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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 23, 2015****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 Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 157-17(5):
ANTI-POVERTY ROUND TABLE
AND TERRITORIAL ACTION PLAN**

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the late Nelson Mandela said that overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right; the right to dignity and a decent life. As a government, we are committed to helping residents be self-reliant and to live with dignity. We have made investments in a wide range of programs, including education, housing, early childhood development, health promotion and addiction prevention and treatment, to help reduce and prevent poverty in our territory. However, government alone cannot eliminate poverty. It takes a coordinated response from communities, Aboriginal and community governments, non-government organizations and businesses.

Annual anti-poverty round tables that engage representatives from all sectors in every region provide an important way to share success stories and identify common issues and priorities. These collective discussions help align the poverty reduction efforts of all partners for maximum impact.

On December 2 and 3, 2014, the second annual NWT Anti-Poverty Round Table was held in Yellowknife. Over 100 delegates from community organizations, Aboriginal and community governments, non-governmental organizations and businesses from every region of the NWT came together to identify and address key priorities to reduce and prevent poverty. The common themes that emerged from the round table were food security, homelessness, on-the-land programs, early childhood and wellness.

Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere at the round table was positive and encouraging. We are using input gathered at this event to finalize a territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan.

This territorial action plan, developed under the leadership of the Anti-Poverty Advisory Committee I established last year, is a multi-stakeholder plan that will address priorities identified by stakeholders and provide a roadmap to help guide our collective efforts for reducing and preventing poverty.

Another important component of the fight against poverty is the GNWT Anti-Poverty Fund. This \$500,000 fund was created to support community-based anti-poverty efforts and allow territorial stakeholders to submit funding proposals for initiatives to tackle poverty or symptoms of poverty in their communities, regions or at a territorial level. Fourteen projects, covering a range of innovative activities from communities across the NWT, are currently being funded and we anticipate receiving even more applications for the 2015 fund.

Mr. Speaker, healthy, educated people free from poverty is one of the goals of the Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is only by forming a strong circle of partnerships that we can be successful in reducing and preventing poverty. Working together we will help residents live with dignity and self-reliance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 158-17(5):
UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY**

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy, or EOS, is the most informed approach ever taken to advancing economic development in the NWT. Since the implementation plan for the EOS was tabled last October, we have been working hard to put the recommendations and initiatives outlined in the strategy in place.

Today I would like to update Members on the progress we are making on a few of these initiatives.

Responsibility for the implementation of the EOS is shared by a number of GNWT departments along with our strategy partners, the NWT Chamber of Commerce, the NWT Association of Communities, the Northern Aboriginal Business Association and the Government of Canada's Northern Economic Development Agency, CanNor.

Recognizing the opportunities that tourism offers for economic development throughout the NWT, several EOS recommendations reflect how to capitalize on these opportunities.

This year ITI and NWT Tourism formalized a two-year contribution agreement in which NWT Tourism would develop a convention bureau to attract and facilitate business tourism, conferences and industry events to the NWT. The convention bureau is already working to attract meetings and conventions to the NWT, and I am confident that all regions will benefit from visitors who travel to other parts of the territory before and after their meetings.

We have also reached an agreement with the Canadian Executive Service Organization to strengthen our Tourism Business Mentorship Program, and we continue to work with the Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council to establish cultural tourism products for the NWT. Destination Deline is a partnered initiative between the community and ITI and a great example of a proven viable model for attracting tour groups to the NWT's smaller communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have also been responding to recommendations to grow a stable and attractive entrepreneurial environment in our territory. This includes exploring opportunities to diversify our economy and strengthen the fishery, film and agriculture sectors.

Last month we launched the Great Slave Lake Fresh Fish brand and accompanying marketing campaign. This is the first element of a multi-pronged initiative to revitalize our territory's fishing industry.

To support the film sector, we have put a pilot rebate program in place. For the first time in the NWT, this program will provide financial incentives to productions filming on location in our territory.

We are also developing an agriculture strategy to grow our territory's rapidly evolving agriculture sector with our partners, the NWT Association of Communities, the Territorial Farmers Association and the Northern Farm Training Institute. Also, using a partnered approach, the NWT Chamber of Commerce is leading an initiative with ITI, the Northern Aboriginal Business Association and CanNor to develop an information and media campaign promoting and encouraging small business growth in the NWT, and we are also developing a marketing plan that will increase

awareness and purchase of made-in-the-NWT products.

In response to services that entrepreneurs have said they need, we are connecting businesses and entrepreneurs in the NWT's small communities with professional bookkeeping and accounting services, through the Professional and Financial Support Program.

We are streamlining information about funding programs and services through a new online database.

Mr. Speaker, our partnered approach to advance the recommendations set out in the EOS is key to this strategy's success.

Our partnership with CanNor has offered us the opportunity to leverage significant joint funding efforts in support of advancing everything from geoscience, to agriculture to tourism. This includes CanNor funding of \$5.3 million to build the geoscience knowledge base of the Lac de Gras region, joint funding of \$4.2 million to establish a permanent campus for the Northern Farm Training Institute in Hay River and the launch of the Northern Greenhouse Initiative to advance the commercialization and productivity of greenhouse projects across the North; and the most recent announcement of joint CanNor funding of over \$10 million in our tourism industry, which will be focused on smaller communities with emerging tourism opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the responsibility of developing a strong economy belongs to us all as we work to achieve our goal of a diversified economy that provides all communities with opportunities and choices. I look forward to sharing a complete report of all the work, initiatives and investments that we have taken to advance the EOS recommendations with Members later this spring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that I'm going on the heels of such a happy report from the Minister of ITI, because today it's Monday. I don't know if I'm in a Monday mood or what, but I want to talk about Hay River. Hay River, Hay River, the Hub of the North.

My question to this government is: Who cares about Hay River, the second largest community in the Northwest Territories? People say things like, I like Hay River, I like coming to Hay River, but that's

not going to cut it. That's not going to be good enough. They say Hay River is resilient, they'll figure it out. I'm tired of being the happy, optimistic champions of all things economic and all things entrepreneurial.

Hay River needs some help. The absolute success of Hay River over the years has been its diversified economy and was made up of things like tourism, manufacturing, agriculture, the commercial fishery, the transportation hub, the railhead of the North. But, Mr. Speaker, lots of these things are being left to languish right now.

You know, it seems that we can spend – I don't know; I don't want to say the number, I don't know how big it is – you know, to go off, well, let's just say hundreds of thousands of dollars to go to China and Japan to get more tourists for the Northwest Territories. But those tens of thousands of tourists are coming to Yellowknife. I mean, let's call a spade a spade. They're not coming anywhere else.

Where was this government when the Greyhound bus service, which is a national bus service, cut off its bus service to Hay River? Oh, that was only 25 little tourists getting off the bus every week in Hay River. Oh, but we don't care about them. But we sure care about those tens of thousands that are coming to Yellowknife. But anyway, where was our government? The Yukon government effectively lobbied Greyhound, and guess what? The Greyhound bus still goes to Whitehorse today.

In the manufacturing sector, Hay River is innovative. They put their money where their mouth is. They put their money on the table when it comes to manufacturing. But we shouldn't, as MLAs, have to intercept contracts going out to southern companies for something that can be manufactured in Hay River. We shouldn't have to have a political intervention every time somebody in the manufacturing sector draws that to our attention. There should be a mindset in the government, like, hey, this can be done in the North, let's figure it out.

Agriculture, the Minister spoke to that here today, and we are seeing some. But I give a lot of the credit to the federal government and to people like Jackie Milne. Sorry, our government has been saying they're going to have an Agriculture Policy. They've been saying that for the last 20 years. It's coming. So is Christmas. We haven't got it yet.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I made a too long list of things to complain about today because I haven't even made it through half of them, but that's the end of my time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SUPPORT POLICY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not too long ago I spoke about what I consider to be punitive income support policies. I was, and still am, particularly concerned with the Minister of Education's view that an RRSP, a retirement savings plan, is considered a rainy day fund by the department and that an RRSP must be cashed in for a client to access income support.

With the help of our very capable Legislative Assembly staff, I did a little investigating of income support policies across Canada, and surprise, surprise, most provinces and territories exempt RRSPs from consideration as income for income support purposes. With slight variations, almost everywhere in Canada, except in the NWT, income support clients can keep their RRSP funds. As long as the funds in the RRSP are locked in, meaning they cannot be cashed in before retirement, then they are not considered when calculating income support payments.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Nunavut, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario the client's locked-in RRSP is exempt. In Quebec and Alberta, RRSPs are exempt up to a certain value, \$60,000 and \$100,000.

Mr. Speaker, 10 of the 12 jurisdictions I could check recognize RRSPs as a savings tool and allow income support clients to keep that safety net for retirement.

When I questioned the Minister previously, he made sure to tell me that registered savings disabilities plans and registered education savings plans are safe from liquidation for income support purposes. The income support manual states, "A Registered Disabilities Savings Plan, RDSP, is a savings plan to help parents and others save for the long-term financial security of a person who is eligible for the disability tax credit." So, it's okay in the NWT for a client to save for a child's future, but it's not okay for the same client to save for their own financial future.

Do we value our elders? I keep hearing that we do, but this policy flies in the face of that. It ensures that our seniors, our elders, will have no savings to top up their Canada Pension Plan payments when they retire. It's well known that seniors are often our poorest residents, usually because they have no pension other than Canada Pension Plan. Our policy is contradictory to most other Canadian jurisdictions where locked-in RRSPs are excluded. If that is so, why do we have so many seniors and elders who can barely make ends meet?

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: The NWT income support policy in regards to RRSPs puts people into poverty and ensures that they stay there right through retirement and into old age.

Mr. Speaker, I will have some questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment at the appropriate time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIOR CAGER BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I stood up in the House and I congratulated our young boys who were at the basketball championship. I'm happy and proud to say that our 19-and-under boys won the championship again this weekend. It's the first time in about 30 years that Inuvik has won that championship.

They had a real great game. They won 61 to 56 over a very hard, very sportsmanlike St. Pat's team, and I want to thank the coach and the St. Pat's boys for making the game very exciting for everybody who was in attendance.

I would say there are a few boys on that team that are going to be leaving high school this year, and it was really great to see them leave with such a great memory that they're going to cherish for the rest of their lives.

This weekend was a great weekend of basketball. We had teams from Lutselk'e for the first time ever. We had a team from Deline win a school banner, and we had some from Cambridge Bay attend as well. But this couldn't all be possible without sponsorship. The NWT Power Corporation has been sponsoring that tournament for years, so I want to give them the recognition that they deserve.

Just like last week, I want to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers, the chaperones and both schools for hosting a very successful Cager Tournament this weekend. I would also like to make a special thank you and acknowledgement to all the coaches for their dedication, their time, their guidance and their support for our youth in the small communities and throughout the Northwest Territories. Two in particular that I'd like to recognize are the coaches for the East Three Eagles Basketball Team, Mr. Will Logan and Mr. Al Gillis, who have worked with these boys for years. For them to finally win a championship, especially some of those boys leaving school this year, they deserve that championship. They worked hard, they gave sound advice to the athletes and they showed a lot of sportsmanship to the referees, to the other teams, to the coaches and they did a great job.

Just before I finish off my Member's statement here, I'd like to recognize a young gentleman, Mr. Liam Larocque. He's only 15 years old. He moved

up into the senior division and played for Inuvik and he was recognized as the tournament MVP. So, great job, boys, and I look forward to seeing more basketball championships in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GAMETI HAND GAMES TOURNAMENT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about this weekend. I happened to drive to Gameti for the first annual John D. Quitte Men's Hand Game Tournament. I truly appreciated the invitation of the Tlicho chiefs that encouraged me to go there, and more particularly, I want to thank Chief Wedawin for his personal welcome to his community.

I drove that winter road and I have to say it was a wonderful experience, unlike some of my experiences on Highway No. 7, of course, but that's a story for another day. Several community members said that they look forward to the year that their winter road becomes a real highway, and they look forward to seeing that in the capital plan with some real money behind it.

Even though I drove the winter road and it took about four and a half hours to get there, the drive was certainly well worth every moment of it. The community of Gameti was very welcoming from the moment I got there. When I got there I ran into Minister Jackson Lafferty, who was enjoying the games himself.

From the moment I stepped into the community hall, the hand games were being played and it was full of excitement from everyone. It was tremendously exciting to see the energy of our youth, and it was obvious to me the joy of those young at heart who were having a fantastic time. Mr. Speaker, that's a nice way of describing the elders.

The Tlicho region, like all our northern regions, does such a wonderful job of putting on their community events and their cultural games. This was no exception. While I was there, they gave me an opportunity to speak and address the crowd, and I made sure I underscored how important these community events are to instilling culture and language in our people.

I even got to do a little drumming, although I don't know if I'll be welcomed back to drum again. But I certainly had a great time doing the drumming.

In closing, I want to say that I would describe that, with my modest experience around hand games, I didn't get to play this time, but I would certainly say it is the excuse for the future for me to attend my next event. I want to finish by saying this is a breathtaking opportunity that I would encourage all

Northerners to get involved and enjoy the culture that's around us. It's an experience you'll remember for a lifetime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
STUDENT MEDICAL ESCORT
TRAVEL POLICY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A Medical Travel Policy gap causing grief for northern families needs resolution. Specifically, problems are arising for those who have children going to school in southern Canada under the Student Financial Assistance program and who fall ill and require hospitalization or treatment. At a time when these kids desperately need them, their parents are unable to access travel support to attend them because the medical travel is not initiated in the Northwest Territories. Yet if these students had fallen ill at home, their own plus an escort's travel costs would be covered to travel south for treatment.

As an example, take a family whose child is going to school in Alberta and who is suddenly diagnosed with cancer. Alone and away from home, she desperately needs the support of her parents who live in the North. While funding for her mother's travel is initially approved, the second application for a parent to be with her during the actual surgery is denied with an attempt at clawing back the original support. Far from theoretical, this has actually happened. This family was denied any further medical travel assistance. The reason for denial by Health and Social Services was that only medical travel originating in the NWT is covered. Yet these students are NWT residents fully covered by NWT health care and parental travel originates at home in the NWT.

The issue of needing third-party health insurance when travelling outside of the NWT is a real issue, and I appreciate the profile my colleague Mr. Bouchard has brought to it. But this is not relevant to this policy gap. School students outside the NWT and supported by our SFA are fully covered under our Health Care Plan. If it is relevant at all, SFA should ensure that a group insurance plan is in place for the northern students it funds. Northern students attending school in southern Canada should be treated as if they are residents in the Northwest Territories, and if they are unfortunate enough to require hospitalization or treatment for serious illness, they should be able to expect that a parent can be there to support them in their time of need.

I understand that the seemingly continual review of our Medical Travel Policy is still underway, this time a medical escort policy is underway again. I urge the Minister to close this medical assistance travel

policy gap and assure our residents the support they need and deserve, both to ensure proper care and to ensure the interest in remaining as residents.

I will have questions.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DENE LANGUAGE
COMMUNITY NAME CHANGES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] About 400 years ago there was now here in the Northwest Territories our communities, we liked to name our communities using our Dene language. I feel that would strongly support the culture and also the people that have access to schools and, therefore, the history. If they have to change the names to a Dene name they would have to go through MACA.

In the past there were other communities like Tuktoyaktuk in the 1950s. When they changed their name in 1993, Fort Franklin, they reverted back to their Dene name of Deline. Tsiigehtchic also changed their name in 2006. Ulukhaktok also changed their name back to their Inuit name.

I would like to know if Education, Culture and Employment and Municipal and Community Affairs, if we work together we would likely be able to change our present English names to our Dene names for the communities.

The Hay River Reserve is presently K'atlodeeche and Fort Providence is called Zhahti Koe and Kakisa is called Ka'a'gee tu. If we could name our communities in our Dene language, we would feel proud and our culture would be strong and also make the people feel good about their language and their culture. Perhaps if we talked about it those Dene names would be accomplished.

MR. SPEAKER: [Microphone turned off]...Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIFE GATHERING OF
SAHTU BENEFICIARIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend, specifically yesterday, the grounds in Yellowknife were hopping. About close to 500 people from the Sahtu region live in Yellowknife. So, yesterday they had their first ever Sahtu Dene-Metis beneficiary gathering for all beneficiaries that live here in Yellowknife. People come here for school, to raise their families, for work, whatever.

It was the unofficial Sahtu day here in Yellowknife. It was a gathering of the large families that came together yesterday. The board of directors said, you know, we have close to 40 percent of listed

beneficiaries living here in Yellowknife, let's get together.

There was a feast, there were giveaways, there was a dance. They had a lot of caribou meat to give to the families and they loved it. When they started playing the drums, the people said that just lifted them right up, and they came into the hall to hear the drums and they started to dance. The young kids were running around more so because of the activities for them, also, but for the fun they had in saying this is a family that's coming together. They've been apart in the large city. We don't get together much and the land claims, through their initiatives, brought everyone together. People had fun yesterday.

That's the thing about our land claim. People were there to encourage people to go back to school, get a job, work hard, work the land claim. It's been over 20 years. They're saying that this land claim was put in for a reason. You are to go out and get your education but also remember the culture.

Yesterday when they were playing the drums and playing the fiddle, people had fun, they got together. There were a few visitors from the Akaitcho, the Deh Cho, even an old lady from Kugluktuk came over and as soon as the drums started playing, she walked right over into the hall and started dancing.

So, I wanted to say thank you to the people in Yellowknife for hosting a good event for the Sahtu people.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECENTRALIZATION OF GNWT POSITIONS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about decentralization. I've spoken of this many times in the House. I know Hay River has had some opportunities to get some of this decentralization, but I'm still a little bit disturbed in the fact that we don't have a general plan for decentralization. We don't have a plan of how many jobs are going to get out to the smaller communities, how we're going to do that.

When we started in this Assembly, it was a priority. We were looking at all the issues that are there, whether it's housing or office space, or how do we do that staffing. We've heard that from HR about staffing in those communities.

We need to continue to work on that. We need to continue to figure out a plan going forward. We've had Members concerned about how it's being implemented. How are those people that are being moved, how are they being told? Are they being told three months away, two months away, or a year ahead? Maybe we should have a better plan to go forward on decentralization. It's important.

We know the populations are moving to Yellowknife. We just heard a bunch of people from different regions are in Yellowknife. We need to move those people back out to their regions, out to their communities when we get jobs out that way. We need to work on decentralization more. We have to have a bigger plan and figure out how all these departments can work together to figure out a plan to get jobs in all of the small communities and out in the public. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PAUL STIPDONK SOCCER TOURNAMENT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to speak about a sporting event as well. I was home for the weekend. It was a pleasure to attend the second annual Paul Stipdonk under-12 soccer tournament. I spoke in the House before about him. Paul was an avid soccer coach and teacher in Fort Simpson, and a big thanks goes out to the Stipdonks who allowed the organizers to pay tribute to a great man for a second year.

All ages were involved in the sport of soccer this weekend. There were travellers from Fort Liard, Behchoko, under-12-teams, as well. We spoke in this House last week about mental health. Like the arts, children who are involved in sports have improved self-esteem and improved mental health and awareness and improved schooling.

I think the best part of the whole tournament was they actually had an under-three category there. We were watching little tykes chase soccer balls. It was outstanding and awesome for all the parents involved to watch their youngest getting involved in soccer. I'm sure that one day those three-year-olds and under will be on a soccer team representing Fort Simpson at the Arctic Winter Games.

I just want to extend a big thanks to the Bompas Elementary School, the teachers, coaches and volunteers, as well as to Thomas Simpson School, Village of Fort Simpson recreational staff and to the communities that travelled to Fort Simpson. Mahsi cho. It was great to see that event continue and I look forward to the one next year. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT 2015 RCMP/FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL HOCKEY CHALLENGE

MR. DOLYNNY: Great. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday, on February 21, 2015, I had the privilege of emceeing while Yellowknife played host to the 9th Annual Memorial Hockey Challenge in which our fire department and our RCMP squared off in a good old-fashioned hockey game.

This annual event honours their colleagues, Yellowknife firefighters Cyril Fyfe and Kevin Olson and Hay River RCMP officer Chris Worden, who lost their lives while in service.

I am pleased to say that my legislative colleagues MLA Alfred Moses, MLA Robert Bouchard, Minister Glen Abernethy, Minister Dave Ramsay and Premier Bob McLeod were in attendance. Minister Ramsay was actually playing for the RCMP team that night and, incredibly, against all odds, didn't require the use of a defibrillator.

---Laughter

In fact, although he did score a goal, his team was unable to win that night in overtime.

Although this evening was about fallen comrades and heroes, this event was about a community coming together to help support an incredible Range Lake little boy and his family. The city has come to know the struggles of "The Incredible Malcolm" and the strength he is finding with our community's support.

Although we know all too well the issues of cost of living, wanting better health care and other various obstacles that overwhelm us in our day-to-day activities, it is comforting to know that through all this a community can rise to the occasion and find strength to persevere. I'm proud to say this is a strong community that has done incredible things for its residents, and I'm extremely humbled by the many sponsors, donors and volunteers that give so much.

I wanted to finish by saying thank you to our men and women in uniform who keep us safe, and for our fallen heroes, we are grateful. We will never forget your sacrifice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT GNWT POSITION VACANCIES IN MACKENZIE DELTA

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It often takes a long time to fill vacant jobs in our government, especially in our smaller communities. The irony is that this is where jobs are needed the most and where unemployment is the highest. Even one job, even one new employee can make a real difference in a community as small as Tsiigehtchic, or even Fort McPherson.

I know one problem is matching local skills to the jobs available. I hear from Minister Lafferty that his department is improving education and training, and I really look forward to some of the good results.

The job vacancy statistics are a little surprising. In my riding, the largest community, Fort McPherson, had the highest vacancy rate last year. Mind you,

the numbers, the latest ones that I get from Human Resources are from April 2014. So, I am hoping to see some progress since then, but it seems to me that there are still too many jobs vacant.

The final part of this story is one that does not get enough attention. What is the impact of these vacant jobs on our services to the public, and how much extra work and overtime end up as a burden on our other staff?

I have two suggestions, and the first one is: do more training that is linked to the vacant jobs available. The second is: use a little ingenuity in looking for people to fill our jobs in our small communities. Hosting those jobs on the GNWT website and waiting, well, it's probably not enough to get the job done anytime soon.

I'll have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Today, colleagues, I'd like to welcome Julia Pokiak-Trennert, originally from Tuktoyaktuk, and her daughter Brendalynn, who works with us here at the Assembly. Ms. Trennert was also a participant in our 2012 Elders Parliament. Welcome to the House. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple people in the gallery. I can't see if two of them are behind me, but I'm hoping they're there. Ms. Rachel Kirizopoulos, who is the executive assistant/research analyst for the office of the chief public health officer, Dr. Andre Corriveau, who has been working with the anti-poverty file with us, as well as Mr. Grant Gowans, who is the senior advisor of anti-poverty.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to recognize a respected consultant for fundraising, communications and advocacy issues, a member of various committees and boards for a number of NGOs in Yellowknife and a current member of the ministerial Anti-Poverty Action Plan Advisory Committee, Ms. Julie Green. Thank you for all you've done to support the initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognize a former Tuktoyaktuk resident but a resident of Hay River, Julie Trennert. She's done many, many things, but I would like to also say that she and her daughter Brendalynn are outstanding, renowned artisans. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I too wish to acknowledge and recognize a couple constituents. First off, Ms. Julie Green, a well-known person here in Yellowknife for her many activities. Thank you very much for your hard work. I believe Grant Gowans is still a constituent of Yellowknife Centre, if he hasn't moved and, of course, if he's still up there. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple people up in the gallery today: Ms. Julie Green, who is a very strong community advocate and one for the Anti-Poverty Strategy. I really appreciate what she does for the small communities and speaking up for the small communities. I'd like to recognize Mr. Grant Gowans who's been a childhood friend of mine. He grew up in Inuvik and now resides in Yellowknife. But he's taken on a new portfolio and I wish him luck in that portfolio.

I'd also like to recognize Mr. Andre Corriveau. He's been a very strong mentor of mine but also a very strong health advocate for people of the Northwest Territories. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy the proceedings. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Dr. Andre Corriveau, a resident of Weledeh and a well-known member of Yellowknife; also Julie Green who is also well known for all her work on the many social issues including the poverty one, but all the related ones, as well, housing and so on. Thanks to those for attending today. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I welcome everybody here in the public gallery today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 677-17(5): INCOME SUPPORT POLICY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on my statement and ask some questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. When I questioned the Minister previously, he told me that he would consider reviewing policy. I'd like to ask the Minister, to start off, considering the information regarding locked-in RRSPs right across the country, will he consider

revising our income support policy with regards to registered retirement savings plans? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Within our policy there are amendments every now and then, and this is an area that I spoke to last week I believe it was. Making some changes to a policy obviously comes from the general public's feedback and also the MLAs. If there is an area that we need to make some changes, then there is an opportunity to do so.

MS. BISARO: To the Minister: I guess I would say that if there is a willingness to make changes, this would seem to me to be a change that should be made sooner rather than later. The Minister seems to suggest that he has to wait for changes to be suggested from the public or from us as MLAs. Well, I'm making the suggestion. It seems to me that the policy says that it's okay to save for certain things but it's not okay to save for other things.

If the money is not available to be cashed in, I'd like to ask the Minister, will he not wait for more complaints but will he, in the next month, look at revising this policy?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we speak to income support and Income Assistance program, it is a program of last resort that helps the most vulnerable of community members in the Northwest Territories. When I speak of vulnerable citizens, I mean those that do not have anything to fall back on as opposed to RRSP, that there is financial support that is available to them.

We have to be very careful how we deal with policy changes when it comes to these particular areas. That's why I am very cautious of changing the policies with respect to this particular area that we are faced with.

MS. BISARO: I can appreciate that we need to be cautious, but I only asked the Minister if he would consider looking at revising the policy.

I would like to ask the Minister if he would like me to forward the information on RRSPs in other jurisdictions which I have gathered.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Any information that the Members can contribute to our decision-making will be valuable. Also, my department, obviously, has done some research, as well, so we can compile all that information, and if changes are necessary then we have to seriously look at those areas.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister: I guess if his department has done some research, he should know by now that we are out of

step with the rest of the country, and I think we ought to get back in step.

I asked the Minister a number of weeks ago whether or not there's a cost to the department to allow somebody to keep their RRSP to allow them to have something to fall back on when they eventually retire or when they get to old age.

I would like to ask the Minister, again, is there, in his mind, any cost to the government for allowing an individual to keep their RRSP?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Anytime we do a payment plan or subsidy to our clientele, obviously, there is a cost factor to it. I don't have the actual figures because this is the first of its kind of RRSP clientele requesting income security area. We need to do further work in this area of the cost factor. Once the Member is compiling all the information with my department, we should have a clear idea of where we stand on this.

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

QUESTION 678-17(5):
YELLOWKNIFE DIESEL GENERATION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to use the opportunity to ask some questions to the Minister of the Northwest Territories Power Corp about the latest damage and repair process that's happening. As I see news reports point that it's costing the NWT Power Corp over \$40,000 a day additional to run that operation, that burden is going to fall on someone. Maybe the Minister can highlight what's being done and how we'll recover some of that process to make sure that that cost isn't falling on the NWT residents.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They are looking at the repairs. We, earlier on, made a contribution of \$20 million to the Power Corporation to offset some of the diesel requirements due to the low water. This is related but not directly tied to that. However, we had anticipated that we would be saving some money with the lowering price of diesel and that we will be using that \$20 million to offset the additional diesel costs as the appropriate repairs are affected. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. What's the anticipated cost of this particular problem that we have going on right now? Can the Minister qualify the additional cost it's going to run? Although he'd pointed out how we're going to pay for it, let's find out exactly how much we think it's going to cost. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I don't have a definitive estimate at this point, but I will keep the

House up to date when I do get that number. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Is the Minister able to speak to the issue of when we think it will be repaired? I mean, I can do my own math at \$40,000 a day. The territorial resident needs to appreciate and understand are these parts available, are we going to see the NWT Power Corp run on diesel for how long? That's part of the issue here, is we've got a dedicated service, which only has parts that probably can be sourced from one or two places in the world, who knows where, and we need to appreciate how long and how complex this is. So can the Minister speak to the availability of this? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Those are all legitimate, real concerns that we are as well very cognizant of, and as we plan to affect repairs, those are issues that are being addressed. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: If we estimate that this could take – one day is \$40,000 – six weeks, that's almost \$1.7 million. This is certainly an expensive meter running at the cost of the NWT taxpayers.

Is the Minister able to update us at all other than what the media report has already covered out there? Otherwise, we're just sitting in the dark not knowing what's happening and it's very difficult to deliver any type of accountability on this particular initiative. It's not about criticism, it's about transparency as to what's happening and what will taxpayers be on the hook for. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I will commit to provide all the most current information to the Members before the end of the week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 679-17(5):
STUDENT MEDICAL ESCORT
TRAVEL POLICY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement today on the subject of medical travel for the parents of children who are attending school in southern Canada and diagnosed with serious illnesses. So, for the Minister of Health and Social Services, these youth obviously need a parent with them at this stressful time and normally would be escorted by a parent to their treatments if the child's travel originated in the NWT. There's a clear policy gap here. I understand that there's a review of the medical escort policy underway.

Can the Minister tell me who is conducting the review and if this specific policy gap is being addressed by this review? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We actually have a private organization doing the current review of the medical, or escort portion of the contract. I do forget the name of the provider, but I will get that information for the Member. I have asked the department to make sure that this is one of the issues that's being discussed. To that point, I've also asked that the group that's doing the review actually get in touch with the family that is in this particular situation. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I know the Minister is keenly interested in this and very open to investigating and considering the various perspectives.

This review is a welcome one, of course, and long overdue. I'm sure that there are many people that could provide valuable insight and have experiences to relate, such as my constituents.

How is the Minister engaging the people of the North for input into this review? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. I went into some detail on this when we were in front of Committee of the Whole, but at this point the working group has actually gone out to a number of communities in the Northwest Territories. What we're trying to do is get a small community, a large community and a remote community so we can get a variety of different inputs and opinions. We're also looking at all the data that's been gathered on medical travel over many, many, many years. So that's been thrown into the mix. There will be some discussions with different stakeholders and groups in Yellowknife. They've also been in touch with Larga House as somebody who is a recipient of our residents and our escorts.

This particular review is focused around escorts. There's going to be one later this year on an appeal process and then we're going to be looking at some other portions of that Medical Travel Policy, as well, as we go through 2015-2016. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you to the Minister for his response. I'm sure he's hearing from MLAs who have constituents with ideas to contribute.

Medical travel insurance for people travelling outside the Territories has been rightly suggested for NWT residents who travel. The issue of SFA, Student Financial Assistance, sponsoring students possibly needing such extra coverage, which could possibly include medical travel support for parents when appropriate, seems to me a special case that could be covered under a group insurance plan included in SFA for sponsored students.

As the Minister responsible for social programs, Health and Social Services, is this idea of group insurance by SFA for NWT students in this situation something he would investigate and consider? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not aware of any group insurance that Education, Culture and Employment might provide to students that are on SFA, but I've already asked the deputy minister of Health and Social Services to be in touch with the deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment to find out what, if anything, they do. Once we know, then we will be in a position to have some discussions with Education, Culture and Employment whether that is something that they might possibly be able to do for our students who are travelling south. As I get more information, I will absolutely share that with committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's initiative. Of course, students are on a budget, so a group plan might be something attractive.

I support the Minister's review of the Medical Travel Policy including this apparent policy gap under the medical escort travel.

When will the Minister be seeking input on the draft results of the review from committee, and when can we expect it to be completed and implemented? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The initial work being done by the contractor is going to be done, I believe, at the end of March, at which point we will start putting together the results and how we're going to move forward. Of course, this is a consensus system, so we will be sharing those results and having further discussion with the Members as the report comes in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 680-17(5): DECENTRALIZATION OF GNWT POSITIONS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll follow up from my Member's statement and I have questions for the Premier of the Northwest Territories about decentralization.

My first question would be: What is the general plan going forward with decentralization? I know we've done the first, second and third phase, what is the general plan going forward from... How do we decentralize these positions into the regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to report to the Member that we have decentralized 150 positions from Yellowknife to the regions, and it has been spread out over a variety of positions.

We have a plan. We're continuing to work towards fulfilling our plan. We've invested \$21 million over three years to build 100 houses. We're now entering our second year of building houses. We are spending \$750,000 to have another 100 market houses built in the communities. We are investing \$300,000 so that we can use that money for coming up with a plan to acquire office space so that we can no longer use the excuse of not having housing or office space to prevent against decentralization. Of course, we have introduced a Regional Recruitment Strategy so that we can start filling these hard-to-staff positions and also fill those positions that are being decentralized to the regions and to the small communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: I understand a lot of the information that's there that the Premier just provided me, but there is no plan out there. There's no long-term plan that the Cabinet has been sharing. This is information that Cabinet has, Cabinet's keeping close to their chest. We're moving these positions, we'll be moving these positions eventually here, but we don't know all those plans. The public doesn't know those plans.

Is there a plan that the government will be presenting to the public?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have a plan. We've been sharing it. We have a Refocusing Government Cabinet committee and one of its primary focuses is decentralization. The Minister of Finance is the lead Minister on decentralization, and I'm proud to say that Hay River has the second highest number of decentralized positions in this 17th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: I didn't look for the report and I already indicated in my statement that Hay River is appreciative of the positions we've had decentralized. We were looking for the plan, a public document to be presented to the public of the Northwest Territories. Is the government presenting that going forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have laid out the three phases repeatedly. Also, as part of the 2015-16 business planning process, that's part of phase three where all of the departments, with the exception of those new departments that came through devolution, those three departments will have to come up with their plans for decentralization. So we have a plan. We have been

filling and decentralizing positions in this 17th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Premier is giving me all the history and all the information that's there.

My question is: Is there a one-page document advertising that we can share with the general public that there will be jobs in Fort Res, Tsiigehtchic in the third, fourth year? Is there a document out there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Fort Resolution has 53 jobs. Tsiigehtchic has 11 jobs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 681-17(5): SKILLS FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. This week I believe the Minister and his department will be going out and doing some regional engagements throughout the Northwest Territories starting, I believe, today in Hay River, regarding a program called Skills for Success Initiative.

I want to ask the Minister in terms of this Skills for Success Initiative, what does he plan to get out of these regional engagements? I believe there's a symposium that's happening next month here in Yellowknife. What's the Minister's goal and objective of these regional engagements and the symposium he's going to be hosting next month? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Part of the forum we are having in these communities, more specifically Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Yellowknife and Behchoko in February and March, is to gather all the information, the data that we require that will lead to the development of a strategic framework that will set out a new direction for adults and post-secondary and skills training in the Northwest Territories. That will be followed by an action plan, monitoring and evaluation and also an accountability plan. So there is a great deal of work ahead of us, but we want to compile the information to share the northern perspective, to hear their voices and plant a seed from there. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: I know he's going to all the regional centres. What is he doing for all the small

communities where you've heard, more and more in this House, that's where we're having the highest unemployment rates? They are in the small communities.

How is he getting input or engaging people in the small communities to get them on board for this program but also get them trained and educated so they can get the employment they need, support their families and also the economy? What is he doing to engage the small communities outside of these regional centres that he mentioned earlier? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I agree with the Member that we also need to focus on small communities. Small communities tend to feel left out and this is an area that will capture them as well. Even though we have regional representatives, that does consist of community members as well. That is educators, trainers, students, employers, industries, job seekers. All those will be captured. I assure you the small communities will be well represented.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate the effort. The Minister is showing the need to engage the residents of the Northwest Territories. I went on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment website and I was looking at what we currently do for the labour market and got some information. What I did pull up was an NWT Labour Force Development Framework from 2009-2010 that is supposed to guide us until 2020 that has specific recommendations, statistics from all the communities and from the Bureau of Statistics Canada, some really good reports.

I didn't get a chance to look at all the reports, but why is the Minister redeveloping a framework that he went out and engaged in in 2009-2010 and actually has reports right up to 2013, I believe. Why does he want to reinvent the wheel and spend more money, when this government has been telling us to be on a fiscal restraint policy, and start putting the words into action? We have something here. Let's start putting into action instead of consulting about it and talking about it. Why is the Minister reinventing the wheel when we already have it here, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I am fully aware of the framework that was initiated in 2009. It has been six years now. A lot of things have changed over that six-year period, such as employment and training stats. We've been told over and over, either by this Assembly or the general public, that we need to engage the public. We need to seek their input. We need to gather that data. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. Over six years there's been a lot of work put into play and now we want to build on that. That's what we're doing. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MOSES: We've got some really good strategies out there such as the Economic Opportunities Strategy, which was mentioned earlier, the Oil and Gas Strategy being developed, Mineral Strategy. We have strategies in place. These reports give us information on what has been happening. Now we have to put it into action.

All the recommendations are in there, I've read it. Why don't we put those into action rather than continuing to talk about it? We know these statistics are low. We know the economy is slow.

Will the Minister take this report and give this Assembly and residents of the Northwest Territories an up-to-date report on the progress his department has made with regard to this framework? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That's exactly what is going to be happening. Today and tomorrow in Hay River there's a visitation that's happening, and in the following regions, as well, up to March 2nd. Once there have been visitations and forums that have taken place, then there will be a follow-up with an action plan and also monitoring, evaluation and accountability. That needs to be established. Once the action plan has been developed in the business planning process, then we will be moving forward to implementation. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 682-17(5):
DELINELINE PALLIATIVE CARE STUDY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Minister of Health and Social Services talked about the plans for palliative care beds in Deline. Is the planning study expected to be completed by the end of this Assembly? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we are planning to have individuals from the Department of Health and Social Services go into the community of Deline during the 2015-2016 fiscal year, which is the fiscal year coming up, to do the analysis and identify what kinds of needs exist in the community. We anticipate that information will be ready and available for discussion with committee during the '15-16 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Minister Abernethy. So, in 2015-16 the needs assessment and analysis will be done for Deline palliative care beds in that community and that discussion will come forward for discussion for the '15-16 infrastructure. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That will give us the ability to insert it into the capital planning process, which the Member does know takes a bit of time. I do hear the Member clearly around palliative care. We want to make sure, where possible, individuals can be supported for palliative care in the communities. While we're doing the planning study and we're getting the information which we can have further discussion on, we are making sure that our staff are trained so that the communities can support palliative care where medically possible in our communities in individual's homes for short periods of time. In Deline, by way of example, we do have equipment that can be shared on a temporary basis with residents who are providing palliative support.

Although the capital planning process is going to take a bit of time, this planning, this will help inform the capital process, and we are also doing things to make sure that we can provide palliative care in the community without beds until such time as we get through the capital process.

MR. YAKELEYA: There are provisions, there are training resources in the community of Deline should an elder want to go back to the community for their final resting area. Are there provisions and resources in that community that people are trained to look after their loved ones?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: At this time, depending on the medical condition of a person, whether they're an elder or whether they're a young person who wishes to return to their community and die in their community, we can provide palliative care for certain conditions. There are some conditions that we'll probably never be able to provide palliative care for, for a person who wishes to die in their community, because of the extreme medical needs of some. But for certain medical conditions we can do it now. Yes.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Is there any funding in the provisions to train and assist local people in the community of Deline to look after their loved ones in times of need?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There isn't a specific fund for that but there are different types of training that are available to all residents of the Northwest Territories. Things like First Aid, Medical First Aid, and Mental Health First Aid. There are a number of programs that are available. But as far as specific palliative care training, no, there isn't. But we do have some dollars in our budget that allow staff to put in some overtime to provide some one-on-one support to families and the patient if needed.

Just a reminder, this is palliative care for short periods for certain medical conditions. It certainly can't cover all conditions.

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

QUESTION 683-17(5):

MACKENZIE DELTA POSITION VACANCIES

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions for the Minister of Human Resources. I'd like to ask the Minister, what is the most current vacancy rate for GNWT jobs in the Mackenzie Delta including education and health authorities?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can give the Member a snapshot of what we have on PeopleSoft October 31, 2014. There were 19 vacancies. Usually by September all of the positions in the schools are filled so that there will probably be no vacancies there, but with the rest of the GNWT there are 19 vacancies in the Mackenzie Delta at that time.

MR. BLAKE: I'd like to ask the Minister, on average, how long have these jobs in the Delta gone unfilled and how does that compare to the NWT average?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Right now there are nine of those 19 jobs. Well, as of October 31st, when those vacancies were identified, we proceeded to try to fill nine of those jobs, so either those jobs have been filled or are in the process of being filled. Then there is also the possibility that there have been more vacancies created. On average, the jobs that we go to fill are being filled in the same time period as other jobs across the territory.

MR. BLAKE: Last year the Minister announced the Regional Recruitment Program which was supposed to link on-the-job training to a permanent job.

How often has this been done in the Mackenzie Delta and what are the results so far?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't know if any of the regional recruitment positions are in the Mackenzie Delta riding. I can get that information. However, I do know that if there is a possibility that any of those positions would be eligible for the regional recruitment position, we would use that as a method to fill jobs. If a standard process was not working, then we would use a regional recruitment to fill those jobs.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within the last year the Gwich'in, the GNWT and Canada have all signed an agreement to build capacity within the communities. I'd like to ask the Minister for the status of that as of today and how many jobs are working towards being filled.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This is a committee between the Gwich'in and GNWT. The Premier and the president did sign this memorandum of intent on April 1, 2014. We set up a working group between the Gwich'in, GNWT and the federal government. The intention is to have three people starting at the Gwich'in, three people starting in the GNWT and three people starting with the federal government all at the same time and working in those positions for one year and then they would rotate. We would also make accommodations if any of the Gwich'in people wished to stay exactly where they were after year one. We're expecting to make the first placements of those positions on September 1, 2015.

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

QUESTION 684-17(5):

TLICHO REGION ALL-SEASON HIGHWAY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to ask questions to the Minister of Transportation. Just before I do that, of course, I'd like to send a little hello and a shout out to Patrick Joss who is watching our proceedings here all the way in Ulukhaktok. It's really exciting that we have people watching.

Speaking of people watching, many of the people I had talked to in Gameti wanted to know when the Tulita winter road would be worked on as a capital project and when would money be put into the capital plan so they can eventually see the Tulita winter road connect from Highway No. 3 all the way to at least Whati.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've done a considerable amount of work in the plan to build an all-season road off of Highway No. 3 to Whati. It's one of the roads where we have a group working on it, GNWT and the Tlicho government. This is something that we are looking at. I don't have the exact status as of today, but there are some requirements that need to be filled prior to this going forward in the capital plan and we're working on those requirements now.

MR. HAWKINS: I think I was reading in the Huffington Post a few weeks ago about how important connecting communities to road infrastructure is and how it changes the life when it comes to cost of living. It adds benefits such as regular fuel supply, regular grocery supply and certainly family connections. I could go on about the merits, but the question really is when can we expect to see it in the capital plan to help lower the costs of communities like that, that are so close to the highway? We could make a real difference and

a dent in the cost of living in their lives. We should be on this.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We've certainly talked about the highway a lot. I can't give a definite date on how close we are, but we consider that to be one of the roads. We have a few roads right now. We have a proposal into the federal government on the Mackenzie Valley Highway, so we're looking at that as well as a couple of other all-season roads.

MR. HAWKINS: I want to assure my good friends from the Sahtu that I'm not wanting to take away from their road. I think the Mackenzie Valley Highway merits stand on their own. This road would provide close community access to major infrastructure and connect family, food, people, everything. You name it, it comes with all the fantastic benefits.

When will this government hear back from our proposal about connecting with this community? I think it's time this government comes up with a policy to ensure that if we had a community within a certain amount of distance, we need to get together right away and start building these plans and building these highways that make all the world of difference to these folks when it comes to their cost of living. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Certainly if we had the money to do all the roads we would be able to do it. The Whati all-season road has a price tag of about \$150 million to go from Highway No. 3. It's approximately 105 kilometres into Whati. There are certainly benefits to doing that. Again, it's tied into our capital, our ability to borrow the money if need be. So, that affects the borrowing limit of the GNWT. We'd like to do all these roads, but we have to put them into some sort of priority as the borrowing limit makes the decision on whether or not we have the money to borrow to build these highways. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the GNWT willing to put, sort of, money where their mouth is and start to make a commitment to the engineering and the environmental assessment on this particular project so we are able to get this off the ground so when the federal government does get off and make a decision and finally agree that this is an important highway to connect people and families and certainly put industry together and create a window of opportunity for people to go to work?

Is the GNWT placed in order to be able to respond in a timely way to these important things? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Like I indicated, we are doing a lot of the legwork, environmental assessment. We've looked at some of the roads,

some of the planning that's needed to build the highway to Whati. However, it's based on whether or not we have the ability to borrow money to build that road. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 685-17(5):
DELINE ACCESS ROAD

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Transportation. The Minister of Transportation and I had a visit in Deline last year and we talked about the safety of the lake and we did talk about the concept of the road going around a section of the lake to hook up to the winter road on the other side of the Bear River.

Is that concept still alive within this department as to the wishes of the people of Deline?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member speaks about the road that would go around the arm that's near Deline, as opposed to going straight across. For sure, if there was an all-season road across there, that would be something that would be good for even the speed with which we put the winter road in.

I guess the issue is there also has to be, in order to gain access to that side during the winter months, we'd have to cross the Bear River to get to that all-season road that they're wishing to build. The community looked at that as one of the possibilities in case there was a viable way to put hydro on the Bear River and they felt that that was the ideal location. So they would build a road to it. It would take money, we recognize that. It's about a \$20 million project that the community is looking at. It would be looked at along with other major access road projects that the region is looking at. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up with more questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, but it seems like he's stepped out for a second. So please put me back on the list, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The list is done. Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 686-17(5):
SKILLS FOR SUCCESS INITIATIVE

MR. MOSES: My apologies, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies to the Minister there. Like I said, I just want to follow up to questions about these reports

that I've been trying to catch up on and getting reports on.

Under these last stakeholder meetings, there were nine sessions held throughout the Northwest Territories between 2009-2010. There were 36 organizations that participated and in collaboration with about 21 different strategies and initiatives. So a lot of information out there. Also in the report are 30 recommendations that were given to the department.

Is there an update on these 30 recommendations, and at the symposium will the stakeholders be updated on those 30 recommendations that were from the previous report? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. That information that we received, whether it be the 21 different strategies, there was the 30 recommendations. Our government has done a lot of work in this area. Most of the information that we collect, obviously, is through our negotiation with the federal government through the Labour Market Development Agreement, Labour Market Agreement, the Canada-NWT Job Fund that we successfully negotiated. We compiled the information, shared it with the Minister of the day with the federal government. That is information that we've been compiling.

Obviously, during our engagement with the general public, as I stated, starting today, February 23rd until March 2nd, all that information will be highlighted as well. Again, we're building on the successful work that we've done over the years, hearing the NWT's perspective on how we can develop an action plan and how we can move forward. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate the work that the department is doing in this area, but like I said, we've got a lot of recommendations, a lot of strategies out there. We've got to start putting money and our resources into creating action, creating jobs, creating the training that's needed. Actually, in one of the reports one of the consultants identifies what is happening in each of the regions. Deh Cho has zinc; Sahtu has the oil and gas; Inuvik we have the Inuvik-Tuk highway, Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link; South Slave has Avalon Metals resource development all over these regions. Why aren't our people getting the jobs and the training that they need?

One of the things that came out of this report was the implementation of regional training committees. Can the Minister give me an update on how many committees we have in the regions and how actively are they working on creating the training and the jobs that we need in the small communities and the regions? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The Member is raising this profile because there is still a lot of work that needs to be done, information that we're compiling. The fibre optic was in discussion in 2009. Now it's here, 2015-2016, and it's going to be happening. We need to have the resources and we need to have the information on how many are required, positions that are required, the talented individuals, the skillsets required and also the Sahtu training institute that's been brought up in this House. We're compiling all of that information. We're getting the people ready for all this work that is out there, whether it be oil and gas, whether it be Fibre Optic Link.

We're doing what we can as a department. With all of the information we want to develop an action plan. That's what our goal and objective is. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: I think all you need to hear is from the communities and the regions. Look at some of our statistics for unemployment. As I mentioned, I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel and create an action plan. We know what's out there. We know what we need to do. We know where we need to put the money to invest in our greatest resource right now, which is our people.

What is the cost to the taxpayer and this government for these regional engagement sessions that the Minister is embarking on during this week? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. The specific information, which highlights how much it would cost us to reach out to the key people, the stakeholders, the industry representatives, community members, leadership, I don't have that information here but I can provide that to the Member. But this is an area that we need to seek input. The more information the better, then we can develop an action plan. Mahsi.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree. The more information we get from our people speaking up, the better we can go ahead and make the decisions that we need to do. But there are 21 strategies and initiatives that I mentioned, not to mention the ones that have been developed since this consultation in 2009 and 2010.

I want to get back into the small communities. Because we're going to be doing a symposium and I'm assuming that we're going to invite the same people that we're going to hear from at the regional sessions, I want to ask the Minister whether or not he can speak with his stakeholders to put the money from the regional centres sessions into possibly creating scholarships and getting our people educated, putting the money for people to get educated, and everybody else can meet when they come down for the symposium? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The symposium, obviously, is geared towards I believe it's the second week in March, March 11th to 12th I believe. This has been a long time in the works, and those individuals, obviously, will cover the small communities as well. Any input such as what the Member is sharing with us and others from the general public will be shared at that forum. Based on the report, obviously, they will create a framework that deals with the labour market in the whole Northwest Territories. So, we'll do what we can to work with the stakeholders and have an action plan to move forwards with. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 8, written questions, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back on the orders of the day to item number five.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure of recognizing the leadership of Deline in the gallery this afternoon. Yesterday we had some beautiful music from the Deline drummers at the celebration here. Of course, Deline is the birthplace of ice hockey in Canada and Deline is the place where you want to catch the largest, biggest trout in the whole wide world. I want to recognize the leadership, the negotiating team, the elders from Deline who are here on this historic day for themselves. They also brought along a friend, I think, one of the leaders from Colville Lake, Mr. Joseph Kochon. Welcome to the Assembly.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome my constituency assistant to the gallery, chaperoning a couple of Pages and I'll recognize them later on in the week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 12:
NORTHERN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS
SERVICES PROFESSIONS ACT

BILL 43:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
BORROWING AUTHORIZATION ACT

MR. NADLI: I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has conducted its review of Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Professions Act, and wishes to report to the Assembly that Bill 12 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted.

Further, the Standing Committee on Government Operations has also conducted a review of Bill 43, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act, and would like to report that Bill 43 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 102-17(5):
SHARING, LOVE AND RESPECT:
REPORT ON THE DELIBERATIONS
OF THE 2014 NWT
ANTI-POVERTY ROUND TABLE

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Sharing, Love and Respect: Report on the Deliberations of the 2014 NWT Anti-Poverty Round Table." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Mr. Bromley.

Motions

MOTION 36-17(5):
WORKPLACE SAFETY AT
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL,
CARRIED

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS all workers in the Northwest Territories deserve a safe workplace that is free from the threat of physical assault;

AND WHEREAS non-violent crisis intervention is not adequate or appropriate protection of staff and patients in the face of violent physical attack;

AND WHEREAS contracted security personnel and other staff at Stanton Territorial Hospital and territorial health care facilities are not trained to protect employees, patients, themselves or others from violent people;

AND WHEREAS staff at territorial health care facilities are currently at high risk of physical and mental harm, with recent violent incidents at Stanton Territorial Hospital causing injury, including post-traumatic stress disorder, to three health care workers, and property damage;

AND WHEREAS RCMP response times have not always been prompt enough to intervene during a violent episode;

AND WHEREAS the Union of Northern Workers has expressed grave concerns about the lack of protection afforded to its members at Stanton Territorial Hospital, and the anxiety members subsequently experience;

AND WHEREAS a recommendation from the 2011 inquiry into the Leishman case called on the Department of Health and Social Services to consider hiring trained in-house special constables with legislated powers to restrain and assist in direct patient care;

AND WHEREAS security personnel at Stanton Territorial Hospital should be full-fledged government employees to ensure long-term job security and retention of experienced, well-trained employees;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services clarify procedures for Stanton Territorial Hospital employees to follow when violent incidents occur, including procedures expressly for the use of physical restraint in these cases;

AND FURTHER, that the Department of Health and Social Services direct Stanton Territorial Hospital management to hire security personnel with recognized training in non-violent crisis intervention and physical-restraint techniques;

AND FURTHER, that security personnel at territorial health care facilities be hired as full-fledged employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories, guaranteeing continuity of service and benefits resulting from accumulated experience, institutional memory and professional training;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Department of Health and Social Services review its policies and procedures pertaining to security at territorial health care facilities and report back to the House within 120 days. Mahsi.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Workers' safety for all government workers is of primary importance and hospital workers are really no different from carpenters, electricians and others, although the hazards may be different.

In a perfect world, non-violent intervention would be adequate and de-escalation would always work. But in the real world this sometimes is not enough and this is exactly what we are seeing at Stanton Hospital, both currently in the emergency department and the psychiatric unit. I have been at the hospital and hearing code whites frequently.

When violence occurs, it is necessary to have trained people in place to protect staff from injury due to assault for whatever reason it occurs, be it drug induced or the result of mental health issues. I am all for making sure this is well-qualified help. We want to avoid physical restraint, if it is possible to do, to avoid a situation through non-violent negotiations.

Medical staff should not be required to use physical force to control violent patients. Properly and thoroughly trained security personnel proficient, again, in non-violent crisis intervention and in safe, physical restraint measures are the proper resource.

Properly trained people charged with the restraint of people out of control will also reduce the risk of injury to the people who need to be restrained as well as the targets of their assault, as the unfortunate Allisdair Leishman episode so clearly showed. The Leishman report, of course, recommended hiring and training a special constable to handle such incidents, yet was never followed up on.

Experience has taught us that it is difficult for the RCMP to respond quickly enough when one of these fast-evolving, violent episodes unfolds and essentially things depend on luck. They depend on the close proximity of an RCMP unit or that they happen to be not tied up with other incidents at that moment in time, which is clearly inadequate and an irresponsible basis for providing security for our workers.

The union representing health care workers has expressed concern about lack of protection for front-line health workers, and I would like, at a minimum, to ensure that a member of the executive from the UNW should be appointed to the safety and security working group being proposed.

Health care workers are reporting high levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder due to violence they have experienced on the job, and they are choosing to remove themselves from certain jobs due to the lack of action by this government over time. They appreciate the things that are being done, but all of the things that are

being done, they tell me, are not sufficient without dealing with the restraint issue.

Contracted security workers are not adequately trained to protect workers and property. Cost should not be a factor when it comes to job safety. Retention of well-trained and experienced security personnel becomes paramount and would be imminently doable if a routine provision was put in place.

It's hard enough to retain qualified health care workers in the NWT, as we know, without losing them because of job stress due to violence in the workplace, but this is a real threat and I believe we have already lost people because of this.

Recently, a violent patient-initiated incident and left three health care workers injured and thousands of dollars of property damage. An unacceptable level of confusion remains over legislation and policy provision to support physical interventions when necessary. I know the Minister has tried to clarify this, but this certainly needs immediate resolution.

Threats to Stanton Territorial staff are real, immediate and quantified. They are real. The time for study is over. Staff are being physically and mentally harmed and there are serious vulnerabilities with potential for much greater harm. Action is clearly needed now.

I recognize the need for territorial assessment at all of our health facilities and at the long-term and extended care facilities throughout the NWT. I have worked with my colleagues on this. This is something that is needed and can be done on a non-emergency basis, but needs to get started right now so we are not finding the situation at Stanton is developing throughout the NWT.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, the Stanton Territorial Hospital is the one facility where every resident of the Northwest Territories will find themselves at one point or another. It's the busiest by far of our territorial facilities and that's where the issues are repeatedly arising without resolution.

This motion is intended to address that, and I very much appreciate the support of my colleagues in bringing this forward and the support of the Member for Sahtu in seconding the motion. Again, I look forward to comments and debate. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I will allow the seconder of the motion comment. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank Mr. Bromley for bringing this motion to the committee to have a discussion and a chance to talk about it today.

In today's society, when you look at this motion, it's quite challenging for health care workers. Today you don't know what type of people will walk into our health care facilities. You don't know what type

of drugs they might be on or where they've been or what kind of state they're in. You think you are bringing them in to get help for whatever injury they may have or where they may be hurt really badly, but for them, being on some of the drugs that are out there right now, they don't know and they put the situation in a dangerous sense with the nurse or the doctors and things get a little bit crazy.

I've said to Mr. Bromley I'd be able to second this motion because in the motion it talks about health care facilities in our small communities in the Sahtu and extended care or care facilities, that we're going to get a facility. But we need to have our health centres a safe place to work even in small communities.

I understand in the small communities there are some drugs that are getting into our communities. I was talking to someone over the past summer and they were saying that there were some drugs coming up from Edmonton that they're starting to see in some of our young kids, and it's dangerous. This is what I'm thinking about in the future, having some care facilities have the nurses be safe and do help our people.

I want to thank Mr. Bromley to ask the Health department to look at these facilities, make sure they're okay, make sure they've got the protection. Also, for Stanton Hospital it's more prevalent because of the bigger city and more things are happening, but not to take light of other small communities. They also need to be looked at. These are my comments for supporting this motion.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, first of all, thank Mr. Bromley and Mr. Yakeleya for bringing this motion before the House. I know GNWT employees and residents probably thank them as well. Our employees have the right to work in a safe environment, but our residents also have the right to safe and quality health care, and when incidents like this happen, that safe and quality health care gets compromised. We will have people who might be working in a condition where they're nervous, they're not sure what's going to happen, and it could compromise the health care of others that are getting the treatment that they need.

I know when I speak to people back home in Inuvik with the health services we have there, a lot of times there is a lot of interaction with people and dealing with people with alcohol and drug issues and, in some cases, coming into the emergency room under the influence. A worst-case scenario is a physical altercation happens, and we need to address that. In some cases this motion will bring forth the right services, the right training and people that want to stay in these jobs, if they're full-time employees of the GNWT, and provide that

continuity of service as well as the training that's needed to make sure the environment is safe.

I know we've done some work. I know in Inuvik we've created those inclusion rooms. I think that's something that needs to also be looked at in addressing how we move forward in terms of this motion. If we have enough inclusion rooms in all the health centres or in the regional centres or in places where we have high activity of economic development, because that's where we start to see an increase in terms of drugs and crime when we have a lot of money flowing into some of the communities when the economy is really high.

I know in Inuvik a couple of years ago, I went to a training session at the Inuvik Hospital for our staff. They had a retired RCMP official come up from Calgary and teach safe intervention, non-violent crisis intervention. I didn't think they got into the physical restraints but that's something that I think needs to be dealt with, especially with the incidents that we've seen here recently at Stanton Hospital.

I always make reference to this, but mental health and addictions is our biggest cost driver in the Northwest Territories. We do have a lot of cases of mental health illness. In some of the bigger centres like here where we do have a lot of people attending the hospital, I think it just increases the chances for incidents of such and, as Mr. Bromley had alluded to earlier, just the post-traumatic stress disorder. I made a statement in the House a couple weeks ago about that, but I know when we have officials and GNWT employees who are in that type of environment or have experienced a traumatic event like that, they're going to need the services and the help to do their jobs efficiently and to do their jobs again.

I do support the motion and I, once again, thank Mr. Bromley and Mr. Yakeleya for bringing this motion forward. It's something that does need to be addressed.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise in support of this motion and I want to thank the mover and the seconder for bringing it forward. I think it's a very important issue to consider. We have had a very serious situation at Stanton. We've had several serious situations at Stanton and it seems that it is happening more and more often. As has been mentioned, we have other health care facilities within the NWT and we don't want the same thing to happen there.

A change is needed. Some adjustment is needed, and it needs to be made sooner rather than later. The Minister has said that the hospital is doing an evaluation, that the hospital is doing some planning. That's been happening for a number of months now so it's not something which should be taking this

long to make the change. It requires a much faster response, and the reasons in the motion and the reasons that have been articulated by my colleague Mr. Bromley are the very reasons why we need to have a faster response. It also needs a stronger response than what we've seen so far. There have been some changes made, from what I understand, but I don't believe that they go far enough. There needs to be an opportunity for staff to feel safe. That's been mentioned already. I don't think staff feel safe if they don't know that the security guards who are there can use physical restraint to deal with people that are unruly.

The main focus in this motion tends to be Stanton, but as I've said, we have health care facilities throughout the NWT and we need to make sure that the same situations do not end up happening in health care facilities outside of Yellowknife.

In 2011 an analysis of the situation that occurred with Allisdair Leishman had a number of recommendations, and one of them was to increase security at the hospital. It's my understanding that there were no changes at the hospital. Those recommendations from that investigation were not followed up on. So for any number of reasons, we need to make sure that we take action, that we take action soon. For the safety of our staff particularly, I think staff need to be recognized for the work that they do there and for the situation that we are putting them in. Not all the time, but they shouldn't be in that situation at all.

I want to say that I appreciate Mr. Bromley for bringing this motion forward, and I would urge my colleagues to vote in favour.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I'll be rising in support of this motion this afternoon. I think that the recent incidents at Stanton really highlight the need for safety at the territorial hospital, only because we also have clients and the travelling public from the small communities that go to Stanton. I think Mr. Bromley spoke about how stressful and fearful it can be when there's an incident that does arise. I also believe that, for whatever reason, there have been many incidents quickly developing, so we as government have to come up with a plan or strategy to increase the type of security that's available for the employees and the public as well.

Over time when things like this happen, I think the confidence and trust of the public kind of gets waned or it gets lessened, so I think that our government has to act just as quickly to restore the confidence and the trust in our health care system as people come to Yellowknife and get their health care needs.

With that, I believe it's a good motion and the government is going to have to act quickly just to let the public know that they will be protected as well as for the employees themselves.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I too rise in support of this motion. The hospital emergency situation in Stanton, I think it's a paramount matter that needs to be addressed and is needed. Security and safety is essential and should be established in the hospital. Of course, there are two more likely spots in the hospital, the emergency ward and the psychiatric ward that need to at least have immediate security systems in place.

Of course, we're trying to learn from the incident that happened in 2011 regarding Allisdair Leishman and we need to make things right to ensure that there is a level of safety at the facility. At the same time, there are proposed renovations to the hospital. Just the nature and the scope we don't understand yet, but hopefully it will address the security issues as well.

At the same time, there are similar security needs in all of our communities across the NWT, specifically for our facilities such as the health centres as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an interesting topic and certainly I, like my colleagues, am very concerned for the safety of our workplaces in hospitals and care facilities and all facilities in the Northwest Territories. Safety in the workplace has to be a paramount concern.

Some other Members have referred to many incidents and I don't know if that would be a fair characterization because I don't know the numbers of incidents involved. I think back to just a few weeks ago when there was an incident on Parliament Hill and the good members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, right after that incident, put two police officers on the driveway here at the Legislative Assembly in response to that one incident that occurred on Parliament Hill. I bring up that because it is indicative to me that I don't think that that's the kind of response that we can afford to some isolated incidents at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

I think we need a broader take on a safe workplace. We need to look at perhaps enclosed areas. I know people in Justice that deal with probation services and deal with probation clients and so on, when they are dealing with certain clients there is a safe place to go where they are protected. So I think we need to look at this in a broad context.

When this came up in committee, I mentioned that I don't think we have enough money, enough resources to prepare for people in every place in every space where there's an inevitability, where there's a possibility, even a relatively high possibility, of something occurring. Mr. Nadli mentioned the psychiatric ward or the emergency ward and I think we have to be realistic. I'm going to try to be realistic about this. I don't think that we can have people that are solely dedicated to security that are at a place, at a workplace 24/7 in case something happens. I think there may be a way, though, when we look at this in the broader context, there may be a way of enabling, equipping, training, preparing people to respond to an emergency that are already in the workplace. I don't know who those people might be, but I think we need to take a really multi-faceted approach to this issue of safety in the workplace. I just don't think we should set our hearts on something that isn't reasonably affordable or sustainable or fair, because we are talking about very specifically, in this motion, Stanton Territorial Hospital.

As I said also in committee, we have drugs and alcohol and problems with violence in every community in the Northwest Territories. We have nurses attending nursing stations by themselves in a community with no RCMP presence and they are dealing with people, the same kinds of issues, everything from A to Z. It's not the concentration and the traffic and the volume of people you'd be dealing with at a territorial facility like Stanton, but it is still individual cases where those particular employees of ours could be at some risk.

So, I think we need to discuss this. I think we need to consider recommendations that have come out as a result of inquiries. I just don't think that having dedicated security people in one facility, in one community is the answer to the problem. I think we need to take a broader view of this and I will support this motion in the hopes that – it is a recommendation – it will lead to more discussion about this. But I just want to say that I'm concerned about the safety in the workplace of all of our health care workers, of all of our GNWT workers, but certainly in areas where there's a higher risk of potential harm. I think we need to take a very broad approach to how we can implement things to protect the interests of those folks that are serving us in those places. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Member for promoting the importance of safety in our health and social services workplace. I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge just how incredibly important this issue is not only at Stanton but for staff in all of our facilities across the

entire Northwest Territories. I totally agree that our workers deserve a safe workplace that is free from the threat of physical assault. At the same time, we need to ensure that our patients and our clients deserve to receive treatment in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

This is what makes it so challenging in finding an appropriate balance to this incredibly difficult situation. The motion suggests that all workers in the Northwest Territories deserve a safe workplace that is free from threat or physical assault. We absolutely agree. The safety and security of staff, patients, residents and clients in the health care facilities is one of my number one concerns. Our staff are our most valuable resource. Workers not only deserve to work in a safe workplace but are entitled to a safe workplace. Safety and security of workers dealing with violence in health care settings is a challenge not only at Stanton but across the Northwest Territories as well as across Canada. Every situation and facility brings its own unique challenges. Many of us have seen the facilities that we have and know that every facility is different. We need to ensure that our staff are safe, and we are taking steps today to make this happen.

The motion also suggests that non-violent crisis intervention is not adequate or appropriate protection of staff and patients in the face of violent physical attack. I don't agree that non-violent crisis intervention is not the appropriate philosophy for our facilities. The Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Program is considered a worldwide standard for crisis prevention and intervention training with a core philosophy of providing care, welfare, safety and security of everyone involved in crisis situations. The program's proven strategies give human service providers and educators the skills to safely and effectively respond to anxious, hostile or violent behaviour while balancing the responsibilities of care. But I do agree that it can't work unless it includes proper training, clear expectations about the performance of security guards and clear procedures for dealing with situations where violence escalates. Stanton is currently taking steps to make the improvements in this particular area.

The movers suggest that contracted security personnel and other staff at Stanton Territorial Hospital and territorial health care facilities are not trained to protect employees, patients, themselves or others from violent people. Our staff and security personnel have been provided with training on basic techniques to deal with most scenarios, to restrain individuals and to escape harm.

We acknowledge the concern that not all episodes of violence can be prevented and that in certain situations of extreme violence or escalation, such as the event that we had in November, a more physical approach to restraint or intervention may

be warranted. The security contract includes standing orders outlining the responsibilities of security guards in a variety of situations. The orders with respect to the guards in the emergency department indicate that a guard will assist in patient restraint and surveillance in the emergency department under the direction of a charge nurse and within limits of the NVCI training.

Stanton and the security contractor are exploring how training for security guards can be improved to help them respond to a situation where an individual becomes aggressive, violent or difficult to manage. This level of response is one of the gaps that we are working to address in collaboration with the department and with the input of our front-line emergency department staff who have been involved.

Stanton and the security contractor, in partnership, will be sending three employees to investigate a higher level of training that may be adopted. They will attend the next available course offered in Canada, which is April 15 to 17 of 2015. It's a little ways off, but it's the earliest one that can be delivered. These individuals will provide their recommendations on the applicability of this course within our setting. Techniques learned in this course can be incorporated into training for select staff to supplement and augment existing training.

The mover also says that the staff of the territorial health care facilities are currently at high risk of physical and mental harm, with recent violent incidents at Stanton Hospital causing injury, including post-traumatic stress disorder to three health care workers, as well as property damage.

The well-being of our staff is always, as I have previously indicated, a priority and I recognize that those who have suffered harm in the provision of care to our residents. Supports are available for our staff involved in violent situations, including an immediate debrief and incident investigation as well as an offer of immediate medical and psychological supports for our impacted staff.

We also routinely offer information from the Employee and Family Assistance Program, EFAP, through the Department of Human Resources, to help them deal with any issues including anxiety resulting from any incident that they have been involved with.

Unfortunately, we must also acknowledge there's a certain amount of risk inherent in working in the provision of health services. As a system, we do need to take steps to minimize the risk of harm to our staff. The working group established to review safety and security policies and provisions will inform and help prioritize steps we need to take system-wide, not just at Stanton.

This may include physical improvements to helping social services facilities, improved procedures for

staff safety, staff training and awareness or provisions for security personnel in some of our facilities outside of Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, the motion goes further to suggest the RCMP response times have not always been prompt enough to intervene during violent episodes. There is no doubt the typical response times for RCMP to attend the hospital in the case of a violent episode can pose a risk. Stanton's senior management have met with the RCMP to explore how they can work together more effectively. In recognition of this gap, we will be putting interim measures in place to assure higher levels of intervention is available to assist until the RCMP arrive. I will go into that a little later.

In the longer term, enhanced training and clarification of roles and responsibilities will be addressed with the security staff as well as the staff within the facility. That has already been done.

The mover states that the Union of Northern Workers has expressed grave concerns about the lack of protection afforded to its members at Stanton Territorial Hospital and the anxiety members subsequently experience. Stanton has been working with the UNW, local 11, to follow examples of committees where there is joint participation. The joint consultation committee is made up of executive members of the union Local 11, who are elected by-annually, and members of Stanton's senior management team. The terms of reference for this committee state that the union local executive members shall consist of, as a minimum, the local president, the members of the local executive and other members of the local executive that may be deemed necessary or required.

We also have the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee which is comprised of elected members of union Local 11 and Stanton management representatives. The terms of reference indicate the committee shall be comprised of five representatives elected by the UNW Local 11 members.

Stanton has also established a violence committee with managers and front-line staff. The Department of Health and Social Safety and Security Working Group have front-line staff from Stanton who are members of the UNW. Further, the Workplace Safety and Compensation Commission, WSCC, regularly inspects Stanton to make recommendations to provide a safe workplace.

In relation to the two incidents reported in the media, WSCC completed two safety inspections and Stanton has complied with all the directions as a result of these inspections. Stanton will continue to engage UNW members and executive as we move forward on all these different initiatives.

The mover also states that a recommendation from a 2011 inquiry into an incident in 2009 fell onto the Department of Health and Social Services to consider hiring trained, in-house special constables with legislative powers to train and assist in direct patient care. The internal investigation into an incident in 2011 resulted in recommendations to implement a model which would involve legislation to establish a special category of security officer. After careful consideration both in 2011 and again more recently, it was determined that this was not required in the Northwest Territories. The Criminal Code of Canada provides for individuals to exercise a reasonable amount of force to ensure their safety and security and that of their property. This allows Stanton to expand the scope of physical intervention provided by its security contractor within existing legislative framework.

As a note, Mr. Speaker, in response to the 2011 review, Stanton did take measures to increase security throughout the hospital including increased security guard coverage in the emergency department, installations of doors, locks and alarms, and training and improved operational response for incidents of violence. Mr. Speaker, clearly, based on November, more needed to be done.

The mover has also said that security personnel at Stanton Hospital should be full-fledged government employees to ensure long-term job security and retention of experienced, well-trained employees. This request to bring security personnel into the GNWT public service is a new ask and hasn't been raised with my office until this motion. We have not considered bringing security personnel at territorial facilities into the public service. However, as a result of this motion, we will take a look at it. I do have to just say, Mr. Speaker, it would have to be done within the fiscal reality that we have today and the cost of bringing in a security team as full-fledged employees of the GNWT could be incredibly expensive and could take away from some of the program areas we are also delivering, but we will do the work. We will do the analysis. I think it's worth it.

The mover of the motion also strongly recommended that the Department of Health and Social Services clarify procedures for Stanton Territorial Hospital employees to follow when violent incidents occur, including procedures expressly for the use of physical restraint in these cases.

Since the very disturbing incident in the emergency department last November, Stanton has again increased security coverage in the emergency department, installed safety devices including one-way windows and bathroom locks, implemented enhanced reporting procedures for situations involving violence. A number of the structural

changes were actually recommended by staff of the emergency department and acted on immediately.

In addition, an external security expert has been retained to conduct a review of Stanton's physical layout and security policies and procedures. Their initial recommendations will look at immediate improvements for physical security provisions. An initial report will be received at the end of this month, followed by a full report with final recommendations to be received in March.

The mover of the motion also recommended that the Department of Health and Social Services direct Stanton Territorial Hospital management to hire security personnel with recognized training in non-violent crisis intervention and physical restraint techniques. Security guards with a higher level of training will be placed in the emergency department this week, in fact, today, until such time as enhanced training is completed for all security guards and policies and procedures have been updated. Security guards are being trained on the health care facility training courses, and over the longer term Stanton is working with its security contractors to tighten up policies and procedures and to offer a higher level of training which includes physical restraint to all security guards within the facility.

The mover of the motion recommended, furthermore, that security personnel at territorial health care facilities be hired as full-fledged employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories guaranteeing continuity of service and benefits resulted from accumulated experience, institutional memory and professional training. As I've already mentioned, we have not considered bringing security personnel at a territorial health care facility into the public service, but as a result of this motion we will certainly be taking a look at it.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the mover of the motion recommended that the Department of Health and Social Services review its policies and procedures pertaining to security at territorial health care facilities, including long-term care and extended care facilities, and report back to the House within 120 days. I have already established a working group consisting of the departments of Justice and Health and Social Services as well as Stanton Territorial Health and Social Services to do this work. This group will build upon the good work being done at a local level at Stanton and its dedicated employees with a focus on the safety and security provisions and policies to include all health and social services operations. We are also collaborating with other government departments, including Human Resources, Justice and Public Works and Services, for a broader look at safety and security in the government facilities across the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we want the same thing at the end of the day. We want safe, secure facilities where a patient can receive the best care and our staff are safe. However, as this is a recommendation to government, Cabinet will be abstaining and we will be reporting back within 120 days. Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Bromley, you can have final comments.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to all my colleagues for their comments. I appreciate that the Minister is very active on this file. I won't attempt to comment on this voluminous statement. I will look forward to studying that and getting on top of all those things. I speak very slowly, Mr. Speaker.

---Laughter

I do note the Minister is taking this very seriously. I guess the one point I would make is that this was brought to me by the staff. I don't want to miss out on stressing the vulnerability that patients have to this violence and the need to recognize them in particular.

I think the Minister is keeping our staff aware of what he's doing. This has been brought forward by the staff at the hospital out of care for themselves as well as the patients.

Again, I appreciate the comments I've heard and I know this is an issue throughout the Northwest Territories. Colleagues have raised that and the Minister is on it. This can't be done at every place and every institution that we have trained staff, as Mrs. Groenewegen has mentioned, but of course, we're not proposing that. We're proposing this at the busiest territorial facility in the Northwest Territories by far, where we have repeated incidents being reported.

I know there was a mention of inclusion rooms, and that might be something that each facility could contemplate. I know the Minister has captured that and will look into that.

Again, what we're talking about here is recognition of respect, as was raised by one of my colleagues, for our workers as well as our patients, maintaining the confidence and trust in the system that our public expects.

I'm going to leave it at that. I think we've had a good debate. I know there are some things happening. We want to respond to the call from our workers and our patients. On that basis, I would ask for a recorded vote.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Member is seeking a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Nadli, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. All those in favour, seven; opposed, zero; abstentions, seven. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 46:

DELINE FINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act, be read for the first time.

I ask for a recorded vote.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Member is seeking a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

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

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. Thank you, Mr. Clerk. All those in favour, 16; all those opposed, zero; abstentions, zero. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 46 has had first reading.

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act; Committee Report 10-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and Tabled Document 188-

17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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 for today and ask what is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We wish to continue with TD 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016. We want to continue with the Department of Transportation, then the Department of the Executive and Environment and Natural Resources if we get that far.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will commence with that after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right is Deputy Minister Russell Neudorf, Department of Transportation. To my left is the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, Daniel Auger; and to my far right, director of corporate services, Jim Martin, Department of Transportation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. I will now go to Members for general comments. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a few opening comments as I did the other day. I'd just like to express large concern with the Dempster widening. Hopefully, that will happen this summer. I know it is under the Building Canada Fund, which we haven't gotten to yet, but I'm looking forward to that and the council moving forward.

We have, as I mentioned a while back, the overflow concerns that are happening along the highway. In this day and age there's technology that's available that we could put in place that we would not have these minor problems, I mean the huge problems for some people that are affected, like the people near Tsiigehtchic. We need to ensure that our highways are clear of water at all times. A simple little thing like a heat trace line or a generator could really help. We need to make sure that that's in place.

Also, with the ferry contracts, as I mentioned, the communities in my riding are very interested in

taking over the management as it is right in our backyard here. It only makes sense to do that.

The other thing was the bridge to Willow River. We did purchase it last year and I thank the department for their support in that, working with the community. I look forward to actually having that in place within the next couple of months with support from the department as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just quickly, the plan is, on the first bundle of Building Canada Plan, we'll first go through a supplementary appropriation. We have earmarked \$4.5 million annually in the first bundle. So, it's the first four years of the plan, although the plan runs nine years.

The overflow situation that we had talked about just recently, the Member thought there were some solutions that were applicable in the Yukon. Maybe the weather might be a little bit different, but possibly if it's further north on the Dempster and a solution is working, we can look at that. The deputy minister advised last time that it was a solution that worked well in the spring but may not work in the winter. We should, I suppose, find a solution. Previously we thought that between ourselves and the Housing Corporation that we did find a solution by moving the community member to another location, but apparently he's flooded out of that location also, so it looks like maybe that didn't work.

We are on the last year of the ferry contract at the Dempster. We've had some very preliminary discussions with some people who are involved. Between the leadership of the Gwich'in we are going to determine exactly who it is we are going to be negotiating with. Once that happens, we will talk about the negotiations. There's also an option of extending that current contract in addition to the option of negotiating the brand new contract.

Of course, on Willow River Bridge, as I indicated previously, the bridge is purchased. Three-quarters of the bridge is in Inuvik, ready to go on the winter road to Aklavik, and the other quarter of the bridge is still down south and has to be hauled all the way to Aklavik as well. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: On the overflow issue by Tsiigehtchic that we're talking about, there's also another thing we can do, but I know it's all based on cost. The major lake that is the problem is Island Lake. There's another place where a creek goes down to the Arctic Red River, which is about a mile west. All we needed to do is get the proper permits and get a backhoe in there and trench it out. As I mentioned last year, there's a huge population of beaver in the areas throughout the Delta especially. That's an issue. They clog up the creek. For that reason the water builds up and we have those issues along the

highway. That's another solution we can look at. As I mentioned, the most cost-effective one is using the heat trace lines. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We'll look into that alternative solution the Member brings to our attention.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Any further general comments on the Department of Transportation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Detail, okay. If we can start at page 449, then, and we will defer this page until the end of our consideration of the detail. Go to page 450, Transportation, revenue summary, information item. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Building Canada Fund dollars, are they reflected on this page or is that something we will fill in later?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The new Building Canada Plan that we're launching into now is not reflected on this page.

MR. BROMLEY: Just to complete that, when can we expect that to be added in? Do we have a date on that? And, for that matter, do we have an amount on that yet?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This answer requires a little detail and I'll ask the deputy minister to respond to that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Deputy Minister Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are just coming forward, hopefully later this session, with a supp request for capital funding, so that would begin spending of the BCP funding. We still need to enter into a formal agreement with the federal government on Building Canada Plan. Once we do that then we will formally enter the revenues and the expenditures in the main estimates.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Anything further, Mr. Bromley?

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's good. I was just asking when that might be.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. We hope to bring forward the supps in this session. We hope to sign the agreement within the next two months and be in a position to spend the money next summer.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Page 450, Transportation, revenue summary, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 451, Transportation, active position summary, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Transportation, airports, operations expenditure summary, \$27.811 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just have a quick question here with regards to the Yellowknife Airport. I haven't heard anything recently, but certainly over the last six to 12 months there have been a couple of comments about making changes at the Yellowknife Airport, making changes in the management, perhaps privatizing it and so on.

Could I get a comment on whether or not there's anything reflected in the budget around that kind of action and/or what the department has planned, if they have anything planned for the Yellowknife Airport? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've completed a report on the governance of the Yellowknife Airport, and we now have a consultant looking at that and looking at the options. Most likely, if there's going to be privatization or a change in the way the governance at the Yellowknife Airport occurs, then it will probably be something that would be decided at the next Assembly.

MS. BISARO: Not being on a committee that has this department as part of their mandate, I would like to ask the Minister if the report that he referenced is public. Has it gone to committee yet and/or has it gone to the public? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The report has not gone to committee, but the report is on the website.

MS. BISARO: Perhaps I could get the name of that report so I would know what to look for. To the Minister, I'm a little surprised that we have a report with recommendations and now we have a consultant who is evaluating those recommendations. So, maybe I could get an explanation as to why we can't just take the recommendations from the report and internally decide on where we want to go.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We can send the report to committee or any of the Members that wish to review the report. The report is mostly a report on what the current situation is. It's not something that is, in the sense, something we could do something with as far as the governance goes. So, what we're doing is we're asking a consultant to look at the report and put it in terms where we can look at and determine whether or not it would be something that would be feasible to move forward with.

MS. BISARO: I think that's good. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Airports, operations expenditure summary, \$27.811 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just one question on this page. I note a reduction of about 35 percent in facilities budget between the previous couple of years and this year. I'm just wondering if there's a ready explanation for that decrease. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. The main reason for the decrease is that there's a sunset there. We had got one-time funding for the Inuvik runway dip repairs and so that money is sunsetting. It's a decrease of \$2.35 million. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Questions on this page, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In my opening comments I spoke about the operating and maintenance of the new Trout Lake Airport and the need for snow removal equipment, and that's something that would certainly benefit them. It's a much larger airport and the community indicates that having a grader is just not going to work, as you can see, with the larger volumes of snow that can happen on a much larger surface. I would just like they ask about a snow blower to be put in the plans for the community of Trout Lake.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. I had indicated earlier that we were going to take a look at how things worked with the current equipment for one season with what equipment was in place, and if it appeared to be very difficult for the community to manage, keeping the airstrip cleared with the current equipment, then the snow blower would be a capital item or an item that maybe they could work with the rest of the community to determine whether or not that would be high up on the community's capital list as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. That's good news. Mr. Menicoche, any more questions? No? Okay. Thank you.

Airports, operations expenditure summary, \$27.811 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 454, airports, grants, contributions and transfers, contributions \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Airports, active positions, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Community Access Program, operations expenditure summary, \$1.008 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 458, Community Access Program, grants, contributions and transfers, contributions \$980,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$10.965 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. I have a question here with regards to the Transportation Strategy 2015-2040. The Minister talked about it the other day in a Minister's statement. This strategy seems to have been being developed for quite some time and I gather we've now done consultation, and that's a good thing. According to the Minister's statement, our next step is to prepare a draft of the Transportation Strategy and then go back out and visit each region of the NWT in the spring of 2015 to discuss the draft strategy with residents and stakeholders. So, that's great, lots of consultation. I do like to hear that, but I'd like to know from the Minister when we can expect to see not a "what we heard document," which is what he tabled the other day, but when are we going to see the actual strategy itself in terms of transportation and the road strategy? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The strategy is intended to run from this year, 2015, probably this summer, in around that time. I guess, essentially the strategy is being done in 25 year blocks, NWT Transportation Strategy, so from 1990 to 2015, which is just beginning to end now. But in essence, a strategy does not expire, so if we don't have the next strategy fully developed, we would just continue with the strategy. But the intention, the plan, I guess, is to complete a strategy every 25 years and look at all of the various modes of transportation that we have in the territory, being highways, winter roads, marines, airports. That's what the intention is, so we hope that after we were able to take the strategy out on the road that we would have one complete strategy.

MS. BISARO: My question was when. I heard lots of info in there, but when will this strategy be complete?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We will table the actual strategy for the spring session.

MS. BISARO: That's good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I also want to follow up on the Green Light, I believe it was called, environmental strategy for the department. Are we expecting an update on that strategy or that process and an evaluation of how well we're doing?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. For more detail, I'd ask the deputy minister to provide a response.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. Green Light is our Department of Transportation environmental strategy. It has a number of different actions that are proposed underneath it. We released it about five years ago, and those actions continue. It is another one of the background documents that's also feeding into our Transportation Strategy update that we're working on right now. Our efforts on the strategy are focused on the main document, our update, which we will table in the May/June session. Following that, we'll see what direction is provided as part of that and consider updating any of the sub-strategies underneath that, including that Green Light environmental management strategy.

I would note that are, as I indicated, a number of activities that are still going on with that, and this year we've got a low focus on our environmental management systems to try to improve the way that the various aspects around the regulatory environment and our environmental activities are being undertaken.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Neudorf. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the deputy minister for that. I'm wondering: is there an evaluation program in place for that and can the Minister commit to getting committee an update on that? I believe the deputy minister said it had been in place for five years. It seems due for a good review.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have an evaluation program per se, but we can give an update on the plan.

MR. BROMLEY: I'll leave it at that. I think it's always good, as the Auditor General continually reminds us, to have an evaluation program in place when we start new programs like this. I would have thought there would have been one and I hope the department will address that. For now, I appreciate the Minister's commitment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Corporate services, operations expenditure summary, \$10.965 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 462, corporate services, grants, contributions and transfers, contributions, \$12,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Corporate services, active positions, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 465, highways, operations expenditure summary, \$66.420 million. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I know that with Highway No. 7 there was previously capital amounts, but I would just like to know, in terms of operations and maintenance, what expenditures they have planned for Highway No. 7.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. We may have that information here but it's a fairly standard amount. Each year we go out, or in blocks of time we go out to tender to maintain all our highways, and the contract to maintain Highway No. 7 would be similar to what has occurred previously. If you give us a minute, perhaps we're able to find the amount.

We have the amount. It's \$800,000.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: With the \$800,000 I wasn't too clear if the Minister said that it was part of the contract, or else is this additional investment like replacing culverts and strengthening the road that's outside the standard maintenance contract?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The deputy minister has the amounts here. I will get either the director or the deputy minister to do a response. Maybe the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. We did have a forced growth submission that's in the budget here for contracts within the Fort Simpson

region, and that total is the \$800,000 that the Minister had referenced before. It's for a number of different contracts including the highway maintenance contract. Total spent on Highway No. 7 maintenance is about \$2.5 million. The contract with Fort Simpson region takes care of part of Highway No. 7 and also Highway No. 1. I don't have the breakdown of that contract amount between the two different highways, but the total highway contracts within for Beaver and for Rowe's Construction are about \$2.5 million.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Just when it comes to the expenditures of extra work on Highway No. 7 or any of the highways around Fort Simpson, I've always said that Nahendeh, because we don't have industry or anything around, that government supplies a large portion of the contracts to the service sector there. So any work that they can do on the highway systems there and extra work on Highway No. 7 is certainly a benefit to the communities and the people that I represent as we have more work for them.

Just as a note, I'd just like to continue to support any investment that we can, and yes, I know that we've got passive restraint, but any projects that have been planned, I certainly urge the department to continue with them as we move forward into this year.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I'll take that as a comment. I'll go to Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. A couple of comments and questions here. In terms of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, it certainly seems to be a project which has now become a priority of this government.

Is there any money in this budget that is being, I guess for a lack of a better way of putting it, earmarked for the Mackenzie Valley Highway? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The main money that we hope to spend on the Mackenzie Valley Highway is in a separate proposal to Canada under the national Infrastructure Fund. We are also seeking some money from CanNor, which is another pot of money that's outside of the O and M that we're discussing here today.

MS. BISARO: If I heard the Minister correctly, then, the funding for the Mackenzie Valley Highway is totally outside of this budget. I'm wondering about the Building Canada Plan. Is any of the Building

Canada Plan money intended for the Mackenzie Valley Highway? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Madam Chair, there's one outstanding proposal from the Sahtu referred to as Canyon Creek proposal. That is something that could possibly end up in the Building Canada Fund, Corridors for Canada III. In that proposal, if they build a Canyon Creek Road, then Canyon Creek Road would be on the same alignment as the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

MS. BISARO: I didn't hear any reference to the Building Canada Plan, so can I just get confirmation that the Building Canada Plan money is not going into the Mackenzie Valley Highway? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Madam Chair, there will be three or four bundles on the overall plan, Building Canada Plan. In the first bundle, it will be discussed in this session. There is no money in that bundle for the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. Three or four bundles... Does a bundle equate to a fiscal year, or is this three or four bundles in the '15-16 fiscal year? Thanks.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Madam Chair, the bundles are more than one fiscal year, but I'll have the deputy minister respond so we can provide a little more detail on how the bundles work.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Neudorf.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. The bundles are really for administrative purposes. They will allow us to bundle several different projects together as long as they have some common themes. That eases the administrative process for both ourselves and the federal government to get those projects approved.

At the end of the day, it's about \$300 million for DOT over 10 years underneath Building Canada Plan. We believe it will be three or four bundles of projects, the first bundle of which we hope to bring forward in the supp document later this session. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. BISARO: I'm trying to get at how the Mackenzie Valley Highway is going to be financed. There's no money in this next bundle of Building Canada Plan money, but is it conceivable that there will be money for the Mackenzie Valley Highway coming from the Building Canada Plan sometime in the next period of years in these bundles as they come forward? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Building Canada Plan that we have been

working with that we're getting very close to rolling out does not include any expenditures to the Mackenzie Valley Highway. The national Infrastructure Fund, which is also under the umbrella of the Building Canada Plan, is again a different pot of money coming from the federal government. That is where we have our proposal. We're trying to draw down some of that money. That is a \$700 million proposal that we put in front of the federal government all to go towards the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. My other question in this area has to do with the highway, the roadway from the intersection at the Explorer Hotel and the now extinct gas station and then heading out towards Niven Lake. It's been discussed for quite some time. By quite some time I mean quite a few years. There's a great concern for the people that live in Niven Lake and walk to work and downtown that it's reasonably unsafe. There's concern over tourists who are walking from downtown to the Visitors Centre. There's no place for people to cross from one side of the road to the other.

My understanding is that the GNWT has been working with the City of Yellowknife to try and figure out, first of all, ownership of the roadway but also to figure out how to effect a decent pedestrian crossing, a safe pedestrian crossing somewhere between Niven Lake and the four-way downtown, whether it be a crossing at Niven Lake itself or whether it be a crossing here at the Assembly out at the highway.

My understanding is that, in discussions with the city, there was some research on the road that needed to be done. The road needs to be upgraded to a certain standard before the city will take it over. There was some research that needed to be done before the upgrading could be done. Can I get an indication from the department whether or not that research has been done and where we are at in the transfer of ownership of this piece of road? Thank you.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working and talking to the city about that stretch of road, and the long-term goal would be to turn it over to the city because it's becoming more of a municipal road than it is a highway as development occurs around it. We have undertaken quite a few improvements to that stretch of road to recognize the fact that there are pedestrians on there. Lights have been installed. Speed limits have been reduced. There are extra wide shoulders on that stretch of road.

Ideally, we would come up with a solution for improving pedestrian access so that pedestrians could get right off of the highway itself. It would be

our goal to get the pedestrians off the highway itself, so we are talking to the city about potentially doing that.

One of the hesitations on behalf of the city is just the long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction that would be required for that highway. We have recently installed a test section on that road to see if this new technology will help stabilize it and take care of some of the longer term reconstruction that might be required on some of the settlement areas. That effort is still ongoing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate the information from the deputy minister, but the effort's been ongoing for a very long time. Is there any end in sight? Obviously, the answer to my question about the research is that no, it hasn't been done. It's in the throes of being done through this test section, but is there any kind of a time frame that the Minister or the department can give me as to when we will get to some point of being able to turn this piece of road over? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Madam Chair, we do not have a time frame as to when this solution will come about.

MS. BISARO: I have to reiterate that this is an accident waiting to happen. I appreciate the work that has been done that Mr. Neudorf pointed out. It definitely is safer than it used to be, but there is, at this point, no safe place for pedestrians to cross. I think it is something that this government needs to take a stronger position in, I guess. I would encourage the Minister to see if there isn't some money to be found in the '15-16 budget that could do whatever work is required to turn this over sooner rather than later. The fact that there's no timeline is very concerning to me.

So, if there is no timeline that he can give me at this point, can I get it narrowed down to a matter of years, if that's what we're talking about? How many years is it going to take to get this done? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The solution would most likely be a capital solution, and we will work with the city and see if there is a possibility that we could bring something forward in the next capital plan. We know that almost any solution would be an expensive solution. Any time you have people crossing a highway, walking across a highway, it's not a safe thing to be doing. So, it's a solution that will likely be costly if we want to safely cross a highway.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Ms. Bisaro, your time has expired. I'm going to next go to Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the discussion that's just been had and I'd like to just make a couple of comments and ask a question. First of all, I appreciate the deputy minister's recognition of the safety issue and his mention that really the best thing is to get people off the road, like, right away from that. There's no safe place to cross, Ms. Bisaro and the Minister are right, but there's also no safe place to walk on that highway and there are no options, so people have to and they are doing that. So it's a very unsafe situation. I know the deputy minister and Minister realize that.

Niven Lake is a young neighbourhood that's growing quickly. Given that we're between a rock and a hard spot in terms of time and expense and the schedule, despite the eight years of bringing this forward in the House, can the Minister work with the City of Yellowknife on the pedestrian issue and establish a walking trail off the highway and provide a simple pedestrian-operated, button-operated yellow light that will alert people who want to cross, probably located right at the Legislative Assembly junction with our access road and the Niven to town highway.

I don't see this being tremendously expensive, but it's a solution that could be done on a shorter term. Finally, with respect to the expense, I believe the City of Yellowknife would be more than happy and more than interested to have some discussions on putting a simple interim solution like that in place. I would imagine a walking path would be useful in the longer term as well.

I know this has been raised repeatedly by the city as wanting to do something. They say they're harried, they're frustrated in the transfer that hasn't taken place where they're waiting for that to happen. So there is an opportunity here. It's a modest opportunity to deal with the safety issue both for walkers, pedestrians, young people, young families and the crossing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley, Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will work with the city to try to find a safer way for pedestrians to come into the city for work and back to Niven. We know that the ideal situation, of course, and the safest situation is for the pedestrians just to stay on the city roads and come into town on the other side of Niven, recognizing that's a long ways, especially for the people that live on this end of Niven. But it's just that we are finding that any time you cross, we create an unsafe... Whether we're crossing right at Niven or crossing at the Legislative Assembly, both of the crossings on that road would not be a safe place to

cross. Nowhere is safe to cross. If you end up across, then you can have some pedestrians that come through by the Visitors Centre; however, alternatively trying not to have individuals cross the road at all would mean that the pedestrian pass would have to be on the Explorer side of the road and we know there's a huge cliff there. We'd have to get around that somehow in a safe way. So, I think it will require some money and some consultation with the city. Like I said, the alternative is for the people to go the long way around, but I don't think people wish to do that so we're trying to find a solution.

MR. BROMLEY: I know the Minister is capable of putting all kinds of barriers up here but we need something done now. This has accelerated and exacerbated itself to the point where, you know, this is overdue. I realize that we can't do the perfect thing, so I'm talking about an interim solution and I think a yellow flashing light... There are no obstructions, there's plenty of time for people to see those. I'm not an expert so I'm just giving you my opinion here, but something in the interim, in my mind, could be done at relatively modest expense. Recognizing that we are talking years now, still, after eight years of discussing this to get something actually done.

I appreciate the research that's been done and the intent to get things done, but people are really saying, we need this now and we are so lucky now. People approached me, both pedestrians and drivers. Drivers are equally upset because they are having close calls. Who wants to run over anybody? So this is a real issue and I would appreciate the Minister's best efforts to get an interim solution in there while we wait for the perfect solution.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We will have our engineers look at this again along with the city and there will be some question on whether or not a flashing yellow light is a safe way to cross the road. It depends on the condition of the road and the lighting. I know that we have good lighting at Niven and if that is the solution, if they are able to cross the road and safely walk as far as the Legislative Assembly entrance, we will look at that along with the city.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Highways, operations expenditure summary, \$66.420 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Highways, grants, contributions and transfers, grants, \$200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Highways, active positions, information item on page 467.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Page 469, marine, operations expenditure summary, \$7.418 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just have one quick comment here and a question, I guess, about the expenditures. But I want to add my voice to those who talked about the need to dredge both the Hay River harbour and the Mackenzie River. I know that it's a federal responsibility but I think it is something we as a government, as a territorial government, are going to have to seriously consider biting the bullet and funding within and then maybe going after the feds for some money, because this is only going to get worse, it's not going to get better.

My formal question to the Minister is whether or not there is any money in this budget. Will there be any consideration to put money in this budget for dredging either Hay River harbour or the Mackenzie River itself in the '15-16 year? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is no money in this budget for dredging Hay River, the port or the rest of the Hay River.

MS. BISARO: So, will the Minister be considering trying to find some money to do some dredging in the '15-16 summer?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we are. We're hoping that the federal government, through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, will put some money into dredging the Hay River. I recently wrote a letter to the Minister responsible for the federal government, asking them to look at that.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister, but I already heard you say that the other day. My question is: If we don't get money from the feds, will you find money from within our own budget to try to do some dredging? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: That's not in our plans. It is a federal responsibility and it's unlikely that we will take money from our responsibilities and then expend it where the federal government has responsibility.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Committee, we are on page 469. Transportation, marine, operations expenditure summary, \$7.418 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 470, Transportation, marine, active positions, information item. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 473, road licensing and safety, operations expenditure summary, \$5.840 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 474, road licensing and safety, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Road licensing and safety, information item, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 475, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 476, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): If committee agrees, we will turn to page 449, Department of Transportation, \$119.462 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Committee, at this opportunity I would like to thank Mr. Enge for his long-time service. I think this will be the last time he will be before us in the House. Thank you very much. Good luck in your retirement.

---Applause

Does committee agree we have concluded the Department of Transportation?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister. Thank you, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Thank you, committee. We will continue review of Tabled Document 188-17(5) with the Department of Executive. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Minister of Executive, Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Main Estimates for the Department of Executive of \$11.335 million. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$157,000, or 1 percent, over the 2014-2015 Main Estimates. Within its proposed appropriation, the department will spend \$305,000 in forced growth for collective bargaining increases and projects \$154,000 in expenditure reductions.

Our estimates continue to support the objectives of limiting expenditure growth in order to sustain the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework.

A key highlight of the department's 2015-2016 Main Estimates is the proposal to establish two new single window service centres in the communities of Trout Lake and Wekweeti. This will increase the number of government service offices in small communities from 18 to 20.

As Members know, our home-grown Single Window Service Centre model recently received the national Institute of Public Administration of Canada Award for Innovative Management. Our government service officers were recognized for the services they provide directly to residents in their communities, including visiting elders and disabled residents in their homes and providing services in their Aboriginal language.

These positions provide much needed local employment and make it easier for residents of small communities to access Government of the Northwest Territories and Government of Canada programs and services.

Funding for the two additional part-time government service officers positions will be established through a re-profiling of a vacant full-time Headquarters position.

In keeping with modern government communications, we are also proposing to separate the functions of Cabinet and corporate communications.

Corporate communications will have the responsibility for delivering the Government of the Northwest Territories corporate communications program, coordinating government-wide communications and ensuring that our communications policies and practices are up to date.

Cabinet communications will primarily support the communication needs of the Premier and Cabinet Ministers.

To better align departmental mandates with program responsibilities, the department is proposing the transfer of the Government of the Northwest Territories annual contribution to the national Indspire Awards – formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards – to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

We are also proposing the transfer of the NGO Stabilization Fund to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, to allow for better integration of support for community-based voluntary organizations. That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Premier McLeod, do you have witnesses to bring into the House?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Premier McLeod, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left I have Penny Ballantyne, secretary to Cabinet, deputy minister of Executive. To my right I have Lisa Turner, director of finance and administration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Committee, I will open the floor to general comments. General comments on the Department of Executive.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Detail? Committee is agreed to go detail. We'll skip page 127. Page 128, Executive, revenue summary. Questions? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 129, Executive, active position summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 131, Cabinet support, operations expenditure summary, \$1.743 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 132, Cabinet support, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 135, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$6.121 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was page 135. Am I correct? I just wondered, and I'm sure there's an explanation probably associated with devolution, but the big jump in the current fiscal year from about \$6 million to about \$17 million, a \$10 million jump, if I can get an explanation for that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct. That was the leftover federal money for implementation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question here. As the Minister said in his opening remarks, we are separating the functions of Cabinet

and corporate communications. I would presume that by setting up two separate communication shops, so to speak, that there is going to be some expense incurred. I realize that it's over two activities. It's in the directorate and I think it's under Cabinet support as well. How are we funding the establishment of these two separate Cabinet and corporate communications functions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are funding it through internal reallocations. There is an increase cost of \$5,000 related to French language communications and services.

MS. BISARO: To the Minister: I guess, is there no intention, then, to increase the number of communications personnel straight across government? I'm gathering, then, that there is no increase of personnel within the Department of Executive. But with this change in communications strategy and staffing, will there be an increase in the number of PYs required for communications?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The complete review and dealing with the communications review that was undertaken wasn't completed in time for the business planning process, so if there will be further increase requirements it would be done through the supplementary process.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. When can we expect to know, I guess, the results of the review, first of all, and then following on the results of the review, when would we know whether or not there's going to be a supp appropriation coming forward?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I don't have the details of the supp review. When that information is made available to committee, we'll know at the same time.

MS. BISARO: The Minister said supp review. Now I'm a little confused. I guess I'm wanting to know when the evaluation of the communications review will be done and when the government will know whether or not we're going to increase our communications personnel which would then require an additional supp. Is this weeks or months or years that we're talking?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I expect it will be probably a week or so, or weeks, I guess, to be specific to your question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister mentioned the transfer of the NGO Stabilization Fund being proposed. Is that relevant to the directorate, or perhaps I could have some advice on what page that would appear.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That would be in the MACA business plan details.

MR. BROMLEY: It was profiled in the Minister's remarks today, so somewhere there's a missing \$350,000 here from the budget, I would assume. But it is a proposal and I guess I'll just go ahead and talk about it a little bit here.

I am a little bit uncomfortable with that. The thing about the Executive is that they do deal with all aspects of government, as do non-governmental organizations. They deal with all areas of government and some non-government areas, of course. But MACA has, in the past, mostly focused on sport and NGOs that work in sport, so I think we would be losing something in the transfer from Executive to MACA. We have had some communications between Members and committee and the Premier on this, and I think that's a good process to have. As I'm sure the Premier knows, the voluntary sector is an extremely critical part of good governance and it's very appropriate to have that in a department that is playing a leadership role for the government. It brings that recognition to it. By shifting this to MACA it puts a different light on it and so I just wanted to express that.

I'd appreciate any response, obviously, on this, but that's not something I support. I don't know where others are on that, but I hope there's room to talk about that and discuss that before we go ahead with it. I'll leave it at that.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The rationale for putting it in MACA is the fact that MACA deals with all government departments, they deal with volunteers and they're the lead on volunteerism, and they do have more capacity and more knowledgeable staff that deal with volunteers. It was seen to be a much better fit to have it in MACA than for it to stay in the Executive.

MR. BROMLEY: Those remarks don't fit with any of my experience whatsoever.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): I'll take that as a general comment. Committee, we're on page 135, Executive, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$6.121 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 136, directorate, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants, \$150,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Executive directorate, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 139, Ministers' offices, operations expenditure summary, \$3.471 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 141, Ministers' offices, active positions. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Committee, we'll go back to page 127. Executive, total department, \$11.335 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Does committee agree we've concluded... Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't have a chance earlier to say how important this single window service is to the communities. I know some of the Members may have some in my ridings. Especially in the small communities, it really helps our elders and people that don't know what kind of programs are available in our smaller communities.

I just want to thank the Minister and Cabinet for moving forward with this initiative. I know we did a pilot project, and seeing how successful it is and winning an award, I hope in years to come this continues. I look forward to hopefully one day have this as a full-time position in the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Blake. I'll take that as a general comment. Committee, we're on page 127, Department of Executive, total department, \$11.335 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Committee is agreed we've concluded the Department of Executive?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Premier McLeod, thank you. I'll get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

Thank you, committee. We will now go to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and I'll go to the Minister responsible. Minister Miltenberger, do you have general comments?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do. I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Main Estimates for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Overall, the department's estimates propose a decrease of \$112,000, which is less than 1 percent over the 2014-2015 Main Estimates.

These estimates continue to support the objectives of limiting expenditure growth in order to sustain the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework.

Highlights of the proposed estimates include:

- \$1.5 million for the continued implementation of the Water Stewardship Strategy, including the implementation of transboundary water agreements with British Columbia and Alberta

and the negotiation of similar agreements with the Yukon and Saskatchewan;

- \$2.3 million for traditional economy programs, including the Community Harvesters Assistance, Disaster Compensation, Western Harvesters Assistance, Prime Fur Bonus and Take a Kid Trapping. These programs were transferred from ITI to ENR for increased program alignment.
- \$954,000 forced growth for the fourth year of the Collective Agreement;
- \$249,000 for the creation of a new hydro geologist position to review water licence agreements, undertake groundwater studies and assist in implementation of transboundary water agreements; and the transfer of four laboratory technician positions at the Taiga Environmental Laboratory from Aboriginal Engineering Limited to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The proposed Department of Environment and Natural Resources Estimates continue to support the priorities of the 17th Assembly. Specifically, activities in support of these priorities include:

- protecting and regulating the use of onshore territorial waters, mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts, improving environmental stewardship and maximizing benefits from industrial development;
- working collaboratively with Aboriginal governments and communities to ensure the sustainable use of our resources through the development and implementation of national and territorial management plans and recovery strategies for species at risk such as boreal caribou, polar bear and Peary caribou; implementation of the new Wildlife Act and regulations; and continued support for wildlife co-management regimes and sustainable forest management;
- development and implementation of a Northwest Territories-wide electronics recycling program;
- coordinate GNWT participation in the Arctic Boreal Vulnerability Experiment, a major international scientific initiative to look at how climate change may affect our physical, biological and social environment through the large-scale application of space-based technology. This initiative will provide landscape-level predictions of how a changing climate will impact our water, forest and wildlife resources as well as our infrastructure and communities.
- provide support and assistance for Aboriginal corporations in Fort Resolution and Fort

Providence to participate in the development of a wood biomass industry in the North;

- finalize a multi-partner range plan to manage the cumulative effects of human disturbance on the range of the Bathurst barren ground caribou herd;
- work with Aboriginal governments and co-management partners to implement a management plan for the Bluenose-East caribou herd; and
- continue to train community residents to test for basic water quality parameters, dissolved hydrocarbons and metals at one or more of the 42 community-based water quality monitoring sites in the NWT.

In these and other ways, our department continues to pursue an aggressive agenda to ensure the sustainable use of our natural resource and protection of the environment.

That concludes my opening remarks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Do you have witnesses to bring into the Chamber?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger, could you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Ernie Campbell and Ms. Susan Craig from Environment and Natural Resources, the deputy minister and finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we'll open up the floor to general comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. General comments. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a few comments. This summer we had extreme fires here in the south, but in the coming summer I'm hoping to see more of our fire suppression crews in all the communities, especially in the Delta. We cut back over the last few years from Tsiigehtchic and other communities, Fort McPherson as well. I know we've really downsized over the last 10 years here. We used to have a lot of crews in many of the communities. I hope we do the same training as we usually did every spring and have people on hand and trained up in case of emergencies like we had this past summer.

Also, it's good to see the Take a Kid Trapping and Prime Fur Bonus moved back to ENR. It was a concern that was raised that it was a part of ITI in the past.

Also, just moving forward, I know one of the communities would like to see their part-time position moved to full time. Right now it's a part-time position. We just got a new facility there and people would like to see that position moved to full time. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his comments. In regards to the fire crews, I'll let the deputy speak to that.

As well, I appreciate the comments about the Take a Kid Trapping. Those programs will continue to provide a high level of service in that regard.

In regards to the half-time position, at this point there are no plans to increase that to a full-time, but we will make note of the community's interest in that area and will ask the deputy to speak to the fire crews. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I'll go to Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Regarding fire crews, that is an area that we're looking at, at this time, as part of our review of the 2014 fire season.

In regard to training, the commitment is there to start the training early this year and build on the training that we did last season. Last season we trained between 500 and 600 firefighters. Again, we are going to continue the effort earlier than usual in the upcoming fire season. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Deputy Minister Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Just on another note under the biomass, we have been working with the community of Fort McPherson quite a bit over the last couple of years and made a lot of progress. They are looking forward to building on that and possibly tie in other buildings within what system they have and also we can upgrade to maybe more systems. Is the department willing to work with the community? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're very interested in pursuing biomass initiatives. There are those projects underway in the community, as the Member indicates. As we achieve success, we're interested in looking at those. There are other ones with the

Willows and waste heat. I commend Fort McPherson, as well, for their initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next I have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have some opening comments. I was very interested, of course, in the progress towards updating the Forest Management Act and with the particular interest in terms of the non-timber forest products. I understand that's still in the works at some point. Hopefully, we'll see some progress towards that end.

Why I remain very interested in that is because, of course, the non-timber forest products pertain to the mushrooms in terms of how it is that this government will be responsible and manage them and ensure they're sustainable at the same time. There are regulations in place so that there is at least some management regime to ensure the protection of such a vegetative species but, at the same time, ensuring that there are regulations in there so that people don't over-harvest them.

I understand too, in that same light, there was an effort from the House here to set up an interim system so that, in the absence of the updating of the Forest Management Act, there will be at least an effort to try and set up a regime so that things are workable. Last year we experienced for the first time a major population from down south that came up in the Deh Cho area along the highway and harvested a lot of mushrooms. More than likely we're going to see more people come up, especially in light of the major forest fires that we had. There needs to be at least a system in place so that there's a regulatory system in place so that we can manage it at the same time. We can monitor it at the same time and ensure the sustainability of the morel mushrooms. That's something that I remain interested in.

The other aspect of my general comments is on the forest management agreements that were recently signed in Fort Providence, and also, hopefully with some effort, to bring along other communities that will be interested in terms of entering into the business area of looking at biomass initiatives that we have, in the end, more likely a wood pellet mill and plant operated in the Deh Cho.

I think with the recent closing down of Strat Oil at Cameron Hills, the Deh Cho constituency that I represent and, at the same time, the South Slave region really need a boost of some kind to invigorate the economy to create jobs and business opportunities. This is the hope. The North Slave communities are looking forward to creating some jobs and business opportunities.

There are, of course, ongoing things such as the advancement towards our Water Strategy. There's great leadership shown by this department in terms

of ensuring that there is a water strategy in place for the Slave that runs into Great Slave Lake, but equally important is the Liard that flows into the Mackenzie from northeastern BC. You know why that remains, in my eyes, fairly significant is because you have the Horn River Basin and we have major fracking activity that's happening in that area, so any effluence would run down the Liard and on to the Mackenzie River. The development of a water strategy in northeastern BC going into the Liard and into the Mackenzie is something that more likely is advancing towards its final stages, and that's very encouraging.

Just some other comments on this are government has made great efforts to develop a traditional land use policy framework and ensuring that we have guiding principles in terms of how this government is going to operate and manage the natural resources but, at the same time, trying to balance conservation and development. In that same spirit, there are initiatives out there within the region down the valley where some regions have taken the initiative to develop at least a conservation regime, ensuring that things are done equally in a balanced way. For the Dehcho, they've tried to move forward on our land use plan. This government has been involved in a tripartite regime. There have been efforts since 2001 to develop a land use plan, and that's ongoing. I understand that there are five or at least seven issues that remain outstanding and hopefully it becomes resolved, unless it stays for greater things to come in terms of maybe forging the steps towards a final agreement of a land claim and self-government arrangement.

My other comment is mostly related to the forest fire experience. It was a major forest fire season last summer, of course. What we saw was the interruption in public travel. The riding that I represent is right on the Mackenzie Highway right from Alberta when you travel up to Yellowknife. It is uninterrupted. You can make the trip in a period of about seven hours, a day trip. It is very scenic. You have lots of things to see and do while you make your way up to Yellowknife. But that highway was closed a couple of times. I understand there was forest fire suppression, and management is another thing along with the Department of Transportation. The point that I'm making is that we need to learn from that experience. Hopefully, we come up with a very fluid system this summer. Those are just my comments. Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his comments in regards to the morel mushroom situation. Our plan A is to come forward in time for passage in the May/June session with a very small amendment to the existing Forestry Act that will

give us authority to manage the morel mushroom situation. At the same time, over the longer term, the plan is to come forward and bring renewal or redoing of the Forestry Act to bring it into the 21st century. That will be a longer term project that will take place in the life of the 18th Assembly.

Plan B is if we can't get that small, modest amendment through in time, then we will look at a policy solution, working with other departments like ITI, in terms of managing the morel season for this coming year.

In regards to the Forest Management Agreement, they are up and running. We have put in hundreds of thousands of dollars to support both Fort Providence and Fort Resolution. We know that there are other interests now from other communities, Jean Marie River and Kakisa specifically as they see the evolution of the project with Aurora Wood Pellets take shape and see the potential opportunities and benefits there. We are collectively more experienced in how to manage these and how to negotiate those agreements, so we are, of course, willing and we will be talking to these other communities.

In regard to the transboundary water agreements, we have final documents, for the most part, with Alberta, and hopefully by the end of this week we'll have concluded our final discussions with BC on the final wording to the various appendices and the intent document itself which is going to be a major achievement on behalf of this Assembly, a process that started back in 1997. We are also quite confident, having initiated these discussions with Saskatchewan, that before the end of the Assembly, as well, hopefully even before the May/June session we will have concluded an agreement with Saskatchewan. There is work underway at revitalizing and modernizing the Yukon agreement, which is currently the only one in existence under the Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Agreement.

We share the Member's concern and interest under the Land Use Sustainability Framework and the Dehcho Land Use Plan as a government working with the Dehcho to hopefully conclude the outstanding issues that are there. We have now concluded land use plans in the Gwich'in, the Sahtu and the Tlicho, and there has been, as the Member has pointed out, years of work, and we think we can get there if we continue to apply ourselves.

The fire season, as the deputy mentioned, we've been doing a major review in anticipation of the upcoming fire season. There were some issues with the fires, as the Member pointed out, between here and Providence. There was inconvenience of some road closures, but those were considered essential just for vehicle safety and to avoid any accidents and fire that could take an unpredictable

turn if there were people on the road and things didn't quite work out according to plan.

As we move forward this year, as the deputy once again has already pointed out, we're going to be making sure we have our troops mobilized and that we're on this situation very early, based on last year's experience. There are going to be assessments done of the snow load and moisture content and those types of things. We are in year four of a major drought. We don't think the snow pack this year is going to be sufficient enough to really put a dent into the drought conditions that were in existence when winter set in, plus there were modest fall rains, so a lot will depend on what the spring brings us. I will maybe ask the deputy just to quickly touch on some of the work that's been done and the amount of reviewing and consulting as a result of the last fire season in anticipation for the upcoming fire season.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I'll go to Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We started, of course, at the end of the last season with the intent of doing a review of the worst fire season we've had, and there are two components to it. We've done an internal review looking at six themes, and we're now in the process of doing the external review where we're having public engagement sessions in all of our regional centres in the Northwest Territories. Through that process we're finding that a lot of our internal review is aligning with some of the stuff we're hearing from the public engagement sessions. But there is no doubt, as the Member identified, the road closure is that... We're hearing the same things, actually, and we are actually working with MACA and other departments, Transportation and that, on the communications aspect.

Again, that's one of a number of areas that we're looking at as part of the 2014 fire season review. We're working back from the end of March, at which at that time we will have a document prepared here that would hopefully address some of the challenges that we faced last season.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just speak briefly. A few weeks ago I raised the issue of wanting to see further support from the department through the Arctic Energy Alliance for doors and windows. Since that time I've learned that there is an extremely small, I wouldn't want to even call it meagre because that would sound like there's something, but there is an extreme sliver of support for insulation, and I think we could be doing a lot more. I have yet to hear back from the Minister as to what the department plans to do or how they plan to move forward on that initiative.

Again, as I talked about that day, that's where a lot of energy is created and consumed and certainly lost through things like exterior insulation, windows and doors. We could be helping a lot further. Although I would not necessarily speak in any way against things like woodstoves or pellet stoves or those types of heating devices, but if we really want to be talking about how we can save and use less energy, there is certainly one way to go.

I'm glad to see a little bit of what looks like headway on the area of recycling of electronics. That's kind of nice to hear something is coming.

I would certainly like to hear a little bit on the issue of a tire shredder. That's been brought up by me and I think at least one other Member or two other Members over the years. It isn't a new item. It's certainly one of good value that I think we could be doing something. No one community itself would be able to meet the demand one would normally need to own one, but we could run one up the valley and we could certainly lease it out to our good friends to the east and the west which, of course, is Nunavut and the Yukon. There could be some great opportunities there. Once we own an asset like that, we can ship it up the valley, do some work, do some good work, plus recycle those tires that are just sitting there in some of these communities that will never, ever move.

I would also like to see, over a period of time, some examination towards batteries added to the recyclable list and how we can find ways to get them back into some program rather than being tossed. The latest, of course, is the CF lightbulbs. People are having great concern about the mercury content in them and folks are just throwing them out into their normal waste that heads towards the dump. Of course, these things have turned out to be an interesting anomaly. Although they save you energy on the one hand, there's mercury that leaches out of them on the other hand when they hit the dump. Work needs to be done and considered on what approach needs to be taken on that one.

There are other issues that I think should be considered on our recyclable list or our best sort of top 10 list on how we want to do business. What I would really like is suggest that the department look at consultation and a little bit of outreach as to what the community, as in the territory, feels about what would be good and useful from our aspect. Every community may have a different perspective, but it's really nice to... I mean, quite often, and in the nicest sense, departments think they know best and they certainly try to do their best, but public demand could really be out there for things like tire shredders. When we go to communities, they always talk about having to get rid of waste. That's just an example. What I'm saying, really, is the department should be reaching out for a little bit of

community consultation, get a little feedback and work towards stuff that makes sense in the NWT.

I can't imagine us having ENR before us without talking about the fire season. This will be the year we talk about for generations to come, unfortunately. It will always be the subject at hand. Oh, geez. Can you remember the 2014 season? We're barely starting the 2015 year and, of course, we're going to be spending a lot of time comparing it. I think what's going to have to happen here is I would really like to hear from the Minister as to a revision of policy, because there's no way we can afford to keep fighting a \$60 million fire if we have another low water year and a bad fire year. There's just no way we can keep up with that and we're going to have to start making some particularly interesting choices, choices no one's going to want to make, especially during an election year, we all know. But the truth be told, it's the fact that we're supposed to be here for tough choices.

One issue that had come up, and I know they had done some recent consultation, of course, but one issue that had come up to me was, of course, an interesting one. I don't know what value or what strategy the department will have, but I'd certainly like to see the department invest in sprinkler kits so we can be more prepared and allow residents to help fight their own fires by protecting their own assets such as their cabins.

The last issue I'll make mention of is I had mentioned the other day in the House during questions about Giant Mine remediation. I think it's funny. In my opinion, and I stress "mine," it's such a really good idea. I don't know why people are ignoring it, which is trying to get the information out there to find someone else who will solve their problem.

In no way have I ever suggested the GNWT needs to invest the \$10 million as a prize by trying to attract someone from who knows what corner of this earth, but somebody who has the power, ability, time and skills in order to help solve the arsenic trioxide problem. I understand the department will say it has too many things on the go. If we could do everything, we would do everything. I understand those answers. In all fairness, I realize that there's some truth to that. But I brought this up over a year ago and we're still no further ahead on this particular problem.

At times you think Ministers forget what it's like to be on the Members' side trying to find solutions to problems when you don't have all the resources the departments have. On some of these it's very frustrating to watch.

I look at our community. We're sitting on basically the pill that could poison the world. Whether that is the truth or an outlandish exaggeration, the fact being is if the arsenic releases, it will do grave harm, one that would be so difficult to calculate and

I can't imagine the comprehension of fixing it, which is maybe just one of those things that it just probably could never be fixed if it ever became a tragedy.

To me that's why it's so important that we start getting the information out there. I provided the example of crowdsourcing of ideas. It's a new world. Someone who may have said crowdsourcing of ideas and funding an opportunity 10 years ago might have been the most foolish idea in the world, but it's a different world. I look forward to the next 10 years where we will be looking at things we do today and we'll be asking ourselves, why didn't we spend a little more time on them. I'm not convinced it's going to require a whole lot of time. I think, if the department spends a little resources on coming up with a bit of a strategy, I don't believe it would cost a lot of money, especially compared to the fact that it is federal money but it's \$1.9 million to operate that in perpetuity of today's dollars. It's still a steal if we give it away at \$10 million to somebody who could find a solution for that.

I don't even know where to begin with a solution. That's not my area, but like I said, the world is a funny place. Someone could be in Prague today working on something extremely similar or someone could be in Savanna, one of the states in the United States, or someone could be in Malaysia working on something similar. We just don't know. But the great thing about the world is that the Internet has tied us together in the way that we communicate, and it's difficult to foresee where it's going to take us. That's the exciting thing, is that all good ideas, I often think, are built on other good ideas. We always stand on the shoulders of giants just to see that little bit further through knowledge. Could this be the way to see just that little bit further to gain the knowledge? Maybe sometimes someone will be staring at the key to this particular problem at Giant Mine with the arsenic sitting there. The answer might be sitting right in front of them. Many discoveries, although we don't have time today, have been made by great accident. But it was built on time, circumstance and raw genius being able to recognize the solution right in front of them. Accidents like Pasteur had by leaving his specimens on the table and coming back the next day and the world changed. It's hard to believe, but he also had the skill of recognizing what he found. Excitement and breakthroughs have all started by being able to think differently and seeing the problem a different way.

Those are a few comments on the general department. I wish them well in this next budget year. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comments

and his suggestions of where we could make life better. I want to reassure him that even though he challenges my memory, I have not forgotten what it's like to be a Regular Member. I just want to reassure the Member of that as he constantly reminds me that I've forgotten, and I constantly remind him that I can well remember.

Unfortunately, I'm going to just tell him some things that he doesn't want to hear. He says he knows the answers. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is working, in my opinion, at capacity. In fact, we're scraping to try to stay abreast. If you pick an area, it doesn't matter if it's fighting fires, dealing with wildlife issues, caribou, for example, bison. We've got enormous water issues that we're trying to solve here in the next 273 days, the recycling where we've spent enormous amounts of time and money looking at our next big initiative which is all that electronic waste. The issue of tire shredders is there. It's just we have not got the resources or the time to do all the things. It's on our list and we're working towards getting there.

The issue of consultation and outreach on recycling, I've talked to the Member about, yes, on things like plastic bags. We recognize that after five years or so it's time to look at that so that it's a little more surgical, maybe a little more precise. The world has changed. People's actions and use of bags have changed, so there is an area that we are going to look at. We've committed to do that.

The fire season – and the Member's made comments about revision of policy and hard choices and we can't afford another fire season – while we want to be very prepared, we want to, I want to, the government wants to reassure people of the Northwest Territories, as we did last fire season, that if their communities are threatened, if people are threatened, if our homes and communities are threatened we will spend the money. We will have no choice, I don't think. If we are faced with the new norm of \$60 million fire seasons, the Member is correct, it's going to take some very tough fiscal choices if we're going to have to significantly realign our budgets for that new reality.

But for the coming fire season we're going to fight the fires with the same focus, the same decision and the same extreme expertise, in many cases, flat out valour and hard, hard work that we did last fire season. We have some of the best firefighters and fire resources in the country on the ground and in the air, men and women who put themselves in harm's way every day and went above and beyond in many cases, and we've had the benefit of using similar kinds of skilled resources in other jurisdictions. We are going to be ready for the fire season. We're hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst.

I agree with the Member, especially for those folks living out in the hinterland, that they have to take part responsibility for their circumstances. We want to work with them, as well, in terms of the additional sprinkler kits, the fire smarting that you need to do when you're that far away from any other potential resources, and when you factor in the vagaries of the weather and the extreme fire behaviour that in many cases has defied practice and standards that we've seen both in drought and in terms of the speed of fire.

The Giant Mine remediation, the Member has been on this idea, and I don't disagree that it has worked in other jurisdictions and in other parts of the world in other areas. With the Giant Mine remediation we have invested significantly in a process where we've worked out, for the most part, the bugs of the system. The Member has raised an issue repeatedly in this House that I have yet to hear picked up at all from all the people, the interested people, the experts, the community people in Yellowknife and around Yellowknife that are involved in Giant Mine remediation. We have charted out a course of action. The Member has suggested a somewhat different course of action, but he, at this point, is a lone voice and I believe we need to stay focused on a path that we have laid out, trying to get it implemented and we both want the same thing. We want to be able to protect the environment and the people from the arsenic trioxide. That's not to say there's no chance that the Member's suggestion will someday get some legs and be more timely, but at this juncture it's an issue that we are, once again, fully occupied trying to do the work that we've laid out for ourselves. This is an interesting issue, but one that's going to be hard to devote any significant resources to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Noting the clock, committee, I will rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Thank you, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Bouchard?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 24, 2015, 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. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
 - Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act
 - Committee Report 10-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
 - Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 24th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:04 p.m.