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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Michael Nadli

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, June 3, 2014****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Hon. Jackie Jacobson, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 76-17(5):
EXPANSION OF SINGLE-WINDOW
SERVICE CENTRES**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to creating prosperity for all our citizens, and we recognize that residents of rural and remote communities have unique needs. We recognize that it can be difficult to communicate with government departments when people do not know who to contact or if they are not able to access online services.

I am pleased to announce that with the support of this Legislative Assembly, three new single-window service centres will soon open in Fort McPherson, Deline and Behchoko. These centres will help connect residents with the information and services they need, right at home in their own communities.

As Members know, these offices not only provide access to government programs and information, they also increase employment opportunities where they are most needed. These new single-window service centres will be staffed by trained half-time government service officers, recruited right from the communities they serve.

Our government service officers serve as a bridge between the government and citizens in small communities. They are true system navigators, helping residents access the services they need, Mr. Speaker. With the addition of these three new centres, we now have a total of 18 across the Northwest Territories. Since the program was launched in 2010, staff have helped residents in small communities with over 15,000 requests for assistance accessing Government of the Northwest Territories and federal government programs and services.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that most of our government service officers provide direct services in their Aboriginal language. They make home visits

to help elders and other people who cannot come to the office.

Mr. Speaker, supporting all communities and regions is a priority for our government. Our commitment to them is demonstrated in programs like our single-window service centres, decentralization and regional recruitment and capacity building initiatives. We are doing our part to create sustainable, vibrant, safe communities as we work towards the vision of this Assembly.

The single-window service centres and government service officers program proves that we can provide more efficient services by creating positions in smaller communities to help residents connect with the programs and services they need. I want to thank Members for their continued support for this initiative. It is truly making a difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 77-17(5):
UPDATE ON INVESTMENTS
IN HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE**

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, addressing housing needs is a priority of the 17th Legislative Assembly and the NWT Housing Corporation. This year is the first year of a multi-year plan that will see considerable investments in housing infrastructure that will have significant impacts on housing in our communities.

Overall, the NWT Housing Corporation expects to spend approximately \$48 million on housing infrastructure during 2014-15 and, Mr. Speaker, today I wanted to provide an update on this work.

A significant aspect of our investment plan includes the new seniors facilities in the communities of Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson and Whati and the replacement of the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik. The work on the Joe Greenland Centre has started and we expect the tenders for construction of the facilities in Fort Liard and Fort McPherson to be out shortly for completion during 2014-15. The other two communities will be completed next year.

The NWT Housing Corporation's plan for 2014-15 also includes adding new public housing units in Jean Marie River, Wekweeti and Colville Lake. These new units will add important housing stock in communities that have been under-served by the Public Housing Program in the past.

Overall for our NWT HC units, the 2014-15 plan includes replacing or building 63 new public housing units and completing retrofits on 165 other units. Our three-year plan, which includes retrofits on close to 600 NWT HC units and over 100 new or replacement units, will build on the work planned for 2014-15. These investments are part the NWT Housing Corporation's continuing effort to ensure that good quality public housing stock is available for our tenants.

Mr. Speaker as Members know, this government is also investing over \$22 million during the next three years to add about 100 market rental units in NWT smaller communities to support devolution, decentralization and service delivery. A request for proposals was issued for 30 of these units that will be delivered in 2014-15. The plans for this year will see 12 of these units located in the Beaufort-Delta district, four in the Sahtu district, five in the Nahendeh district, four in the South Slave district and five in the North Slave district.

Finally, based on previous years, we expect to spend about \$7.1 million to support about 325 eligible low and modest homeowners in 2014-15 with major and emergency repairs and preventative maintenance activities.

Mr. Speaker, the \$48 million that the NWT Housing Corporation will invest in 2014-15 not only supports the GNWT's overall mandate and priorities related to housing but it is also an important part of the economy. The NWT Housing Corporation counts on northern contractors and businesses to complete this work. The 2014-15 investment, when compared with planned capital spending of \$26 million in 2013-14, means there are considerable opportunities within the housing sector for northern businesses. The NWT Housing Corporation looks forward to continuing to work with our contractors to ensure the successful delivery of our plan.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring the quality of the NWT HC housing stock and supporting low and modest homeowners to complete repairs on their homes are a critical part of the 17th Legislature's vision and goals and I look forward to continuing to work with Members on these initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Her Excellency Marie-Anne Coninx, Ambassador of the European Union to Canada, and Ms. Terri-Ann S. Priel, Advisor, Political and Public Affairs, who have traveled here

from their embassy in Ottawa. Welcome to the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Members, I'd also like to draw your attention to the gallery to former Nunakput MLA Mr. Ernie Bernhardt. It's always good to see Ernie.

---Applause

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GENERATING LOCAL HYDRO POWER

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on this government's adventures in hydro power plant and transmission line building over the last 15 years, an unfortunate pattern is emerging. It starts with a modest community proposal to generate local hydro power. It could be Deline with their run-of-river proposal on the Bear River, Lutselk'e with their proposal for the Snowdrift, Whati on the La Martre River, or even Fort Smith's desire to make use of wasted power on the Taltson system.

These proposals were all able to show long-term savings for both the community and this government that spends many millions subsidizing the cost of producing power with diesel generators.

Rather than listening to what the community wants, our leaders instead dream up a glorious mega project. They look at their maps and dream of power lines criss-crossing the NWT. Perhaps they look at maps of the provinces and wish they could have a power grid just like them.

Rather than face realities, they come up with a low-ball price and then proceed to spend millions of dollars on studies. A few years later, they quietly announce that the project has been shelved because it costs too much.

In Deline, the run-of-river project was transformed into 100 megawatt power for the pipeline project which went nowhere. In Lutselk'e and Fort Smith, we have Taltson hydro for the diamond mines. After investing tens of millions, the project was cancelled.

Just recently, the government announced that the Whati transmission line, which started as a modest, small hydro proposal, is cancelled because after a decade of consideration they concluded it will cost \$20 million more than the original proposal. For the fourth time in Whati, we are back to square one.

Meanwhile, we have spent literally hundreds of millions of dollars subsidizing diesel power. Had we built these small hydro plants when the communities asked for them 10 or 15 years ago, we would be well on our way to having paid them off

and residents and businesses would be enjoying stable or reduced power costs.

Rather than learning from this experience, we just dream bigger. We are currently spending millions studying a transmission line from Yellowknife to Saskatchewan that is estimated at \$800 million, four times the cost of the Deh Cho Bridge.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT is a vast, sparsely populated territory. We need to be innovative. We need power solutions that are scaled to our communities and our geography.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: We need to be innovative and recognize our vast territory and we need power solutions that are scaled to our communities and our geography. Our communities should be adopting the cutting edge in efficient technology and renewable power production. Above all, though, both politicians and senior staff need to focus their thinking, get some hardhats, safety shoes and shovels and concentrate on building actual projects in our communities. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WEK'EEZHII LAND AND WATER BOARD

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 21st of this year, Premier McLeod announced the recipient of the 2014 Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award for the Northwest Territories as the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board.

The award recognizes outstanding achievement and innovative practice and leadership in the area of the water stewardship and is presented to organizations, partnerships, businesses, institutions and communities in each province and territory.

In a press release that day, Premier McLeod stated that the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board recognition "is an excellent example of how innovative, locally focused and action-oriented programs delivered through a regional board can educate communities in water conservation and water quality protection at the local level." High praise and well deserved, I say.

The Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board works with Tlicho communities to initiate training for chief and council members, employees, land officers and other community members, to meet the monitoring requirements of water licences for sewage discharge and solid waste facilities. The training, which includes sampling procedures and interpretation of results, has led to an increased understanding of water quality issues and other aspects of water management.

There's more than a hint of irony about this situation. While Premier McLeod sang the praises of a hardworking, successful regional land and water board, he was well aware that a mere two weeks later, on April 1st, the effect of the implementation of the federal Bill C-15 would mean the eradication of all regional land and water boards in the NWT. Replacing them would be one board, a super-board, a move condemned by First Nations across the territory, including the Tlicho, but tacitly supported by Premier and Cabinet.

The irony is this: On the one hand the GNWT has recognized and praised the excellent work of a regional board, all the while passively accepting its imminent demise.

If the Premier and Cabinet really believe the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board deserves the Council of the Federation award, why are they not fighting to keep the board up and running, to keep it alive so they can continue the excellent work they do at the regional level? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2014 CANADIAN DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. June 2nd to 8th is Disability Awareness Week in Canada. It continues the tradition of National Access Awareness Week, established in 1988, to promote better community access for people with disabilities.

The impetus behind these national campaigns was Rick Hanson's Man in Motion world tour. A Canadian icon, Rick Hanson dreamt of creating an accessible and inclusive world and finding a cure for spinal cord injury. For 26 months he wheeled over 40,000 kilometres through 34 countries. He averaged 30,000 strokes a day, through tough terrain, harsh weather, illness and injury. Through his breathtaking achievement, he defied dominant perceptions about disabled people.

The disabilities umbrella includes a diverse list of conditions: blindness, deafness, brain and spinal cord injuries, speech disorders, multiple sclerosis, schizophrenia, FASD and Autism Spectrum Disorder, and the list goes on.

Hundreds of my constituents are disabled in some way or another. At least four require intense, highly specialized care. As their MLA, I represent them to the best of my ability.

I am supporter of the NWT Disabilities Council that has been visibly preparing for this week's events, including Thursday's high tea with the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities and Saturday's Grand Prix event on School Draw Avenue, a full day of races and family fun.

This organization's mandate is to swing open the doors of access and promote full citizenship through equality, inclusion and participation. This organization performs a range of extremely valuable services, yet it's chronically underfunded. In fact, despite a widespread perception that the GNWT delivers effective public programs for disabled persons, that isn't the reality.

Comparatively little government spending is allocated for the needs of disabled persons. I believe it's time for a designated territorial facility for disabled persons. Ideally, such a facility would serve as a resource hub and provide state-of-the-art rehabilitation services. It would also be warm and inviting, a place that feels like a home.

I will have questions later for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR
SENIORS AND PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the heels of Mr. Nadli's speech about disabilities, I have to bring forward an issue that's in the community of Hay River. It has to do with the handi-van services that have been provided by the Hay River Council for People with Disabilities and the fact that the last few years they've been striving to get private funding to operate this service. This service is being used by seniors and people with disabilities to get around the community, to get to job interviews, to get groceries and to actually get to medical appointments. Because of the increased costs, the council has had difficulty and had to basically eliminate all the transportation that the handi-van currently is providing. They continue to provide some services to some of their members that are in schooling, but they've eliminated that to seniors and to people with disabilities.

It's a vital part of our community. It's a vital need that's in our community, and we've had lots of constituents that have come forward to us not only in Hay River but in other ridings such as Enterprise and K'atlodeeche that have used this service in the past to get around and to have for people that are seniors that need a facility or a vehicle that actually has wheelchair accessibility, that is easy to get into and use. We've also asked the Minister of Health for information on funding, and he has also indicated to us that it would be the municipality's issue. The difficulty is that this is an issue that has to do with specific individuals, seniors and people with disabilities. It's not public transportation. It's specific to a group of people that need it mainly because of their medical condition.

I will have questions for the Minister of Health and the GNWT, I guess. I am going to specify my questions to Health because I think that's where the dollars should be coming from, but it is GNWT-wide. There may be a couple of departments that have that issue, but I need the GNWT to get together and find a solution to assist and fund the handi-van services in Hay River.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CANADIAN TRAVELLERS' REPORT CARD

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday as we were recognizing our seniors, I was thinking, as our population ages and the number of travelling Canadians continues to increase, it is important that our government be attentive to travellers' rights, especially our seniors and elders who now enjoy more mobility options than ever.

As a government, we have many layers of legislation, regulation and policies that make our approach to dealing with travellers either rewarding or problematic. The purpose of my statement today is to be sensitive to the needs of our travelling seniors and reveal some inconsistent standards and how the GNWT is rated versus other Canadian jurisdictions. To assist me, I will be using the Canadian Traveller's Report Card, which is an evaluation tool published every two to three years by the Canadian Snowbird Association.

Admittedly, the NWT did rather well in this report card as we actually scored an over B rating, and I have to applaud we scored a best practice of an A-plus for their access to emergency health coverage when travelling. However, we failed in three other categories with a C rating.

One area was on the preservation of health coverage for frequent travellers, and the recommendation to correct this is to allow international travel for up to seven months or six months with unlimited short-term trips anywhere in the world while still maintaining health benefits.

Another low rating was under the access to prescription drugs for use during travel. With the GNWT only covering a three-month supply of medication, the recommendation is to cover the cost of a supply of prescription medication equal to the permitted absence from the territory.

Finally, the last of the low ratings was on the availability of government information. Apparently, the GNWT contains very limited health-related information or details for travellers on such issues as residency requirements and out-of-country reimbursement. The recommendation is to create a comprehensive brochure of medication or medical

information and prescription policy for such travellers.

Clearly, with some minor encouragement from the Department of Health and Social Services, our jurisdiction could join the likes of the Yukon who has the best grade in the country at A-minus. My challenge now is to the leadership of the Department of Health to assess the patchwork needed to address these simple policy fixes. We have the choice for clear and fair government policies so we can make travelling pleasant, safe and a rewarding experience for our seniors and our elders. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH COVERAGE FOR SNOWBIRDS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has been talking about attracting more people to live in the Northwest Territories and encouraging people who already live here to stay. I know that we are open to ideas to do this. I have a suggestion to offer. Let's be a little more flexible in providing health coverage to people who like to travel outside of the territory. In turn, that may keep them living in the Northwest Territories and not moving out to some other province that allows them to travel for a longer period of time during the year.

For those people who do long-term travelling in the winter, we call them snowbirds. It is also worth noting here that our snowbirds are people with the means to travel and who are usually healthy enough to travel. Right now we require our residents to remain in the Northwest Territories for at least six months of the year to maintain their health care coverage. I propose we change that requirement to allow snowbirds to travel for seven months of year, which would then require them to remain in the Northwest Territories for five months a year.

There are major advantages to doing this: maintaining our population, our federal transfer payments and the number of tax filers that we have. A less stringent residency requirement for health coverage will encourage seniors who might like a warmer climate to keep their residency in the Territories and travel in the winter. Some might even be discouraged from moving to Alberta, which presently requires you to remain in the province for six months of the year. So we would have an advantage over our southern neighbour in that regard.

Most importantly, on top of wanting people to move to the Territories, we want our visiting residents to stay. A one-month change in their residency requirement for health coverage is not going to cost us very much. It's probably far less than the

benefits that having them here brings to our territory.

This is not a radical idea. Ontario requires its residents to be in province for 153 days per year, which is basically five months. It is the same in British Columbia, who also has five months. That's two of the three most populous provinces in Canada. A resident of Newfoundland only has to be present for four months of the year to keep their health care coverage.

Let us follow the lead of these enlightened provinces. Let's be among the first. Let's do our homework and let's get this done during the life of this Assembly. Let's figure out how much it will cost us and what the benefits are of keeping these Northerners, who like to travel in the South, living in our territory. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN NAHENDEH

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be speaking about the highways in Nahendeh and I would also urge the Department of Transportation to bring their hardhats, shovels and safety shoes. There are three major arteries in Fort Simpson. My favourite, which is Highway No. 7, Highway No. 1 from Fort Simpson to Wrigley as well as Highway No. 1 from Fort Simpson towards Hay River, and there's access roads that go into Jean Marie and Nahanni Butte as well.

I'm pleased to see that there are investments in this infrastructure this coming year, but I do want to stress the importance of completion of the reconstruction, repairs and dust control plans for 2014.

I'm very pleased that Highway No. 7 did not have any serious issues this spring, but Highway No. 1 between Fort Simpson and Wrigley had severe problems. It was muddy and there was lots of rutting. So I'll be asking the Minister what the plans are to fix that portion of the highway this year.

Also, during my last visit of Jean Marie, they wanted to look at improving that access road. In fact, they want to upgrade it from an access road to an all-season road.

Overall, the residents in the communities want me to emphasize the importance of continued maintenance. We make our living using the highway system is what constituents tell me. So I'll be asking the Minister of Transportation questions at the appropriate time and get answers on the highway system repairs in Nahendeh. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SKILLS CANADA
TERRITORIAL COMPETITIONS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today students from across the Northwest Territories in grades 9 to 12 as well as post-secondary apprentices will be travelling to Toronto to compete in the Skills Canada National Competition from June 4th to the 7th where they will showcase their skills and challenge themselves and others to new heights of success.

Skills Canada NWT is a non-profit dedicated to promoting careers in skilled trades and technology to northern youth since 1999. This is done by organizing programs and events each year for youth and supporting schools for school programs throughout the NWT such as regional and territorial skills competitions. All participants who are travelling to the nationals have to in fact win a gold medal in their respective trade at both the regional and territorial level.

This program has many benefits, such benefits as more skilled northern workers, reducing the number of unemployed people throughout the Northwest Territories as well as instilling confidence in our youth, resulting in youth making more positive choices and better life decisions. There are also benefits of fewer crimes and misdemeanors because these youth are doing what they love, they're doing what they like and something that they enjoy and are good at. More importantly, these youth become role models for their peers and they also become role models for the next generation.

I know that this government does a great deal in supporting this program and the GNWT does give a very healthy contribution to this program, but I think this government can do a little bit more in the sense of just taking it to the next step. Look outside the box, think outside the box and look at how we can start supporting all these gold medal winners in the Northwest Territories that are going to nationals, looking at what their skills and trades are, investing in them, supporting them so that they can become our future workforce in the NWT. That way we don't have to rely on bringing southern workers up into the NWT as well as we might be able to meet our socio-economic agreements of a northern workforce and also assist our NWT industries to find well-trained, well-prepared young people who can help business grow and help our economy grow.

At this time I would just like to thank all those who are participating and thank all those who are supporting the NWT skills trade participants and Team NWT going to the nationals. I wish them the best of luck, and hopefully you can bring a couple of gold medals back from the nationals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONSTRUCTION OF
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, along with my honourable colleague Mr. Menicoche, mentioned to the Department of Transportation and I also want to ask the Minister, once you've finished your discussions in Nahendeh, if they could bring their plans and their hardhats and their monies up to the Sahtu. Oh yes, we still need to build a highway in the Sahtu, so we would like to join that discussion one day down the road.

The first highway in the North was built in 1943-44 from Norman Wells to the Yukon border, famously known as the Canol Road. It was built by 30,000 men and women in 13 months. Although with it, they built a pipeline and a telephone line, and they were guided by the Aboriginal people.

It was built because the U.S. government said we're going to build this road, you're either with us or not. It has to be built for national security. They needed the Sahtu oil for a greater cause.

Only after 20 years did we see the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Alberta up north in the '50s, '70s and '80s. Even in 2010 we saw construction of the highway in the Northwest Territories, and now we're waiting for ours in the Sahtu region.

In the '70s the model Hire North was used to construct the highway. It went as far as Wrigley. Today we're seeing the extension of the Dempster Highway, known as the Inuvik-Tuk highway. From what we saw, it's a great success for the people in that area.

We are waiting now to see the beginning of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley north. Let me explain in three points why we need to keep this portion of this lifelong dream of Diefenbaker's Roads to Resources alive and become a reality.

1. The training opportunities. We have a high rate of graduates in the Sahtu who are ready to work. We have a high rate of youth in our region that are ready to work. Our needs assessment research shows that we have a high number – close to 300 people – willing to work together, ready to work.
2. Employment versus unemployment.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. YAKELEYA: In our region, Norman Wells has the highest rate of employment and the lowest rate of unemployment because they're working. We

have a high rate in the other communities of unemployment. Income assistance is showing that we're spending millions of dollars to support people in subsidy programs. Businesses are ready. We have now 28 Aboriginal businesses compared to 60 in 2006.

Building infrastructure in the Northwest Territories is key. We have unprecedented industrial interest in the Sahtu region. As Mr. Ramsay said, two to three billion barrels of oil is ready to be taken out. Communities want to build. They're looking for partnerships. The high cost of living – just take a look at our airline tickets to bring a family of five out of Tulita, Good Hope or Deline to Yellowknife. We want to build our region. We want to be in the driver's seat. Truly, the Road to Resources is obtainable. Let's stop talking and start walking, I mean building.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about tourism in the Northwest Territories. More so, let's talk about how the tourists travel to our smaller communities in the North.

Year round we have people from the South and all over the world attracted to the Northwest Territories, to the Mackenzie Delta and to the Beaufort communities. Some fly into Inuvik, but the majority of them drive the ever popular Dempster Highway. Yes, let's talk about the Dempster Highway and the need for more funding to make this a safer highway.

I'd like the Minister to address why the lack of funding. Where did the funding go to finish off the widening that was promised? The widening project has obviously made a big change in how we see the Dempster. For one, it's a lot safer. Wider roads mean easier to drive and allows for safe passing of oncoming traffic. You know the amount of vehicles that come up the highway hauling food, dry goods, freight, fuel, propane and now LNG, and the list goes on. We need to maintain this highway to ensure zero accidents.

Another thing, this is seasonal work of which our local people rely on to earn extra money to sustain living in our communities. My constituency is expecting work to continue this summer. Let's make this work happen for them. Let's reassure them that construction on the Dempster will continue. I ask the Minister again to take another look at the widening portion of the Dempster Highway and re-implement this back into this year's plans.

Another thing is resurfacing. Our highway needs to be resurfaced from Fort McPherson to kilometre

173. Again, in order to reassure a safer highway, we need safer driving conditions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TOP EMPLOYER DESIGNATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What would this session be without a little bit of discussion on the topic of jobs? Jobs matter. It doesn't matter where you're from. If you live in Tulita, Aklavik, Ulukhaktok or even Yellowknife, jobs matter. Jobs are what help people get along. We need jobs to pay our rent, to take care of our kids, to put food on our table. Jobs matter to everyone. Recently something drew my attention to this problem and I'm trying to figure out what we are doing about this. Well, recently the government was touting, once again, that it has been nominated and found as one of Canada's top employers. It was a top employer in 2013 and yet again now it claims another title of being a top employer for young people and a diverse employer. But we'll get to the details of that challenge here in a minute.

The GNWT is a good employer and I think on many occasions it needs to be recognized for its hard work, but are we focusing our administration on the award and getting nominated or are we focusing on the true problems of unemployment rates that are the highest in the land? In small communities, when you have 70 percent unemployment, what are we doing about these things?

Look across the land and you hear nobody saying, "Oh boy, the cost of living, if it would only go up, we're getting by so easy." I haven't heard that at all. Quite the contrary. I hear about the cost of living as a significant problem whether you live in Aklavik, Tulita, or you live anywhere. It is a problem.

I hear from my colleagues about job opportunities and how few they are, while we're worried about nominating ourselves about what a great job we're doing. Are we actually getting the job done? I'm constantly getting calls at my office from summer students still scrambling and looking for any opportunity of experience, let alone just paid.

So, back to the top employer issue. Does it seem realistic that the GNWT would pay \$795 to self-nominate itself to a specialized marketing company in order to get an award that we don't really know what it's about? I called this company and they wouldn't tell me anything. I asked them how do you apply and they said, well, you pay almost \$800 to get on their list and they evaluate. I asked them, what do you evaluate it against? They said, well, go to our website and that will tell you who applies because they're the winners.

It's kind of a clandestine sort of approach on meeting the bottom line. We must focus our efforts

on what's important: getting jobs into small communities, getting jobs for Northerners. I think it's now time to return to the discussion about those 1,050 unfilled jobs with that job snapshot. Let's talk about those 571 jobs that this government is supposed to be pursuing and let's see what else we can do for those summer students that so desperately need the money and the opportunity. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Bisaro.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple of Pages from Frame Lake who have been working here last week and this week. I believe they're both in the House today. Gabriel Layden and Isaac Macpherson. I would like to thank them for their service and thank all Pages for their service for the last couple weeks. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Weledeh constituent Ernie Bernhardt. I'm assuming he's still up there. Great to see him in the House today. Mahsi.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to once again recognize Hannah Allan. She's a Page here from Yellowknife Centre. She's just over there on the side. I recognized her last week, but I believe she was on duty somewhere else. I'd like her to take a moment so she can stand up and be recognized and thank her for her duties here. Also, I may remind her, many Pages have become MLAs and even Clerks in this Assembly, so you never know where you can end up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'd like to welcome Mr. Ernie Bernhardt back into the House today. I said earlier, it's always good to see you in the House, Ernie. I'd like to welcome Calysta Lucas-Kudlak from Sachs Harbour and Ms. Cheyenne Gully, also from Sachs, paging for us here today from my riding in Nunakput.

I'd like to welcome our guests here that just walked in. Thanks for taking an interest in our proceedings here today. Thank you and welcome to the Assembly.

The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife South, Lona Hegeman. With her is Dr. Neal Hegeman and his wife, Sandy, and daughters

Melinda and Katrina. Welcome to our Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 343-17(5): NEW ENERGY INITIATIVES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions for the Premier under the portfolio of responsibility for new energy initiatives, energy initiatives that we know are a core opportunity to address cost of living issues for residents and businesses in the NWT. As the Minister for new energy initiatives, I asked the Premier why this government's tendency to not build modest hydro plants while pursuing dreams of mega projects that are never realized is ongoing. Is it poor planning or is this a result of an overly ambitious vision at the leadership level? What is going on here? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government, in both the 16th and 17th Legislative Assemblies we have reduced our reliance on fossil fuels. We've been spending money on alternative and renewable forms of energy. For the 17th Assembly, we have an Energy Plan where we're spending approximately \$10 million a year over three years to move into the areas of biomass, LNG and other forms of renewable alternative energies.

As far as spending money on projects that are large and costly, when we have our helmets on and our boots to the ground, we determined that they're no longer feasible. We are not in the business of entering into projects that are not feasible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: My conclusion is that it is actually a result of both poor planning and an overly ambitious vision.

With all these feasibility studies, many of which indicate things are economic to do, will the Premier work with other responsible Ministers to redirect GNWT's new energy initiatives to realistic hydro developments that could actually produce a facility on the ground in the next five years? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We do work with all Members in this Assembly. We brief them on all of the different energy plans. We take all of their input and come up with a plan that's acceptable to all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: I am looking for evidence of that. This inability to actually get projects done on the energy front may also be a result of the fracturing of

the energy portfolio between at least six government departments.

Has the Premier explored the possibility of combining these functions into an office of energy that would allow for better coordination of energy initiatives and provide a direct line of responsibility to a single Minister? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I think the Member should look around. We've done Bluefish, we've done biomass, we've done LNG, we've done solar and there's a whole host of other alternative and renewable energies that are on the books. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear an answer, not unusual for this Premier. Given that many departments have new roles and responsibilities under devolution and given the fundamental roles that energy plays in all aspects of life in the NWT and given the commitment and focus in the NWT Energy Strategy on renewable energy, would the Premier commit to reporting back on the possibility of a new office of energy outside of departments with a mandate to actually build, not just study, an environmentally sustainable, affordable and efficient renewable energy system for all sectors of NWT society? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I am sure the Member would be pleased to hear that that work is well underway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 344-17(5): DISTRACTED DRIVING PROGRAMS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We in the NWT suffer from many forms of addiction. Some of these addictions are to drugs and some are alcohol related. Both are bad, both destroy lives and both can be treated. However, we in the NWT also suffer from a severity of another modern day addiction and it's getting worse, not better, and we're ignoring all the warning signs. Of course, I'm referencing our addiction to connectivity while driving a motor vehicle.

Just this morning on my way to work, just in a couple of blocks I counted nine motorists on their cell phone while driving. My questions today are for the Minister of Transportation.

Our distracted driving law came into effect on January 1, 2012, and on October 22nd of that year, I asked then Minister of Transportation how many convictions, tickets and warnings have been issued in the NWT since inception. So I will ask the same question to the Minister here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2012 we had 177 convictions; in 2013, 223 convictions; and to the end of March 2014 we've had 54 convictions. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you to the Minister. Thank God for Twitter for the advanced notice. Clearly, the issue of distracted driving is not getting any better, not only here in the NWT but everywhere. Just last month I saw a billboard in Edmonton saying "Crotches Kill." I was a bit taken aback by the aggressive tone, but you didn't need to stray far as many drivers really do have a fetish of looking at their underwear while driving. Don't worry, Mr. Speaker, we in the NWT have the same addicted fetish. So I know DOT has awareness campaigns like Leave the Phone Alone and Drive Alive!

Can the Minister honestly stand before this House and say these programs are having a meaningful impact here in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: That type of campaign seems to have limited impact on an individual deciding to continue driving while distracted. One of the steps we are taking immediately is to increase the fines for individuals who are found to be distracted driving. This is perhaps not enough of a fine, but the fines have gone up from \$115 to \$280 if you're caught driving while you're on your phone or texting. So that is one step and we'll see how that works. Probably we'd have to do something more severe to start to bend the curve downward. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: I will probably get some clarifications on the changes in fines, which leads to my next question. I took the liberty to compare our fine and demerit program for distracted driving and put them against the rest of the country. While the NWT residents normally suffer from a high cost of living, clearly our fines make us the cheapest place to get caught in the country.

Can the Minister explain why our fines, from what I know today, are published at \$115? Why are they so low? More importantly, what is he doing to address our inability to deter motorists? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Member is correct; our fines are very low. So this is the reason we are increasing them, more than doubling them from what we have of \$115 to \$280. Also, in addition to that, we are going to step up the advertising and campaign of making people aware of how dangerous it is to do distracted driving. We know figures show in reality, distracted driving is more dangerous than impaired driving. We are going to have to be as severe with distracted driving as we are with impaired driving. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm strongly encouraged from what I am hearing from the Minister, and I appreciate the thoroughness of his reply. Back in October 2012, I suggested an amendment to the act of the removal and confiscation of the illegal and dangerous use of a mobile tool while driving. The then-Minister said the department would consider the idea. I've heard nothing since.

Because I believe we have to get tough on treatment like any other addiction, can the Minister convince this House he has a handle on this issue and will give it his full attention for the remaining life of the 17th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I do believe that the department does have a handle on the issue. It is a relatively new thing, as I indicated, about three and a half years we have been charging people for distracted driving. I think over time it would become very apparent. It would probably be viewed as poorly as people view impaired driving within a very short period of time. Like I said, it's probably more dangerous than that. So we're very serious, the department, about doing something about it.

I see distracted driving all the time too. In fact, I just watched almost an accident two days ago as an individual was waiting at a stop sign. We both watched a young lady drive through a red light on the phone, and we both looked at each other and went like this. I mean, it's dangerous for everyone, so we're serious about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 345-17(5):
HIGHWAY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE
IN NAHENDEH

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that some Members here are talking about our highways and highway system.

I just wanted to ask the Minister of Transportation with reference to my Member's statement. I know that for the 2014 construction year, we had many plans and investment for Highway No. 7, Highway No. 1 north of Fort Simpson towards Wrigley and, of course, from Fort Simpson towards Hay River.

I'd like to ask him about those plans. Are they on track and what's the DOT's strategy for completing all the projects this year? Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are three main pieces of work happening in the area that the Member speaks of. On Highway No. 7 we are resurfacing and putting new chipseal

down from zero to kilometre 20, and the Member knows exactly where that is. Also, on Highway No. 1, we are going to apply new chipseal. I believe there was some chipseal down. We're going to apply new chipseal from kilometre 395 to 411. Also, again on Highway No. 1 just as it flows into the Member's riding, from kilometre 188 to kilometre 206 we're going to resurface and put on new chipseal. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank the Minister for confirming those projects. The one that was most concerning this spring was Highway No. 1 that goes from Fort Simpson and Wrigley. That collapsed in some places; there were ruts; there was lots of mud. I think there were some plans to do some reconstruction work on that Wrigley road section.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he could confirm some of those plans. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Member, I don't know where each of the kilometres start and end. I do believe that the highway that the Member refers to, I think, is from 395 to 411, and that's the part of the road where we are applying new chipseal. But I cannot confirm that in the House today, if that was the exact section that the Member is referring to, but I would be glad to get that information immediately and get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: That section the Minister quoted – 395 to 411 – is actually towards the Hay River section. I was looking for the work that's being done from Fort Simpson towards Wrigley. I think it might be kilometre 420 and even greater. So there was some work being done on the schedule for this year, but I'm asking the Minister to... Let's complete that work and it looks like there's more work to be done, by all the phone calls I've been receiving from Wrigley residents.

Will the Minister look into it and also confirm the plans to work towards Wrigley? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, certainly I will look into that. I will talk to the department, and the department, in turn, will contact the regional office out of Simpson and confirm any issues with the road. If there are serious issues with that road, then we'll repair it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I also spoke about the Jean Marie access road. There's the Dehcho First Nations Annual Assembly there next month.

I'd like to know what plans are to maintain that road for all the travelling public and the increased

number of visitors that Jean Marie will receive. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, earlier we had provided some funding to the group in order to make sure that that access road into Jean Marie is ready before the Dehcho Assembly. I'll touch base, again, with the region, to the department, to ensure that was enough money to ensure that road was ready for people to drive in there for the Dehcho Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 346-17(5):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Ministers had some meetings with the Tulita leadership, and one specific topic that they were consistently on with the Ministers was the extension of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley into the Sahtu region.

I want to ask the Minister, in regards to discussions with the Tulita leadership and this government here and the Sahtu region, could the Minister update us on the progress to build an all-season highway from Wrigley into the Sahtu?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time what we have completed is a proposal. We recognize that this is something that's been in the works for many, many years. This year, prior to March 31st, we as a government, with the Premier and Minister responsible for infrastructure, Minister McLeod, were able to put together an initial proposal that we forwarded to the federal government. We have received a response. The federal government is looking for some more detail, some more technical detail, maybe closer, better estimates on what the actual costs could be. So we've received that letter and we are now working on preparing a response to that.

We are also in the process of completing an environmental assessment on the road between Wrigley and Norman Wells. The initial environmental assessment took it all the way to the Dempster, but now we're focused in on the road from Wrigley to Norman Wells. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the update from the Minister. My constituents have duly noted the importance of the Mackenzie Valley Highway coming into the Sahtu. They want to know what's been done. They've been having their meetings and have been making suggestions to the Minister. They want to know what's been done to keep the momentum going with the Mackenzie Valley Highway so that they can start the construction on this road.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, to date, the GNWT has spent \$128 million on that section of road; we're referring to a road up the Mackenzie Valley. Slowly we've continued to work on that. We've put quite a few of the bridges in. We're continuing to put bridges in which not only will work well for the future all-season road but also works well for extending the length in which the winter road will remain open. Plus, like I indicated, a proposal to the federal government on the national infrastructure program.

With that, we will be providing some information to the federal government, but for the most part, we're waiting for their blessing in order to proceed any further. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the leadership and the people in the Sahtu sort of have an idea as to the progress to get full support to move in major steps on the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I want to ask the Minister if he's committed to working with the Sahtu leadership in regard to seeking funding from other partnerships in place to start building the important highway as soon as possible. I know they talked about some of the work that could happen, so the leadership is looking for this government and this Minister to look at some possibilities that could be there that without even further investigating, so we need to look into that.

Can the Minister commit to looking into further areas that we can start to do some work in that area?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: During our meeting with the leadership when we were meeting on the Mackenzie Valley road, the leadership had indicated to us that they were going to provide a proposal to us, a proposal that will be presented to the federal government and other departments in the federal government so that they can provide some funding through various avenues. One of the things that the leadership was very focused on was to try to access some quarries and that they wanted to build some of the road using some access money from the federal government and some money from the various other agencies and departments in order to begin and ensure that some of the contractors continue working.

One of the things they really wanted to do was something similar to what happened with the Inuvik-Tuk highway, was to try to get an access road to a gravel source near Norman Wells and one near Tulita. We talked about that with them.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the leadership certainly, again, wanted to show its appreciation to Premier McLeod and the Cabinet Ministers for making themselves available to talk about some of these important issues.

The Inuvik region companies have a big role in the design and the construction of the Inuvik-Tuk highway and local residents and businesses are benefiting a lot from the construction.

Does the Minister support a similar approach for the Mackenzie Valley Highway to make sure that local companies and residents benefit from the future construction of this Mackenzie Valley Highway?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Inuvik-Tuk highway is a design build highway. We are heavily involved in working with the joint venture up there, the EGT Northwind and in the construction of that highway. We think it's a good approach. It's a good approach for the Inuvik-Tuk highway. We would look at all of our procurement avenues when we build any major infrastructure like this.

At this time it would be unwise, I think, to say that we would go and negotiate a contract on that section of highway. We recognize that that highway will be running through two different regions. About 100 kilometres will be through the Deh Cho and about 233 kilometres will be running through the Sahtu. At this point, our priority is focused in on getting financing together and working with the federal government to pull the finances together, and the procurement of that will occur once the money is in place.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 347-17(5):
RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR
NWT HEALTH COVERAGE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I'd like to ask him, has the Department of Health and Social Services ever done a cost-benefit analysis on changing the residency requirement for health care coverage from six month resident per year to five months?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I've become the Minister of Health and Social Services, I've actually had a number of constituents and other residents raise this particular issue with me, and I've already directed the department to begin the analysis. First, what are other jurisdictions doing, how many have moved from the 183 days to 153 days. But more importantly than just the number, how many of those are for out of province and how many of those for out of country. I've also asked the department to do a cost analysis on what this could bring or limit the Northwest Territories.

Given that we have a different way of collecting money in the Northwest Territories – TFF compared to how provinces raise their funds – we need to

verify that a change of residency won't affect the TFF. I've directed the department to do the work, and once that analysis is done, I'm happy to bring it forward for discussion with Cabinet and committee.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Does the Minister know how long it's going to take his department to do this homework and come up with a potential proposal to this change of this residency policy?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The staff that we have doing this is the same staff that are doing things like the medical travel review and a number of other things, so it's a little down the list. They've started doing the work, but my direction to them was to complete the review, package it up so that I can explain it, and it can be explained to everybody within this fiscal year.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Could the Minister also please outline for us what exactly would be required for the government to implement a change in residency requirement for health care coverage? Would it require a legislative change or regulatory change? What would be required to make this change?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It would actually take a change to policy, we believe, at this time, but as I indicated, we need to make sure that any changes to policy or residency won't affect the TFF and ultimately affect the finances that come to the Territories as a whole. From the perspective of Health and Social Services, it's a policy change, but I'll be able to confirm if it will affect anything else as we conduct a review and come back to committee and Cabinet.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he's contemplated how he might collect information, how he might survey people who would be in this category of wanting to spend time outside of the territory, whether it be in Canada somewhere else or in another country.

How would he be surveying, I guess, to quantify the number of people that such a policy might affect? He doesn't need to send a survey to my house because I never go anywhere.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That's actually incredibly difficult because they don't have to self-identify that they're travelling, but under the existing policy they don't have to notify us anyway, and I don't believe that would change. We don't necessarily need to know the numbers. We just need to know that they are residents of the Territories for the allocated period of time. Our colleague Mr. Dolynny mentioned a report card that was recently conducted on snowbirds and travelling south. We have copies of that report and we're using that information to help us do our research,

as well, and we will incorporate the areas that were identified in that for improvement where we scored a C, which is a pass, not a fail, but we certainly can do better in that area. We're incorporating best practices. We're incorporating reports. We're incorporating information and we will come back to committee and Cabinet for further discussion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 348-17(5):
FEDERAL FUNDING FOR
DEMPSTER HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recall at the end of our last session, the federal government just approved the Building Canada Plan of which in our plans \$40 million was set aside for work on the Dempster Highway at \$4 million a year.

I'd like to ask the Minister, when will those funds roll out and begin on projects like the Dempster Highway widening project?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funds were approved and we had presented a plan to the federal government and the plan was approved, but the money for the plan and how the money is going to roll out from the federal government has yet to be determined. Unfortunately, we are still in the process of negotiating when and how the money will flow. We don't want to spend the money up front if that's not the way the federal government is hoping to advance the money to us, so we're going to talk to them and then determine exactly what is acceptable and when the money starts to flow, and then hopefully there might be something later this summer or maybe even earlier this summer, but at this time we haven't gotten that final piece of how the money will flow through as yet. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you. I'd like to ask the Minister, is his department ready with their plans to follow through with the work on the Dempster Highway Project? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. Yes, we are. It's essentially the same plan that we've been running for seven years. It is a plan that's worth \$4 million a year for the last seven years that has been spent and we thought that it would just roll into this new Corridors for Canada III. However, there seems to be a one-year gap in between. We were hoping that didn't exist, but yes, we will be continuing to widen the road moving forward with money that comes from the federal government. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you. Will the Minister expedite the Dempster widening project so that the work will happen this summer? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The department will do all it can to talk to the federal government, to meet with the federal government, have discussions, try to get the agreement signed off as quickly as possible so that there is no disruption in the work that ended last summer and that we're hoping to roll into this year. We're doing all we can, and unfortunately, I cannot stand up here and make a commitment for the federal government as to when they will release the money. But we're doing all we can to try to get that done as quickly as possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also mentioned resurfacing. I'd like to ask the Minister, why was there no funds in the operation and maintenance to resurface the Dempster Highway from Fort McPherson to Wrangling River at kilometre 173? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The resurfacing of that highway is, unfortunately, not in the information I have here, but my understanding was that we were continuing the work, other than all other work that needed to be done other than this widening of the highway, using that money from Corridors for Canada. I will check to see what is happening between Tsiigehtchic and Wrangling River and I'll let the Member know. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 349-17(5):
SKILLS CANADA NWT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to follow up from my Member's statement today with questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in regards to this very successful program that's run through the NWT Skills Canada division here.

I just want to ask the Minister, does the department, working in conjunction with NWT Skills Canada, have some type of database on the successes or successful candidates or participants that obtain a job in the trade or skill that they practice and won a gold medal for, successfully obtained a job with the GNWT or industry? Do the Minister and his department have some type of database for that currently? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Through the Skills Canada office, they're supported by federal and also our territorial government through the ECE department and industry through program and event sponsors. So this is a very successful initiative pertaining to access trades

programming throughout the Northwest Territories, nationally and also international stages. So we are working closely with Skills Canada to obtain the data that they would have on those individuals that are entering the trades programming. We have our own information as well. We sponsor those individuals through labour market agreements. So we try and keep data on those individuals, but we exchange with the Skills Canada organization. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. I think this is an opportunity right now for government to maybe step up and take it to the next level in terms of looking at how we can think outside the box and look at all our successful candidates that have won gold medals at the territorial level and who are currently going to be representing Team NWT at the national competition here.

Would the Minister implement some type of mentorship supporting program for all of our gold medal winners or all our participants who are currently at the national level, whether they're in Grade 9 or Grade 12, and start supporting them through the years so that at the end of their high school that they might be able to take on a career within the industry or within the GNWT or within the communities back home? Would the Minister look at creating some type of follow-up mentorship program so that we can support these successful, skilled individuals? Youth actually? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. First I'd just like to congratulate those individuals in the past that have obtained gold medal level, a silver medal and also bronze at the national or international level and for the Northwest Territories as well. So we have to congratulate those individuals for their hard work and continue to support them. This is an area that, federally, Canada's Job Grant is coming and Labour Market Agreement and Labour Market Development Agreement, there are changes coming. What the Member is referring to, if we can integrate that into our discussions with the federal, how we can achieve those goals, sponsoring those individuals at the gold level. So, this is an area that we need to discuss with Skills Canada and other partners out there. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. I know the Minister mentioned the Canada Job Grant. I think that's a great opportunity, a great program and as long as we can start getting by and promoting that program, but we do have some youth that are down there in Grade 9, Grade 10 and this is a great opportunity for government to step up now and say, in two or three years you're going to be either going to post-secondary or even getting some type of career, as a government we're willing to help you, support you, because sometimes some of these individuals might not have high math skills, high chemistry skills, but the trade and the skill that they're in right

now, they're succeeding in that. As a government we need to enhance that, encourage that and continue to motivate them to make the skills. So that's where I'm coming from in terms of recognizing these gold medal winners.

I guess the next question is that if the government isn't going to be stepping up, would the government start making agreements, whether its socio-economic agreements or working with the mines, other industry, to help support them to recognize our gold medal winners, our Team NWT that's at the nationals right now to take on this type of program and support them for the remainder of their high school years? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. I agree with the Member that these individuals should be recognized and supported, and that's what we're doing through our apprenticeship occupation certification. We've committed \$70,000 to support Skills Canada per year. Also, in 2013-14 we provided \$140,000 for Skills Canada. We'll continue to provide those types of sponsorships for these individuals to succeed beyond just the trades access. Someday we want them to be a journeyman ticket holder so they can come back to our Northwest Territories and contribute to our society. So, yes, those are areas that we need to discuss with the new initiative that's coming down from the feds, and the industry has been in discussion as well. So once that information is available, I will be sharing it with the standing committee. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the last question, we've got a lot of these youth that have the summers off and they might be looking for summer jobs.

Would the Minister possibly work with our Minister of Human Resources to look at developing some type of summer employment program, especially for the gold medal winners, so we can promote them, get them right into the working system and possibly create some type of program? Is he willing to work with the Minister of Human Resources to develop some type of program where our Team NWT national winners would be able to possibly be a priority to get some of these jobs in the summer so they can start practising that skill, that trade that they've excelled at? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I will commit to working with the Department of Human Resources to establish that. Not only there, but there's also the Housing Corporation when it comes to plumbing and different trade areas and industry as well. So we do have connections within our department and other departments as well. We need to develop a plan of action towards this so we can focus on those individuals who are in the gold, silver and

bronze areas, so they can hopefully achieve their dream as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 350-17(5):
HANDI-VAN SERVICE IN HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement, a vital service in Hay River, which is the handi-van, that deals with seniors and people with disabilities to get around the community to attend medical appointments and stuff like that, has not been receiving any government funding and has seen cost increases and has pressures there. So my questions are for the Minister of Health today.

Is there any funding available to assist these people, seniors with disabilities, to get to their medical appointments and go throughout the community of Hay River?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that handi-vans provide an essential service for persons with disabilities; however, the provision for transportation services for people with disabilities is beyond the core mandate of the Department of Health and Social Services. I have had an opportunity to share the concerns that have been raised by the Member and the public with the Minister of MACA, and at present there is no GNWT funding available to municipalities for transportation services. The funding that they do receive from Municipal and Community Affairs is for water and sewer, operations and maintenance, and maintenance of infrastructure.

The community government could, obviously, choose to use some of these dollars from their gas tax or community public infrastructure to purchase a van, but that obviously wouldn't help them to operate the van. However, O and M funding from the community government could be used for this purpose, if the community government chose to.

I strongly encourage advocates of persons with disabilities to continue to work with your community governments to take full advantage of the available funding for those purposes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: The difficulty with that solution is we are downloading the information to a municipality where some of these services aren't just a municipal issue. We are dealing with people from Katlodeeche that use the service as well as the fact that this is not public transportation. This is transportation for a specialized group that need wheelchair access, that need low ramp access. So

we're not talking about public transportation, as the Minister indicates from MACA.

Is there a way that we can have all these departments, whether it's the department for seniors, people with disabilities and MACA, to get together and find a funding solution for this handi-van?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Northwest Territories isn't unique to this particular challenge. Throughout Canada, many municipalities do fundraising and other initiatives to raise money to support things like handi-vans. This is a community issue. This is a community transportation issue. It happens to be citizens and residents who happen to have some challenges with existing infrastructure, like normal cabs and normal vans, but it is still a community issue and I would encourage all the communities that are affected by the downgrading of services, like the handi-van in Hay River, to work together to see if they can come to a solution or conclusion with respect to the provision of transportation services for their residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: I don't quite understand the fact that the Minister of Health believes the transportation to health facilities and the need to get those people who need special transportation is not a department issue. I don't understand the fact that this is being downloaded from private organizations to communities to find the funding.

Is this not the responsibility of the GNWT to deal with its public issues to people's public access to medical services?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Nothing is being downloaded, because nothing has changed. The fact is, the communities have had this responsibility and they have actively pursued it in different communities. There is fundraising that can be done. Communities have always taken this action. It's not being downloaded, because it has always been the responsibility of the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: So, Mr. Speaker, I guess the problem with the handi-van in Hay River is the fact that we found an initiative. We actually got some sponsors for the purchase of the vehicle and we got some private funding to start with. We should have first come to the government and begged and pleaded and nailed them to the cross here in this House to get the money. Now that the shortfall is coming, the government still wants to deny their responsibility here. Downloading, yeah, there's no downloading because you aren't providing any funding.

I am asking the Minister to commit to looking at all the different departments that are associated with

this type of transportation to find a solution for the handi-van.

Is there any way the Minister can... I don't know which Minister to ask next because every Minister says it's somebody else's responsibility. Is there a way the Minister can look to get the solution done?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, across this country, communities are responsible for the provision of ambulance service as well as mobility services. This is something that is consistent in Canada, it's something that has been consistent in the Northwest Territories. All of the communities in the Northwest Territories that want to provide those services step up and meet those needs of the residents of the communities. It isn't being downloaded because it isn't in the mandate of the Department of Health and Social Services. As I've indicated, I've had conversations with MACA. There is money being flowed to communities that they can choose for this exact purpose if they would like to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 351-17(5):

GIANT MINE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, who is also responsible for the Giant Mine Remediation Project. I would like to follow up on some of the questions that were asked by my colleague Mr. Bromley the other day about the environmental assessment agreement for the Giant project.

In the fall of 2013, there were some excellent hearings held by the Mackenzie Land and Water Board. They produced a very well thought out decision and a whole bunch of recommendations. There was a really good response from the responsible Ministers in response to the recommendations, but that agreement is not yet signed and it has been some six months since the decision came out. In response to Mr. Bromley, Minister Miltenberger stated, "We, along with the rest of the responsible Ministers, are waiting for the lead responsible Minister from AANDC to publicly announce the agreement and the agreed upon recommendations and modifications."

So my first question to the Minister is that this decision has been unduly delayed, and I appreciate that the Minister is waiting for the AANDC Minister to do something, but he has a responsibility, in my mind, to NWT residents. I would like to know if he is prepared to talk to the AANDC Minister and push him to make a decision in the near future. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to strongly encourage the Minister and his staff to give us the indication that we need, sign it off so we can get down to business. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: If the Minister is going to continue to encourage, I must ask him, what has he done in the past six months in terms of encouraging the AANDC Minister? Can he give me some details, please?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We've been working through the process and making sure everything is done. We've been working with the staff to encourage them to do that and we will continue to do that and move it up to the ministerial level. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: That doesn't give me very much comfort. I know you're working with staff, you're doing this, doing that, but what does "encouraging" mean?

Can the Minister give me more detail? When he talks to the AANDC Minister, just what does he do to encourage the Minister to make a decision? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: It's a federal site. The federal government moves at its own pace and we've seen that across the board. In this case, they have yet to respond, and we will do what we can to encourage them to carry out and conclude a response on this issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. The Minister is much closer to the Minister of AANDC than the other Members here in the House and the general public, so I'd like to know if the Minister can tell me when he might expect a decision. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, there are projected timelines, as the Member pointed out. Depending on when you start counting the five months, it could be this month, it could be in another couple months. We're going to encourage them to get the response out sooner rather than later. That's all I can tell the Member at this point. The federal Minister marches to his own drum. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 352-17(5):
ACTION PLAN FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently, in April, there was a day designated as Autism Awareness Day. I do know of parents who are caring for their autistic children and they're burdened with the cost of bringing, sometimes, their autistic children down south just to get that specialized care.

In the hospitals, too, we have a few patients who live there in the extended care unit. Sometimes, of course, there's separation from family, and sometimes we have disabled persons who have to be removed from their family and communities.

Being disabled, there are challenges in terms of transportation. We just heard about it, accessibility, plus access in terms of big, large buildings such as this.

My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Since 2008, what enhancements have been made to the department's Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The action plan that the Member is referring was put in place in 2007. It was done in partnership with a number of different organizations, including the NWT Disabilities Council.

We recently had some discussion with the NWT Disabilities Council about helping us to provide an update on that plan. I'm happy to provide the Member and committee with a written update of all the actions in the action plan to date and how we're going to move forward with the council to do an update. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Thank you. The five key areas of the action plan include employment, education, income, disability supports and housing. One of the problems that government seems to have once in a while is working in silos. We have, perhaps, one division in a department working in isolation from another division. An example right now is Health and Social Services. The Minister is stating the responsibility for public transportation for disabled persons is a responsibility of communities, basically MACA.

In these key areas, what interdepartmental activities are being undertaken to advance the quality of life for disabled persons? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, within the action plan, a number of the activities actually require departments to work together: Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; but not just the government

departments but organizations that are providing services to residents, like the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities and organizations like the Yellowknife Association for Community Living. Within the action plan, it identifies clearly who's working on what initiatives, and I'd be happy to provide Members an update of where we are on that action plan today, a status report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Right now there has been discussion in terms of the Stanton Hospital updates. Within the hospital, we have an extended care unit, and unfortunately, there are some persons who live there because there is no other facility to house them.

I believe it's time for a designated territorial facility that provides professional, state-of-the-art rehabilitation services for disabled persons in a warm and homelike environment.

Will the Minister commit to examining the feasibility of such a facility? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, a number of times in the House I've made reference to the adults and youth living in southern facilities, and I've indicated that we're going to be doing a review on a case-by-case basis to find out if there are any similar type conditions or individuals or groups of individuals that are out there in those facilities, to see if there's an opportunity to repatriate them. That will go to what the Member is talking about to some degree.

But, also, we are moving forward with the renovations of the Stanton Territorial Hospital. As part of that plan, the extended care unit will not be located in that hospital. It doesn't make sense to have an extended care unit in the hospital because it is a person's home, for all intents and purposes. So as part of that plan, we are looking for an alternate site for extended care in the Yellowknife area, similar to services that are provided in other communities throughout the Northwest Territories, and that will have the programs and services for our residents within that extended care unit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Minister for highlighting some of the possibilities. There's hope.

The Minister has indicated the idea of repatriating some of our patients who live down south and possibly moving the extended care unit.

As the Minister leading the Department of Health and Social Services, what is his vision in terms of how it is that perhaps facilities designated for disabled persons could work, and how could industry and non-government organizations play a part in helping the government realize this dream of

having a facility in the North for disabled persons? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I was making reference to an extended care unit that currently exists within Stanton and that will have to be located outside of the building, but it does provide services to people living with disabilities who require extended levels of care.

As far as the funding model around the Stanton renovations, we're looking at a P3 model and a request for qualifications has gone out to that effect.

If the Member is talking about a completely separate building designed for particular individuals to provide either short-term or long-term rehabilitation, that is a different building and we would have to talk about a building like that in the capital plan, which would have to go through the full capital process. Whether it's built by the government or built by someone as part of a P3 or a lease to own, it would still affect the borrowing limit, so it would still have to go through the capital process as it would be a design purpose building.

But if that's the wish of committee, we're certainly willing to have that conversation, that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 353-17(5):
EVALUATION OF
GNWT EMPLOYER AWARDS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to use my questions to follow up on my statement today and it will be directed to the Minister of Human Resources and it's about jobs.

In order to get, sort of, down to the nuts and bolts here, maybe we could ask the Minister of Human Resources to help explain the self-nomination process where we pay \$795 to self-nominate in a program, and how is that making a dent into the fact that the last update from this government said we were pursuing 571 jobs? I'm just trying to get a sense of what value we're getting here when we self-nominate ourselves in a program that we don't know who's competing in and what value we're getting. At the end of the day, are we getting people in jobs? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada's top employer for youth is a process where there's a selection committee. They look at about 800 applications, roughly 800 applications at one time and select what they consider to be the top 100. It's not, I guess, solely related to whether or not we recruit, but it makes it more attractive if we can advertise that we are amongst Canada's

top youth and student employers, then we are more attractive in that sense. In that sense, I guess, we would be assisting in recruitment from that aspect of it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, I fail to fully understand why we go to a specialized marketing company and spend \$795 to self-nominate, and when I actually called them they told me they couldn't tell me who competes for these awards because that's proprietary information. Ultimately, that's what they said, and they can't tell me about how it's evaluated at the end of the day. It almost seems like it's self-gratification designed.

By the way, let me be the first to announce, I'm creating a Yellowknife Centre MLA award. I won't tell you who can apply, and it will be in 2014. It's just as simple as that. Obviously, that was just being tongue-in-cheek.

The issue here is how are we getting these jobs filled when the government is busy nominating itself for awards that don't really have any value?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Maybe I'll try to provide some context to this. What the selection committee looks at is the physical workplace, working atmosphere, social, health, financial, family, benefits, vacation, time off, employee communications, performance management, training and skills development and community involvement. Some of the companies that are on this list that have been selected as top employers are companies such as CIBC, City of Edmonton, Coca-Cola Canada, Ikea, Ontario Public Service, Shell Canada, Telus, Xerox, KMG, LLP. There are a lot of companies there. I don't think that it takes a whole lot of time. It's not like the whole public service is busy trying to nominate themselves and we don't have time to recruit. It's a very simple thing. It's an application. You put it in and it's done. It doesn't consume a whole lot of time. The people that do the selections, we're not involved in selecting, so it's not like we're busy nominating ourselves for things, that we're so busy doing that that we're unable to recruit people to the public service.

MR. HAWKINS: I think the last sidebar provided the Minister is ultimately the crux of the issue. It's not the fact that we have to self-nominate. Sometimes we have to draw attention to the great things we do. I understand that. But when we have to pay \$795 to self-nominate, it does start to draw into question. This government has said, through its own little PeopleSoft software, that we have over 1,000 job vacancy positions. This government has said that they we are actively pursuing 571 jobs. I went to the job career website today and there were about 102 job postings. We all know there has got to be several hundred summer students that don't have jobs, so how do we put all this together that we're so busy nominating ourselves for a great job

we've got hundreds and hundreds of job positions not filled, and we certainly have probably thousands of people from top to bottom of the Northwest Territories, whatever community you live in, that need jobs. How are we filling these jobs when we're busy filling out applications to tell us how great we are?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Again, I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that we haven't spent a whole lot of time nominating ourselves and maybe a very, very minor piece of work that was done in order to promote ourselves as a good employer. It's a competition. It's not like we nominated ourselves and we're guaranteed to go on the list. Like I said, only a certain group of individual companies and governments and organizations are selected.

As far as summer students go, we're on schedule to hire an equivalent amount of students that we've had every summer. As of May 2, we had hired 217 summer students, of which 70 of these summer students were in the regions, and of the 217 summer students, 48.5 percent were indigenous Aboriginal and 48.85 percent were indigenous non-Aboriginal, so we have hired our students to the tune of 97 percent, and we're on pace to hire as many summer students as we did in previous years.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Population is in decline. The cost of living is up. The Minister says we've hired 217 summer students. I bet there are at least 800 in total that have been looking for work, so we're lucky to even get 25 percent of the students hired. The bottom line is I want to know how many job positions are open and how we're getting them filled. This government has repeatedly said they had 571 jobs they were actively looking for a few months ago. We've got, at best, in the range of 800 students, probably almost 600 looking for job. When you go to the website, there are only 102 job postings on our career website. It doesn't seem like this government is interested in employing people and making sure that they can feed their families.

I'd like the Minister to tell me exactly how many of these jobs are open and what is he doing.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Like I said, we do get 700 to 800 applicants to our summer students. We hire around 300. We're on target to do that again. We tried to do a fairly even split between Yellowknife, where the majority of the public service is, and out there in the regions and the communities. We do have 100 or so competitions at one time because we can't run all the vacancies at one time. All the positions to recruit, we cannot run them all at one time. They're at varying stages. Some of them may be at the offer stage, some are at the appeals stage, some are just becoming vacant and so on,

so there is a constant flow. We have about 500, maybe 10 percent turnover, so on an annual basis we turn over about 10 percent of our public service. We do have a vacancy close to 20 percent and we hire casuals and so on throughout the years and we have the departments manage their human resources the best they can to get the job done.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Colleagues, the time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 93-17(5):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2014-2015

TABLED DOCUMENT 94-17(5):
GNWT RESPONSE TO CR 2-17(5):
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE
2012-2013 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 95-17(5):
PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE
2013 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I wish to table the following three documents, entitled "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015," "Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-17(5): Report on the Review of the 2012-13 Public Accounts" and "Program Review Office Annual Report, 2013."

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Lafferty.

TABLED DOCUMENT 96-17(5):
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN – FACT PACKAGE

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Junior Kindergarten – Fact Package."

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

TABLED DOCUMENT 97-17(5):
LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER HARPER,
DATED MAY 16, 2014, RE: EXTENSION OF THE
TERM OF THE 17TH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following letter from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, dated May 16, 2014, regarding the

extension of the term of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 98-17(5):
TUNDRA SCIENCE AND CULTURE CAMP
2013 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 99-17(5):
2012 ANNUAL REPORT OF
WILDLIFE RESEARCH IN THE NWT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents, entitled "Tundra Science and Culture Camp Annual Report" and "2012 Annual Report of Wildlife Research in the NWT."

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dolynny.

TABLED DOCUMENT 100-17(5):
CANADIAN TRAVELLERS' REPORT CARD,
THE CANADIAN SNOWBIRD ASSOCIATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a number of documents here from the Canadian Travellers Report Card and Evaluation of Government Policy and Practice for Canadians Who Travel, 4th Edition. This is by the Canadian Snowbird Association.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 15, notices of motion. The Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 22-17(5):
FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 5, 2014, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment identify and seek new funding to support the implementation of junior kindergarten instead of reducing funding to any other education districts; and further, that the department ensure that the Junior Kindergarten Program be professionally designed and delivered by properly trained staff; and further, that the Junior Kindergarten Program be oriented toward early childhood development and not a hybrid Junior Kindergarten Program; and further, the department's rollout of junior kindergarten be focused on communities without an Aboriginal Head Start program; and furthermore, that the

government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MOTION 23-17(5):
APPOINTMENT OF SOLE ADJUDICATORS

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 5, 2014, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that the following persons be approved by the Legislative Assembly as sole adjudicators:

Honourable Ronald L. Barclay;
Mr. Paul D.K. Fraser;
Mr. Ronald Perozzo;
Honourable J.E. (Ted) Richard;
Honourable Marguerite Trussler.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MOTION 24-17(5):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO OCTOBER 16, 2014

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 5th, 2014, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on June 5, 2014, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, October 16, 2014; and further, that any time prior to October 16, 2014, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 44 and deal with Motion 20-17(5), which I gave notice of yesterday. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Motions

MOTION 20-17(5):
SUPPORT OF FEDERAL BILL C-583:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS Bill C-583, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder), is before the House of Commons;

AND WHEREAS Bill C-583 seeks to define fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in the Criminal Code and to allow the courts to order assessments and consider mitigating circumstances where FASD contributes to the offence;

AND WHEREAS fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is an incurable developmental disability resulting from exposure to alcohol before birth;

AND WHEREAS 43 percent of the NWT population regularly consumes five or more drinks per occasion, according to the 2009 Addictions Report;

AND WHEREAS FASD affects hundreds of residents in our territory;

AND WHEREAS individuals affected by FASD have a diminished capacity to grasp the consequences of their own and others' behaviour;

AND WHEREAS this government and Legislative Assembly have publicly stated our collective commitment to support individuals affected by FASD;

AND WHEREAS this government and Legislative Assembly have an opportunity to urge the Government of Canada to support Bill C-583 and schedule full committee hearings, including the testimony of expert witnesses;

AND WHEREAS this government and Legislative Assembly have an opportunity to collaborate with the governments and Legislative Assemblies of the Yukon and Nunavut to express pan-territorial support for Bill C-583;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Members of this Legislative Assembly strongly urge our federal and territorial counterparts to support Bill C-583 and urge the Parliament of Canada to schedule full committee hearings with testimony of expert witnesses, including at least one hearing in the Northwest Territories;

AND FURTHER, that Members of this Legislative Assembly urge the Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic to support Bill C-583.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to provide a little background to this motion so that people know why I'm bringing this motion forward, why we're debating something that is before the House of Commons in Ottawa.

Bill C-583 is a private member's bill sponsored by Mr. Ryan Leef, Member of Parliament for Yukon, and it is soon up for second reading. If passed, it will amend the Criminal Code of Canada to (1) add a definition of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) to the Criminal Code, and (2) to establish a procedure for assessing individuals involved in the criminal justice system who are suspected of suffering from FASD. The amendments will require the courts to consider as a mitigating factor in sentencing, a determination that the accused suffers from FASD and manifests certain symptoms.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is the most common type of developmental delay in Canada. There's increasing data to suggest that a disproportionate number of people in conflict with the law have FASD. Some researchers estimate the rate of FASD to be 10 times higher inside Canadian prisons than in the general population. Certainly we're all well aware of the high incidence of FASD in the NWT and in the North in general.

Several months ago I was contacted by Ms. Liz Hanson, leader of the NDP Party in Yukon. Ms. Hanson advised me that Yukon is supportive of Mr. Leef's bill and the positive changes it would bring about for criminals afflicted with FASD. The Yukon Assembly had considered and passed a motion evidencing their support and they were looking to gain pan-territorial support for Bill C-583. I offered to bring a motion to our Assembly for consideration and here we are.

It's no secret that Northerners affected by FASD are far more likely to end up in the criminal justice system than others. Our government has recognized that those with FASD need different treatment and the NWT corrections system has established a specialized facility for FASD inmates to assist them in their rehabilitation during their sentence time.

The characteristics of FASD are many and they include:

1. Trouble with assessment, judgment and reasoning, making it difficult for people with FASD to make choices that seem smart, or to consider long-term goals.
2. Poor memory. A person with FASD does not choose to forget certain events, but is truly unable to recall what happened.
3. Misunderstanding of cause and effect such that they have significant challenges recognizing cause and effect. Punishments are unlikely to

have any impact on deterring future similar behaviour.

4. Inability to generalize, to draw connections between two similar but separate events. For example, being able to apply knowledge gained from one situation to a new situation that may have some key differences.
5. Inability to think abstractly, to understand basic concepts in math, money and time. All rules and laws are inherently abstract and as such are difficult for individuals with FASD to understand and internalize.
6. Difficulty planning. They're unable to envision an abstract view of the future and to achieve goals through a series of complex steps. This leads to highly impulsive behaviour and makes it difficult for people with FASD to be deterred from committing a crime.
7. Trouble in school due to no diagnosis or misdiagnosis of their condition and a lack of recognition of why they are misbehaving.
8. Self-medication is common, generally with illegal substances, and we all know the effects of that.

Given these characteristics of FASD, it's no surprise that affected people face challenges at all stages of their lives and often end up in the criminal justice system. These characteristics lead to a much higher rate of recidivism for FASD affected prisoners.

We recognize the challenges that our disabled residents face and we provide programs and services to assist them in their daily lives. We need to do the same for our residents affected by FASD and Mr. Leef's bill will help us do that. Support for the bill from all three territories will hopefully make an impression on our federal parliamentarians when they consider Bill C-583, this private member's bill, at second reading and hopefully they will be impressed enough to support the bill.

FASD is a totally preventable affliction. If the mother does not drink alcohol while pregnant, there will be no FASD in the baby, but we all know how difficult it is for us to remove the scourge that is alcohol addiction from our northern people.

While we try to eradicate alcohol addictions, we can at least give proper consideration to FASD inmates in our prison system. We can ensure that their incarceration and programming in jail is suitable for their special condition. After all, we want to help our inmates break the cycle of committing crimes over and over, help them become contributing members of our society instead of a drain on our society. I'm sure that's what they want too.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask all Members of this House to support this motion and by doing so, to send a message to all federal politicians that our

FASD afflicted residents need the help that this bill will bring. It's my hope that Bill C-583 will pass and our FASD Northerners destined for federal jails will be the better for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I will allow the seconder to the motion to speak. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to, first of all, acknowledge and thank Ms. Bisaro for bringing this bill into the House so we can have a good debate on it today. I would also like to make a special recognition and acknowledgement of Mr. Ryan Leef who brought this private member's bill forward that is now being debated before the House of Commons. I think what gives strength and credit and the need for this bill is the previous career that Mr. Leef had, and that was in law enforcement, and all the work he did in dealing with such individuals and seeing the need to have some type of system in place and that we need to amend the Criminal Code to make those much needed amendments.

More importantly, this government is actually going through a Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, which we are recognizing wellness courts, which is an opportunity to address specific individuals with mental health disorders or mental health delays that might help them with diversion or in the court system.

We already know the high cost associated with the court system, for one thing, with our incarcerations in the jail system as well. I think this would really reflect on the cost that we, as government, do put forward, not only that, but if we do a pan-territorial support with both Nunavut and Yukon, it might cut down the cost and see the need for resources we need in other areas, such as mental health counselling, and start putting our efforts towards prevention, promotion, education and awareness in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, I also agree that we do need one hearing here in the NWT. I think that would be beneficial to all our health professionals and our professionals in the judicial system, RCMP officers, lawyers, all those associated when we have somebody that may have FASD and they are going through the court system, all the expertise they can bring, experience that they have.

Although there are some challenges such as assessments and diagnosis, when you look and do research on this bill at hand, Alberta is the leading province and jurisdiction and making the biggest commitment and has done the most adult diagnostic and assessment clinics in all of Canada. With something like this coming forward, as a pan-territorial and even the NWT moving forward, we can build off of what Alberta is doing and start implementing those things in the Northwest Territories so we don't have people slipping through the system, that we help people who need the help

sooner than later and it shows the need for resources in the Northwest Territories. Hopefully it will cut down on some of the high cost associated with people being incarcerated, cut down on the backlogs of people who need lawyers and those types of things.

Once again, I thank Ms. Bisaro for bringing this bill forward and I do believe that the 17th Legislative Assembly needs to support this private member's bill that is before the House of Commons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleagues for bringing forward this motion. As we know, this disorder occurs at varying degrees and, in some cases, judgment capability is impaired in individuals, as Ms. Bisaro has clearly laid out. Judgment may become quite limited and equivalent to that of a child, even when they are fully grown adults. Yet, our system and our laws treat these people as if they have the full ability of an adult to make logical judgments. This is where we start to really get into trouble.

The current laws assures them of their rights as an individual to make those judgments typical of adults, and without full capacity for reasoning and judgment leads to very tragic consequences.

People with FASD often don't have this capability and, again, they end up playing a role that leads to getting off track and causing a lot of problems for family members as well as themselves and society.

The consequences also end up in our corrections system all too frequently and repeatedly. There is exposure to our corrections system which is not fully equipped to deal with people with FASD. They are not funded appropriately for that. They don't have the necessary expertise. Again, this is exacerbated further when people don't have a clear diagnosis or assessment.

As mentioned, this leads to tragedy for families, especially for those people with FASD as well as the individuals themselves: their parents who are trying to care for them often even when they're adults in physical age, and their siblings and their friends.

So, I appreciate that there are some steps being reflected in this private member's bill at the federal level. I think it is appropriate to speak out in support of this. I am also encouraged that this government is moving this fall, I believe, towards the implementation of a wellness court, which takes acknowledgement of this situation and begins to address this condition and the consequences of it right here in the Northwest Territories for residents and families.

So this is a national issue, certainly, but it's also a very big issue in the Northwest Territories. Again, thanks to my colleagues. I will be supporting the motion. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Members for their comments as well.

FASD affects far too many Northerners. As a government, we are committed to supporting people who live with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We are always seeking out new and better ways to offer that support. That can include working with both Yukon and Nunavut and learning from their experiences. We certainly appreciate the commitment that led Ryan Leef, the Yukon Member of Parliament, to introduce this private member's bill in Parliament.

People with FASD need access to services and supports when they run into trouble with the law. They can have difficulty understanding the consequences of their actions and we agree that the court system needs more flexibility to deal meaningfully with them.

In the past decade, the Yukon has shown leadership in their response to FASD in criminal courts. Since 2007 they have provided support to those with FASD through their community wellness court. The Northwest Territories has been working very closely with the Yukon as we prepare to launch our own wellness court later this year. This court will not only deal with persons with FASD but with people with other cognitive impairments, mental health and addictions issues.

That flexibility, Mr. Speaker, is a key part of the project. The primary goal of the NWT wellness court is to reduce recidivism while helping offenders access needed services and supports related to the underlying issues and challenges that they live with.

Federal, provincial and territorial officials are working on a justice response to FASD and other cognitive disabilities. They are collaborating with the Canadian Bar Association and reaching out to professionals who are involved in diagnoses and assessment. Any changes to federal legislation, however, whether through Mr. Leef's private member's bill or other initiatives, must come with sufficient funding so we can deliver quality justice services to all of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, Cabinet will be supporting this motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I will allow the mover of the motion, Ms. Bisaro, for closing remarks.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, first of all, as did Mr. Moses, recognize the actions of Mr. Leef to bring his private member's bill

to the Parliament of Canada. It's a bill that will assist Northerners right across the whole of the North.

I'd like to thank my colleagues who have spoken in favour of the bill and I'd like to thank the seconder of the motion, Mr. Moses, for doing that job for me. I'm pleased to hear that there's recognition of the need to address the problem of FASD by Members and by Cabinet alike. I really appreciate that.

There's no direction to government in this motion. I'm pleased to hear that the government will be voting in favour and I think unanimous support will send a very strong message to Mr. Leef, to our Member of Parliament and to other Members of Parliament in Ottawa that this is an important bill and an important amendment to be made. I do ask for a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour?

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Blake, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. SPEAKER: In favour, 18; zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 10-17(5), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond its daily hour of adjournment to consider business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order this afternoon. There are several items on our agenda before Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We wish to consider Committee Report 6-17(5), then Tabled Document 93-17(5) and Bills 8 and 9 in that order. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, committee. We will proceed with that after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. When we adjourned yesterday we were dealing with Committee Report 6-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2014 Auditor General of Canada on the Northwest Territories Child and Family Services Compliance Audit and Action Plans. We were going through motions that had been put forward in the report by the committee and we could resume there. Actually, the motions aren't numbered, so I trust you know where we were. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have two motions to go and then we'll move on to Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 54-17(5): COMPLIANCE AUDITS AND ACTION PLANS, CARRIED

I move that the Department of Health and Social Services conduct compliance audits of child and family services files annually in all health and social services authorities, as required by the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual; and further, that the department require health and social services authorities to submit action plans to address deficiencies and monitor their implementation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. Just briefly, the area of lack of auditing of files was a huge one in the Auditor General's report. It was an area that was noted by the Auditor General, and I think the language used by the Auditor General, certainly in our report we said, failure to complete these audits is significant. So, committee felt very strongly that we need to impress upon the Department of Health and Social Services and the authorities that audits of files must be done. It's required in the procedures manual, and without action plans to back up the findings of the audits, there's no point in doing them. So, this motion speaks to both of those things. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We agree with recommendation 11 and work is already in process.

The department has established an audit schedule and requires action plans to address deficiencies that are identified, and the department is monitoring the implementation.

Based on the Auditor General's recommendations and our response and the departmental response, we are planning and intend to work with the health and social services authorities to develop a more formal audit schedule and process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 55-17(5):
PROVIDING COMPLIANCE AUDITS AND
ACTION PLANS TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that internal compliance audits and action plans designed to address deficiencies prepared by regional authorities be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 56-17(5):
TABLING OF MODIFIED COMPLIANCE
AUDITS AND ACTION PLANS,
CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that internal compliance audits and action plans designed to address deficiencies prepared by regional authorities be modified for privacy considerations and tabled in the Legislative Assembly; and further, that internal audits include updates on indicators associated with Exhibits 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Auditor General's report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to recommendation number 12, I'd be happy to discuss with the Standing Committee on Social Programs the appropriate format and time in providing updates on a regular basis. I will say that it may not always be appropriate to forward some of these internal work plans, depending on the level of detail about staff and clients. Some of the work plans may include client-specific information, so it may not be appropriate to provide those as we may need releases and other pieces of information. But I'm happy to have further discussion with the Standing Committee on Social Programs with respect to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-17(5):
REPORTING BY DIRECTOR OF
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES,
CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the director of child and family services report annually to the Minister of Health and Social Services, as required under the Child and Family Services Act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As much as this motion is simplistic in design, its lack of performance, I believe, has caused the complexity that we see here before us today, and I think that was echoed loud and clear through the Auditor General's findings.

Moreover, I think members of this committee and I think the public at large are still quite perplexed that there was no reporting function, which is a statutory requirement of the department on this child and family services area, for well over a decade.

Again, without that information, it's very confusing and a bit daunting that a department is able to guide themselves through the rigours of trying to satisfy the needs of our most vulnerable in society.

So this motion, again, as simple as it is, clearly states a statutory obligation to which we hope that, moving forward, the department sees as an important part of the legislative process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We agree with the intent of recommendation number 13; however, rather than tabling individual audits, it may be more practical and more appropriate to amend the format of the annual director's report to include the information that's outlined in the Standing Committee on Government Operations' recommendation number 15. I have already committed to tabling that report, so it may be more practical for us to modify the content of that report rather than individual audit reports. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 58-17(5):
TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTOR
OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES,
CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Minister of Health and Social Services table the director's annual report each year in the Legislative Assembly; and further, that the Minister of Health and Social Services arrange for the director's annual report to include updates for each regional authority on indicators associated with Exhibits 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Auditor General's report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee felt quite strongly to include the series of motions in its format. We've just heard a recommendation from the Minister to do something maybe of a streamline in nature. This is something that we'd have to take back to committee for review, but again, the motion speaks for itself and it stands. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Two things. I'm a little confused. I think this is recommendation 15 from your report, not recommendation 14. The recommendation 15 goes right in, and for the record, we agree with recommendation 15 as it relates to recommendation 13. We were talking about modifying what's provided in recommendation 13 and included in recommendation 15 so the

information the Members are looking for is there. It's just much more practical to do one report as opposed to multiple reports.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 59-17(5):
PERFORMANCE MEASURES INDICATORS,
CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that all future Department of Health and Social Services business plans adopt as performance measures the indicators associated with Exhibits 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Auditor General's report.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We're hoping that for the upcoming business planning cycle for 2014-2015 that this indeed is part of the business process and we look forward to seeing these performance indicators with all future business plans performance.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I've already indicated, I'm prepared to commit to a public reporting of these indicators. However, the level of detail may not be appropriate for the format that we're using for our business planning, but we will consider how best to do the public reporting.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 60-17(5):
ASSESSMENT OF FINANCIAL AND HUMAN
RESOURCES FOR DELIVERING
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES,
CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services, in conjunction with the health and social services

authorities, perform a detailed assessment of the financial and human resource requirements for delivering child and family services; and further, that the department revisit this assessment periodically and identify any necessary changes.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think, again, the motion is very self-explanatory, but to add a little clarifier to this is I believe Members, including the Auditor General of Canada, felt that because of the lack of reporting for the many years that had occurred, trying to follow the financial implications, but more importantly, the human resource requirements in delivering the much needed care for the most vulnerable was definitely a daunting task for the review and the audit. Again, this motion basically speaks to the fact that both financial and human resource requirements should be determinants in terms of being visited and revisited periodically to identify need on a more regular basis.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. These discussions are actually underway with the Child Welfare League of Canada to determine whether the league would be in a position to initiate this assessment and help us in the fall of this year, so we agree this information is necessary and important.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Dolynny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 61-17(5):
STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES MANUAL,
CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've got one final motion and then I'll be passing this over to Mr. Moses. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with the health and social services authorities, update and clarify the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual and identify additional tools and guidance to better assist child protection workers in meeting key requirements of the Child and Family Services Act.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, just to recap very briefly what was found during the audit and why the committee felt compelled to include this motion. The procedures manual currently being used is fairly dated. It is a fairly large document. I believe it was over 600-and-some pages. We have recently been given an update that they are looking at certain chapters, that they will be performing or at least the department will be looking at. We encourage and hope for the facilitation of the completion and modernization of this procedures manual in the short order rather than the long order. Again, we feel that this really is the essence of activity and requirement for the proper standards that will adhere to the act and the statutory requirements of the act.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We agree with recommendation 18, and this work is currently in progress. The manual will be completed by October and further tools will be completed by December, so the manual is intended to be released in October.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 62-17(5):
REVISIONS TO CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES,
CARRIED

MR. MOSES: Madam Chair, I move that the Department of Health and Social Services complete revisions to the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual by December 2014.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department started developing the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual in 1998, and despite trying to complete this work, it has never ever been completed and has never kept pace with changes to the act or the best practices in child welfare. Just to note the absence of standardized procedures for all key responsibilities

is a significant deficiency. It represents a great failure to support child protection workers and this likely affects morale, staff turnover and, ultimately, the well-being of children when our workers are not supported nor have anything to go by. Committee strongly agrees that these need to be completed by December 2014.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We obviously agree with this recommendation given that I've already indicated we intend to have this manual completed by October, and I agree with the Member's comments as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 63-17(5):
PROCESS FOR SHARING
BEST PRACTICES INFORMATION,
CARRIED

MR. MOSES: Madam Chair, I move that the Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with the health and social services authorities, develop a process for all parties involved in the delivery of child and family services to share information on best practices and challenges in delivery of these of these services.

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

MR. MOSES: Yes, just briefly, Madam Chair. Just speaking in terms of wraparound services and all those that are working with our child that is in care, I think it is almost common sense and with the Health Information Act that we're working on that this might be something that we can move forward into where RCMP, teachers and anybody associated with the high-risk child or the child in service that some kind of plan of care of treatment is in place, so this is something that we'd like the department to work on.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Within the system we have actually established the regular quarterly meetings of the directors of social programs to help provide a forum for this exchange. We have also made child and family services a standing agenda item at the Joint

Senior Management Committee meetings of CEOs and departmental senior staff that happen every second month. We will explore ways to expand these efforts to include other stakeholders.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 64-17(5):
TRAINING FOR
CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS,
CARRIED

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with the health and social services authorities, provide training to all child protection workers for all key responsibilities required to carry out child and family services; and further, that the department assess whether the training provided is meeting the needs of child protection workers to deliver child and family services and make any necessary improvements as soon as possible.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Auditor General did indicate that when he was doing their questioning, some of the child protection workers did indicate that they did receive training, but the level of training that they did receive varied from child protection worker to child protection worker, and I feel that that is something that needs to be standardized and something that needs to be in place so that all children that are in child protection cases have the same equal service delivery and we provide that same service delivery. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The statutory training is continually adjusted based on feedback from the different participants, but I hear the Member and I support the recommendation 21. The new action plan will include an evaluation of the Statutory Training Program and it will be updated accordingly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 65-17(5):
CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS'
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS,
CARRIED

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services implement an ongoing formal process whereby child protection workers have an opportunity to recommend improvements for the child and family services system. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. In consultations with the department, we did hear that there were informal consultations with the child protection workers. We want to make sure that there's something formally in place where instead of child protection workers being afraid to say how they really feel, that as front-line workers, as case workers seeing what's happening in the homes, on the streets, in the communities, that they provide the recommendations that will really have a strong impact and effect on this act as we move forward and that it should come from the bottom up rather than top down and that we have everybody give quality input into making sure that children receive the services that they need and they get the resources and the type of training that they receive. Thank you, Madam.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Getting feedback and input from the front-line providers is critical, as they're the ones dealing with the residents of the Northwest Territories on a daily basis. There are two formal processes already in place. Suggestions for improvements to the child and family services system can be brought to the attention of regional directors of social programs, who meet on a regular basis to discuss program matters, and also suggestions for improvements to the child and family services system can be brought to the attention of the chief executive officers, who can place these on the agenda items for the Joint Senior Management Committee, which is meeting on a regular basis with child and family services as a standing agenda item.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 66-17(5):
FUNDING METHODOLOGY FOR
REGIONAL AUTHORITIES,
CARRIED

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services revise the funding methodology for the regional authorities upon completing the assessment of required resources. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was a recommendation that I think came out of the 2000 report, as well, and something that went right back, I think it even mentioned 1977. It talked about requiring financial and human resources for this area with child and family services and nothing has been developed. There has been no caseload standards being developed and we've heard in some cases where a certain child protection worker might have had up to 100 cases and some of them might only have a few. So we want to make sure it's something standardized, caseload management, and that each health authority has the proper financial and human resources to effectively offer quality child and family services to the clients and the families. So this is a recommendation that came out of that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've already indicated, and I'd like to indicate again, that we agree with recommendation 23.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 67-17(5):
CASELOAD STANDARDS FOR
CHILD PROTECTION WORKERS,
CARRIED

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services establish territory-wide caseload standards for child protection workers; and further, that the department ensure that the caseloads are fairly balanced across the regional authorities; and furthermore,

that the due consideration be given to regional variation of duties, demands and available resources. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you. Yes, just briefly, I think the motion states specifically what we need here and I also think that there does need to be inventory assessment of caseloads across the Northwest Territories in the regions and maybe identify which regions have the highest caseloads and start putting some of our resources, financial, human, towards those regional authorities that we can assist and provide quality care for our children and our families. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do want to move to a more sort of coordinated caseload count, but it's difficult to arrive at a caseload standard when each case is unique and may require a different amount of time, different expertise and varying resources. There are also regional differences, such as distance between communities, that must be factored into resource decisions.

I've already indicated we will be working with the Child Welfare League of Canada to ensure that we are applying best practices in determining caseloads, but moving to one single integrated system, obviously moving to one single integrated system will make it easier to deploy resources as required to areas of greatest need. But in determining caseloads, we must keep in mind some of the varying realities throughout the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 68-17(5):
ENHANCEMENT OF AURORA COLLEGE
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the Department of Health and Social Services work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Aurora College to enhance support for students in the Social Work Program with the goal of increasing the number of homegrown Aboriginal students; and further, that a

bursary program be established; and furthermore, that the online course work in distance education also be considered. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I fully support this motion. It's very clear, as stated here, that the goal is to have our Aboriginal students in our communities in the North here take advantage of this opportunity and that there's a support system set in place so that we support them going through the education programs, such as the Aurora College Social Work Program, and that other options also be considered to support our young students here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Northern Graduate Employment Program, which began in 2001, 26 Northerners have become social workers, of whom 16 are actually still employed by the GNWT. The department is completing an updated Health and Social Services Human Resource Strategic Plan and social workers have been identified as a priority area in this new action plan. We will work on a number of fronts to encourage northern social work students, including going to the schools to encourage northern youth to consider social work as a career, and continue to provide summer students intern and practicum opportunities as much as possible. Overall, our review of the existing programs indicated that bursaries are not an effective way to recruit and retain. So we're looking at doing some things differently. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 69-17(5):
FRONT-LINE WORKERS' TOOL
TO ASSESS LONG-TERM RISK,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the health and social services authorities, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Services, develop a tool to ensure that longer-term risks to children are formally assessed to determine a child's safety as required under the Child and Family Services Act; and further, that this tool be ready for use by front-line workers within the current fiscal year; and furthermore, to expedite the

process the department look to other jurisdictions for guidance. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Again, this motion is very straightforward in regards to the type of tools that we want to develop to ensure that long-term risk to children is formally assessed properly and determine the safety of our children. It was noted in the Auditor General's report that there were some deficiencies in this area. So, again, I look forward to the department's work. There is a demand on here for front-line workers within the current fiscal year and that this process be expedited by other jurisdictions. I want to have the same thing as we're asking for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department is considering adopting a series of tools called structured decision-making. These are standardized forms which child protection workers can complete in order to assess both the immediate safety risk and longer-term risk and future harm.

Several Canadian jurisdictions recently adopted these tools, and the director of territorial services is in touch with his counterparts to receive guidance on lessons learned in other jurisdictions. One of the first lessons that was learned is that it will take several years to adapt the tools to our particular jurisdiction and to validate the tools for use within our population. We intend to move this process forward as fast as possible and explore what interim guidance can be provided to child protection workers, but at the end of the day, as we move towards a system that supports families in a different and more proactive way, we will need to make sure that these tools are appropriate and it will take a bit of time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I feel very strongly about this particular deficiency and want to speak to it. In the files that the Auditor General examined, none of them had done a long-term risk assessment of the child's safety. It struck me as being particularly deficient, for lack of a better word. I understand the Minister's comment that the department is looking at something and that it's going to take a long time in order to get a tool in place, but there has to be something in the interim. We can't continue the way we have for umpteen years, not doing long-term assessments of the safety of children when they are apprehended or even when there's an intervention being done of some sort whether they remain in the home or not.

I can understand that to take a tool and adapt it for our particular northern situation may take a while, but in the interim, the Minister has to ensure that long-term assessments are being done and there needs to be an interim tool. During the hearings, we were advised that it could take up to a year for the department to get tools in place, and that's way too long. So I wanted to just state that it is up to the Minister to find something that will ensure that workers are doing long-term assessments of children until we get this risk assessment tool formally identified. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 70-17(5):
HSSAS' COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION,
STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: I move that the health and social services authorities comply with the Child and Family Services Act and the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual in their delivery of services to children and families; – Madam Chair, we are just getting the motion handed out because there was a typo, so we are just handing out the motion – and further, that health and social services authorities ensure the key requirements are met when:

- investigating concerns about child safety and well-being;
- providing protective services for children to address and confirm child protection needs;
- providing service to children under the care of the director of child and family services; and
- performing screening and monitoring of foster care homes.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: The motion certainly speaks to the procedures manual and the delivery of services to children and their families and key requirements that should be met as per the Auditor General in this part of their findings. I certainly would support that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We agree with recommendation 27 and all

the actions that are being designed, including the action plan designed to support this.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 71-17(5):
ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES BY HSSAS,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the health and social services authorities, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Services, should regularly assess whether the services they provide to children and families are in compliance with the Child and Family Services Act and the Child and Family Services Standards and Procedures Manual; and further, that the results of these assessments be used to improve compliance and be shared with the director of child and family services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have two more motions. I do apologize if you don't have the information in front of you.

COMMITTEE MOTION 72-17(5):
SERVICES FOR YOUTH,
CARRIED

Madam Chair, I move that the Department of Health and Social Services address gaps in services for youth and make appropriate amendments to the Child and Family Services Act; and further, that performance measures be included in all departmental business plans to track the number of youth receiving discretionary services and the types of services received. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. This recommendation will be addressed in the amendments to the act. Drafting is underway and is expected to take about 12 months, with

introduction of the amending bill in the spring of 2015. As outlined in the legislative proposal, the amendment will include enhancing services offered to youth, including youth protection orders, housing supports under support service agreements and defining youth under the act. It will also include extending support services to youth who are in permanent care until they reach the age of 23 and requiring the development of a written transition case plan for youth leaving permanent custody. We will consider the most appropriate performance measures and reporting mechanisms as we move forward and they will be discussed during the review of the bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 73-17(5):
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE
WITHIN 120 DAYS,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the government provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Does committee agree that that concludes the consideration of Committee Report 6-17(5), Report on the Review of the 2014 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. The next matter before Committee of the Whole today is Tabled Document 93-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015. I will ask the Minister of Finance if he would please bring his opening remarks. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015. This document outlines an increase of \$17.891 million in

operations expenditures for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

The more significant items included in the supplementary estimates are:

1. \$10.9 million for the Department of Executive for costs associated with one-time devolution implementation activities. These costs are offset by an equivalent lapse of Government of Canada funding in 2013-14.
2. \$2.7 million for the Department of Public Works and Services to complete the demolition of the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik. These costs are offset by an equivalent lapse of funding in 2013-14.
3. A total of \$1.9 million for departments for the provision of French language communications and services.
4. \$1 million for the Department of Lands to establish the liabilities and financial assurances division to assess and manage the securities associated with required closure and reclamation activities. These costs will be funded from the devolution supplementary reserve of \$9 million.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary estimates document. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. I would ask you if you would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses to the table.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me are Mr. Mike Aumond and Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar from Finance. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. General comments. No general comments. Does committee agree we'll proceed to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. If I could direct your attention, please, to page 3 of the document. Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized \$24,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$24,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized \$10.957 million. Total department, not previously authorized, \$10.957 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to welcome the Minister and the Department of Finance here today.

This one, there needs probably a little bit more of a clarifier. I believe this is a residual amount from, I think, a pot of money that was around \$26.5 million, which is part of the devolution implementation funding. I know that was chiselled down as we prepared for the Devolution Final Agreement.

So the question I have, there was supposed to be some fairly specific caveats where this money, in terms of one-time money or one-time transitional activities specifically for devolution. Is this, indeed, exactly what this residual will be used for, for the remainder of this \$10.957 million? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: At least we got an answer that's quick and easy. I guess maybe I'll ask the Minister to expand on what exactly this \$10.957 million will be specifically spent on in relation to these one-time transitional costs. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The funding is split into two categories for transition and implementation. The transition phase is the time between the signing of the AIP, and the final agreement was allocated \$4 million of the \$26.5 million. Total implementation phase is the time between the final agreement and April. It was allocated \$22.5 million and that money is continuing to be expended.

MR. DOLYNNY: I guess, as Members on this side of the House are asking, is what specifically this money will be spent on. There has been some fear, and I know it's been talked about here in the House, that this does not become part of a slush fund for Cabinet direction for Cabinet priorities, that this is indeed to help, I guess, foster and prop up the devolution implementation.

So again I'll ask the Minister what specifically is earmarked in this calendar year, which is a carry forward, where this money will be specifically spent. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is transition money, as the Member has stated. It's for

one-time costs associated with the transition to devolution. We still have some work to do, to do this upcoming year. For example, there could be more fit-ups required for offices, more moves of offices as we implement the org structure that was agreed to at the last session. Again, we have to report on these activities not only to the federal government, we'll be reporting on those activities to committee in due course as we go. I guess, to assure the Members and the House that these will not be discretionary funds, we can only spend this money according to our agreements with Canada for the intended purpose. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, if I'm reading the deputy minister's response, and I have to maybe go back to answers tomorrow to take a look at it, but I did hear the word it "could" be for offices and it would not be used for discretionary funding.

I know all too well, being in this House for the few years that I have, typically the Department of Finance as well as departments know very well where they're spending the money. Money is not easily come by in this House. Money is very sought after, and when there is money to be spent, I can assure you, Madam Chair, we all know that there is a laundry list a mile high where this money is going to be going. So I'm very concerned and perplexed that money could be spent, and we've heard a very general sense of over \$10 million.

Again, I'm at the mercy of the Department of Finance here with some of the half answers that I'm getting here, but I'll ask one last time: Can we get a specific list of criteria or infrastructure and more specifics of exactly where this \$10.9 million will be spent in this calendar year? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll account for every penny, and we can provide the Member with a list of where the money is anticipated to be spent. There are one-time costs that we're still coming to grips with, but we will commit to provide a list of what has been spent and where we anticipate the need is going to be for the remainder of the funds. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have some concerns about this money that's associated with the Devolution Final Agreement as well. I believe we brought this up before, but I think there's a concern on the part of Members that, you know, the money is there and we are being assured that it's going to be used for devolution purposes,

whether it's to refit an office or whether it's to hire a person that we didn't anticipate that we needed to have hired before. But I think there's also some nervousness about the fact that this money is sitting in general revenues. We get assurance that it's only going to be used for devolution purposes, but there's really no guarantee to us as Regular Members that that's what is going to happen.

So, this question may have been asked before, I can't quite remember, but is there a possibility that we can place the Devolution Final Agreement funding that is being carried over from year to year into a special reserve fund so that we have some assurance that it will only be used for devolution-type activities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The item for consideration is the transition funding, which is the one-time costs to get us to implement devolution as opposed to the ongoing funding that we're getting, which was part of the budget in the last Assembly and in which we indicated that we would have... We didn't spend all of the money. We have a \$10 million special supp reserve that we've set up for that ongoing funding as opposed to this one-time money, which our intention would be to spend this money this year. It's only to get us to implementation as opposed to the ongoing delivery of programs and services associated with devolution. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. Thanks to Mr. Aumond. I guess that's even more worrisome when we haven't really heard what this money is going to be used for if we're going to be using it up in '14-15, yet I gathered from previous answers that we don't really know what we're using it for. That's a little more concerning.

When would we know what this \$10 million is going to be used for?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'll be reporting through this in the business planning process, and we can provide updates to committee as often as they'd like.

The issue of the trust factor is somewhat worrisome when we're talking about... We're spending \$1.6 billion. We sit in this House and we lay out the plans, we give our commitments, and then we're now asked on this particular fund, how can we be trusted to do what we say we're going to do. Because this is our job and we're going to be before this Assembly and we're accountable to the Assembly and we'll provide you that information.

Plus, we have a deal, a contractual arrangement with the federal government where we have to account for this money according to the agreement that we signed. So I want to assure the Member, her distrust aside, we are people of our word here and we are accountable and we serve before this Assembly at their will.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I think distrust is too strong a word. I think it's a concern for the accountability of the money. The Minister mentioned the business planning process, but the business plans, we didn't have business plans for the '14-15 budget year. The business plans coming up are for '15-16, and if I understood the comment earlier, it was that this \$10 million is going to be spent in this year, '14-15. I appreciate and accept the offer from the Minister to get reports on how this money is being spent, but for me and other Members to feel like we are adequately monitoring how this money is being spent, we're kind of being asked to... I agree. We're being asked to trust you, and I do trust you, but it would be nice to know what sorts of things we're spending this money on.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The commitment is as we make the expenditures and identify the need, we will provide that information to committee through fiscal updates, through our business planning process, through our supps that we're going to put this money to use in.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$10.957 million. Total department, not previously authorized \$10.957 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Department of Human Resources, operations expenditures, management and recruitment services, not previously authorized, \$130,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$130,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$6,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$6,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Department of Finance, operations expenditures, deputy minister's office, not previously authorized, \$7,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$7,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$28,000.

Total department, not previously authorized, \$28,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$177,000, asset management, not previously authorized, \$3.6 million. Total department, not previously authorized, \$3.777 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to zone in on one of the line entries here for the asset management, and that's under the \$2.758 million, which the descriptor indicates funding for costs associated with concluding the demolition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in Inuvik. I guess, just so I can understand some of the clarity here, this is now an operational cost, and I believe the original total budget – which it actually appears that this demolition has now dragged on for almost two and a half years, almost three years here – I believe, was around \$8.6 million for the complete demolition of the schools in general for the new E3 School.

Can I get some confirmation that this \$2.758 million is the final leg of this \$8.6 million, and if that's the case, were we on budget for this full demolition and is the project complete?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. The total costs are \$8.6 million and the \$2.758 million is part of that, and it does represent the total budget for the project. This money was approved to the Department of Public Works and Services last year for the demolition of their schools and they're just bringing this back for this fiscal year so that they can complete the demolition of the final school, and it will be done this year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just so that I can get to proper closure of this file, during the demolition phase there was definite anticipation that there was going to be a significant amount of asbestos and contaminated materials. I was led to believe that there was more contaminated material than earlier, I guess, thought of when the demolition commenced and even during the different phases of the demolition process.

My question is that given the budget that we had of the \$8.6 million, did that cover all the extra anticipated disposal of asbestos and any other contaminated substances that were known during the demolition phase?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair, it did.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the Minister's response. For my final answer, again, I'm looking for closure on this file. There will be no other supplementary asks for any other budgetary lines that we should expect in committee with respect to any type of funding for demolition of these two schools or any other type of repatriation or costs associated with the new E3 School project as a whole asset cost?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, we are presenting what we have as a final expenditure on that project.

MR. DOLYNNY: Keeping on the topic of the asset management, there is a not previously authorized of \$179,000, under the description of to provide funding for costs resulting from increased electricity rates. Could we get a bit more of an explanation as to that line entry?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a result of the decision taken by the PUB to increase rates, so this is the requirement for '14-15 for the Department of Public Works and Services who is funded for the utilities for government assets for this year. We weren't able to confirm what was required for '14-15 in time for the budget, so that's why it is brought forward as a supplementary appropriation at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I'm a bit confused here. Are we talking about the rate increases that everyone here is much aware of? The public at large, we're very much aware. There was three years of a 7 percent increase and, I believe, year four of a 5 percent increase. Are we referring to those increases from the Public Utilities Board?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair. In 2012-13 it was 7 percent; '13-14, 7; '14-15, 5.6; '15-16, 6.2.

MR. DOLYNNY: Now we're talking apples and apples, which is good to know. I guess what I have a hard time understanding here is our own government, our own Public Works and Services, was not aware of a rate increase which is clearly defined in our government. Everything that we've had in our business plans and, I think, the public at large was very much aware of the increases that we were going to have or that did occur here. What we're saying here is that we didn't anticipate the very same increases that we actually approved and this is why we're seeing it as a supplementary

expenditure. If I can get an explanation of that, because I'm a bit confused.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We were waiting the PUB official ruling before we could include it and it didn't happen in time to get it in the budget. Now that we do have it, we are coming forward in this forum.

MR. DOLYNNY: I would probably agree with that comment if this was year one of the four-year implementation plan of rate increases, but we're not in year one. I believe we've completed year two, so we're well into the four-year rate increases from the Public Utilities Board. So I have a hard time understanding how we didn't anticipate that and we didn't have that number in time, hence we're seeing it today.

Can I get some clarification in the first just so that, again, we've got all the dates right here because, again, we're talking '14-15 here. Are we saying that this was year one of the implementation plan? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Madam Chair. So, what the Members are seeing here is the incremental impact of how the shortfall was calculated. So as Members recall, when we did the '13-14 amount, an amount of \$1.7 million was provided to the department during the last session and we sought number three for '13-14 of \$1.7 million and the basis of that increase was how the shortfall was calculated. We originally did the shortfall based on a three-year moving average and the methodology was updated to base it on actual consumption of electricity.

So we did provide a provision for the department in '14-15 of about \$1.5 million for anticipated rate increases and what this difference is, is a change in how we changed the forecasting. So the shortfall is \$180,000 in '14-15. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. What I'm really trying to get to the bottom here, as Members here we can only go on the descriptors that are provided to us as we lead up to discussion in Committee of the Whole here on the floor of the House. When I see increases of electricity rates and it's clear that it may not be a rate issue, it may be the fact that, well, we had a shortfall on not calculating our proper use and we had more electrical use than we planned for, but if that's the case then I should see a description that says, well, we missed the mark on our use, but we're seeing a description here that says, well, we missed the mark in the rate. So are we talking about the rate miscalculation or are we talking about the use miscalculation? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you. I totally agree with the Member. He's correct. The description on this

could have been clearer and we'll correct that going forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of quick follow-ups there, perhaps one on that same issue of the \$179,000 for electricity costs.

I know we moved all our utilities into Public Works and Services so that we could identify opportunities for efficiencies and ways to keep those costs down. Am I understanding here that we haven't figured that out yet? I don't know what our total budget is for electricity, but an increase of \$179,000, that's sort of level-eyed look for deficiencies based on this move into Public Works and Services where one hand can be on the pulse and figure out where the opportunities lie and take advantage of them.

Could I just get some comments from the Minister where we're at with that expectation as a result of moving all of our utilities into one department like this, which I think is a good idea? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That process has been done. We are looking at, in terms of management efficiencies, in terms of actual dollar savings, we've done things separate from electricity, but with things, as the Member is well aware, with biomass, where we've put the savings back in with the issue of electricity, the costs keep going up every year. So we're not in a position of being able to save the 7 percent rate increases through those types of efficiencies. As a Power Corporation, we're looking at a wholesale change out. For example, things like LED lights from the sodium vapour. We're looking at all sorts of efficiencies in the Yellowknife area, but the issue of are we saving that kind of money to offset the 7 percent rates, no, we're not. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I heard earlier today from the Premier that we were spending millions of dollars. I think he said tens of millions of dollars on these sorts of issues, but perhaps our residents are getting more benefit than we are from this. It seems like there should be some opportunities to be realized here. Just a comment, unless the Minister has any additional perspectives. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. If you look across the whole spectrum of energy, including the renewables, we are spending tens of millions of dollars over the last number of years going right back to the last government where we started with the \$60 million and we've carried on

every year since, trying to make sure we keep that work going. So we are investing that kind of money and we're continuing to invest both in the actual delivery as well as the planning and design on a go forward basis. Especially if we're successful and confirm our \$1 million O and M increase, then we'll have the ability to look at some serious economic infrastructure investments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley, anything further?

MR. BROMLEY: No, thank you, Mr. Chair. There are lots of comments that deserve a reply on that response, but I'll hold off on those. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Alright, committee, we're on Department of Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$3.777 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Agreed. Page 10, Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, directorate, previously not authorized, \$906,000; health services programs not previously authorized, negative \$326,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$580,000. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Minister would like to provide some clarity in terms of the negative operations expenditure of \$326,000. Again, it talks about costs associated for Yellowknife Consolidated Health Clinic lease. If I can get a clarification on that, please. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's an accompanying \$326,000 added to the Public Works budget. So this money is being transferred between departments as Public Works takes over the leasing portfolio of the clinics.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So what I'm getting at here is that we're taking the money out of health services and Public Works now is taking over the lease operations of this clinic. Is that my understanding? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So this is the lease associated with the consolidated clinic here in Yellowknife, and Public Works and Services manages the lease portfolio on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories and at the time this lease was entered into, the funding provided before the lease was held in the Department of Health and Social Services, and it's just being transferred into the Department of Public

Works and Services, who manages the lease on behalf of the department. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: I guess the question I have is that clinic has been operational now for some time here and it's only now that we're transferring from the Department of Health to Public Works and Services.

Do we have other scenarios right now in the Northwest Territories where the Department of Health does have a number of their leases, or are all leases now going under Public Works and Services? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: Public Works and Services already had the base part of the lease. This is just the O and M portion of the lease – heat, utilities, janitorial, et cetera – associated with that lease funding. This is an anomaly, and by and large all the leases and all the funding associated with leasing for the GNWT is in the Public Works and Services budget already. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Just for one final clarifier, we do not have any other health clinics, health facilities. As of now, all health facilities are under the realm and statutory obligation of Public Works and Services. Is that, indeed, correct? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: I believe that's for the most part, but I would have to confirm and get back to committee about that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Committee, we are on Department of Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$580,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 11, Department of Justice, operations expenditures, services to the government, not previously authorized, \$651,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$651,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 12, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, directorate and administration, not previously authorized, \$1.378 million; education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$1.899 million. Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$521,000. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have questions on the \$114,000 planned for electronic tablets under the Early Childhood Development Framework.

My first question is: Why weren't these dollars spent? These dollars were provided in the previous fiscal year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There were some delays in rolling out some of the tablet purchases due to issues with the supplier. The department is now requesting that that funding that was lapsed in '13-14 be carried over to the '14-15 fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. This is the first I have heard that Apple was not able to supply iPads, but that's interesting to hear.

I understand that 300 iPads were purchased. Were they distributed, and if not, why not?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, we will get that detail for the Member.

MR. BROMLEY: I have the Minister's briefing note in front of me, if he would like me to read it out.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, I was temporarily distracted. If the Member could repeat the question.

MR. BROMLEY: I was offering to read the Minister's briefing note out that explains that, if he would like me to.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Is there a question there, Mr. Bromley?

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I was asking why the 300 iPads that were purchased were not distributed, if they weren't. That was my question. I have other questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The information we have says that ECE has procured 300 iPad minis from the local businesses and is now testing the best process for loading the information onto tablets.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't seem to be getting a full understanding here. I understand that the department called for sponsorship in purchase of iPads in 2013 through a public call for that. Why was that done and what was the response?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. When we first initiated these tablets for new mothers, we figured that we wouldn't have enough funding to go out to all the new moms and 300

tablets that we're talking about, it could go beyond that. So we were seeking an alternative source of funding. We've had that in the past with other projects that have been very successful, accessing other sources of funding. Those are some of the areas that we have reached out to.

As Minister Miltenberger stated, these tablets are before us. They are still being tested. We have all of these different programs that need to be installed. Those are some of the delays that we have encountered. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for that response. I'm wondering: in the sponsorships, is there a requirement for branding of the iPads?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sorry, Mr. Bromley. Can you repeat the last part there?

MR. BROMLEY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering: is there a requirement through these sponsorships for a branding of these iPads, a strict branding that will go along with the iPads into the homes of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Those are the logistics that still need to be worked out. With any sponsors, obviously, they want their logo. We are currently in discussion with the industry on the particular matter, but at the end of the day, the important part is we are giving tablets to new mothers, expectant mothers and all kinds of programs that will be beneficial to the family. That is what we're doing at this point. There are a lot of discussions that are happening. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Minister's information. Basically I have two concerns here that I would like to address. The first is the use of iPads for early childhood development and putting them into the homes of our smallest and youngest and most vulnerable minds and the almost certain use of those iPads by these wee children, and the second is the effective branding on these children who will certainly be accessing these pieces of equipment in contrast to what we know is a very effective way to communicate with families on a personalized basis.

First, just to the impacts of screen time on children, which undoubtedly will be the ones using these iPads the most, I would like to note that there are clear effects which have been demonstrated. Excessive screen time on children include obesity, sleep deprivation, irregular sleep, aggression,

behavioural problems, impaired academic performance, less time for play, greater risk of hypertension, asthma, addictions, poor mental health, problems with body image, desensitization and consumerism. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under two actually have no screen time for babies and toddlers.

Young children, it is demonstrated, learn best by relating to real, live people and by moving and doing, and therein lies a very important point on how we can deliver these programs in effective ways.

In terms of branding, the University of Alberta study on partnerships between oil multinational corporations and the Alberta government shows that such partnerships undermine the basic tenets of education, obstruct access to information and limit critical thinking. I don't think there's any question that all of us would like to see every citizen in the Northwest Territories reach their full human potential, and this is being limited by this approach.

There's new research that shows that a brand experienced from birth is more quickly recognized by students than a brand encountered at age five and older. So these are quite insidious effects or not if the product is a good product and so on. Studies show that branding and corporatization in education and health, for example, by large oil companies, programs delivered undermine or even demonize concern for the land and traditional knowledge values in favour of technology and fossil fuel and artificial values in order to conscript, of course, lifelong consumers.

These are extremely important considerations and they contrast with, you know, the opportunity to deliver programs, again on a personal basis, within the homes of families.

Mr. Chair, I realize I'm running out of time here. I'm happy to carry on after others have had an opportunity to comment here, but I do have a couple more questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe the Minister of Education would like to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The tablets that we're talking about are not only for the children, it's for the parents as well. Mostly for the parents where the families can keep track of their children's developmental milestones providing immunization and nutrition information. There is all this different programming that's on these tablets that are going out. There's First Aid, as well, and

language apps and different apps for children's songs, books, learning, fun activities to enjoy as a family. The tablets also encourage the relationship between community-based health care and our education providers with new parents, so together they can explore the early childhood development apps that are out there. There are all these different apps and the resources, which are on electronic tablets.

This is an area that's not new. We've been exploring this area for quite some time now through the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative and engagement of the general public. It's the grandparents who spoke to us to say, provide some resource material to these new parents so they can work with their young ones. It's a whole learning curve for them.

We've experienced the brand names the Member is referring to. De Beers is a prime example. Books in Homes has been very successful to date. They have provided thousands and hundreds of thousands of books into the Northwest Territories communities, and they continue to do so, educational materials. I don't see any issues with that.

So these tablets going out to the parents, we should be supporting that. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro, then Mr. Menicoche.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some questions, as well, around this particular item.

My first question to the Finance Minister or to the Minister of Education – I don't know who would want to answer this – if we are accepting money from corporations and they are assisting us to buy the materials that we need to put programs in place, I'd like to know whether or not that is being done within a corporate sponsorship policy of the GNWT.

Is there a policy that we are following when we make these purchases with money from a corporate sponsor, or this is something... The Minister of Education mentioned that this is something that has been talked about for quite a while. It hasn't been talked about with Regular Members, so I have no knowledge of whether there are parameters around the dealings that the department is doing with this corporate sponsor or whether we actually have a policy that's being followed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From what I understand, we've been doing this through practice and convention on a case-by-case basis, that there is no clear

delineated policy on corporate sponsorship. We've been doing this for decades literally, especially when it applies to things like the Arctic Winter Games, when we have events where we have sponsorships, sponsors that put money in and we share the brand with them. We have a way that we've worked out to do that. So this is something that is upon us from all quarters, and we have been, in fact, pushing partnerships across the board and this is another one of these areas. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I guess I would ask the Minister if he could provide me and other Members with a written summary of this practice and convention that we've been following for however many years he mentioned.

I have great difficulty in seeing a similarity between what we're talking about here with iPads, which are branded, presumably, and putting money into, for instance, Arctic Winter Games. I don't see that these are equated quite the same.

It's one thing to take funding and to put a logo on a program or put a logo at an event on a sign. It's another thing, in my mind, to take a piece of equipment that a child is going to be using and/or that the parents are going to be using, and put that basically in front of the child or in front of the parents where they're going to see it over and over and over. So I see a distinction there.

The comment from the Education Minister earlier was that at the end of the day, we have to remember we're giving iPads loaded with materials to the parents. That struck me as the important thing, is we're giving the iPads, never mind about the fact that this is a corporate sponsor and never mind about the fact that there is branding on there and that there is a corporate name that is going into the home. Whether the iPad is intended for the parent or not, it's going to get into the hands of the child. I cannot see that a parent with an iPad is not going to put an app on that iPad that is going to keep their kid amused for 10 minutes while they have a shower or whatever. So I don't think that we can assume that these iPads are only going to be put into the hands of parents. If we do that, then I think we're only fooling ourselves.

My request is if we can get some kind of a summary of a policy or protocol or convention that we are following. That's the question. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We'll pull together what's requested by the Member. We're also, as we're going to have this discussion, I need to clarify the issue of branding, per se, is not a problem, it's the type of brand, from my understanding from the Member, that if it was Toys R Us or whatever, that would be fine, but if it's an oil company, the Member's predilection for what's right and wrong, that would be noted. Is that the issue, that all brand name is bad, regardless

whether we're sponsoring oil and gas conferences or we're giving books from Diavik Mine or we're getting airlines and all the other good corporate citizens who put money towards Arctic Winter Games, or is it because they have a particular point of view about some corporations and they shouldn't be allowed near children? That's a whole different debate. Thank you. But we will get that information.

MS. BISARO: Yes, it is a whole different debate and it kind of goes to the crux of this issue for me. There's the issue of getting \$5,000 from a company and putting their logo on a sign at an event. This is a different issue, in my mind, where conceivably, because we don't know yet what's going to happen, but every time somebody opens up this iPad that a corporate logo is going to pop up or a corporate name is going to pop up, or every time they turn the iPad over they're going to see a corporate logo pasted on the back of the material or the iPad. I see that as very different from a one time or even a repeated event of a logo on a sign. The books for De Beers, I mean, yes, the books are given away in a bag that says De Beers on it, but I don't believe – I can't remember totally – but I don't think the books all have De Beers emblazoned all over them, and if they do, I would have a bit of a problem with that.

It is a very different debate but it's not a debate that we've had, and I think, as Members, maybe we ought to have that debate. I don't know that the government should be making these decisions around corporate sponsorship without the input of Regular Members. That said, bottom line for me is if we have to, and I appreciate partnerships to get events done, but if we have to start canvassing corporate partners or corporations to get funding to run our programs and services, I think we are headed down a very difficult road and a very dangerous road. If we can't properly fund our programs and services without getting money from whether it's big business or little business, and it doesn't matter – to go to the Minister's suggestion – whether it's an oil company or whether it's a food company. I have a problem with the fact that it is in the face of children particularly, but in the face of residents constantly, and if we can't fund our programs and services properly, then we shouldn't be asking corporations for it. We should be asking taxpayers to fund our programs and services properly.

It's a very mixed bag answer, but it is because it is a very difficult debate and I would again encourage the government to consider having that debate with the Regular Members.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This supplementary request of \$114,000 has triggered a policy discussion that would probably best be held at another time. I wouldn't confirm that the De Beers books have stickers on them. God forbid that they have stickers on them. The policy discussion,

maybe it can be agreed that we do want to have that debate about is there a prescribed list, what are we going to accept as brandable and whatnot, and what activities, what actual physical objects, and have that discussion. I don't know if we're going to resolve it here today, but clearly some of the Members have a problem with that particular item.

I mean, it's for the families, to hook them into our systems, to help them with parenthood, to hook them into the immunization, dental, all these good things that the Minister of Education has laid out. I would be shocked and appalled if there was subliminal advertising built in to the iPads that are flashing out things about the oil companies or love Chevron or whatever it is. I mean, this is a partnership arrangement to do good things for parents and families that otherwise wouldn't be able to afford this type of support and advantage. We can have that debate. I don't know if we're going to finish it here tonight.

MS. BISARO: No, I'm not suggesting we have the debate here tonight. I think it needs to be done in a different time and venue. I just want to say two things and then my time is up. One is that the books from De Beers are not being handed out by the government. They're being given out by the company, and albeit they're being given out in our schools and to our schools, they're not coming from the government. These iPads presumably are coming from the government, and I think they are being recognized that they are coming from the government. I don't have a problem with the concept of the iPads, giving the information to the parents. I do have a problem with the fact that we are, as a government, giving out materials that presumably are going to have a corporate brand on them. That's the debate we need to have.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: To understand that clearly then, the question would be, then, if the partner gave out the iPads and we just put our information in it and they gave it out, is that then acceptable? I guess it's a question. I'm not quite clear. That's the next question that leaps to mind, listening to the Member about what she would consider acceptable.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next I have Mr. Menicoche and then Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to talk about providing funding for electronic tablets to new parents under the Early Childhood Development Framework Right from the Start for \$114,000. I respectfully disagree with the previous two colleagues that spoke on this matter. The iPads are for our new parents and their children. A colleague spoke about TV time and the numerous studies and the health effects of it, but this is TV time that's spent at home under parental

control that we, as government, have no control over. In fact, we see it on the news all the time that Canadians, please, don't have your children watch TV, try not to keep them on the iPads such as this when they're on their own time, keep them away from games. That's all about screen time, and certainly, there are detrimental effects, but that's something that's outside the home. We're talking about an educational tool here. That's something that I'm supportive about. In fact, the future education will be more virtual. There will be more educational tools like this at the school at all levels, in fact. That's where we're heading.

I represent small communities. Many parents have low and no income, and here's an opportunity for my communities and my parents and my children to catch up to the world. I'm supportive of that and accessing the tablets because that's where we are. The tools are there. The apps are there to help to get a jump on education and to further help them. Education courses, environmental and natural resources, in fact, are supported by government and they're supported by industry and supported by non-profits and private organizations. These things are already being done. In fact, they're being done in our schools, Aurora College, the high schools. In fact, small communities, in fact, I think it was Apple that gave 15 computers to Trout Lake because they had shown outstanding effort and they were chosen for a test project. In fact, Apple presented one to Trout Lake and delivered these products.

I'm not too sure about their concerns. Like I said, TV time, I'm not too sure about that, but they're talking about branding too. I saw some of the briefing notes that my colleague had. They had only one opinion from one scholar out of the University of Alberta, and many of his colleagues disagreed that branding is bad. We're also talking about policy. It's probably a good time to talk about it. How do we handle people? How big are the signs? Those are good questions. We should go there and I'm supportive of continuing to work with our partners. It's about transparency as well. The Minister at the table there talked about subliminal messages. I don't think that anybody will be that low to do that. But it's about transparency and letting everybody be aware, knowing who our partners are that are helping us with education. You know, should it be formatted, style, size? Certainly, but it's about transparency and everybody knows that.

I certainly disagree, as well, that industry has the most to gain from branding. Like I said, our children in our communities have the most to gain from these educational tools that are otherwise unavailable to my constituents and my communities. So I just wanted to say for the record, Mr. Chair, that as passionate as my colleagues are, I don't think, as a Member on this side of the House, that I share their opinion. Not that it's a bad

thing; in fact, we've got to welcome partners. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I'll take that as a statement. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya, then Mr. Hawkins.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I also want to just weigh in on the issue here. We're talking about a small sum of money versus a whole budget here and that these iPads will benefit, as Mr. Menicoche mentioned, the parents and families, so far that we can go into disciplining children in terms of how to use these iPads.

Branding has always been a marketing ploy of whatever company you have in this world. McDonald's has a brand, Coca-Cola, you know, ever since I was growing up, Snap, Crackle and Pop, Rice Krispies. I still remember that, that's a branding. Yes, it has always been in the industry, corporate world, you know, effective marketing, effective branding. Everybody does it. We just do it differently and it does have an effect. This new technology we're into now, I see it no different than when technology was coming out in my school days and getting into it. Now we've advanced further and our children are more into it and they're smart, these little ones. They can grab the iPad and just doodle on something, even set up my phone and things like that. They're very, very smart, very keen. That started in the days of Thomas Edison, Einstein, Henry Ford. They all advance. That's their God-given right. With the technology that we have, the advancement is more in the medical field, the science field, the environment field. All of these will move forward. For good or bad, it's how we see it with our eyes. Henry didn't make that judgment. I see that and Mr. Menicoche sees that this is an educational tool.

I heard a Member talk about technology in the world today. It's good to have Facebook, that's a real good tool, but it's being used sometimes in not a good way. It's scary. So the technology is there, it's how will you use it and it seems like this is an educational tool we can use.

I also agree with Mr. Menicoche about big business. Big profit organizations have a corporate responsibility and this is a corporate responsibility. I see it as a good thing and you can take that interpretation however you want.. Imperial Oil just gave the students in Norman Wells new computers. They've been in Norman Wells over 90 years. One of their corporate responsibilities was the schools and they found out they were lacking computers, so they gave the schools a lot of new computers. So you interpret that how you want to interpret that, but the kids certainly enjoy those new computers and they're making good use of them. How they use it, that's up to their own integrity in how they do it, but for them, their families worked for Imperial, maybe, or their aunties and uncles work for Imperial. So

that's the benefit of some of these large corporations coming to our communities.

Madam Chair, as Mr. Menicoche said, there are books, I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, you hear that Snap, Crackle and Pop, it's because I'm happy here. Mr. Chair, there are many documents written by well-known academics that are smarter than us in psychology and that on the study of the effects of the world today. I certainly appreciate Mr. Bromley bringing some of these here to look at. I mean, there are many. So we have to look at all of them and see what those effects are, not to disregard but to look at some of these studies here. There are many of them out there.

I myself do not think we need to have a discussion about the policies of branding. I think we need to be fair about it and look at it, but there are some goods that we have received and we're to look at the government, the taxpayers, do we increase our taxes so we can cover so we know the needs out there? They're so great. Even on a motion that I'm still thinking about that, you know, we couldn't increase the taxes because it's costing us a lot of money.

So this branding issue here, I believe for me it's common sense. Look at it. In Tulita and other small communities in the Sahtu, Husky has given our communities a breakfast program for our small kids. So I don't think there's any branding about it. It shows the people if you're willing to work, they will provide you something, some benefits. So we have a breakfast program going from Husky Energy and that's helping us. That's a good thing. Husky also provided a couple hundred thousand dollars to the people in Tulita. They took 47 people out to build a moose skin boat. The government, there's no money left, they've got no money for that. We asked them, can you help us train traditional skills on the land and construct a traditional boat? There might be other motivating factors from Husky, I don't know, I haven't gotten in their head, but 47 people who took advantage of that went up to the Keele River and built a moose skin boat. As a matter of fact, Mr. Premier went in that boat and he went for a boat ride.

But those are some of the things I wanted to say that corporate donation, responsibility, I don't know what you call it, but it certainly helps us and helped the 47 people on the Keele River teach the traditional skills of boat building to our younger generation. So those same things are how you look at it. We could be settling for other things that are not quite so positive.

So I wanted to say, just going back to the tablets and these iPads, let's not be too hasty in rushing, I mean, look at all things, are there alternative motives. I want to say I'm not very interested in them or having any discussion on the policies right now or in the future. It's a big issue that we need to

look at and there are probably other examples out there for both sides. But I want to leave it at that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, there's really no questions to the Minister. Those are my comments as I see this issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya, for those comments. Next I have Mr. Hawkins on my list.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This problem is quite simple to me. I boil it down to this little piece. The question is to iPad or not to iPad. Whether it is noble to suffer without an iPad or to slings and arrows without rages fortunate against those who cannot afford it – that darned iPad – or to take arms against those trying to offer those iPads, and in the end, as we oppose them as we go to sleep, there will be no iPads for any children or any family.

It's quite simple. The challenge before us is do we support the iPads to get in the hands of the young people and the parents and provide the mechanisms to do that. I don't have such concerns with the iPad. Actually, I am more about the technical side, about who is responsible for content, who is going to own the iPads, who is going to maintain them? What if they get dropped? Do they get replaced? Who's going to supply the Internet and stuff?

I do hear the concerns brought forward by the Members who are concerned, but the reality is this is a trend which is that sometimes things just don't get done without corporate support. We have to be thankful when they come in and they are able to do things.

Is this a taxation problem as Mr. Bromley has brought up? Maybe in the bigger picture it is in some ways, but no one can deny that that can't be a real consideration of the problem, but I don't think we are solving today's problem by standing in the way of the iPads. I am more concerned about now, once we have them in our hands, are we responsible for content? When I sign on to my computer in the morning, the first thing it says is it controls the contents, a little message about using it appropriately, et cetera. Well, if the government is buying an iPad, where do we take the responsibility? When I say government, I mean it means with Chevron's money, that is. But I think that is one of the questions that need to be fully answered for the public.

Are these going to be disposable in the context of giving them away? Let's start with those technical questions I am more focused on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Health and Social Services, working

with ECE, will be looking at loading up the tablets with all the appropriate programs and apps that allow people to tie into all these programs and services that the government does provide.

As I was sitting here listening to the debate, if I just may digress for one second, about 10 years ago ECE entered into a multi-year contract with the Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation to cover the Northwest Territories, which they did with going in all the communities trying to set up virtual libraries. It was a two- or three-year arrangement, but that was done with the money and funding from the Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation. We used Microsoft computers, of course, but it was a very successful partnership. So there are some very strong examples that we could all quote or point to in the area of the need and benefit of partnerships. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, maybe the Minister was so excited to get his message out he forgot my question. If he would like me to repeat it, I would be happy to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger, about some of the costs, Internet, et cetera, that Mr. Hawkins was asking about.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understood the Member was interested in the content piece that Health and Social Services and Education will be looking at loading it up. Once they get it, the Member is correct in how they use it other than what that content is, is another question. In terms of Internet access, that's not going to be our cost unless there is public accessibility somewhere. In the homes, it will be the cost of the parents. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, we are getting a little closer than before. I guess that's progress.

So, who owns the iPad? Who controls the content of the iPad? Who maintains them and are they disposable? In other words, once we give them, we don't see them back? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that they will be loaded up and given along with all the other accoutrements that go with the things we provide to new parents. That will be part of that package that they get. It will be from there, and henceforth their iPad. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Are we in the maintenance business if there are problems with the iPad? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: No, Mr. Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. As far as branding goes, who is paying for the implementation or how are they going to be branded? That is one of the problems that are being discussed here. I think, frankly, it's the elephant in the room. How are they

going to be branded? Are we talking about 50 percent of the screen and it stays on the brand name 20 minutes? Are we just talking about a small piece on the side like we see on a BlackBerry, et cetera, just small, little wording? What are we really talking about when we talk about branding in reflection to size and the impression it may have?

I mean, let's be realistic. I support the fact that if a corporation is going to supply them, I think they deserve the credit for supplying them. But I also recognize Mr. Bromley's point; we don't want to be hypnotizing young minds into thinking that this is the best brand in the world and those types of things. It's just like putting Coke, for example, at a sporting event. It is its own juxtaposition.

So, let's get to the bottom of that. What are we really talking about when it comes to branding? How much money will be invested in the branding portion and who is responsible for that? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: My understanding is that those details are still being hashed out. Whether it's branding of the actual case of the iPad or is it logos that are going to come up every time you turn your iPad on, I'm not sure. I'm not sure if the Minister of Education has any further detail on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. As I stated, we are working on the details of that. Obviously, we don't want to see when we open up an iPad and it flashes. We just want to have their branding or logo on the product itself. Those are the logistics that we're still figuring out. We are working closely with Health and Social Services where it is a joint initiative, as well, early childhood development.

We are at the early stage of the branding at this point, but we are dealing with the industry on the particular matter. There will be some sort of branding, obviously, on the tablet itself. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, who is picking up the cost for branding?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, the cost of branding, obviously, those are discussions that we are currently having with the industry. By the end of the day, we are going to have a tablet for each and every new mother that's going to be out there in the Northwest Territories, promoting that with their kids, reading and whatnot. We are still working out the logistics of the branding and who is going to pay for the cost of the branding. The industry is working very closely with us as well. Mahsi.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister really clear that a value on branding has not been

decided nor a process has not been decided thus far? I have been led to believe that that has already been considered. So when you say these are things we still have to work out, you would think that the plan would have come to our committee and our attention just a little clearer before you ask.

Basically you are asking us to trust you. Then when you go on and you can do whatever you want, and by the time it gets back to us, that is long down the river and it's too late to care about it.

Is the Minister very clear that this discussion has not been decided upon and, furthermore, no value has been directed to it? I have come to the understanding it has been decided and that's why I'm trying to get that detail officially. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated, this is the discussion we've been having. We're talking about potentially just a sticker on the back of an iPad, a tablet, similar to the De Beers book that we distributed through our partnership with De Beers and the schools. So it could be a matter of a sticker on the back of that tablet. We're finalizing those discussions we are currently having. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next on my list I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to thank my colleagues for all the very interesting and good comments I have received here. I think it demonstrates that there are a lot of questions and it is a serious issue. I think there are underlying issues here that we are discussing. How appropriate is it for government to partner with large corporations, especially oil corporations and so on in dealing with our youngest? That's what we're talking about here. We've heard about sponsoring teams in the Arctic Winter Games. No, no, we're talking about early childhood development here. Illiteracy is very strong.

I think Ms. Bisaro underlined a number of the fundamental aspects of this and so I think it's very clear that corporations have influenced the tax programs in this country. Not so long ago our revenues were typically 50/50. Personal income tax, corporate tax has changed dramatically in favour of the corporations and so on. So it's not surprising that government is very open to corporate partnerships and not having a close look at the impacts of those on our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. So I appreciate the call for the government to do that. I think that's appropriate and was one of the intents in doing this.

I think this program has been delayed in ways that are related to sponsorship. Of course, these are the sorts of prices we pay and the public never hears about as we take on these partnerships.

I believe most people in Cabinet might know that the so-called free trade agreements that Canada has with other countries, we have reservations on

the involvement of corporate delivery in education and health. To the extent that we start to move outside of that practice and use corporate delivery and sponsorships, we become very vulnerable to blowing those reservations out of the water and all of a sudden our entire educational/health systems and all business becomes open to global corporations from elsewhere coming in and removing business from our local businesses and so on.

In fact, just this weekend, Mr. Chair, on the national news, the Northwest Territories was solely pointed out and profiled as partnering quite often with big business in our educational and health programs. That is of concern not only to myself and some of my colleagues but to many of the citizens of the Northwest Territories and I wouldn't doubt Canada as well.

So, it's clear that the Ministers have not realized what the impacts of screen time were on our youngest children, nor of branding. It was mentioned that it was only one example provided, but obviously there is a large body of literature on that that can be referred to and brought into debate, if the Ministers choose to take the suggestions of myself and my colleagues to develop a policy on this.

Minister Miltenberger's reference that he assumes there are no subliminal things going on here, again, shows a naiveté because there certainly is. These corporations didn't get the way they are without knowing full well what they are doing and they have a huge amount of research on this. They know exactly how to take advantage of subliminal advertising. That's what this is all based on. As the Minister of ECE has said, the logos will be front and centre 24/7, 365 days a year and will have the desired impact. So we can't be naïve when we're dealing with this.

I grant that this is a difficult debate. I hope that rather than just having our opinions, that we will go out and do the research and try to get informed so we can base it on the best information that we have.

Very quickly, will these young families be provided with information that highlights the impact of screen time on children, some of the health issues that are very clear and that I have mentioned in my statements today, and the Minister could certainly delineate through research with his own staff. Will the Minister be committing to provide that information with this technology, given that our young children today are facing more and more of these sorts of distractions from the sorts of activities that we know are healthy? Can I get that commitment from the Minister? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Certainly that is part of it as well. As I stated, there are various different apps on these particular tablets that we have been talking about. That is just one piece of it. When we're distributing these tablets to the new moms, we're talking about new moms with infants. Obviously, the infant won't be able to pick up the tablet, but it's all these programs so the parents can work with their child. It's all learning tools and resources we are providing. So, yes, that will be part of the package that will be going out, what we've been hearing about in the whole discussion. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: I hope the Minister will provide that information soon. Again, the Minister is very naïve on this. Perhaps he has not had enough screen time and seen the commercials on TV with the little rocking devices for those babies with an iPad frame in it so you can just set in the iPad, so you can go and have a coffee or go and visit your neighbour. This stuff is a dime a dozen. The corporations are taking advantage of this. I'm not saying in response to Mr. Miltenberger's rather flippant remarks that all corporations are bad, that we're supposed to assume all corporations are bad and so on, I think corporations play a very important role in our economy and so on, but it recovers some government oversight to protect especially our most vulnerable and youngest citizens.

Mr. Chair, looking at the clock here, I think there have been enough issues raised that we really need to look at this before we go further. I've looked at the cost of this. We're talking about over a million dollars for this. It's portrayed here at \$114,000, but when you look at the time and the total number of iPads, I think we're talking over a couple of thousand and then 700 a year after that and then the cost of programming and so on. It's extremely costly. We could have jobs in our communities that are delivering early childhood development information rather than apps, really meaningful personal interactions that are proven to be the way to go in delivering early childhood development, especially with young families. So on that basis, Mr. Chair, I would like to propose a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Alright, Mr. Bromley. Go ahead.

COMMITTEE MOTION 74-17(5):
ECE, EDUCATION AND CULTURE, DELETION
OF \$114,000 FOR ELECTRONIC TABLETS TO
NEW PARENTS UNDER THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK,
DEFEATED

MR. BROMLEY: I move that the \$114,000 be deleted from the activity education and culture, operations expenditures, under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment at page 12, in order to provide funding for electronic tablets to

new parents under the Early Childhood Development Framework Right from the Start.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we are embarking on a program here that has been demonstrated to have serious reservations based on actual research and data. I presented some of it today. I know our research folks have done a lot more that's available for anybody to look at. I'm happy to provide it. That's just the tip of the iceberg. In contrast, there is a very useful way to spend this money and all the additional money that will go along with this and staff time for delivering early childhood development, and I'll remind everybody, all my colleagues again, that we're talking about delivery of early childhood development programs here.

I think the fundamental principle of involving large, multinational corporations in this activity is very questionable when these programs are things that should be delivered by the government. Involving them, of course, leads to delays and branding with its consequences to children and limiting their opportunity to develop to their full potential.

I will leave it at that. I think I have spoken to this. I have listened to my colleagues' comments and there is not full agreement, but there are serious concerns out there and I think this will be a first step. I think we do need to also look at other issues, but we'll leave that for now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I kind of wanted to make my comments in response to the general discussion that was going around here, but let me make them to the motion. I am not in support of the motion to delete the \$114,000 from this activity. I would like to put on the record that I would thank the corporate sponsor for becoming involved and partnering with us, and I am very sorry that they are being named here over and over again today. I am not sure if there is anybody listening here who is actually with Chevron, if I can say their name again, that they must be sitting here scratching their heads sitting listening to us, wondering what on earth they're doing donating and contributing anything to early childhood development in the Northwest Territories.

Screen time, the times they are a-changing. We've gone from vinyl records to eight tracks to cassettes to CDs to downloading tunes on iTunes. I'm sorry. We cannot stop progress. I think that to say that the audience that we are targeting with these iPads or tablets should not have access to this, I find it offensive and I'll tell you why. I know you can't maybe completely compare this on the same level,

but those little peewee hockey players that walk into that sports complex in Yellowknife here every time they go for their hockey practice, I betcha' they walk by a corporate sign that says that a diamond company puts multi-millions of dollars into a complex here in Yellowknife.

This discussion we're having here today seems very colonial. It seems very disrespectful to the audience that we're targeting here. Anything can be abused. I'm worried about children that are sitting in houses full of second-hand smoke. I'm worried about kids that turn on television. Does Mr. Bromley not think that every home in the Northwest Territories has a television that is broadcasting commercials that are influencing the minds of children with their corporate products? I mean, I'm worried about more than commercials. I'm worried about kids that have got access to TV where they're watching pornography, but I mean, we can't be in every home. I don't want to insult the parents, but we cannot be in every home.

As far as the branding goes, I do not see any subliminal harm or damage in a logo of a corporation, a highly regarded corporation, a reputable corporation being on a tablet and then participating with us as a government to put this tool in the hands of young families and mothers. Like I said, times are changing and we cannot stop progress.

I do take some exception also to the comment about the naivety of the Education Minister. I would like to suggest that probably our Minister of Education has more experience with raising children than anybody in this House.

---Laughter

That's including Mr. Bromley, as he points out himself.

That's not intended as any offence, but I think parents are doing their best, and like I said, we cannot stop progress. This is the way. I mean, I'm almost 60 years old and some of the stuff is amazing to me, too, but when the Legislative Assembly issued tablets to all of us, I've got to tell you, my screen time went up, like, 100 percent after I got this from the Legislative Assembly, but I don't really think it's had a detrimental effect on me. I know it's the young people that we need to be concerned about, but we do need parental guidelines. We do need supervision, but so do we on many, many, many other things. So to exclude a group of people because we don't think they can manage that, I don't agree with that, and I certainly do not agree with this motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Next on my list I have Mr. Dolyunny, followed by Mr. Hawkins.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank my colleagues for stepping in and giving

some good comments here today. Unfortunately, I too did not get a chance to throw some comments when it was going around and we were dealing with the line entry on the supplementary estimates.

I'm actually gravely concerned. I come from the corporate environment and if I was a corporation listening in or even having a copy of these transcripts, I would be second guessing my community sponsorship program and my community involvement or my giving back. We're clearly sending a really wrong message here.

As much as I like to embrace the ideology of a few here, I don't believe this is what we refer to as a serious problem. A serious problem here is that we've dragged out a very genuine offer from a company for about the last hour and we've mentioned company names in this House, which I think is wrong. These company names, I have the highest degree of respect. We shouldn't be bringing company names to the floor of the House, and for that I apologize for every company name that was brought forward.

The issue that we have before us as a motion is a motion of deletion, which is really, by purview, one of the few options we have as a committee, and I can understand that, but the concept that we're trying to do here under the guise of use is bad and brand is bad, I've heard some pretty daunting words here today. I've heard the words undermine, demonize, influence the taxation. We're painting corporate Canada like a villain, and I think that is a huge error on our part here. If I liken the fact that if the donor here today had a mission statement of, you know, say no to carbon footprint or let's save a tree, would we be having the same argument here today? I don't think we would be. Because we're dealing with a company that happens to be in the oil business, all of a sudden now this is a bad thing.

Again, no disrespect to any company that may have those mission statements, but the thing is that, as someone who's trying to make sense of all this here, it doesn't compute. We're saying no to technology. We're saying let's play with a stick, and let's ignore the modernization which has put us here in this very room and has made the Northwest Territories devolve. We're saying no to evolution in a general sense, and I think, really, when it comes to early childhood development, there are going to be many schools of thought.

Growing up and going to university, I can tell you, I had professors. You'd have one professor say one thing and you'd have another professor saying a completely different thing. The beautiful thing about being academic is everyone's got an opinion. Everybody. And you've got to learn to live with it and respect those opinions. No one's really wrong and no one's really right. It's just that there are different opinions.

But, really, what we're boiling down to is a company has come forward, they have offered to modernize our way of doing business. They've offered to partner with us with early childhood development. We have been involved with companies forever in the Northwest Territories, and yes, I liken this to the same thing as doing sports. You know, our youth ambassadors, sporting events, scholarships. Companies donate to many of our scholarships that involve our children. I grew up with a block of wood and if I had the choice between a block of wood and a tablet, I'd choose a tablet. The farm made the person I am today, but really, at the end of the day, I don't see a huge issue here. Can we have some rules around corporate sponsorship and a policy? Absolutely. But today is not the day for that conversation, and I'm willing to have that debate when the time comes, but not at the expense of jeopardizing what I think is a very genuine offer and I do have good faith, and great faith, that we're going to move forward in the right way with this sponsor in making sure that, yes, there's no subliminal messages being broadcast time and time again.

Growing up with my two sons, we've had tablets around the house and stuff like that. These kids pick up stuff very fast. It's amazing and I couldn't even imagine raising my kids without technology in today's day and age and giving them a fighting chance to have the jobs. At the end of the day, I've got to make sure that my kids are as competitive as any other kid down south and given the right tools and the same tools, and we're dealing with impoverished communities here, we're dealing with communities that do not have. This allows have, which I don't know how we can say no to have. It just does not make any sense at the end of the day.

As much as, again, I respect my colleague's opinion, like I said, everybody has got one. At the end of the day, block of wood versus a tablet, I choose a tablet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. On my list I have Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Moses, Mr. Menicoche, then Ms. Bisaro. So, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm always entertained by growing up stories by Member Dolynny. They're quite entertaining by all means.

I think the real fundamental problem here, and I think Member Dolynny touched upon it, is about the rules here, and certainly the roles and responsibilities are the issues. Frankly, I welcome sponsorship and we just have to have it under what we believe is our choice and our guidelines, and I think, fundamentally, that's the problem here. Some of us are accepting things for the unknown.

If we did not consider this opportunity, which is one, you know, I think it would be a mistake not to welcome. The problem is we have to look at how

many things we would have lost. There was a gymnasium I've been into not that long ago, the score board was sponsored. There are jerseys for sports teams; they sponsor music festivals. I mean, I believe that the credit is certainly and rightly deserved upon the corporation that steps forward.

A lot of things really wouldn't get off the ground without sponsorship. I was at a sporting event the other day and I think it's NT Power Corporation. I made sure that they got extra acknowledgement for their contribution to the athletes and opportunities that they helped create. Now, I'd hate to think that my power rates would need to go up for them to sponsor more, but the fact is that some of these events just don't happen without help.

So I guess the question really here is, I sort of poked away at to iPad or not to iPad. Frankly, that's it. Will there be iPads if we delete this? That will delete the line item, but will it delete the iPad and the opportunity it creates? Frankly, I think that that would take away that learning environment and opportunity.

I hear Mr. Bromley's point about the messaging and whatnot, and I've made note of it myself on a few occasions about we have to be responsible about the right types of atmosphere, and furthermore, I was trying to get at the fact that no one seemed to want to answer who is paying for this logo issue. Where I was going with that is, frankly, I want to ensure that if somebody is sponsoring it and they want their name on it, then they should be paying for that piece. That's where I was going with that. I wasn't trying to trip government up this time. Frankly, it was just about them taking full responsibility. If they're going to have their logo on it and they're going to supply it, then once agreed upon by our rules, that they pay for their own logo, not the government. That's all I was worried about.

So, fairly and frankly, I worry about the impacts. Can the kids get along without these, or can the families get along? Well, they'll continue what they're doing, and in Mr. Dolynny's words, I mean, they'll be continuing to play with yesterday's technology. Mine happen to be not as fancy a stick or a block of wood as his maybe, but I don't think it's fair to hold other kids back with what really is modern day technology. By supporting this, it worries me about the messaging we're sending to corporate opportunities.

Not every company out there should be thrown under the guise of evildoers or whatnot, or trying to play a quick one on the tax guy by saying, well geez, I'll help you with \$2 here, but don't tax me \$100 behind my back. I don't believe that's the case. If we have a taxation problem, and I've said this and I will continue to say this, then let's work on the taxation problem, period. Okay, let's talk about the taxation problem, let's talk about our revenue problem, that's it, but they don't have to do this.

That's the something we're forgetting here, is they don't have to do it and they're doing it. I thank them for that and I'm going to finish off by saying I try to think corporations, every time they step to the plate and they pick up, because the expectation in government time after time after time is to do everything. Frankly, we cannot do everything and I'm enjoying every moment of saying this because it's so important. We just can't do everything.

So I thank them for their contribution. My only concerns are about the responsibility of this, the ownership of this and, of course, fair and reasonable responsible guidelines for labeling. That's all, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on my list I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I always welcome good debate in the House, depending on whatever concern or issue is brought forth. But when you look at the description here, it is to provide funding for electronic tablets to new parents. We've had many discussions in this House on many issues and even in committee, and a lot of times what it boils down to, we always talk about the underlying issues of why we're funding or why program services for certain things, and a lot of times it comes down to parenting skills. How do we get our parents better skilled in terms of providing the right type of parenting to their children?

Most of my life I've had the opportunity to work on the front line and work with new parents, and we do get those responsible families that come in and want to learn about how to be a new parent, how to take those programs and services, all the education that's needed with it, but there's also a targeted audience in the communities, and we all see it and they'll continue to possibly have babies and might not be very responsible and yet they still lack some parenting skills. This is an opportunity to change that cycle, especially with young parents that are possibly in high school or just out of high school or college and they need those skills moving forward.

However, moving forward, I do feel that as we develop this program that there are some questions that need to be addressed and that we're not just handing over the tablets to new parents, but possibly some type of training, some type of monitoring, feedback, follow-up on how these programs are brought forth, the type of parenting skills that are going to be implemented, healthy eating, exercise, languages. If the tablets, obviously, cannot add some new applications on there, add resources, maybe have an icon with emergency resources. We have those books, do you have to see a doctor? We could have information on there where parents could go to reference the book and save hospital visits. Just information, not for the parent to be a healthy parent, it's an opportunity to have information at

home at the tip of your fingers without having to make phone calls, exhaust the health centres, exhaust the RCMP.

It's a great opportunity, but as I said, we've got to make sure that we're not just handing over the iPads, the tablets. However, there is potential for backfire such as visiting extra Internet sites, who knows? You might give it to a family; they take it on their own and sell it. So you've got to have things in place to make sure those things don't happen.

I do agree with Mr. Bromley on screen time. I've done a lot of work in terms of physical activity, especially in youth and the high obesity rates and I think we'll see some of those results with instruments, but it's not just tablets, it's TVs, it's videogames, it's movies, a lot of things outside of the tablets here. I think we do need to think in a more innovative way. The Internet is good. There's a program that was just on the Nature of Things, David Suzuki, actually it was CBC National, it was a thing called the Khan Academy where they took education that was very difficult to learn and they taught individuals, they brought it down to simpler form so students that were getting academic education actually learned a lot better. Like I said, we could put applications on there for English, but also for all the Aboriginal languages that we are losing. Early childhood development, we have seen everything where the brain develops. If we had a parent and the infant learn at the same rate and we can start revitalizing our Aboriginal languages again.

We are going through the Education Renewal Initiative. We are promoting e-learning, and all these things are done through tablets and through screen time as well. There are some challenges that we have. The Minister mentioned we are going through a new funding formula for our schools and our authorities. The current funding formula we have right now, perhaps some schools might be getting the short end of the stick, so maybe that's where we look at as a priority, look at some of the schools that might need this more than others, or look at where our EDI results are coming with the highest need for intervention to get this education addressed.

Coming from Inuvik, we are a regional centre. A lot of our NGOs and sometimes the schools do rely heavily on donations, donations in-kind and they do succeed and they do work that way. Coming down to Yellowknife for sporting events or actually being able to learn and take on new programs can be done without the help of some of our industry providers in Inuvik and possibly elsewhere.

Obviously, I can't support the motion that Mr. Bromley did bring forward. There are a lot of challenges that we have in the North, and there are a lot of opportunities that we can use with this type

of program and being innovative and unique in getting our small schools educated.

As I said, just on the news yesterday, we are implementing this e-learning program into the Deh Cho and the Tlicho region, I think. So we are going to be hitting these small schools, and this is a great opportunity to use this. We should be thanking and taking every opportunity that we can have to look at the successes that we have and build partnerships with our partners in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Next I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I spoke earlier about disagreeing with my colleague's opinions that providing these tablets will be disastrous, deleterious and harmful to our children.

First, let me begin. Of course, I will not be supporting the motion. I am gravely saddened that my colleague's opinions have led to a motion on the floor of this House. The motion, although it doesn't say it, questions corporate donations. Like Member Jane Groenewegen, I too would like to thank them publicly right here for all that they do for our Government of the Northwest Territories, to the communities and to the schools in all our communities. These companies pride themselves in giving back to make a difference in the communities that they work in.

Once again, the premise of my colleague's argument I believe is wrong. He is talking about screen time. The screen time that we are all talking about is at home. It's a great concern to all Canadians and all jurisdictions about how much screen time that our parents are giving their children, but that's under parental control.

He talks about branding data. That, too, the jury is not out. As much as he has his scholars that say that branding is bad, there are other scholars that can attest that branding has no or very little impact. To put those two together and say an iPad for parents and children is one and the same argument I believe is wrong. I don't believe there is a connection there.

Once again, our education system and right across Canada, many of them are grateful that they have corporate sponsors, they have industry sponsors, non-profit sponsors, private sector organizations sponsoring them. They are happy, they are proud that everybody is working together for the education of their children.

My small communities have people with low and little and no income. I believe that what we are doing here will support access of my constituents to tablets for their children. Our children in the communities have the most to gain from this educational tool that's in this supplementary budget. This will be otherwise unavailable to them.

In closing, I disagree that industry has the most to gain. It is us and our communities, our children and our schools that have the most to gain. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I seem to have been labeled as anti-iPad and anti-corporate sponsorship. I'm not quite sure why. Maybe because I expressed a concern with the fact that we don't have a policy to deal with corporate sponsorships.

I am not against corporate sponsorship. I think I need to impress upon people that I am making a distinction between corporate money going to government and corporate money going to a sporting event, for instance.

We are – and I use us all in this room – we are the government. By putting a name on a piece of equipment, we are endorsing that organization, that company, and I don't think that that is what a public government should be doing.

I do support this project. I think the project is valid. I have concerns, as does Mr. Bromley, about the amount of screen time that our kids are getting into and can get into. I think what concerns me about what we are doing is that we are giving children another opportunity to increase screen time, but as Mr. Menicoche says, it's within the purview of the parents. If we supply the iPads with information on how much time kids should have in front of a screen, then one weighs off the other and I am fairly comfortable with that.

I don't know how to say it any more strongly, that providing material to our parents to help them raise their children better is a good thing. I think better is if we can provide the one-on-one and the individual person-to-person information about raising our children better. That's probably more expensive and probably harder to do. So if this is a choice of two things and this is a second best choice, then I am okay with the iPads, but I do have concerns about the fact that we as a government are accepting corporate money and we don't have anything to guide us in how we do that. That's basically what my concerns are. I seem to have been tarred with the brush of we shouldn't accept any corporate money, and that's not where I'm coming from.

I appreciate Mr. Bromley's concerns about the branding. That for me, I guess, is also a problem. We don't have a policy which says whether we should have a logo that is 500 feet wide or five feet wide, if it's somewhere. We don't have a policy which says there should be nothing on the iPads but we give them credit in some document somewhere.

I don't really know how else to explain it. Because I have concerns about the issue but I do support the

project, I am going to abstain from the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, this motion talks about taking \$114,000 from this activity and saying we will buy it ourselves within government. Take it from this pot and we'll take it from the Right from the Start pot. Because of our philosophical and political issues, we say we don't want to say to the corporate world thank you but we'll fund it ourselves, we have enough money. Mahsi, but that's okay. That's what it's saying, because of the philosophical issues of how we see the corporate social responsibility what they're doing and because we need some more discussions as to government has always been receiving corporate donations through many, many forums, the federal government, the provincial governments, all three of our territorial government. Even with the Aboriginal governments, we've always had that type of request donations.

Now, this is kicking it up to another level that I don't want to be involved in for the discussions. I'm not interested. I'm saying mahsi cho, because they always say...[English translation not provided]... I got no money. I want to just say that the branding and the screen time might be an issue, but this motion here is saying it's rejecting the funds. That's what it's saying. Take it out of another one. All the other issues around us, it's a big story, and I'm not going to accept this or support this motion because it's going to have some other consequences. My people are hungry for this kind of information, and I'm getting hungry, so I'm going to close it there. I'm going to ask for a recorded vote on this one here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'll allow the mover to make a final comment.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I appreciate all the comments from my colleagues. I think Ms. Bisaro has said it well. There is a lot of spring boarding from the issues that we're discussing, which is the role of the impacts of screen time and branding on small children and how we are going to deliver our early childhood development programs to try and avoid that. I think that's what we're talking about here. Many of the comments I heard I agree with, and I don't see them as necessarily inconsistent with what I'm talking about, and I will say, quite frankly, corporations I see as having big value and have a role to play, many roles to play in our society. I see the iPads as a heck of a useful tool and Internet as playing a big role in today's education, so those questions are not being debated, though I'm happy to hear the comments and perspectives of my colleagues.

A couple of comments I did want to highlight, Mr. Dolynny's especially. He grew up with a block of wood. Raise your hands. How many of us grew up with a block of wood? This sounds flippant in a way, but no, that is the rub. Do you know that block of wood remains one of the most fundamental tools in early childhood today because it enables innovation. The other thing is many of us grew up in the outdoors, an incredibly complex world and that alone enables innovation and full development of the brain. As seemingly straightforward as that is, that is a huge point that I'm trying to raise here. The iPad certainly enables all kinds of learning, and Mr. Dolynny referred to his children's drawing on that. I'm not taking away from that. I am talking about early childhood here. But iPads and screens generally do have these proven impacts and tend to limit.

I believe he said iPads that enable kids to have the jobs, and I say what we're talking about here is having the jobs versus creating the jobs. I'd say Chevron... Sorry. Many corporations...and that's the first time I've said a corporate name. Many corporations would love you to have the job, but I think this government would love to create the jobs, and that's at least the motivation for what I'm talking about today.

The taxation problem has been mentioned, and I think there's lots of fruitful room for discussions there. The underlying issue have been mentioned, and I hope my colleagues would agree that early childhood development has been a huge issue for me. I've tried to push hard on it in providing a lot of resources, and I tried to be a leader in our move towards developing and delivering early childhood education and development programs, and that's because, like everybody in this room, I really do care for the young people and our smallest children as well as our youngest families that we're trying to address with this program. I realize that this can be taken as taking away iPads from a family, but I am also trying to look at the big picture on what the net benefits will be, is there an alternative way that we should be delivering these programs that are proven to be more effective and could be done with the budget we have at hand.

On the remote possibility that this motion gets defeated here today, I hope the Minister will do some evaluation of the impact of iPads and branding and screen time on kids. This is an opportunity to actually put some information on what the impacts are. I know we've bought some iPads ourselves, but I don't see any evaluation. I see us just jumping into a wholehearted – you know, deliver this regardless – program, so I think some evaluation of it with being cognizant of these potential impacts that science demonstrates would be worthwhile.

Again, portraying it as a philosophical issue. Au contraire. I think there is a lot of evidence in the literature that these are real issues, and it's probably a body of literature we're not all familiar with. I'm certainly not as familiar with it but I have had research drumming up some information on it and I've learned a lot. I've also learned a lot from the debate today. I'll leave it at that. I know we've spent a long time at this and I appreciate the thorough discussion we've had.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Question has been called. The Members have asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Bromley.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): All those opposed, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Moses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): All those abstaining, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Ms. Bisaro.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. One in favour, 14 opposed and one abstention. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Committee, we'll take a short break and continue on.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we are on page 12 of the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015. When we went for the break, we just finished a motion. I'm going to continue on this, and if there are any questions, please let me know.

Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, directorate and administration, not previously authorized, \$1.378 million; education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$1.899 million. Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$521,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 13, Transportation, operations

expenditures, corporate services, not previously authorized, \$349,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$349,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 14, Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$120,000; minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$250,000; energy, not previously authorized, negative \$800,000. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To provide for the transitional allowances for eligible devolved employees, could I just have a brief explanation of what that is? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to Minister Miltenberger. Actually, we'll go to Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of the Devolution Agreement and taking on the employees that were transferred over from the federal government, there was, in certain cases, a gap in the amount of pay the government was paying them and the amount of pay the employees were earning with the feds. As part of the agreement, the government agreed to pay a transitional allowance to pick up that difference for a period of, I think, five years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. Is this something that is payable to the employee immediately for the year sort of thing or is it paid out over the course of the year? Thanks.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Transitional allowances are paid on the first day of the month following April 1st and then are paid in a lump sum after that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: So, could an employee that just stayed for a short time get a whole year's benefit? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: I will have to get back to the Member on that. I'm not quite sure I know the answer to that.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that. I would also appreciate information on how many, if any, employees did leave within a short time of receiving that allowance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'll take that more as a comment, unless the Minister wants to respond. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll provide that information for the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$120,000; minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$250,000; energy, not previously authorized, negative \$800,000. Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$430,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. We're on page 15, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$91,000; environment, not previously authorized, \$500,000, forest management, not previously authorized. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Just a request of the Minister, Mr. Chair, on the evaluation and the success of these energy programs. I would like to know about the Sahtu assessment and how these programs went into our communities. If he could provide me with a written document on these programs that went into the communities, specifically the hot water heater program and any other programs under this initiative that had some impacts in the Sahtu region. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have region-specific information, but I will provide that information to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we're on Environment and Natural Resources. We'll continue with Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question under the water resources section. There's a fairly large increase here for the operations of the Taiga Environmental Lab. Could I get an explanation of why the increase? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's going to be revenue generated out of this. The four employees that were there weren't government employees, weren't federal government employees, if my memory serves me correctly, and we brought them into the fold, but they've been operating on an equivalent amount of revenue from third-party sources. I'll ask Mr. Aumond if he wants to add anything further and, if I've strayed, to make sure that we get it right.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So there was a private company that used to perform operations at the Taiga lab and they used to employ four individuals, as the Minister has stated. Then they would collect the revenues to offset their costs. The intention now is to not use the private contractor. They were unable to come to an agreement to continue that service. So the department now will operate the lab, like the Minister said. So some increased costs, but it will be totally offset by revenues. So no incremental cost to the government for this expense. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister and staff for that. So this was only a portion of the operation of the lab. So the private sector was offset totally by revenue, if I heard that. So then we have a corresponding... I think it's 50 percent of the costs of the lab that we are paying for, or is there revenue to offset our portion of costs as well? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The indication we have is that the lab has generated about \$600,000 a year in revenue and that's all we have listed as revenue. I'll ask Mr. Aumond if he has anything further to add.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department would have in its base budget that just would have been passed last March, money to operate the lab. This is just an additional amount of revenue that was not anticipated at the time that the budget was done. So that's why it's being brought forward in the supp at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Committee, we're on page 15, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The issue here is a comment that was made by an elder in Fort Good Hope that was hoping that sometime in the future I would make a request here that the department considers looking at setting up a lab in the Sahtu, given the issues that we're faced with today and the environmental, especially with the water issue just recently with Imperial Oil. So, Imperial Oil seeking a water licence in the amount of reusable water that's going back into the Mackenzie River and that the elder in Fort Good Hope strongly commented to me how we would like to see a laboratory in the Sahtu. I'm not too sure where that will be brought up or discussed within the plans of the government, but it's something that he seriously told me to raise with the Assembly and

I'm raising it now. So more of a request to the department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For today we're talking about the Taiga lab and the money for the staff. The actual building itself is in an advanced state of decrepitude and is going to need some significant upgrading. The issue that the Member is talking about, we could probably be talking about during the business planning process as we move forward. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you for the Minister's comment, and I recognize that there is a process for that. Looking at the Taiga Environmental Laboratory and I hope to take some of those lessons learned from that laboratory within the government that we would see something like that in our region in the future. But I'll deal with it during the business plans.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'll take that as more of a comment here. I'd like to turn over the floor here to Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to follow up on the earlier question about the transitional allowances for eligible devolved employees. I'm interested in that information for all departments. It looks like it has been three departments probably, three or four departments. Will this cost be derived from I believe it was the \$23 million, the one-time costs to implement devolution? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that, we'll go to Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This money will be funded from the base transfer that we got, the \$67.5 million it came from. So it's not one-time funding. It's going over five years, as Mr. Kalgutkar said. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The last question I have, are the mine inspectors that transferred over, are they in ITI or, sort of, ENR, because I believe that's the department we're on here, or are they in ITI or Lands? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe they're in Lands. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Okay, committee, we're on page 15, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$91,000; environment, not previously authorized, \$500,000; forest

management, not previously authorized, negative \$82,000; water resources, not previously authorized, \$586,000; conservation, assessment and monitoring, not previously authorized, \$7,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.102 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 16, Lands, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$38,000; planning and coordination, not previously authorized, \$1.036 million; operations, not previously authorized, \$157,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.231 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree we've concluded consideration of Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 75-17(5):
CONCURRENCE OF TABLED DOCUMENT
93-17(5), SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2014-2015,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 93-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 93-17(5) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We're just waiting for the final document to circulate. The motion is in order and the motion is not debatable. The motion is carried.

---Carried

I'd like to thank our witnesses here tonight. Mr. Kalgutkar and Mr. Aumond, thank you for joining us. If I can get the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Okay, committee, as previously agreed upon here earlier today, we are going to go to Bill 8. With that, we'll go to the sponsor of the bill for opening comments. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here to introduce Bill 8, Write-off of Debts Act, 2013-2014. The bill authorizes the write-off of debts and assets listed in the schedule to the act.

Pursuant to Section 24 (3) of the Financial Administration Act, Legislative Assembly approval is required for the write-off of government debt that exceeds \$20,000.

Pursuant to Section 82 (2) of the Financial Administration Act, Legislative Assembly approval is required for the write-off of a debt to a public agency that exceeds \$20,000.

I wish to emphasize that a write-off of a debt does not relieve a debtor of the liability for repayment. The government or public agency will continue to collect the outstanding amount. Through continued monitoring by staff, future recovery of the debt may still be achieved.

The debts and assets being presented for write-off relate to the NWT Business Development Corporation.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations that considered the bill for opening comments. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations reviewed Bill 8, Write-off of Debts Act, 2013-2014, at a meeting on May 29, 2014. Following a clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report to the Assembly that Bill 8 was ready for consideration by Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's comments on Bill 8. Individual members may have comments or questions as we proceed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. I'll now turn it to the Minister if he has witnesses he would like to bring into the House.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Miltenberger, if you could please introduce your witness to the House.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Warren St. Germaine, the assistant deputy minister and comptroller general, Department of Finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. St. Germaine, welcome to the House. Thank you for joining us this evening.

Committee, I will now turn to the floor here to see if anyone has any general comments. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some questions. I don't really have comments, but in going over the bill at committee, there were a number of things that I wondered about. Maybe I can just, sort of, wonder those out loud and then the Minister can respond.

We haven't seen a bill like this every year and I wondered if I could get a sense of the trend over the last, say, 10 years or even five years of how much we are writing off annually. Is it an amount that's going up or going down?

I also wondered about the policies and the guidelines that we use to write off debts. I know these are, as they mentioned, debts of the Business Development Investment Corporation, but how often are our policies and guidelines reviewed and updated? Since we're basically taking money off the books as we write off an amount of money, I wondered how hard, I guess, we, as a government and as the Department of Finance, how hard they work to collect the money that we are about to write off, and in terms of collections, if we do write it off, if once this bill is passed there are still some debts there, does the government still try to collect that money? Or once it's written off, do we just say, okay fine, and we totally forget about it and it's gone away?

I know the Minister mentioned that these are Business Development Investment Corporation's, but I gather that we do write-offs of public agencies, and I wondered if there were any other public agencies besides BDIC that we would encounter write-offs for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For those responses we will go to Mr. St. Germaine.

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of the trend over the last several years, and the Member is right, we haven't presented a write-off bill annually, but we have presented bills in '08-09, '10-11 and '13-14. If you want to annualize the write-offs, this decreased from an average write-off in '08-09 of \$424,000 per year to \$225,000, if you look at the current write-off.

In terms of policies around write-offs and specifically for the BDIC, they look at a couple of issues. One is the likelihood of collectability, and part of the write-off itself has been recorded in their books through their allowance of doubtful accounts, so they have recognized the loss in their financial statements already. This is just, in some respects, administrative bookkeeping to get it off the books so you don't have continuing growth in the allowance number.

The policy is basically to review their accounts receivable, their allowance for doubtful accounts on

a regular basis and make a determination whether or not an account, if there is any real legitimate prospect for collection or if we are better off just removing it.

That being said, as the Minister mentioned, we do continue to keep a record of any accounts that we have written off, and an example of where we are monitoring is if another department entered into a contribution agreement with an individual or a corporation, my office has the opportunity to put those accounts on hold when we set off amounts. We would continue to collect on a fairly active basis.

In terms of other public agencies, in the past we have not seen other public agencies presenting accounts for write-off. Housing Corporation, as we'll see in the subsequent bill, is presenting stuff for forgiveness, which they haven't done in the past, so they're presenting more to the House over time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thank you to Mr. St. Germaine. That answered all my questions. I have nothing further.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Committee, are there any other general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Okay, I am hearing we should proceed. Does committee agree to go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. We are actually going to defer the clause by clause until we give consideration to the schedule found on page 3. So if I can get everyone to turn to page 3. Schedule, debts written off, total amount, \$898,682.31. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Bill 8, Write-off of Debts Act, 2013-2014. Clause 1.

---Clauses 1 and 2 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that Bill 8, Write-off of Debts Act, 2013-2014, is now ready for third reading?

---Bill 8 approved for third reading

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Bill 8 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and Mr. St. Germaine for joining us this

evening. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness. Thank you.

We are going to move our attention again to what was previously agreed on earlier today. We are going to go to consideration of Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013-2014. I will turn to the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013,2014. The bill authorizes the forgiveness of debts listed in the schedule to the act.

Pursuant to Section 25 of the Financial Administration Act, Legislative Approval is required to forgive a debt to government that exceeds \$1,000.

Pursuant to Section 83 of the Financial Administration Act, Legislative Assembly approval is required to forgive a debt owed to a public agency that exceeds \$1,000.

The debts being recommended for forgiveness are as a result of death, compromise settlements, a business no longer in operation, or in the public interest.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. I would now like to turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, the committee that considered the bill, for opening comments. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations reviewed Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013-2014, on May 29, 2014.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report to the Assembly that Bill 9 was ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

This concludes the committee's general comments on Bill 9. Individual Members may have comments or questions as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. I will turn to Minister Miltenberger and ask if he has any witnesses he would like to bring into the House.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you can please escort the witness into the House.

Thank you, committee. Mr. Miltenberger, for the record, could you please introduce your witness back to the House.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Warren St. Germaine, assistant deputy minister and comptroller general from the Department of Finance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Again, welcome back, Mr. St. Germaine. Committee, I will now open up the floor to general comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question. Is it written off, forgiven, or how do we address an issue of somebody having rental arrears that's on the list that I know still lives in public housing? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. For that, I'll go to Mr. St. Germaine.

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Most of the rental arrears are dealing with individuals who are deceased and so on. I'm not aware of individuals who, in fact, have rental arrears that we're forgiving that are still in public housing. Presumably the Housing Corporation would have reviewed their files to determine the validity of the amounts being presented, but we can pursue that, if you wish.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: I guess, by what method or measure shall I pursue this matter if I see someone on the list who is alive, who has rental arrears under this act? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Clearly, the Member and I would not want to engage in that type of discussion in the House, so if the Member would share that information with us, we would make sure it gets forwarded on to the Housing Corporation to be tracked down and sorted out. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm fine with that and I'm happy to start straightening it out as soon as I'm done talking here.

The only issue I would have then, is if we passed this act noting the amounts, does that stop us from pursuing it through other methods? Especially when I know they're alive. I know, roughly, where they live. I can't 100 percent guarantee that they're in public housing, but I do believe they are. So I can at least say confidently, two out of the three I can check off with great confidence.

So how do we deal with this? If we pass the act, have we taken away our ability to pursue this money? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. A process question, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. By definition, forgiveness is just that. Once the bill is passed, there's going to be some investigation that's going to be required. There might be factors that the Member is not aware of, that we're not aware of, things like was the person indigent.

In terms of the Member's concern, at this point, once this bill is passed, it is forgiven once it's given assent by the Commissioner.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, in essence... I mean, I'm happy to provide the name and I'll do that, like I said, once I'm done here in this process. But, frankly, once we pass it, what's the point of giving the name to the Minister if we can't pursue it? I guess that's what I'm getting at, is should we pause on a certain section without identifying anybody in particular? I'm just trying to get a sense, because I think I just stated that once its forgiven it's forgiven, there's nothing to pursue at that point. So I'm just sort of lost on the process here, and I think that it's a fair question.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Looking through the file, there is only one individual that's not deceased on the list. The information was provided to all the Members, including for all those accounts that are up for forgiveness. So I would suggest from the information that we have that it's a justifiable forgiveness. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we're just going to take one quick second here. Thank you.

Thank you, committee. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister and I just had a sidebar. My questions have been completely cleared up. I guess in my case, my concern, yes, has been validated, but the Minister has shown me reasons why it deserves, and I will respect that and not pursue it any further. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll go on to Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I also have a process question here and I don't believe we discussed it. It may have come to my mind after we went through the bill at committee, but if an amount in here, for instance, an amount that is to be forgiven, if it is not written off first, if it goes straight to forgiveness of debt and it's now written off, how then is it accounted for in the public accounts? The

comptroller general referenced that write-offs are part of the doubtful accounts in the books, but if it goes straight to forgiveness of debt, how is it accounted for? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For that, we'll go to Mr. St. Germaine.

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of accounting for forgiveness and bad debts, basically what occurs in government and public agencies when we look at our accounts receivable, we look at the likelihood of collection and we generate what's called an allowance for doubtful accounts. When that's generated, when that amount's determined, the charge is made either to the appropriation, in the GNWT's case, or against expenditures from the public agency. So the expense is recorded in the year that the recoverable amount is considered to be impaired. So, from an accounting perspective and evaluation perspective, that's taken account of and taken care of during the audit of the preparation of annual financial statements. The write-off and forgiveness is an event that happens subsequent to that. Not all accounts that are allowed for are necessarily written off. We may, in fact, collect on them later. Similarly, all accounts don't necessarily find their way to forgiveness. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to Mr. St. Germaine. So just a quick follow-up. So then the allowance for doubtful accounts includes both write-off amounts and forgiveness amounts. Is that right? Thank you.

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Yes, they include that and additional accounts that haven't reached a point of seeking specific approval. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Okay. Committee, we're on general comments, Bill 9, general comments. Does committee agree that there are no further comments and we'd like to proceed to clause-by-clause of the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, we're going to actually defer the clause-by-clause on page 1 until we give consideration to the schedule and if I can draw your attention, committee, to pages 3 to 9 in the bill. Schedule, debts forgiven, total, \$648,471.63. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, if I can get you to turn back to page 1, Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013-2014, clause 1.

---Clauses 1 and 2 inclusive approved

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree that Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013-2014, is now ready for third reading?

---Bill 9 approved for third reading

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Bill 9 is now deemed ready for third reading. I'd like to thank the Minister. I will turn it over to Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to acknowledge that Mr. St. Germaine, on June 20th, is going to start the fruits of his many years of labour and he is going to retire. This will be the last time he will be appearing before this august body at this witness table. I just want to thank him on behalf of all of us and I just want to wish him a very long, happy and productive next stage of his life because I don't imagine he'll retire, but this is his last time here.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. We would like to echo those very same words on behalf of the House, Mr. St. Germaine. It is well deserved. Thank you for your years of service. We thank you very much. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witness out, please. Thank you.

Ms. Bisaro, what's the wish of committee?

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Dolynny, can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 6-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of 2014 Report of Auditor General of Canada on Northwest Territories Child and Family Services; Tabled Document 93-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015; Bill 8, Write-off of Debts Act, 2013-2014; and Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013-2014. I would like to report progress with 21 motions adopted and that Committee Report 6-17(5) is concluded and that Bills 8 and 9 are ready for third reading and that consideration of Tabled Document 93-17(5) is concluded and that the House concur in those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Do I have a seconder to the motion? Mrs. Groenewegen.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills.

---Unanimous consent granted

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills (Reversion)

BILL 31:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 1, 2014-2015

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 5, 2014, I will move that Bill 31, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2014-2015, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 4, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 21, Public Review of Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing

18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 29, Human Tissue Donation Act
- Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act

19. Second Reading of Bills

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act
- Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 4th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

