying up the money spent on contracts on PeopleSoft and that document is worth \$1.3 million, by my calculation. I would like to know from the Minister, what was the initial budget to have this PeopleSoft system up and running? How long was it supposed to have taken? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The original budget was \$4.2 million. The total project cost came in at \$6.4 million, and of that amount, \$2.1 is Nunavut's cost. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does that include the last contract document where they had \$1.3 million in contracts for PeopleSoft? Is that part of the figure that you are quoting to me?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we are not clear on what \$1.3 million the Member is referring to.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The contract document that was tabled by the government in this House last week for the second quarter, I believe it was, for the year ending March 31, 2000. I was flipping through there and took a running total of the money spent on PeopleSoft and I came to \$1.3 million. I would just like to know, those figures that you quoted to me in terms of project costs and the \$2 million budgeted for \$4 million or so and coming in at \$6 million, whether that includes those contract costs that were for the last or the second quarter of this year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I think you are referring to contracts from the past, previous year and maybe we can just stick to the interim appropriation. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I request your indulgence. What I asked was what was the initial budget of the PeopleSoft system, which is in their budget again this year and I was asking what that budget was and whether it included the \$1.3 million dollars that was tabled in contracts in

the second quarter. Just to give me a sense of how much more money we are going to spend and where this system is going. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, the \$1.3 million the Member is referring to is included in that total. We expect that the only additional expense we should have beyond that figure will be about \$1 million a year of ongoing operations and maintenance on the system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister clarify, as well, one of the things I have heard in my travels. When a cheque run is done, for the most part the PeopleSoft system is totally tied up and it is not accessible for other functions while they are doing that FIS stuff. Is that true?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I think that does happen when a cheque run is on. It will be fully used during that period and it would not be accessible for other purposes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard this could be as much as every three days out of ten that this system would be off limits or unavailable for basic GHRS work and pay and benefits work and other functions that the government would require. Is that an accurate figure? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is down for about two to three days every cycle. That is, every two weeks. So that is generally accurate. We hope that as time goes on that we are able to trim that back, but two to three days is accurate. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you. So we spent \$6 million on a system that can only do one thing at a time? I just want to make sure I have a clear understanding of this. We spent \$6 million, almost \$7 million on a system that can only do one thing at a time, and 30 percent of the time is tied up doing financial business of government, leaving that percentage of time where there is no human resource, GHRS capacity or any other capacity in the government. Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will refer that to Mr. Voytilla. He is more familiar with the details of how this functions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you will find that with any payroll system that is allowing live entry into the payroll records you need to shut down data entry for a period of time for cycling the pay run. The old systems of batch systems you would do up, do your entry and then do a summary of

everything you put in. Then you roll that batch of data into the system. So it was quite a cumbersome and duplicative process when it came to entering data. Both systems could be up all the time, but you still had to shut them down for particular pay cycles.

PeopleSoft is different. PeopleSoft is a live system. The people who are data entering into it are data entering into actual live payroll records. So, when you are going to run a pay run, you have to cut off their access to the system for that period of time because you cannot have people changing the database and changing the information in people's pay files as you are generating the pay run and cutting the cheques. So for a period of time, you have to deny access to the system so that you do not have people changing data as it is being used to generate paycheques.

Right now, as the Minister pointed out, for about two, possibly in some cases three days in a cheque cycle, the system is shut down and not available to other users. We hope that over time, that will be cut down dramatically, so that it will be unavailable to users for only a day or less. But we are still in the process of refining the implementation, working out the remaining bugs and getting the system performing the way we want it to perform. That is not unusual for implementation of a system of this magnitude.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to take the Minister back to the FMBS homes in the communities. I believe the problems with the communities is the transfer of ownership of FMBS homes that will be condemned in the near future. It is with the Financial Management Board Secretariat to pay for the upgrade of the houses before ownership is transferred and that is a concern by a lot of communities. It is great to give the homes out. I am sure these people would love the houses, but not if it is going to be condemned in the next couple of years and is going to cost regular money to upgrade it to meet the levels of whatever the management structure is involved in homes being operated. It may also reduce the costs. It would definitely reduce the long-term costs of the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Normally, our houses are sold as is. It is up to the community, I guess, if they want to take the house as it is. If they do not, then they should not take it. In some cases, we may just be condemning some houses and getting rid of them. There may be situations, though, and we are looking into some of those, where we would look at the possibility of putting a bit of money into it to upgrade it. I think the most important thing is that we make sure people know the condition of the house when they take it, that it is not a house in new condition. We do not want to get into the business of renovating these houses before we sell them. In some cases we would, and I think there are some specific cases we are looking into right now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we all know, the major cost to this government is in the social programs, social envelopes. A lot of that has to do with health conditions, education levels and so on. One of the biggest challenges in

the smaller communities, where most of these homes are, is housing for professional people. The high cost of living, coupled with the high cost of maintaining homes and so on, is a real challenge. It is costing this government quite a bit of dollars. I would think the government might see this as an investment to reduce the long term costs to the government in the areas of social programs by providing significant amounts of resources to upgrade homes. They could then pass on these homes to either the communities or continue to manage them. By doing this, they could reduce the costs to the social envelopes. I am just wondering if the Minister and the Financial Management Board Secretariat have considered that line of thinking. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, a number of years ago, the government made a decision to get out of staff housing. We are carrying through with that program. While I realize there are some serious situations in terms of social housing needs and getting into housing and maintaining these housing units. For that purpose, it might be an option we could look at, but we are not looking at it at this point. It is not a function of the Financial Management Board Secretariat. I do not think this would be the right way of doing it. We would be better off to look at how we might do this through the Housing Corporation or some other vehicle, but not through the Financial Management Board Secretariat houses. I think we are better to continue on our course of getting out of staff housing. Once we have staff housing in a community, we cannot discriminate as to who gets it, whether it is southern or local people. We have to be open. I do not think this is the right vehicle. I think we should get out of the staff housing program as quickly as we can. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the haste of getting out of staff housing, has the Financial Management Board Secretariat looked at the short term possibility of these houses that they want to transfer to the communities? If it is going to be condemned, what would be the cost to bring it up to acceptable standards? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is a good suggestion and it is one that we are looking at on a case by case basis, to determine whether or not it is feasible to spend the money to upgrade some of these houses. As I mentioned earlier, there are some cases we are looking at right now, but if it is too much money, then it just is not a good business decision on our part. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last question was just to look at how long the life of the house is before it is condemned, before they offer it to the communities. I am not asking if they are going to put some resources into upgrading the houses, just to find out how long of a life it has before the offer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we do provide condition reports on the house. I think that gives a pretty good condition of how many years are left in that particular unit. Again, we

have to do it on a case-by-case basis. It is a good suggestion. I think it is one that we do provide already. If there is a way of improving on that, we are happy to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One final question. When you do that case-by-case or whatever that might be, do you have a cost associated with that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we do not have any set cost that applies across the board. We look at each unit and determine whether or not it would be feasible to upgrade the house. When we sell it to somebody, there is a condition report. I think that gives some indication of what they would have to spend if they were going to take it over and renovate it themselves. Whether we put any money into it, again, it is case by case. There is no set figure because every house is quite a bit different than the other ones. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): General comments. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to follow up with a few more questions about the PeopleSoft system. I still have some questions, I am a little unclear on a few things. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us, now that we have spent \$6 million on the PeopleSoft system, is it able to provide all the things for the various education, health boards, other boards around the North that it will hopefully provide for the Government of the Northwest Territories? Can it handle these functions over the DCN in the communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The PeopleSoft system has been set up and is being used by all the education boards now in the Northwest Territories, as well as all the government departments. It is also currently being used by the Housing Corporation and by the Stanton Regional Health Board, so we have rolled it out successfully throughout the Territories. It is working well over the DCN in those communities. We have not yet rolled it out to the other health boards. We are doing planning on that now, an assessment on that and, of course, talking to the health boards about the timing of that and the desirability of that. The capacity is certainly there if that decision is made.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. We can assume the health boards are interested and we are going to make arrangements to roll this out to them, as Mr. Voytilla has told us, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if the Minister could tell us how much it is going to cost to roll this out to them. When we can expect it to be complete?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would not be able to give the Member a specific cost estimate at this point in time. That is part of the assessment we are doing in determining whether rolling the PeopleSoft out to the remaining health boards is the right business decision. Costing is part of the discussions and the review that is going to be taking place over

the course of the next number of months as we make this determination.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. Is it possible then, because of a business decision, that we may not roll this out to the health boards if it does not make business sense? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes. If it did not make sense, we would not do it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: As the Minister mentioned, the system can be down for other human resource functions for two to three days of a cycle. If emergent pay and benefits issues come up, how do we deal with those when the system is down?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we can do what are called off-cycle cheques. If you want detail on exactly what that means, you will have to ask Mr. Voytilla. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: No, that is fine. I will forgo the detail. However, as Mr. Voytilla has mentioned, we want to get the two to three down days reduced to one. I would assume this will cost us some money to do this. Can the Minister tell us how much money?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we do not expect it should cost anything. We believe it can be achieved through a refinement of our procedures without any additional costs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe, Mr. Chairman, we expected this thing would cost us \$4.3 million and it has cost us \$6 million. I do not know how much comfort that is to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Let me ask the Minister again about the cost overruns. We have heard that it is going to come in around \$6 million. It was supposed to cost us \$4.3 million. We are somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2 million in cost overruns in this project. We understand that some portion of this was Nunavut's portion to foot. Can the Minister tell me if we can look at this as something that did not even run over budget?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the original \$4.2, \$4.3 million figure was an estimate of the cost of implementing it to cover both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The \$6.4 million we mentioned is, again, the amount to cover both. Of that amount, \$2.1 is Nunavut's. So, yes, there are cost overruns. It is a little over \$2 million in cost overruns on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you for the clarification. I missed something there. I thought it was \$6 million and in fact it is \$6.4 million. It is apparently going to cost us slightly more than what it used to cost to get a bionic arm and two bionic legs, so I would like to make sure that this system is going to be capable of handling all our human resource needs in the North. I am glad to hear the Minister say that we have seen some overruns on this. Can the Minister give us his assurance that this is the end of the overruns?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, it is the end of the overruns, unless we want to add additional capability to the system. Mr. Chairman, I might add as well that the PeopleSoft system is the most widely used system across Canada. This is not some bold experiment we are involved in here. We are implementing a system that is pretty common across the country. I am sure everyone else did not get into it because it does not work well. They are in there because it does work well. I am optimistic that we can have the system functioning and running well within a short period of time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Maybe the Minister can tell us if it is common enough that Nunavut is currently using it. They have spent around \$2 million. Surely they are currently using the system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, Nunavut bailed out on this one and no, they are not using the system. Nunavut makes their own decisions. They are using a system out of Ottawa, which I guess someone else convinced them was better than this one. We are not convinced yet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: I am glad we are not convinced. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): General comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding was that while Nunavut paid \$2 million, they found the program too technical and too difficult to run. They did not have the expertise, so they in fact ended up contracting down south. I am not sure if this one is sitting on the shelf somewhere gathering dust.

The concern I have is, of the countless people that have talked about this, I hear a very high level of user dissatisfaction. I was wondering, given the significant, formidable amounts of money that we have invested in a system that our sister territory has already bailed out from, would it not be wise, as part of this knowledge management strategy, to do some sort of user satisfaction survey, to get some hands-on kind of feedback from the people about this system? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have done some survey of user satisfaction. We will continue to do that. I think that is essential as we help people become used to this system. So to answer the question, yes, it is important. We

need to build those user concerns into any sort of plans we have, both in the training and on the technology side. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I initially asked about the knowledge management strategy, the Minister indicated that they would take sort of a cursory or peripheral look at the PeopleSoft system.

Given the concerns raised in this House, which I think are symptomatic of a wide-spread concern and user dissatisfaction, would the Minister commit to ensuring that whoever does this knowledge management strategy will take a cross sectional survey sample of how well the system is working, so we can get some on the ground, grass roots kind of feedback?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have done post-implementation interviews. I think as we go on, we will continue to see user views and take those very seriously. There is often a problem when users are used to one kind of system and they are busy with their regular jobs and they have to get used to a new system. It takes a little while to work through all the bugs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Well, I think the Minister is bailing on the Titanic on this one, but have at her. So when you table this knowledge management strategy and we get to look at that, there will be a section that speaks specifically to PeopleSoft?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I will defer that one, Mr. Chairman, to Mr. Voytilla.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The knowledge management strategy is to provide us with an overall framework for managing systems and investment in information technology. So to the extent that PeopleSoft comprises a significant part of our main government systems, it will be assessed within that framework. But the strategy in itself will not be recommending detailed modifications to PeopleSoft.

We have another review that we do on any big system implementation called a post-implementation review. That review is almost finished. It basically goes through the project and says what did we initially start out to achieve, how did we carry out the project, what did we do good, what did we do bad, and what did we end up with.

Then it gives us advice on how we can maximize the use of the system and the operation of the system in our environment. So that work and that evaluation of how well the implementation went and whether we got what we set out to get is being completed. That will primarily guide us initially in the further improvements we make to how we run the system. Certainly that has user input into it.

We have a user committee that will continue to provide us with input on future improvements and modifications to the system.

Hopefully, with all of that we will, over time, take what is fundamentally a good system and make it more responsive to user needs and make a better system for the organization.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate in terms of the budget, when did we realize that the costs on this project were going south? Given the concern we have had in this House today, we are \$1 million short for adult education programs. That is education we could use. We are scrambling around like mad to find money for summer employment programs. What happened? The \$2 million question is what happened? What assurances do we have that we will avoid this kind of thing with your tangible capital assets? Again, is there any kind of comfort that can be given to us as legislators looking for every penny, so that we can avoid this in the future? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it was probably in August or September when the government realized there were going to be substantial cost overruns. At that point, it was necessary to make a decision to carry on or quit the project. Due to the amount of investment already in it, and because of the belief that it is a good system, the decision was made to carry on.

A lot of the cost overruns resulted from the failure of an agreement for each government to provide staff resources to work through the system. That was not done, I guess mainly on the Nunavut side. As a result, we had to hire contractors, which probably tripled the cost to continue on with this project. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: If I could sort of summarize. So you are saying it is Nunavut's fault? Is that what you are telling us? That now that they are not here, we can blame them? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger, can you please speak through the chair? Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, I do not want to try and dump all the blame on Nunavut. I think we have to jointly have responsibility for it. A big part of the problem has to be shared by both governments. If one of the governments did not provide the human resources that was expected, then it cost us money to hire contractors.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Government of Nunavut obviously bailed early on this particular system. I hope the Minister is right. The other question is, I hope the Minister is right that this, in fact, will be the program they say it will be without any more costs.

My question to the Minister is, as we look at moving ahead on some of these other initiatives with the Financial Management Board Secretariat, tangible capital assets, setting up of pension operations, can the Minister give us some comfort that we are going to be a little bit more on target? It pains me deeply to have to come and find \$2 million cost overruns in a service

department. I have to go back, along with all my colleagues, to all our communities and tell the people that we do not have money for adult education. We do not have enough money for housing. But we found the money to have the cost overruns in headquarters for a service department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, like the Member, I also hope that we are right. I hope that a year from now you can judge me and judge that we did manage this well. But I guess the best thing I can give you right now is my own assurance that we will do everything we can to prevent any cost overruns.

I should also mention that a couple of the other examples the Member referred to, both the tangible capital assets and the pension issues, are issues that were faced. We do not have a lot of choice. We have to get on with them. The superannuation issue is one that was decided by the federal government, in that we are no longer to be part of their system.

In the case of the tangible capital assets, that is coming from the Auditor General and the Public Sector Accounting Board's recommendations to him that we have to move this way. Some things we have to do. We do not have a lot of control over whether or not we do them. We will do our best to manage within the estimates that are given to us. Having said that, it is not 100 percent predictable either. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Just to follow up from Mr. Miltenberger, I think we all agree that tangible capital assets, pension takeover...these are things that we have been forced into. Our concern is not with the PSABs recommendations that we implement tangible capital assets. Our concerns are that we implement them in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. The systems that we choose to set up to run these programs are of concern to the Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are endeavoring to do that. We will report as regularly as the Members may want on the progress. We certainly appreciate any advice that may have been given to us on how we can maintain that efficiency and stay within our cost estimates. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): General Comments? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Financial Management Board Secretariat, subtotal, \$9,654,841.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): No capital. Thank you, Mr. Minister and your witnesses. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable.

To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will rise to report progress.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001 and Committee Report 3-14(2) and 4-14(2), and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is there a seconder for the motion? Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and at 11:00 a.m. of the Board of Management.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, March 29, 2000:

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
 - Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 1999-2000
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 1-14(2), Sessional Statement
 - Tabled Document 14-14(2), "Our Communities, Our Decisions: Let's Get on With It!", Final Report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services
 - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
 - Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001
 - Committee Report 2-14(2), Accountability and Oversight on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation
 - Committee Report 3-14(2), Governance and Economic Development on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation
 - Committee Report 4-14(2), Social Programs on the 2000-2001 Interim Appropriation
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 29, 2000, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT